DONOVAN RICHARDS JR.
QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Operation Urban Sustainability Report

ISSUED MAY 2025

Executive Summary

There are no rights more fundamental to the health of our families than the right to clean air and clean water. But millions of residents across New York City, especially here in Queens, continue to bear the burden of pollution and other environmentally destructive crises.

We have delivered significant change on that front in recent years, thanks to impactful legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) on the federal level and the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) on the state level. However, the new federal administration and its open belief that climate change is a hoax threatens to exacerbate the environmental crisis and leave countless families around the nation vulnerable.

At a crucial moment in history, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards and his Operation Urban Sustainability (OUS) working group continue to counteract this inaction, harm and discrimination by continuing to make progress on the local level.

Much of the sustainability updates, data, strategies and proposals in this 2025 Progress Report are meant to frame the national climate crisis in local terms, while exploring the borough's relationship to its waterways, sewer infrastructure and transportation. Together, we can and will demonstrate how Queens leads the world by example in its commitment to environmental justice.

Capital and Expense Investments

The Queens Borough President's Office has funded the following capital and expense expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025–2026.

DCLA

ORGANIZATION/ AGENCY	PROJECT TITLE	FY'24 TOTAL	NEIGHBORHOOD	COUNCIL DISTRICT	COMMUNITY BOARD	SCHOOL DISTRICT
Sculpture Center, Inc. - SCI	Purchase of AV Equipment	$108,000	Long Island City	26	2	
New York Hall of Science	Large-scale Flood Mitigation/NYSCI Campus Mitigation	$1,000,000	Floral Park	13	13	
The Queens Botanical Garden Society, Inc.	Improvements to Welcome Garden at the North Gate and the Parking Garden at Crommelin St.	$690,000	Flushing	20	7	
	Total	**$1,798,000**				

NONCULTURAL

ORGANIZATION/ AGENCY	PROJECT TITLE	FY'24 TOTAL	NEIGHBORHOOD	COUNCIL DISTRICT	COMMUNITY BOARD	SCHOOL DISTRICT
Girl Scout Council of Greater New York Inc.	Camp Kaufman Capital Improvement Project- Construction of new flooring, roofing, windows, plumbing, fixtures, and HVAC for the residence and bathhouses.	$500,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	
City Harvest	Purchasing a 26-ft truck for emergency food rescue and delivery	$180,000	Queensbridge	26	1	
	Total	**$680,000**				

DOE/SCA

ORGANIZATION/ AGENCY	PROJECT TITLE	FY'24 TOTAL	NEIGHBORHOOD	COUNCIL DISTRICT	COMMUNITY BOARD	SCHOOL DISTRICT
Eagle Academy III of Southeast Queens	Innovative Stem Lab	$1,000,000	St. Albans	27	12	29
P.S. 043	Aqcuisition of a mobile STEM lab	$350,000	Far Rockaway	31	14	27
Q290 A.C.E Academy	Frontyard construction	$750,000	Ridgewood	30	5	24
P.S.40	Hydroponics Lab	$175,000	Jamaica	28	12	28
Q086 P.S. 86	Hydroponics Lab	$250,000	Jamaica	24	8	28
P.S. 7 Q - Louis F. Simeone (24Q007)	Hydroponics Science Lab	$325,000	Elmhurst	25	4	24
M.S. 419 (Q419)	Hydroponics Science Lab	$175,000	Flushing	21	3	24
P.S. 152Q	Hydroponics Science Lab	$175,000	Woodside	25	2	30
277Q The Riverview School	Hydroponics Science Lab	$175,000	Ridgewood	30	5	24
Q686 Queens Metropolitan High School	Hydroponic Science Lab	$750,000	Forest Hills	29	6	28
P.S. 045 Clarence Witherspoon Q045	Hydroponic Science Lab	$175,000	South Ozone	28	12	27
P.S. 175 - The Lynn Gross Discovery School	Hydroponic Science Lab	$175,000	Rego Park	29	6	28
The Bellaire School	Hydroponic Science Lab	$175,000	Queens Village	23	13	29
The Baccalaureate School for Global Education	Hydroponic Science Lab	$175,000	Astoria	26	1	30
Middle School 226 Virgil I Grissom	Hydroponic Science Lab	$175,000	South Ozone	28	10	27
	Total	**$5,000,000**				

