

Home
Customer Services
▶ Pay Online
▶ Ways to Pay Your Bill
▶ eBilling
▶ Account Information
▶ Customer Assistance
▶ Service Line Protection Program
▶ Water Rates
▶ Property Managers & Trade Professionals
Water Utilities
▶ Drinking Water
▶ Wastewater
▶ Stormwater
▶ Harbor Water
▶ Long Term Control Plan
The Watershed
▶ Watershed Protection
▶ Watershed Recreation
Citywide Initiatives
▶ Environmental Education
▶ Conservation Programs
▶ Air Pollution Control
▶ Noise Codes & Complaints
Business and Professionals
▶ Forms & Permits
▶ Support for Businesses
▶ Doing Business with DEP
▶ Asbestos Abatement
▶ Construction, Demolition & Abatement
About DEP
▶ Inside DEP
▶ News
DEP Featured In...
Press Releases
Public Notices
Testimony & Public Comments

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City Announces Progress on \$1.9 Billion Commitment to Alleviate Flooding in Southeast Queens



Ten projects complete since 2015; ten projects in progress; twenty-five more projects in the planning and design phase

Photos from the event are available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Vincent Sapienza and Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Commissioner Lorraine Grillo today updated homeowners and businesses in southeast Queens on the de Blasio Administration's historic commitment of \$1.9 billion to build a comprehensive drainage system and alleviate flooding in neighborhoods throughout the area. Thus far, roughly 20 percent of the funding has been committed to 10 completed projects and another 10 that are currently under construction. An additional 25 projects are currently in the planning and design phase and will break ground in the coming years. Neighborhoods receiving upgraded drainage systems include St. Albans, Rosedale, Jamaica, Laurelton and Springfield Gardens, amongst others.

"Shovels in the ground in southeast Queens mean we are one step closer to a true drainage system and some peace of mind for residents and businesses," said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "As we complete each of these projects we will see better drainage, safer roadways, a healthier Jamaica Bay and higher property values across these long underserved neighborhoods."

"Many parts of southeast Queens experience significant flooding and ponding issues that can linger for days after a heavy rainfall," said **DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. "We're very happy to enjoy the support of the Mayor and to work

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with our partners at DEP to implement the largest systematic street restoration program in the five boroughs.”

The post-World War II residential and commercial development of southeast Queens outpaced the construction of vital public infrastructure, including storm sewers. For decades, residents have lived with the constant worry of the next storm and the resulting property damage and unsafe roadway conditions it would cause. To address the long-standing concerns of residents and business owners, in 2015 Mayor de Blasio announced the allocation of funds for the construction of a robust drainage system for the area.

The bulk of the funding will go towards the construction of large trunk sewer spines along 150th Street, Guy Brewer Boulevard, Farmers Boulevard and Springfield Boulevard. The first of those projects just recently broke ground. Dozens of local sewer projects will connect neighborhoods to the trunk sewer spines. Bluebelts are also being constructed to help manage stormwater at Springfield Lake, Baisley Pond, Twin Ponds and Brookville Triangle.

Funding is also going towards projects that can deliver flooding relief more quickly than the large sewer construction projects. This includes smaller sewer extensions to relieve flooding on a block-by-block basis, and the addition of green infrastructure along roadways and at City schools, playgrounds and at NYCHA facilities.

The buildout of the drainage system in southeast Queens is a collaboration between DEP, DDC and DOT. As part of the Rochdale project, where the Commissioners today joined with elected officials to update homeowners and businesses, more than 1550 feet of storm sewers will be installed and an additional 6,600 feet of storm sewers will be replaced with new, larger pipes, some as large as 66 inches in diameter. Up to 11,000 feet of old sanitary sewers will be replaced, in many locations with larger sanitary sewers ranging up to 36 inches in diameter. To further improve street drainage, 44 new catch basins will be installed and 87 existing ones will be replaced.

The project will also see the replacement of 18,000 feet of old cast iron water mains, some dating back to the 1920s, that were installed by the Jamaica Water Supply Company. Additionally, 16 new fire hydrants will be added to the area and 32 older ones will be replaced with new ones. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in 2020.

“The lack of a comprehensive drainage system has plagued residents of Southeast Queens for far too long. Ground water flooding and heavy rainfall have cost them thousands of dollars’ worth of damage on their homes and businesses,” said **Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman**. “By investing in local sewer projects, Mayor de Blasio will transform the quality of life for this community. With upgraded pipes and water mains, residents will no longer have to live in fear of the next storm. I look forward to continue working with my colleagues in government to bring resources and funding back to Southeast Queens.”

“These significant infrastructure upgrades will result in the quality of life improvements that our Southeast Queens communities have needed for decades,” said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. “I would like to thank Mayor de Blasio for this historic investment as well as DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo, DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza and DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg for your leadership on this important project and look forward to the relief it will bring our residents.”

“The number one issue for Southeast Queens for decades has been flooding and that is why I made it my first priority when I came into office,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “Thankfully, Mayor de Blasio stepped up to address this systemic issue that has been ignored by administration after administration. This \$1.9 billion commitment has finally set Southeast Queens on a path to eliminate the flooding issues that have caused so many residents emotional and financial turmoil. I’d like to thank Mayor de Blasio, DEP Commissioner Sapienza, former DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd, DOT Commissioner Trottenberg and

DDC Commissioner Grillo for all of their dedication to this massive plan that will truly improve the lives of so many Southeast Queens residents.”

“Southeast Queens residents worried for too long whether their homes, schools, and other facilities would be damaged by rising groundwater or overburdened sewers,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides, District 22, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection**. “It’s good to see their plight is getting attention from the City, and that this massive undertaking is moving along. I look forward to working with the Administration as well as the Department of Environmental Protection on further improving our sewer systems.”

“Thank you to Mayor De Blasio, the NYC agencies, DEP, DOT, DDC, and Councilman Donovan Richards, for working with the S.E. Queens Community for many years to find solutions and remedies to the S.E. Queens Flooding and High Water Table’s environmental hazards. I participated with Assemblyman Scarborough and Mr. Manny Caughman as they worked hard to get DEP to find solutions and eventually have DEP install reverse seepage basins. The basins solved only some S.E. Queens home flooding issues. The fight continued for environmental justice, along with community members (SQREJC) and then with Councilman Richards, taking the helm. Since the reverse seepage basin worked, I have confidence that the Comprehensive Drainage Improvement Program and the replacement of the old water mains, that Mayor De Blasio has committed to, will alleviate the flooding, enhance the communities with green infrastructure and better the lives of S. E. Queens residents,” said **Rene Hill, Queens CB12 Chairperson**.

“The residents of South East Queens are both delighted and grateful that this project is now a reality. Since hurricane Sandy six years ago—fear and apprehension have gripped our community in anticipation of another similarly devastating event. This commitment to reinforce and reconstruct our drainage system will go a long way toward restoring our sense of safety and security, while protecting our most treasured assets,” said **Clive Williams, Queens CB13 Chairperson**.

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