

Weekly Pipeline

DEP has begun a **\$48 million initiative** to replace **lead service lines** in the **Bronx and Queens**.

October 16, 2024



Commissioner's Corner



Rohit Aggarwala

Last week, I joined with Mayor Eric Adams to announce the expansion of a free program to replace privately-owned water service lines made of lead or galvanized steel at eligible properties in the Bronx and Queens. The program is focused on homeowners who live in environmental justice communities with high concentrations of lead service lines and a median household income of less than \$47,600.

While there is no lead in our distribution system, our challenge is that many older private properties have service lines made of lead or galvanized steel

The work is being done thanks to a total of \$48 million in grants and interest-free loans funded in part by the Biden-Harris administration's federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which earmarked \$15 billion to be used nationally for lead service line replacements, and in part by New York Governor Kathy Hochul's state loan forgiveness program.

Here at DEP, there is no mission more important for us than keeping New Yorkers and our drinking water safe. It's important to note that our drinking water is lead free when it is delivered from our reservoirs upstate, through our system, and into and through our water mains.

Nobody should hesitate to drink New York City drinking water because it is the safest, most healthy option you have whenever you need to take a drink. And our water meets all federal and state health standards. And in fact, we test the city's tap water hundreds of times every day to ensure that it is safe, clean, and healthy. Last year, we performed 2.4 million tests on our drinking water.

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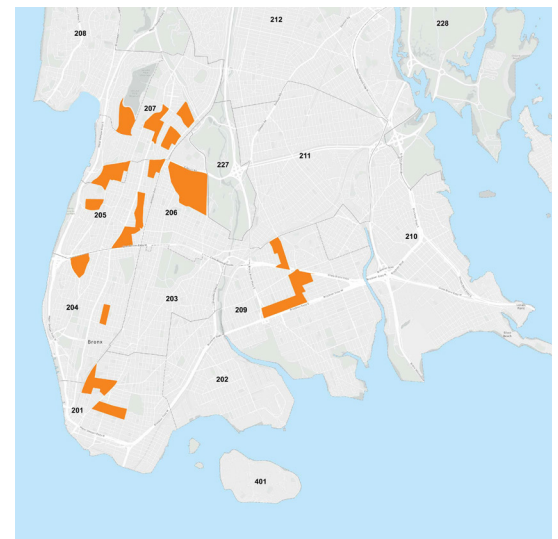
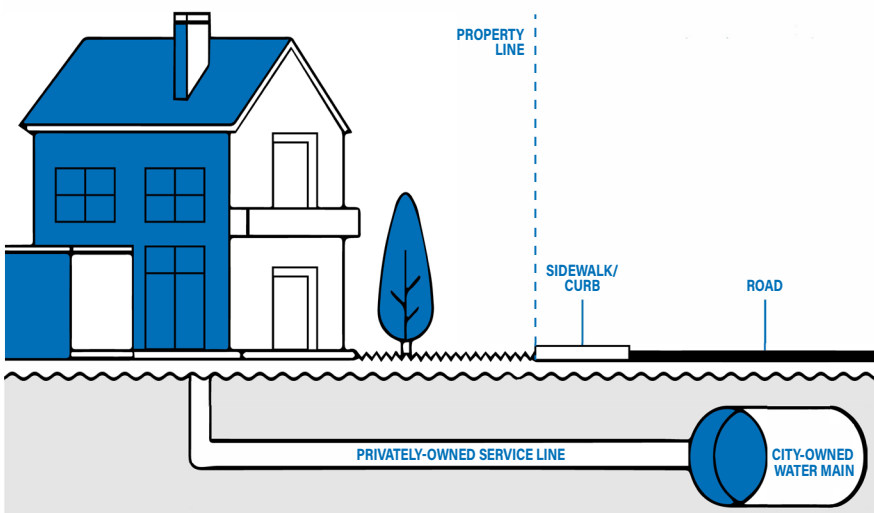


lenge is that many older private properties have service lines made of lead or galvanized steel. And these are the privately-owned pipes that connect a home's plumbing to the water main that's in the street. Although lead service lines were banned in New York City in 1961, lead solder was still used in indoor plumbing. And that was not banned until 1987. So if your home was built before 1987, you could have lead in your household plumbing even if you don't have a lead service line.