PARKS

ORGANIZATION/ AGENCY	PROJECT TITLE	FY'24 TOTAL	NEIGHBORHOOD	COUNCIL DISTRICT	COMMUNITY BOARD	SCHOOL DISTRICT
Baisely Pond Park/ 157th Street Playground	Phase A Renovation of Children's Playground Area	$5,400,000	Jamaica	28	12	
Juniper Valley Park	Reconstruction of Interior Path, including paving, HB Walls, Fencing, Painted Lines, and etc	$1,000,000	Middle Village	30	5	
Black Spectrum Theatre	Outdoor Lighting Shortfall - Installation of 12 light poles	$250,000	Jamaica	28	12	
Creedmoor Soccer Fields at Queens Farm Park	Creedmoor Two Soccer Fields Turn Reconstruction	$850,000				
The Liberty Rock	Renovation of Triangle Including: Stone benches, card tables, paving, flowers, trees for shade, cameras, and vermin extermination	$800,000	St. Albans	27	12	
	Total	**$8,300,000**				
	Grand Total	**$15,778,000**				

Winter 2025 OUS Summit at Alley Pond Environmental Center

As part of the Borough President Richards's archetypal "Borough Hall on Your Block" initiative, all OUS partners were invited to an open meeting at the Alley Pond Environmental Center in Douglaston. The goal was to have a frank, honest dialogue with the Borough President about distinct challenges these groups were facing in 2025 in the wake of the federal administration that does not believe climate change is real.

PARTICIPATING GROUPS:

34th Avenue Coalition

350NYC

Alley Pond Environmental Center

Big Reuse NYC

The Campaign Against Hunger

Forest Hills Green Team

Jamaica Bay Rockaway Parks Conservancy

Kissena Synergy

Neighborhood Housing Services of Queens

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Newtown Creek Alliance

NYC Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice

Queens Botanical Garden

Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition

Transportation Alternatives

Variety Boys and Girls Club of Queens

KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- All nonprofits need to be reimbursed in a timely fashion — operations and initiative are threatened as employees wait for payment;
- Nonprofits also need lawyers to navigate the new political landscape and avoid new potential legal obstacles connected to the federal government in pursuing their sustainability missions;
- Defending congestion pricing, as it will benefit the most marginalized communities across New York City through a dramatic lessening of carbon emissions as car traffic decreases;
- Reactivating Floyd Bennett Field, a decommissioned airbase in Brooklyn near the Queens border, and establishing a climate justice educational hub;
- Federal oversight and commitments to cleaning up the historically polluted Newtown Creek;
- Helping navigate and follow up on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants;
- Working with the NYC Comptroller's Office to divest in all carbon-generating asset management firms and ensure our city's investments are net-zero by 2040;
- Improving citywide sewer and combined sewer overflows (CSO) infrastructure, with an emphasis on lower-lying and historically marginalized Queens neighborhoods;
- Capital funding support at the city and state level for initiatives like a 1.5-acre urban farm, permanent Open Streets for micro-mobility, composting sites, reforestation, flood mitigation, and greenhouses.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT RICHARDS AGREED WITH THESE KEY ISSUES AND ADDED COMMENTS IN SUPPORT:

