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New York City, New York Road Runners, The Trust for Public Land, and Olympic Medalist Jenny Simpson Unveil New State-of-the-Art Green Playground in Harlem



Green infrastructure will capture almost 700,000 gallons of stormwater a year and help improve the health of the Hudson River

Photos Available on the [DEP's Flickr Page](#) and [NYRR Online Media Center](#)

New York, October 30, 2017 — New York City, The Trust for Public Land, and New York Road Runners today unveiled a state-of-the-art green playground at CS 154 Harriet Tubman Learning Center, in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. The schoolyard, which is also shared by the Democracy Prep Endurance Middle School, was designed with help from the school's students and built in partnership with the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the School Construction Authority (SCA). The playground includes new green infrastructure components that will allow the space to capture almost 700,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year, which will help to improve the health of the nearby Hudson River. The playground also operates as a public open space during weekends, holidays and school vacations.

The project broke ground last October, at what was formerly a cracked asphalt schoolyard, and is the third and final site to open in 2017 through NYRR and the Trust for Public Land's first year of partnership, with support provided by DEP, DOE, and SCA. Earlier this year, refurbished playgrounds were opened at the Piagentini and Jones Educational Complex, in Throggs Neck, Bronx, and PS 120 Queens, in Flushing through NYRR's \$1 million contribution to the organizations' shared commitment to provide New York City students and communities with

More Information

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beautiful outdoor spaces. The renovated sites will serve more than 2,000 students and 50,500 community members who live within a 10-minute walk of these sites.

“This new state-of-the-art schoolyard not only provides a fun and safe place for CS 154 students and the Harlem community, it also captured all of the rain that fell on it over the last 24 hours,” said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “The more green infrastructure we build to capture stormwater before it ever enters our sewer system, the healthier New York City’s surrounding waterbodies, including the nearby Hudson River, will become. We look forward to cutting the ribbon on many more green playgrounds!”

“Thanks to our partnership with the New York Road Runners, which not only funds playground and running-track creation but also teaches kids the joys of running and exercise, this new playground will give 37,245 Harlem children and families a 10-minute walk to a park that will provide a lifetime of fitness and health benefits,” said **Carter Strickland, New York State Director at The Trust for Public Land**.

“Through our first year of partnership with The Trust for Public Land we were honored and excited to be able to help open three new state-of-the-art community playgrounds across New York City,” said **Michael Capiroso, President and CEO at New York Road Runners**. “Each of the sites opened in 2017 host our free youth fitness program, Rising New York Road Runners, and thanks to this exciting partnership Harlem students and community members now have a great outdoor space to run, play and get active.”

The \$1.3 million playground renovation was funded through an innovative public-private partnership, with \$333,000 from New York Road Runners, \$500,000 from Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer and Assembly Member Inez E. Dickens, and \$339,935 from DEP.

Community participation is a cornerstone of The Trust for Public Land’s NYC Playgrounds Program, and students spent three months helping plan the new playground. The Trust for Public Land worked closely with students from CS 154 Harriet Tubman School and Democracy Prep Endurance Middle School to create a new schoolyard that features an artificial turf field, 3-lane running track, basketball courts, play equipment, trees in pervious pavers, plantings, benches, game tables, color seal art designed by the students and an outdoor classroom. The color seal painting reflects the student-chosen theme of “Night and Day” to celebrate the neighborhood’s musical heritage.

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 East River, Bronx River and Flushing Bay watersheds.

Continuing their multiyear partnership, NYRR has committed to an additional \$1 million contribution, which will continue to help build safe outdoor recreational spaces for the youth and communities of New York City’s five boroughs. Looking forward into 2018 and beyond, NYRR plans to help The Trust for Public Land renovate underutilized school yards in all five boroughs of New York City.

“We are proud to work together with The Trust for Public Land to transform public school yards into high-quality, green community playgrounds, and look forward to enhancing more spaces for the community members as well as our Rising New York Road Runners, to give them safe, clean spaces to run and play,” said **Peter Ciaccia, NYRR president of events and race director of the TCS New York**

City Marathon. “We’re excited to announce that we will be expanding our efforts into Brooklyn and Staten Island in 2018 and 2019, and look forward to the many years of collaboration ahead of us.”

Since 1996, The Trust for Public Land, working with the City, has helped transform more than 190 public schoolyards from asphalt lots to spaces that 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 3.5 million people who live within a half-mile of one of the sites.

Attendees at Monday’s ribbon-cutting ceremony included Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer, DEP’s Director of Stormwater Management Outreach Mikelle Adgate, The Trust for Public Land New York State Director Carter Strickland and Senior Vice President and Director of City Park Development Adrian Benepe, NYRR President and CEO Michael Capiraso, NYRR President of Events and Race Director of the TCS New York City Marathon Peter Ciaccia, Olympic medalist Jenny Simpson, Ambassador & Special Advisor to Rising New York Road Runners, CS 154M Principal Elizabeth Jarrett and the students themselves.

About NYRR

Founded in 1958, New York Road Runners has grown from a local running club to the world’s premier community running organization, whose mission is to help and inspire people through running. NYRR’s commitment to New York City’s five boroughs features races, community events, youth running initiatives, school programs, and training resources that provide hundreds of thousands of people each year, from children to seniors, with the motivation, know-how, and opportunity to Run for Life. NYRR’s premier event, and the largest marathon in the world, is the TCS New York City Marathon. Held annually on the first Sunday in November, the race features 50,000 runners, from the world’s top professional athletes to a vast range of competitive, recreational, and charity runners. To learn more, visit nyrr.org.

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 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 that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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