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New York City and the Trust for Public Land Complete First “Green” Playground in Queens, With Opening of New Schoolyard at J.H.S. 157 Halsey Jr. High

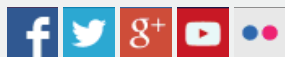
Student-designed “green” schoolyard will serve the Rego Park community and improve the health of local waterways like Flushing Bay

Photos of today’s event, as well as before and after shots of the schoolyard are available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#)

REGO PARK, NY — Today The City of New York and The Trust for Public Land celebrated the completion of their sixth green infrastructure playground - the first to open in Queens - with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at J.H.S. 157 Halsey Jr. High School.

The Trust for Public Land has previously opened five “green” playgrounds in Brooklyn, including two earlier this fall at J.H.S. 162 in Bushwick and M.S. 267/La Cima Charter School in Bedford Stuyvesant. Designed with input from students and several public agency partners, the playgrounds feature green infrastructure elements such as rain gardens, pervious pavers, trees and green roofs that will manage approximately 500,000 gallons of storm water per site each year, helping to improve the health of the local waterways Flushing Bay and Newtown Creek. DEP provided construction funding for the green infrastructure at both J.H.S. 162 and J.H.S. 157.

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Participants at the opening included WABC news anchor Sade Baderinwa, The Trust for Public Land's Marc Matsil, New York State director; NYC Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Angela Licata; Dr. Beverly Ffolkes Bryant, Superintendent, District 28, NYC Department of Education; City Council Member Karen Koslowitz; and Bernadette Longford, Disney Citizenship.

Located in the Rego Park, Queens, and part of the Flushing Bay watershed, J.H.S. 157 serves 1,250 6th through 9th grade students. The schoolyard previously contained crumbling handball walls, worn asphalt, and few amenities. The Trust for Public Land led a three-month participatory design program with students, community members and staff to design a new playground that captures storm water while providing a safe place to play for students and the community.

"I would like to thank The Trust for Public Land, our city council member, Karen Koslowitz, and our art partners for giving the boys and girls of Halsey the opportunity to collaborate on our playground project," said school Principal, Vincent Suraci. "Our youngsters were immersed in environmental engineering and ecology throughout the entire process. This was a creative, wonderful learning experience for our boys and girls. I am sure this beautiful playground will be enjoyed by the community for many years to come."

The new schoolyard at J.H.S. 157 includes an artificial turf field, running track, full basketball court, fitness station, handball walls, amphitheater/outdoor classroom, outdoor Ping-Pong tables, trees, benches, student murals and a water fountain. The green infrastructure components in the playground include a synthetic turf field and porous pavements over broken stone reservoirs. The green infrastructure will capture at least the first inch of storm water during a rain event. The site will be open to the public after school and on during school breaks until dusk, seven days a week, as part of the *Schoolyards to Playgrounds Program*.

"Each of The Trust for Public Land's playgrounds are so special because they are designed by the users -- the very students and neighbors who will be enjoying the park for years to come," said Mary Alice Lee, director of The Trust for Public Land's New York City Playgrounds Program.

This unique program with the Department of Environmental Protection grew out of a long-standing partnership between The Trust for Public Land and the City of New York. The new partnership aims to build up to 40 playgrounds that will improve the health of the Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek, Westchester Creek, the Hutchinson River, the Bronx River, Flushing Bay, Flushing Creek, and Jamaica Bay.

"We have enough asphalt in New York City," said New York City Council Member Karen Koslowitz. "That's why I'm proud to support the new playground at J.H.S. 157 that will provide a healthier, greener place for our children to play. I want to thank The Trust for Public Land, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the New York City Department of Education, and the New York School Construction Authority for working together on this initiative."

Public funding for the playground construction was provided by the NYC Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and New York City Council Member President Karen Koslowitz. The Walt Disney Company, which is dedicated to promoting the happiness and well-being of kids and families, provided private funding for J.H.S. 157.

To date, The Trust for Public Land's New York City Playgrounds Program has designed and/or built 183 playgrounds across the five boroughs. Prior to The Trust for Public Land's commitment to PlaNYC, the organization had created 25 playgrounds at New York City public schools through a pilot program with the NYC Department of Education, which oversees the School Construction Authority.

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring

healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. Learn more at tpl.org.

About New York City DEP

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep.

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