

# Weekly Pipeline

Last week, the City announced a plan to build **Brooklyn's first-ever Bluebelt** in Prospect Park.

December 10, 2025



# Commissioner's Corner



**Rohit T. Aggarwala**

NYC Parks Commissioner **Iris Rodriguez-Rosa**, Prospect Park Alliance President **Morgan Monaco**, Councilmember **Rita Joseph**, and Community Board 14 Chair **Karl-Henry Cesar** to announce up to a \$50 million investment to build Brooklyn's first Bluebelt in Prospect Park. This initiative will not only improve drainage and prevent flooding in the park, but also protect surrounding neighborhoods from flash flooding caused by the extreme storms New Yorkers have increasingly faced.

**DEP pioneered Bluebelts on Staten Island, and now Brooklyn will benefit from this proven approach.**

Last week I joined Deputy Mayor of Operations **Jeffrey Roth**, NYC Parks Commissioner **Iris Rodriguez-Rosa**, Prospect Park Alliance President **Morgan Monaco**, Councilmember **Rita Joseph**, and Community Board 14 Chair **Karl-Henry Cesar** to announce up to a \$50 million investment to build Brooklyn's first Bluebelt in Prospect Park. This initiative will not only improve drainage and prevent flooding in the park, but also protect surrounding neighborhoods from flash flooding caused by the extreme storms New Yorkers have increasingly faced.

New Yorkers are used to making the most of limited space. For example, during Thanksgiving, every square inch of a New York apartment must serve multiple purposes — your living room becomes your dining room, your bedroom an extra coat closet. In the same way, our infrastructure must also do double duty. Prospect Park is a cherished recreation space, but it will soon serve as a powerful tool to manage stormwater and reduce flooding.

The Bluebelt will add rain gardens, ponds, and upgraded drainage to capture and filter stormwater. Improvements will allow lake levels to be lowered in under 36 hours — instead of three weeks — creating critical capacity before storms hit. New ponds and rain gardens along West Drive will slow and redirect floodwaters, protecting nearby homes and streets. A new pond north of the zoo will collect rainwater from Flatbush Avenue and help prevent flash flooding, like the storm that closed the zoo in September 2023.

DEP pioneered Bluebelts on Staten Island, where they re-



duced flooding while creating public green space and wildlife habitat. Now, Brooklyn will benefit from this proven approach. Construction is expected to begin in 2029 and finish in 2032. This project embodies DEP's mission: Deliver, Engineer, Protect — delivering innovation, engineering resilience, and safeguarding New York's people, property, and parks from extreme weather.

I want to recognize the DEP staff who helped make this possible: Acting Chief Operating Officer **Tasos Georgelis**, Acting Deputy Commissioner for Water and Sewer Operations **Mike Farnan**, Assistant Commissioner **Wendy Sperduto**, Chief of Bluebelts and

Urban Stormwater Planning **Sangu Iyer**, and **Samantha Melton**, who led the design of this exciting project. Thank you for your efforts.

Finally, it's important to note that DEP's resources come from the water bills paid by New Yorkers, and we have a responsibility to invest those funds only in projects that prevent flooding on private property or in streets. Our mandate does not extend to parks. What we've done here is create an opportunity to legitimately invest water revenue in park improvements. We will get a better park out of this while staying true to DEP's mission.



Restored Pond – Rainy Day View, Conceptual Rendering



Planned Bluebelt

## In the News



Photo Credit: John Ng

The Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations' Leak Detection Team was recently profiled by the online magazine [Urban Omnibus](#), a publication of The Architectural League of New

York. The team's overnight efforts help find water main leaks before they become disruptive breaks — crucial preventative work that keeps NYC running.