Here at DEP, we've taken other measures to prevent lead from entering the homeowner's water supply after we deliver it from our water mains. For example, we treat our water with

food-grade additives that provide a protective film on pipes that are made of lead. And that creates a barrier preventing lead from leaching from the pipe into the water. We also very carefully manage the acidity, the pH of our water, so that when it is delivered to New Yorkers, it is at a level that absolutely minimizes the chance of leaching of that lead in the pipes into the water.

However, as the EPA has determined, no amount of lead is safe. And that's why we are working with state and federal partners on grant programs like this to help facilitate the replacement of private service lines. This work can be a significant expense, up to \$15,000. And we know most



Grant Funded Replacement Program (Bronx)



New Yorkers don't have that kind of money laying around.

But we know that our low-income and environmental justice communities need the most help. This program builds on a very successful pilot program that DEP completed in 2022. During that pilot, we replaced 600 privately-owned lead service lines in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten

Island at no cost to property owners. Now, we are starting to make use of \$48 million that we obtained from the Biden administration's bipartisan infrastructure law. And we will be expanding into other neighborhoods next year as additional funding becomes available.

I'd also like to point out that, going forward, whenever either DDC or DEP changes a water

main, if we encounter lead service lines, we will also offer to change the lead service line at no cost to the property owner.

I want to thank our federal, state, and city partners for helping us to keep New York City's drinking water safe. And I particularly want to thank the team at DEP that's been working hard to put this program together, starting with Chief Operating Officer

Kathryn Mallon, BWSO Deputy Commissioner
Anastasios Georgelis, General Counsel
Elissa Stein Cushman, BWS Deputy Commissioner
Paul Rush, and the rest of the team, including **Janet Aristy**, **Chintan Patel**, **Chelsea McDermott**, **Salome Freud**, **Kaitlyn Richter**, **Tara Deighan**, and **Joe Olewnicki**, among many others.

Social Media Highlight



NYC water is always delivered lead-free, but homes 60 yrs+ may have privately-owned lead service lines that need replacing. Together w/ state & fed partners, we're spending \$48M to help property owners in disadvantaged communities replace their lead lines in the Bronx & Queens.



In the News



Sangamithra (Sangu) Iyer, Chief, Bluebelts and Urban Stormwater Planning, and **Robert Brauman**, Deputy Chief, Bluebelt Operations & Maintenance, both with BWSO, recently met with ABC-7 meteorologist **Lee Goldberg** for a [feature story](#) on his *Climate Ready* series highlighting how Bluebelts manage stormwater and protect communities from flooding.

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Students Study Estuary Ecology



DEP recently sponsored more than 180 public school students who participated in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) "A Day in the Life of the Hudson & Harbor" educational event on Oct. 10. In Staten Island, DEP Bluebelt staff partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard and NYC Parks to lead middle school students from the St. Clare School in conducting water quality testing and observations at Fort Wadsworth. In Queens, DEP Education staff collaborated with NY Sea Grant—Long Island Sound Study staff to facilitate water sampling and environmental observations for 7th graders from Hunter's Point Community Middle School in Queens taught their peers by leading the same water quality stations for the entire 7th grade. This annual event, now in its 21st year, is part of DEC's [Hudson River Estuary Program](#).



to track tides and currents, identify macroinvertebrates and fish, and examine the water's chemistry, including the level of turbidity, pH, phosphates, salinity and dissolved oxygen in the water. Also, on Oct. 11, students from Hunter's Point Community Middle School in Queens taught their peers by leading the same water quality stations for the entire 7th grade. This annual event, now in its 21st year, is part of DEC's [Hudson River Estuary Program](#).



DEP Attends Academic Pitchfest



From Left to Right: Antonio Ho, Jennifer Farmwald, William Morris, Jenna Difalco, Ronald Vaughn, Jennifer Garigliano, Julie Herzner, Miki Urisaka, and Olivia Sutherland.

