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City Completes New Bluebelt on South Shore of Staten Island



\$15 Million Project in Pleasant Plains Added Catch Basins and Storm Sewers to Reduce Street Flooding; Nearly 100 Homes Newly Connected to the City Sewer System

Photos of the Bluebelt and a Map of the Work Area are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza and Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora today announced the completion of a new Bluebelt in the South Shore's Pleasant Plains neighborhood. Prior to construction, very few streets in the area were equipped with catch basins or storm sewers and roadway flooding often occurred during heavy rainstorms. The \$15 million infrastructure upgrade included the construction of new storm sewers, catch basins and water mains, as well as the enhancement of existing waterways on property owned by both the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The newly installed catch basins allow precipitation to drain from the roadways into the new storm sewers, which then direct it to the newly enhanced waterways, or Bluebelt wetlands, where it will be naturally filtered to protect the environment. In addition, nearly a mile of new sanitary sewers allowed nearly 100 homes to connect to the City sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks. The project, which began in 2014, was funded by DEP and the construction was managed by DDC.

"The Bluebelt system on Staten Island has proven to effectively manage stormwater, reduce localized flooding and raise nearby property values," said

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DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza. “We thank our partner agencies for helping to ensure we preserved the natural beauty of the area while also improving roadway drainage and extending the sewer system to nearly 100 homes in the area, which allows them to discontinue the use of septic tanks.”

“This project highlights some of the finest sustainable infrastructure we have in New York City, and we’re pleased to have completed these upgrades with our partners at the DEP,” said **DDC Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora.** “The Bluebelt continues to strengthen neighborhoods across Staten Island and boosts the borough’s resiliency.”

“Our wetlands are such an invaluable natural resource. Many people don’t realize that wetlands serve as natural drainage corridors and protect Staten Islanders from flood damage,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP.** “We’re happy to work with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection to preserve these wetlands and maximize their flood control potential, making our city both safer and greener.”

“I have long supported the expansion of our Bluebelt areas because they actually work to help control storm water in low-lying areas in a cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally sound manner. This announcement means yet another portion of the South Shore Bluebelt is coming online to benefit Staten Islanders. Besides the obvious benefits to combat flooding, our Bluebelt system has also helped beautify our neighborhoods and natural areas,” said **Borough President James Oddo.**

“This project will bring \$15 million in infrastructure investments to our community on the South Shore. As the population of Staten Island grows, the needs of its residents also grow,” said **Council Member Joe Borelli.** “Over 6,000 feet of new sewers will be installed, storm runoff will be mitigated, and there will be a reduction in flooding. I thank the DEP for their commitment to improving the water management systems on Staten Island.”

“I am very happy to see the completion of this project. I think one of the greatest takeaways from this project is how the Bluebelt was enhanced while upgrading essential infrastructure in the streets,” said **Assemblyman Ron Castorina, Jr.** “This project included the planting of over 7,000 native plants, 400 shrubs, 151 tree whips and 128 large caliper trees—all contributing to our critical Bluebelt system. The new catch basins and storm sewers will help drain our roadways.”

“Catholic Charities of Staten Island is happy to see this project complete. Our Mount Loretto campus has had issues in the past with excessive flooding at both our entrances off Hylan Boulevard. This project has rectified those problems,” said **Vincent Ignizio, CEO of Catholic Charities of Staten Island.** “We thank DEP and DDC for working closely with us and making sure it alleviated our concerns. This sorely needed flooding relief will not only benefit our campus, but also the thousands of residents in southern Staten Island who use our campus every day and live in the surrounding community.”

The installation of 2,350 linear feet of new storm sewers and 19 catch basins will help to better manage the precipitation that falls in the area and reduce localized flooding. In addition, 4,116 linear feet of new sanitary sewers allowed 86 homes to connect to the City’s sewer system and discontinue the use of septic tanks.

The award winning Bluebelt program preserves natural drainage corridors such as streams and ponds, and optimizes them to help control and filter stormwater before it empties into New York Harbor. Over the last ten years, DEP has built Bluebelts for approximately one third of Staten Island’s land area. In the South Richmond and mid-Island areas, the City has purchased approximately 400 acres of wetland property for Bluebelts that provide drainage for 19 watersheds, covering about 14,000 acres. The Bluebelts also provide important open spaces and serve as a habitat for diverse wildlife.


Complementing the landscape design of this completed Bluebelt are various plantings, including 7,765 wildflowers and native plants, 400 native shrubs, 151 tree whips and 128 large caliper trees.

While the roadway was opened to add the new sewers, the City also upgraded the drinking water delivery system by replacing the old cast iron water mains with new ductile iron mains. As part of the project, 5,052 linear feet of distribution water mains were installed. Upgrading the water main network will help to ensure a reliable supply of high quality drinking water for area residents for decades to come.

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 8.5 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 \$20.7 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, or like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

The Department of Design and Construction is the City's primary capital construction project manager. In supporting Mayor de Blasio's lenses of growth, sustainability, resiliency, equity and healthy living, DDC provides communities with new or renovated public buildings such as such as firehouses, libraries, police precincts, new or upgraded roadways, sewers, water mains in all five boroughs. To manage this \$15 billion portfolio, DDC partners with other City agencies, architects and consultants, whose experience bring efficient, innovative, and environmentally-conscious design and construction strategies to city projects. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/ddc.

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