## Titicus Dam Tour



On November 15, the Bureau of Water Supply welcomed the North Salem Historical Society to the historic Titicus Dam in Purdys for a guided tour highlighting its role in New York City's water supply. The event featured discussions by Water Operations South Croton Region staff, including Engineering Manager **Eva Solarik**, Croton Region Chief **Louis Occhiuto**, Regional Supervisor **Anthony Pironti**, and Supervisor II Watershed Maintenance **Michael Ansaldo**. About 50 residents gathered at the 135-year-old dam to admire its 109-foot-high masonry struc-

ture, spillway, and embankments. The tour traced the evolution of the City's water system from New Amsterdam's reliance on shallow wells and the famed Tea Water Spring to the Croton Aqueduct built after the Great Fire of 1835. Rising demand and droughts in the late 1800s led to the construction of additional reservoirs, with ground broken for Titicus in 1890 and completion in 1896, when 1,045 acres of North Salem were taken by the City. Today, the Titicus Reservoir holds 8 billion gallons of water, serving both as a vital supply source and a scenic destination for fishing and recreation.

## New Green Roof in East Harlem



Construction is complete on a new green roof at the River Crossing apartments in East Harlem. Work began in summer 2023, and the 13,311-square-foot roof will manage approximately 285,000 gallons of stormwater each year, benefiting both the neighborhood and the East River open waters. DEP contribut-

ed almost \$400,000 in funding for the project. Seeds are now being planted to ensure vibrant growth by spring. DEP provides financial incentives for installing green infrastructure on private property. Learn more about [Green Roof Retrofit Grants](#) and [Resilient NYC Partners](#).

## Social Media Highlight



Take the PLUNGE on an exciting new career and become part of the next generation of watershed protectors! The Environmental Police Officer's exam application is only open until December 23rd, so sign up today: [on.nyc.gov/4bhpVvK](https://on.nyc.gov/4bhpVvK)



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## Welcome Aboard!



On Monday, 13 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the agency from our Human Resources Generalist, **Harold Kim**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Angel Diaz**, **Brian Fails**, **Patrick Hartill** and **Shefati Rabbi**,

**BWT**; **Wesley Lau** and **Mitch Ng**, **BIT**; **Kahtan Alsaedi**, **BEC**; **Paul Lozito**, **COMM**; **Sainath Dasma**, **FMC**; **Georgie Lellman**, **LEGAL**; **Isaac Gendler**, **SUST/EPA**; **Kelsey Letson**, **BWS** (not pictured), and **Ronald McDonagh**, **BWSO** (not pictured).

## Out of the Archives



106 years later, the clean, cold water of Manorkill Falls still flows into the creek that forms Schoharie Reservoir, making its way to the Catskill Aqueduct for delivery to NYC and several other communities. This lower

part now usually hides beneath the reservoir's surface, while the upper falls are always visible from the Prattsville Road bridge in Conesville. You can view more images from the DEP Archives on [Flickr](#).

## Flood Preparedness Town Hall



DEP joined the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) on Monday to host a flood preparedness town hall at New York Law School in Manhattan. The agencies distributed 40 flood kits — including barriers, sump pumps, and sensors — and shared vital information with business owners. SBS Commissioner **Dynishal Gross** and Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs and Communications **Beth DeFalco** spoke about different types of small

businesses, and practical steps owners can take to protect their properties. The event brought together representatives from SBS and DEP, as well as Councilmember **Christopher Marte**. DEP Manhattan Borough Commissioner **Martin Fatooh** was also on hand to address concerns. Special thanks to **Jae Hyung Ryu**, director of the New York Law School's Plumeri Center for Small Business Empowerment, and the many DEP staff whose hard work made this event possible.

## College Students Meet DEP K-9



Students at Westchester Community College (WCC) had a paw-some experience last Wednesday when they met DEP Police K-9 **Kona** and his handler, Detective **Robert Burke**. Invited by WCC's Veterinary Science Program, the K-9 team shared insights into police dog operations and conducted a live demonstration. The presenta-

tion highlighted the vital role of working dogs in law enforcement and offered a unique educational opportunity for students studying animal health and handling. DEP is proud to support community-policing initiatives like this, which strengthen our connection to local educational institutions.