

Weekly Pipeline

The **Hudson River** and **George Washington Bridge**
from **Fort Tryon Park**

July 26, 2022



Guest Commissioner's Corner



Alicia West

Earlier this month I had the pleasure of joining **Commissioner Aggarwala**, Parks Commissioner **Sue Donoghue**, a host of elected officials and designer **Alex Zervos** to cut the ribbon and officially open New York City's newest public plazas in Lower Manhattan: Rapkin-Gayle Plaza in SoHo and Manuel Plaza in NoHo. These DEP-owned sites were formerly fenced-off gravel lots home to subsurface infrastructure. Now they provide New Yorkers a place to gather, rest, and reconnect in these dense neighborhoods that are starved for open space. The plazas feature new permeable pavers, seating, native plantings, drinking fountains, and synthetic turf areas for passive recreation. The sites will be managed by Parks while continuing to serve as key components of DEP operations. In fact, the plazas were designed specifically to allow for uninterrupted access for DEP trucks and operations staff.

Rapkin-Gayle Plaza, located at the intersection of Grand and

Lafayette Streets, is named in honor of two important figures in SoHo history: Chester Rapkin and Margot Gayle. Rapkin authored an economic study of the neighborhood that was instrumental to preservation activists, and Gayle led efforts to designate the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District. The \$2.35 million Rapkin-Gayle Plaza project received funding from DEP, the City Council and Borough President.

Manuel Plaza, on East 4th Street between Bowery and Lafayette Street, is named for Big Manuel, Clyn Manuel, Manuel Gerrit de Reus, Manuel Sanders, and Manuel Trumpeter. Together, these men were among 28 people of African descent who negotiated their freedom from the West India Dutch Company and over 100 acres in land grants, including the site of this plaza, in the mid-17th Century in New Netherland. The agricultural community they formed, Land of the Blacks, is one of the first Black settlements in what is now New York City. The \$1.58 million Manuel Plaza project received funding from DEP as well as the City Council and Borough President.

The plazas are a prime example of how our infrastructure can do double duty—meeting both our public health and environmental needs and New Yorkers' social and cultural needs. They are also a great illustration of what **Mayor Adams** wants to see even more of—agencies working together to tackle the is-

ssues that New Yorkers want addressed. Thank you to our partners at Parks and everyone at DEP who contributed along the way, especially our colleagues in Legal Affairs, **Bertie Nei** and **Susan Gordon**, and **Andy Kuchynsky**, **Paul Sheane** and **Kit Chun Peng** from the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.



Spotlight on Safety

During the summer months, power outages can be caused by several factors including adverse weather conditions.

Here are some helpful tips and reminders to conserve energy, prepare for, and stay safe during power outages.

- run the A/C at 78 degrees F
- keep shades, blinds, and curtains drawn
- reorganize refrigerator to let cold air circulate; tightly pack freezer
- limit unnecessary use of appliances and turn off lights

- if you rely on electric-powered medical equipment at home, [register with your utility provider](#)

- if you lose power call your power provider immediately to report the outage
- check in on the elderly or disabled individuals, children, and pets
- once power is restored, remember to replenish any emergency supplies you used

For more information, visit the [NYC Emergency Management](#) and [Con Edison](#) websites.

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you're still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [EHS EMPLOYEE CONCERNS](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



Improved Drainage In Midland Beach



DEP recently joined with **Councilman David Carr, Staten Island Borough President Vito J. Fossella and Assemblyman Michael Tannousis** to announce the completion of a \$1.3 million project to install a new storm sewer and catch basins along a portion of [Mapleton Avenue](#) in Midland Beach, Staten Island. Construction included the installation of approximately 1,180 linear feet of new 12-inch storm drain along Mapleton Avenue, beginning at the intersection of Grimsby Street and continuing on toward Baden Place. Additionally, the work installed eight new catch basins and converted 20 existing seepage basins into catch basins, all of which are now connected to the new storm drain. The drainage upgrade connects to the recently completed storm sewer and catch basin system installed along a portion of [Grimsby Street](#) in Midland Beach, which subsequently ties into the completed [\\$25 million first phase](#) of the New Creek Bluebelt.

Education Conference



This past week, Environmental Educator **Akilah Lewis** attended the *Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week at the Hog Island Audubon Camp* in Maine. This incredible experience included educational workshops exploring marine biology, oceanography, bird watching, insect identification, and community science projects. The valuable skills learned and resources shared will be beneficial in supplementing DEP

education programs facilitated at the Newtown Creek WWRF Nature Walk, Visitor Center, and beyond. The camp even had its own wastewater treatment system with grinder pumps, compressors, and a lagoon that process an estimated flow of 1,700 gallons per day and holds 173,000 gallons of wastewater. The trip was made possible by the [Derrick Jackson](#) Educators of Color Scholarship.

Welcome Aboard



On Monday, 29 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the Agency from Chief Operating Officer **Vincent Sapienza** and HR Generalist **Harold Kim**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Zinab Adam, George Almeida, James Barry, Ifteker Bhuiyan, Dwayne Brown, Yavuz Danismaz, Emmanuel Dorvil, Pablo Fernandes, Kievel Hall, Kazi Hossain, Melissa Jackson,

Roberto Lumelino, Alan Luna, Jason Marrero, Emmanuel Paravalos, Mohammad Rahman, Michael Rennick, Reginald Shettlewood, Rebecca Thimote, Christopher Walsh and Michael Walsh, BWSO; Kristina Fetkovich, BPAC; Shanice Hamilton and Ivan Munoz Soto, BWT; Ebony Lloyd, BCS; Graciela Miguel, SUST/GI; Dan Sales, SUST/EC; Joseph Woodrick, SUST/EPA, and John Milgrim, BWS.

Finding Help



Jonathan Glotzer

It can be difficult managing all the demands placed on us, especially when the world seems to be piling on one challenge after another (e.g. COVID strains, staffing issues, grief, contentious socio/political landscape, violence close to home and abroad, etc.). In reaction, more New Yorkers sought out professional emotional support than in years past and, while this was due to greater than usual mental strain, it also indicates a greater acceptance, focus, and understanding of the importance of our mental health. Of course, we are still not out of the woods and over time whatever supports and protections we use to get by may start to falter. This is not due to our "getting worse,"

but just a reflection of the human brain's tendency to habituate to things.

Sometimes what worked very well at one point, loses effectiveness over time and with repetition. This can be seen in almost all aspects of life from exercise routines to hobbies, from relationships to medications. The point here is sometimes we need to pursue different avenues for improvement, and this is especially true when we talk about mental health. We don't just "get better" and live happily ever after.

This is meant to be a reminder that our emotional wellbeing is always a work in progress, and what helped previously may need to be re-examined. Sometimes, this re-examination can be greatly aided by...

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