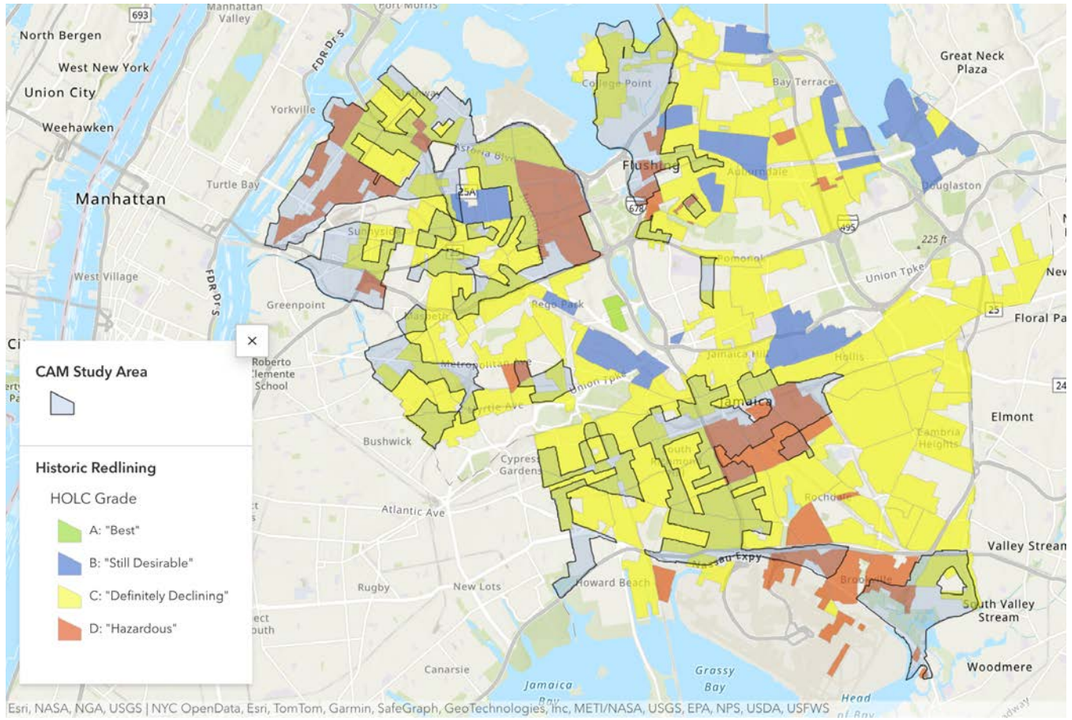
- Signing onto pieces of legislation in the New York City Council like Intro 0107 (air quality monitoring on heavily trafficked thoroughfares), and Intro 1130 (monitoring indirect sources of air pollution (i.e. warehouses);
- Meeting with and diligently following up with the EPA Director to discuss these critical environmental issues;
- Meeting with the Governor's Office; and
- Leveraging land use actions and neighborhood rezonings (such as the ones taking place in Jamaica and Long Island City) and demand the city invest in green and gray infrastructure, as well as fixing the overburdened CSO system.

Environmental Justice and Education Updates

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Air Quality Monitoring

The statewide Community Air Monitoring (CAM) Initiative worked with a mobile monitoring contractor, Aclima, Inc., to collect air quality data in 10 disadvantaged communities for one year ending in August 2023, expanding on the four communities required by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act). Air quality monitoring focused on disadvantaged communities (DACs) with high air pollution burdens. The results will help the state target strategies to reduce air pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change.

DEC releases Phase 1 Community Story Maps.



