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Department of Environmental Protection, Local Elected Officials and Community Groups Announce Completion of Storm Sewer Project in St. Albans

New Catch Basins and Storm Sewers Will Help to Reduce Chronic Neighborhood Flooding

Photos of the Project can be Viewed on DEP's Flickr Page

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd today joined with City Council Members I. Daneek Miller and Donovan Richards, as well as members of the Empowered Queens United in Action and Leadership (EQUAL) organization, to announce the completion of a project that included the installation of storm sewers and catch basins along 119th Avenue between 192nd Street and 195th Street. Working in collaboration with the elected officials and EQUAL, DEP engineers leveraged advances in the department's Geographic Information Systems and hydraulic modeling capabilities to arrive at a faster, targeted stormwater solution for this chronically challenging area. The work included connecting 18 street level catch basins to three blocks of new storm sewers that drain to an existing storm sewer located under 192nd Street. The \$1 million project began in June and is one of a number of new, targeted initiatives DEP is undertaking to help manage stormwater and alleviate local roadway flooding in neighborhoods throughout southeast Queens in advance of the ongoing construction of a \$6 billion comprehensive sewer system for the area.

"Chronic flooding can present a persistent threat to resident's property and peace

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of mind, and we are committed to prioritizing our construction work in those areas of the city that do not have a fully built-out sewer system,” said **DEP Commissioner Lloyd**. “EQUAL and Councilmen Miller and Richards are strong advocates for their neighborhoods and we are pleased to have worked together with them to bring new catch basins and sewers to St. Albans. We look forward to continuing the partnership to identify additional areas for future upgrades.”

“The flooding that has plagued St. Albans has been a major annoyance to residents of the neighborhood as well as a significant threat to their personal safety and property,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “The installation of storm sewers and catch basins along 119th Avenue should help address this persistent problem and improve the quality of life of St. Albans residents as we work toward a long-term solution. I commend the Department of Environmental Protection, led by Commissioner Lloyd, for its successful completion of this important project and I thank Councilmembers Miller and Richards and the EQUAL organization for their persistent and effective advocacy on behalf of St. Albans.”

“The completion of the St. Albans storm sewer project is indicative of the number of urgently needed upgrades for Southeast Queens,” said **Council Member Richards, Chair to the Committee on Environmental Protection**. “Residents in St. Albans and throughout the region are too familiar with localized flooding and related issues, particularly during inclement weather. Today’s announcement marks the culmination of efforts to work closely with the community and the administration to deliver services to those that need it most.”

“While Noah’s flood lasted for 40 days, our flooding has been going on for more than 40 years,” said **Keisha Phillips-Kong, a leader with EQUAL and Our Lady of Light Catholic Church in St. Albans**. “Major rain storms like the one we had yesterday used to cause flooding in our basements, yards and streets. Some residents even bought canoes so that they can paddle to higher ground when the rains arrive. We welcome the DEP’s recent actions to connect new storm sewers with catch basins, install reverse seepage basins and drain the water down. In the past, my block and yard used to look like a pond during heavy rain fall. I’m grateful to see the water draining properly after the work performed by DEP. These are positive first steps and we look forward to working with DEP to finish the job throughout Queens.”

St. Albans is also one of the first locations where DEP has piloted the coordination of its construction work with the private utilities, who also maintain essential infrastructure buried under the roadways. In this case, prior to DEP beginning its work, earlier this summer National Grid replaced its cast iron gas mains in the area, which were originally installed in 1939. DEP then replaced the existing sanitary sewer lines, which were installed in 1931, and the cast iron water mains dating from 1929, before installing the new storm sewers and catch basins. This work will ensure that this critical underground infrastructure remains in a state of good repair for decades to come.

The post-World War II commercial and residential development of southeast Queens outpaced the extension of the City’s sewer system and many neighborhoods in the area are not yet equipped with catch basins or storm sewers to drain precipitation from the roadways. As the multi-year, \$6 billion effort to construct a comprehensive storm sewer system for the area continues through the City’s capital construction program, DEP has initiated a number of smaller, targeted projects that can be advanced more rapidly and will help to manage stormwater and reduce flooding in the interim.

To identify the locations that are most prone to flooding, DEP consulted with local elected officials and community groups, and analyzed 311 reports. Engineers then conducted field investigations during both wet and dry weather. The analysis considered the topography of the neighborhood, the hydraulic capacity and location of existing storm sewers, the relative elevations of existing sewers, and the nature and severity of the stormwater management challenges to identify specific areas where the strategic installation of storm sewers and

catch basins could help to alleviate flooding.

The first two locations identified for upgrades and where work has already been completed include 113th Avenue between 156th and 157th Streets and 111th Avenue between 155th and 158th Streets. Analysis of additional locations is currently underway and DEP expects to approve additional projects in 2015.

As part of DEP’s capital construction program, there are also numerous projects either ongoing or in the planning and design phase. These include the final stages of the \$175 million Springfield Gardens upgrade that will be completed in 2015 and will bring nine miles of storm sewers and eight miles of sanitary sewers to the area, as well as the ongoing \$18 million project to bring high level storm sewers to the Laurelton neighborhood, which will be completed in 2016. Also planned are a \$26 million upgrade for the Brookville Boulevard area and a \$5 million project to install an additional sewer line under 183rd Street at Jamaica Avenue.

The EQUAL organization is made up of congregations located in South East Queens, Sunnyside and Woodside, and was formed to assist members in engaging in public decision making, empowering them to be directly involved in efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities, and strengthen their member institutions.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned 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, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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