



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

**For Immediate Release:** December 1, 2021

**Contact:** [OER@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:OER@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-8841

**NEW YORK CITY MAKES TOPSOIL TO PLANT STREET TREES IN THE BRONX**

*Combining clean soil and DSNY compost, Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation produces high-quality topsoil for NYC Parks*

**NEW YORK**— Today the Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation announced that for the first time the City has made its own topsoil rather than buy it from a vendor.

To assist the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, the Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (OER) combined clean native soil from the NYC Clean Soil Bank and compost from the NYC Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) Fresh Kills facility in Staten Island at an undeveloped portion of Bridge Park in the Bronx.

Using its stockpile contractor, OER made 2,100 cubic yards of topsoil in September and October for NYC Parks, which will use the topsoil to plant street trees in the Bronx over the next two years.

"OER is thrilled to partner with Sanitation to make topsoil for the Parks Department," said **Mark McIntyre, director of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation**. "Because we didn't have to pay for trucking, we could make a high-quality topsoil more cheaply than if Parks bought it from a contractor. We plan to make more topsoil for other City agencies when we can partner with our sister agencies with spare trucking capacity."

"As we work to ensure safe, clean streets across the five boroughs, the Department of Sanitation is also focused on lowering the city's carbon footprint with an increasing number of sustainability initiatives. As part of that work, we are pleased to provide compost to support tree planting right here in New York City. Composting organic material here to nourish our parks and gardens keeps food waste out of landfills while reducing the release of harmful methane into our atmosphere," said **Edward Grayson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation**.

"Sustainability and resiliency is at the core of our mission at NYC Parks, and we are thrilled to be using City-made topsoil towards greening in the Bronx," said **NYC Parks Commissioner Gabrielle Fialkoff**. "With the combination of soil from the NYC Clean Soil Bank and the

compost from DSNY, these plantings will be done in a more environmentally-friendly way, using our City's valuable resources wisely."

NYC Parks partnered with OER earlier this year to convert an existing stockpile of clean soil at Bridge Park into topsoil. In 2019, OER had arranged for 2,000 cubic yards of this soil from a construction site in New Rochelle to be delivered to Bridge Park through its Clean Soil Bank Program. Tests of the soil showed it was pristine, native material but low in organic content so by itself not a good growing medium.

To raise its organic content, this soil needed to be mixed with compost. The only significant supply of City compost was 35 miles away at Fresh Kills on Staten Island. DSNY makes compost at the former landfill from yard waste dropped off by Staten Island landscapers.

OER runs the NYC clean soil stockpile in East New York, a non-profit facility that receives clean soil from construction sites without disposal fees and distributes it at no cost to City and private construction projects as well as to community and school gardens.

The challenge was to move 500 cubic yards of compost from Fresh Kills to Bridge Park. OER partnered with Sanitation to donate this compost and deliver it to Bridge Park.

With Sanitation delivering compost to the Bronx, OER was able to make topsoil 25% cheaper than the \$60 per cubic yard that Parks would had paid if it bought topsoil from one of its vendors.

OER deployed its stockpile subcontractor, AARCO Environmental, to the Bronx in late September. With a screen and a front loader, AARCO began screening soil, separating cobbles and rocks greater than 1 inch in diameter from the sandy loam soil. Several days later, the first Sanitation truck arrived with compost. AARCO mixed it with screened soil and set it out in a pile. Over the next three weeks, Sanitation made 24 additional truck trips to the Bronx, delivering 500 yards of compost, with which AARCO made 2,060 cubic yards of topsoil. A test of the topsoil showed it met NYC Parks' spec for street tree topsoil.

NYC Parks manages the planting and care of all street trees on the public right-of-way and plants new street trees as part of a citywide initiative to green the sidewalks of New York City.

See photos of topsoil at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/oer/about/archive.page>

###