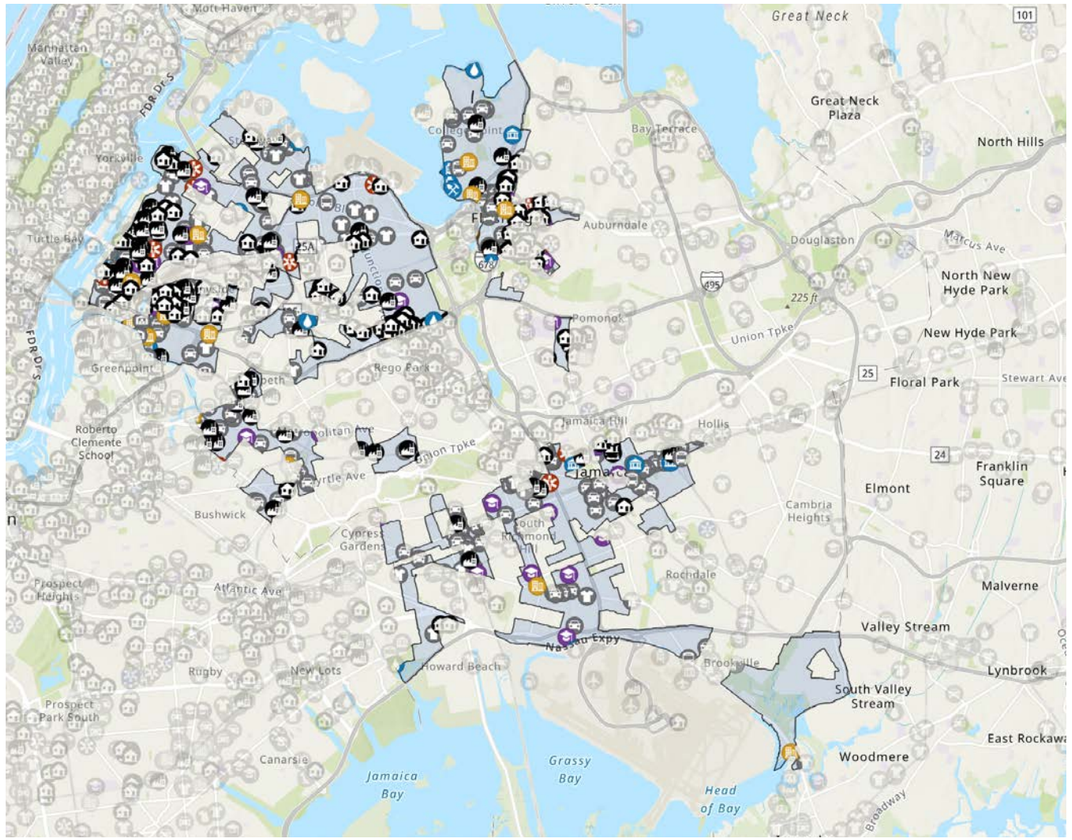
In this collection of interactive story maps, we present mobile monitoring results for each of the 10 communities. The DEC, community members, and other stakeholders will use these mapping tools, results and other information to identify sources and prioritize areas for air pollution reductions. The collection of story maps also includes a survey tool for valuable input on community air quality concerns. The DEC wants to ensure community members and stakeholders are meaningfully informed about the CAM mobile monitoring results and have the opportunity to provide valuable input to effectively guide the critical mitigation phase of the CAM process.

On September 24 at Queens Borough Hall, we hosted a Community Air Monitoring Results webinar to explain the Community Story Maps.

Watch a clip about DEC's Community Story Maps on DEC's YouTube Channel.

Community Air Monitoring Results (8/15/2024) (Webex Recording)