On Sept. 24, DEP participated in a 'pitchfest' event with staff from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and academics from 11 colleges and universities. The event, organized with the help of the Department of Design and Construction's Town & Gown: NYC office and hosted by Fordham University at their Lincoln Center campus, was an opportunity for the agencies and academics to share short research presentations. Staff from BWSO, Sustainability, BEC, and BWS shared interest in topics including stormwater, green roof technologies, noise and air quality, invasive species, and climate change. The presentations were followed by a lunch which offered a chance for participants to further discuss opportunities to match academic research with real world needs.

Out of the Archives



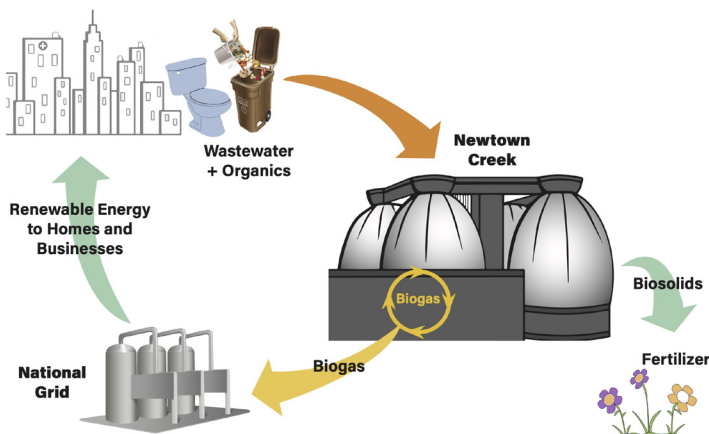
To prepare for construction of the Delaware Aqueduct system's Neversink Reservoir, this team was shoveling inside an exploratory caisson, piling soil into buckets to be lifted out and managing to dig down 35 feet in thirteen 8-hour shifts. Caissons are enclosed on all sides, except the bottom, and filled with compressed air to create stable working chambers in earth, which has groundwater running through it and is likely to collapse. As the ground level inside the chamber got lower, the caisson would also sink down, continuing until they reached bedrock about 100' down, revealing the condition of the soil along the way. The caisson would eventually be integrated into the Neversink Dam, which was completed in 1953. Water from this reservoir travels toward the Delaware Aqueduct via the six-mile-long Neversink Tunnel.

Citywide Curbside Composting



Last week, NYC [completed the roll-out of free, citywide, curbside composting](#) to every New Yorker across the five boroughs. The program, which began in Queens in the fall of 2022 and expanded to Brooklyn in the fall of 2023, is now permanent—something achieved with a focus on sustainability, cleanliness, equity, and efficiency. Every New Yorker can now simply take anything from their kitchen or their garden—all food scraps, yard waste, and food-soiled paper—and set it out for collection in either a DSNY brown bin or their own labeled, lidded bin of 55 gallons or less. “A citywide curbside organics collection program is vital to creating a true circular economy in New York City,” said New York City Chief Climate

Officer and DEP Commissioner **Rohit T. Aggarwala**. “I want to thank Mayor Adams and DSNY Commissioner Tisch for their commitment to making curbside organics collection available to all New Yorkers.” Instead of simply discarding organic waste, DEP recovers energy and nutrients from this material at the Newtown Creek Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility. This sustainable cycle of reuse creates valuable products, including compost and renewable energy, like biogas, which can be used to heat homes. Through the end of June 2024, DEP processed approximately 330,000 wet tons of food scraps at Newtown Creek that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill and emitted harmful greenhouse gases.



New GI Playground for Maspeth



DEP, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Council Member **Robert Holden**, staff, students, and others recently celebrated the opening of a [new 'green' playground](#) at P.S. 229Q Emanuel Kaplan in Maspeth, Queens. DEP provided \$1 million to fund this new playground, which will create a healthier, more resilient neighborhood for students and the wider community. The new design

features a play equipment, a track, a basketball court, a volleyball court, picnic tables, and an outdoor classroom. The new playground was designed with green infrastructure and will absorb an estimated 720,000 gallons annually, eliminating runoff that can flood nearby streets, overwhelm neighborhood sewer systems, and allow untreated water to pollute NYC waterways.

