



Environmental Protection

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DEP Awards \$3.8 Million in Grants for Community-Based Green Infrastructure Program Projects

15 Awardees Selected for Innovative Methods to Manage Stormwater Runoff

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the 15 winners of DEP's 2011 Green Infrastructure Grant Program. Selected from a total of 52 applications, the 15 winners will share approximately \$3.8 million of funds to build green infrastructure projects that will reduce combined sewer overflows and improve water quality in New York Harbor. During heavy storms, the sewer system often reaches capacity and must discharge a mix of stormwater and wastewater—called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO—into the city's surrounding waterways. As part of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan that calls for investing \$1.5 billion over the next 20 years to reduce sewer overflows, the grant program enables the city to partner with community organizations, businesses and not-for-profits to address stormwater runoff from private property. The grants will be used for a wide variety of innovative and creative stormwater controls, including green roofs, blue roofs, porous concrete, bioswales, and other measures to reduce and manage as much as 5.7 million gallons of stormwater a year. DEP originally announced in February that up to \$3 million in grants would be awarded. Due to the strength of the applications, DEP increased the funding to \$3.8 million to fund the most promising of a very strong, highly competitive group of projects. Selections were made by an interdisciplinary and interagency Review Committee comprising experts from the City's Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, Design and Construction, Parks and Recreation, the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The completion of this inaugural grant program fulfills a 2011 State of the City commitment made by Mayor Bloomberg.

"The Green Infrastructure Grant Program has yielded 15 innovative projects, exemplifying how city government can partner with our communities to advance the goals of PlaNYC," said Deputy Mayor for Operations Stephen Goldsmith. "The city has been combating the negative impacts of stormwater runoff for years, and we have developed a cost-effective strategy to find solutions across the five boroughs."

“The 15 winning projects are shining examples of the creativity and innovation of New Yorkers who care about their neighborhoods and the environment,” said Commissioner Holloway. “Mayor Bloomberg’s groundbreaking Green Infrastructure Plan sets out a sustainable approach to reduce combined sewer overflows by more than 12 billion gallons per year by 2030, a reduction of 40% from current levels. This new program enables the public to participate directly in cleaning our waterways and beautifying neighborhoods, and we are thrilled with the quality of applications that we received. The proposals were so strong that we added an additional \$800,000 to the original \$3 million of projects that we initially planned to fund. Because many of the green infrastructure projects use trees, shrubs and other plantings, these projects will also provide benefits in terms of air quality, more attractive streetscapes, and a cooling effect on hot summer days. We can’t wait for these projects to be built.”

“Green infrastructure is an innovative approach to reducing polluted stormwater runoff and sewer overflows while enhancing urban communities,” said State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens. “We applaud New York City’s commitment to protect water quality through direct support for community-driven environmental protection efforts and congratulate the grant awardees.”

Private property owners, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations were eligible for funding for projects that use green infrastructure to reduce or manage stormwater on private property and public sidewalks. Preference for grants was given to projects that would provide cost effective stormwater controls, matching funds or other contributions, and other benefits such as increased shade, decreased energy use for cooling buildings, increased awareness about stormwater management, and increased community stewardship. These additional benefits are a key reason why the winners are providing \$953,550 in matching contributions, a key promise of the green infrastructure approach. Also, over half of these projects will be monitored and data will be collected on the projects’ effectiveness in managing stormwater.

New York City, like other older urban centers, is largely serviced by a combined sewer system where stormwater and wastewater are carried through a single pipe. During heavy storms, the system can exceed its capacity, and must discharge a mix of stormwater and wastewater — called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO — into New York Harbor. To address the challenge of combined sewer overflows over the long term, in September 2010 Mayor Bloomberg unveiled the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, which launched a series of initiatives that will improve harbor water quality by capturing and retaining stormwater runoff before it enters the sewer system. The plan estimated that a combination of \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure, cost-effective grey infrastructure, and other program elements would reduce sewer overflows by 40% by 2030 while saving \$2.4 billion through costly investments in traditional sewage retention projects, such as tanks and tunnels. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other structural elements to absorb and evaporate water and to mimic natural areas and hydrologic cycles. These types of projects are a key component of PlaNYC’s sustainability effort because they also shade and cool the city, improve air quality, and increase property values. The city is currently working with the State to formally incorporate the green infrastructure approach into the city’s long-term plans to reduce combined sewer overflows.

The winning projects are: ...

ATCO Properties

Amount: \$418,073

Location: 381 Park Avenue South, Gramercy Park, Manhattan

Description: The ATCO team will build a green roof that will manage over 274,000 gallons of stormwater per year and will reduce CSOs to the East River. ATCO will partner with Sustainable South Bronx's green-collar job training program to install the green roof. ATCO is providing \$85,000 in matching funds.

Damon J. Hemmerdinger, Senior Vice President of ATCO, said, "Thanks to Mayor Bloomberg and DEP's Green Infrastructure Grant Program, ATCO is very excited to begin green roof construction at our Midtown South office building located at 381 Park Avenue South and remain an active and ongoing participant in the greening of New York City."

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DEP manages the 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. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

Learn more at the [NYC Environmental Protection](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) website.

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