

# Mayor Adams, NYC Parks, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Celebrate \$18.2 Million Remediation of Red Hook Ball Fields

April 20, 2022

Video available at: <https://youtu.be/DIPTL0wSoZQ>

*Joint Effort Marks Milestone in Addressing Legacy Lead Contamination at Red Hook Ball Fields in Brooklyn*

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Parks and Recreation Commissioner Sue Donoghue, and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Administrator Lisa F. Garcia were today joined by elected leaders and environmental justice advocates to open four new and remediated fields in the Red Hook Recreation Area in Brooklyn. The updates to ball fields 5-8 were funded by an \$18.2 million grant by the city, and are part of a phased-in environmental remediation and reconstruction effort of the fields in the area, receiving nearly \$130 million in investments.

“We know parks aren’t luxuries, they are necessities that help New Yorkers stay healthy and build community,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Thanks to this \$130 million investment in the Red Hook Ball Fields, New Yorkers will be able to play ball safely for generations to come. I’m grateful to the EPA for their partnership restoring areas that have needed help for too long and I look forward to working together to ensure every New Yorker, regardless of zip code, has access to a clean and safe park.”

“Today, we are righting a historic wrong. The cleaner, greener, and more resilient return of Red Hook’s beloved ball fields ends years of environmental injustice,” said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi**. “Everyone deserves clean, safe, and green space to live near, and I am thrilled to reopen the Red Hook ball fields with its new sustainable and accessible amenities for all New Yorkers.”

“We are excited to bring these fields back to life and return them to the kids of Red Hook and the community members who followed this project from inception to completion,” said **Commissioner Donoghue**. “We are proud to have righted some of the environmental wrongs that have plagued this neighborhood for far too long. Today, Red Hook is a cleaner, greener, and healthier place to live and play.”

“All New Yorkers have a right to live, work, and play in communities that are safe, healthy, and free of harmful environmental pollutants,” said **Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice Kizzy Charles-Guzman**. “This project demonstrates that cleaning up lead contamination can advance environmental justice in multiple ways: protecting the health of our neighborhoods, increasing access to quality open spaces, and managing storm water all at the same time.”

“We are pleased to stand with the city of New York to celebrate this cleanup milestone. The collaborative work at the Red Hook Ball Fields marks a notable achievement in our continuous effort to address legacy contamination from defunct lead smelting facilities, particularly those affecting overburdened communities like here in Red Hook,” said **EPA Regional Administrator Garcia**. “This is a major win for the community. As always, community engagement was key to this project, and together we listened and worked to address the community’s concerns. EPA, working with our state and local partners, continues to make progress in addressing lead-contaminated soil here in New York, and across the United States.”

The revamped ballfields boast new, multi-sports fields with synthetic turf, new dugouts, rain gardens, accessible ramps, and plantings. In 2014, the EPA and New York City Parks and Recreation investigated potential contamination from the former Columbia Smelting Facility that had been located at Red Hook Park. The company’s operations left lead in area soil that eventually became ball fields 5, 6, 7, and 8, and the joint investigation found elevated lead levels in the soil at the ball fields. As a result, EPA ordered the closure of ball fields 5-8 in Spring 2015.

All exposed soil on fields 5-8 were covered with a minimum of one foot of clean soil and drainage infrastructure. This resilient barrier system permanently reduces the chance of people encountering contaminated soil on these fields and will be inspected routinely to ensure it remains protective. When remediation was complete, the fields were furnished with new amenities, including new fencing, curbing, and other structures.

“I want to commend the terrific work done to remove toxic pollutants at Red Hook Park Ball Fields and make this critically needed greenspace safe for our kids,” said **U.S. Senator Charles Schumer**. “Thanks to the clean-up by EPA and NYC Parks, it’s time to ‘Play Ball’ for kids in Red Hook, all over Brooklyn and beyond!”

“The environmental cleanup and renovation of the Red Hook Park Ball Fields is proof of the great work that can get done when local, state and federal agencies collaborate,” said **U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. “Removing the footprint of a toxic lead smelting facility from baseball and softball fields not only protects Red Hook residents from being exposed to harmful chemicals seeped in the soil that can lead to lifelong, long-term health issues, but also provides Brooklyn residents with parks and public spaces to enjoy healthy recreational activities.”

“From the senior members of our community to the youngest, everyone enjoys going to ball fields to play or watch a free game,” said **U.S. Representative Nydia Velázquez**. “With the Red Hook Ball Fields finally cleaned up from the former polluted industrial sites of the past, families can enjoy an upgraded and safe field once again. I’m looking forward to seeing people in our community take full advantage of these new fields and watching some games myself!”

“The Red Hook Ballfields are a Brooklyn treasure known not only for sports and soccer leagues but for its vibrant street vendors too,” said **New York City Councilmember Alexa Avilés**. “Thanks to collaboration and committed support between the EPA, the City Council and the mayor’s office, the worst of the lead contamination from the Columbia Smelting Facility is being addressed. For far too long our communities have had to endure exposure to dangerous pollutants that negatively impact our families and children. Today we oversee the completion of clean up at ballfields 5-8 and we commend this milestone. We now look toward the cleanup at the remaining fields. I am fully committed to the spirit of collaboration that got us here and await the day when our neighbors, Brooklynites, and all New Yorkers can fully enjoy the Red Hook Ball Fields without fear of lead contamination.”

“This project in Red Hook, which cleans up the industrial waste of generations past to rebuild ball fields for families today, is an important step towards guaranteeing that every New Yorker has access to the mental, physical, and environmental benefits of parks,” said **Council Member Shekar Krishnan, chair, Committee on Parks and Recreation**. “Thanks to Mayor Adams and the EPA for bringing investment in new parks and recreational spaces to a neighborhood that sorely needs it.”

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