

[Home](#)
**Customer Services**

- › [Pay Online](#)
- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [eBilling](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

**Water Utilities**

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

**The Watershed**

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

**Citywide Initiatives**

- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

**Business and Professionals**

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Support for Businesses](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

**About DEP**

- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)

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[Press Releases](#)[Public Notices](#)[Testimony & Public Comments](#)

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[depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov); (718) 595-6600

## Department of Environmental Protection Joins NYC Parks to Cut the Ribbon on Playground 103 in East Harlem



### Green Infrastructure will Absorb 1.7 Million Gallons of Stormwater Each Year and Improve the Health of the East River Photos Can Be Found on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Thursday joined NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP; Council Member Diana Ayala; State Senator Brian Benjamin; Nilsa Orama, Chair, Community Board 11; Theresa Richardson, President, East River Houses Residents Assn.; Cynthia Rodriguez, Congressman Adriano Espaillat's office; Terrell Brock, State Senator Serrano's office; Mariely Moronta-Sanchez, Chief of Staff, Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez; Patricia Johnson, Manager, East River Houses; Maureen Gardner, Director, SCAN Cornerstone Community Center, and SCAN students to cut the ribbon on the reconstruction of Playground 103, a Community Parks Initiative (CPI) site. The new and improved playground was funded with \$5.3 million from Mayor Bill de Blasio; \$695,000 from DEP and \$625,000 from FEMA.

DEP has committed approximately \$50 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations at CPI sites citywide. At Playground 103, the construction of six rain gardens and a subsurface detention system will capture up to 1.7 million gallons of stormwater that fall on the playground each year. By capturing the stormwater and keeping it out of the combined sewer system, the green infrastructure will help to improve the health of the East River. In addition to managing stormwater, green infrastructure helps to improve air quality while also providing shade and lowering summertime temperatures.

**More Information**

NYC Department of Environmental Protection  
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373  
(718) 595-6600

- › [Capital Projects](#)
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- › [Interagency MOUs](#)
- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)

“DEP is proud to be a partner in NYC Parks’ Community Parks Initiative which is transforming neighborhood parks across the city,” said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “The newly installed rain gardens and subsurface detention system will help to reduce stormwater runoff by 1.7 million gallons annually, improve the health of the East River, and beautify the neighborhood.”

“Neighborhoods like East Harlem, and specifically the area around the East River Houses, are in great need for vibrant open spaces for families to spend recreational and respite time outdoors,” said Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver. “Thanks to the Community Parks Initiative’s and our partner’s investment in transforming Playground 103, the community has a renewed space to play, relax, and enjoy for many years to come.”

“Playground 103 has been a staple in East Harlem for decades—it is a welcoming space for residents of all ages and has always brought our community together. I thank Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Silver and the Parks Department for investing in this playground through the Community Parks Initiative. On its face, this is an investment in a playground, but in reality, it is an investment in our youth, their futures and our community overall,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala**.

“It is vital to our communities that we have access to parks and recreation areas. Coming from a background in building affordable housing, I know first hand that when urban infrastructures have open spaces it improves the environment and well-being of residents,” said **State Senator Brian A. Benjamin**.

“It was a pleasure participating in the ribbon cutting for Playground 103 and seeing children enjoying the renovated park,” said **Nilsa Orama, chair of Manhattan Community Board 11**. “This park is a community asset, and I want to thank those involved for designing a park for all to enjoy.”

One of the first CPI sites announced at the start of the \$318 million equity improvement program, nestled in the East River Houses, Playground 103 fills a void in a dense, underserved neighborhood by providing a high quality, safe recreation space welcoming to users of all ages. The reconstruction expanded the children’s play areas with accessible play equipment, fitness equipment and basketball courts to encourage active recreation. There is an area for relaxation; the shade trees and an array of accessible game and picnic tables, form the heart of the park. Additionally, the site’s green infrastructure elements were increased with native vegetation to address drought and salt tolerance, and habitat value to beautify an otherwise harsh location next to the FDR Drive.

Launched by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014, CPI strives to make NYC Parks a more equitable and accessible parks system by investing in smaller parks that are located in New York City’s densely-populated neighborhoods with higher-than-average concentrations of poverty. Through CPI, the City is investing \$318 million in capital dollars to make renovations to 67 parks citywide that have not undergone significant improvements in decades.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.6 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$19.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](https://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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