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## The Trust for Public Land Joins New York City and Council Member Rosie Mendez to Open State-of-the-Art Green Infrastructure Playground in the East Village



**Former asphalt lot transformed, will serve 200 pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade students as well as surrounding community**

**Green infrastructure will capture approximately 400,000 gallons of stormwater a year and help to improve the health of the East River**

**Photos are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)**

**New York, NY** — The Trust for Public Land, New York City and City Council Member Rosie Mendez today unveiled a state-of-the-art-playground on a formerly cracked asphalt lot at PS 15 The Roberto Clemente School, in the East Village neighborhood of Manhattan. Designed with help from the school's students and built in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protection and the School Construction Authority, the one-third of an acre playground includes green infrastructure components that will allow the space to capture approximately 400,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year, which will improve the health of the East River. The playground will also operate as a public open space during weekends, holidays and school vacations.

**More Information**

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“Before the renovation, the students at PS 15 played on a cracked asphalt schoolyard. Partnering with school officials and community residents, The Trust for Public Land conducted a participatory design process to engage students, parents, teachers, and neighborhood residents in designing playground improvements that would best address the needs of the school’s students and families,” said **Mary Alice Lee, Director of The Trust for Public Land’s New York City Playgrounds Program**. “Each of The Trust for Public Land’s playgrounds is unique because they are designed by the users—the very students and neighbors who will be enjoying the park for years to come.”

“Transforming the asphalt schoolyard at PS 15 into an environmentally-friendly playground provides schoolchildren and community residents with a safe space to play that also cools our city, cleans our air and will help to improve the health of the East River,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**.

“This new green playground is a real treasure for our students and the City,” said **Deputy Schools Chancellor Elizabeth Rose**. “It is a wonderful place to play and exercise and has provided hands-on learning opportunities for our youngsters. Watching our students and families partner with City agencies in this special way is a great source of pride for the DOE. We look forward to deepening our commitment to better serve our communities through future environmental sustainability projects and joint efforts with the Trust for Public Land.”

**Councilwoman Rosie Mendez** stated: “The P.S. 15 Roberto Clemente School is the beneficiary of a public-private partnership that brought a renovated environmentally friendly playground to my community in record time. This project would have needed to wait another fiscal year to enable me to allocate the entire funding. The reality is that without the partnership of the Trust for Public Land, we would not have been able to break ground when we did. The Trust for Public Land worked with DOE, the community, the school and its’ children to envision and design a recreational multi-use area. In addition, they worked with the School Construction Authority and DEP to create a state-of-the-art green playground that will benefit the community at large.”

The nearly \$1 million playground renovation was funded through an innovative public-private partnership, with private funds raised by The Trust for Public Land from Charina Endowment Fund, and public funding from the Departments of Education and Environmental Protection and the School Construction Authority. NYC Council Member Rosie Mendez generously allocated \$500,000 towards the project.

Community participation is a cornerstone of The Trust for Public Land’s NYC Playgrounds Program, and students spent three months helping to plan the new playground. The Trust for Public Land worked closely with students from PS 15 to create the new schoolyard that features an artificial turf field, 2-lane running track, basketball courts, net climber with safety mats, play house, water fountain, trees in pervious pavers, benches, boulders, turf pods, a stage, game tables, color seal art designed by the students, an outdoor classroom and a mural.

Additionally, the playground includes green infrastructure elements, such as specialized plantings and shade trees, porous pavement and permeable pavers. Also included in the construction is a new synthetic turf field made of woven polyester filaments and featuring a broken stone storage layer and perforated distribution pipes to promote infiltration.

Such green infrastructure design elements are a hallmark of The Trust for Public Land’s playground work. These features reduce stormwater runoff that can flood streets and overwhelm sewer systems, allowing untreated water to end up in rivers and bays. Each playground absorbs hundreds of thousands of gallons of water annually and includes 20–30 new trees that bring shade and better air quality to their neighborhoods. In New York City, similar playgrounds are being designed in the Flushing Bay, East River and Gowanus Canal watersheds.

Since 1996, The Trust for Public Land, working with the City, has helped

transform more than 180 public schoolyards from asphalt lots to spaces which offer safe and durable play equipment, athletic facilities and gardens. The program has added more than 150 acres of additional playground space serving the nearly 3.3 million people who live within a half-mile of one of the sites. The need is critical in a city where 73 percent of low-income neighborhoods fail to meet the city's standard of 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

The Trust for Public Land has partnered with the DOE and DEP to build eight other green infrastructure playgrounds:

- PS 261K, Boerum Hill, Brooklyn
- JHS 218K, East New York, Brooklyn
- PS 65K, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn
- JHS 157Q, Rego Park, Queens
- JHS 162K, Bushwick, Brooklyn
- CS 300X Tremont, Bronx
- P.S. 75Q, Ridgewood, Queens
- J.H.S. 185Q, Flushing, Queens

The Trust for Public Land has done similar projects in other cities, including Philadelphia, Newark and San Francisco.

Attendees at Monday's ribbon-cutting ceremony included DEP's Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability Angela Licata, The Trust for Public Land Senior Vice President, City Park Development Director Adrian Benepe, The Trust for Public Land NYC Playgrounds Program Director Mary Alice Lee, New York City Council Member Rosie Mendez, PS 15 Principal Irene Sanchez, and the students themselves.

#### **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. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit [www.tpl.org](http://www.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 9 million residents, including 8.5 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 \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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