MAP 1: AIR POLLUTION SOURCES AND TRAFFIC



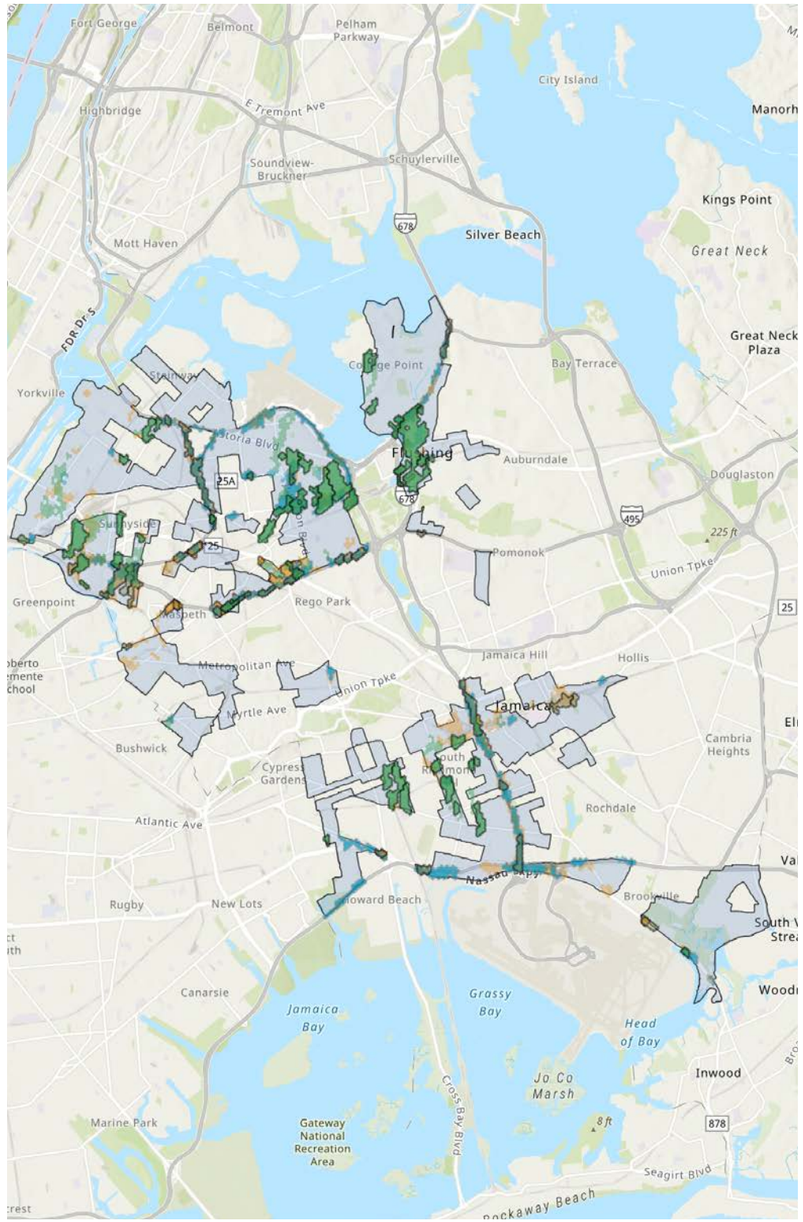
Study Area Sources

Sources

Source Type

- Automotive Manufacture, Sales, and Vehicle Repair
- Real Estate and Small Boilers
- Manufacturing and Production
- Dry Cleaning
- Education
- Healthcare
- Mineral and Resource Extraction
- Healthcare
- Mineral and Resource Extraction
- Animals, Agriculture, and Food
- Retail and Businesses
- Chemical and Petroleum Industry
- Electrical Utilities and Steam Generation
- Asphalt, Concrete, and Construction
- Wastewater Treatment and Water Supply
- Funeral Services and Crematories
- Funeral Services and Crematories
- Warehouses, Terminals, and Bulk Petroleum Storage
- Government and Public Services
- Natural Gas Infrastructure
- Solid Waste Management
- Motor Vehicle and Public Transit
- Other Cleaning Services
- Air Transit
- Water Transit
- Railroad Transit

MAP 2: AIR POLLUTION FOCUS HOTSPOTS



Above Focus Spot Threshold

PM2.5

Below Focus Spot Threshold

PM2.5

BC Focus Spots

Above Focus Spot Threshold

Black Carbon

Below Focus Spot Threshold-Copy

Black Carbon

CO Focus Spots

Above Focus Spot Threshold

Carbon Monoxide

Below Focus Spot Threshold

Carbon Monoxide

NO2 Focus Spots

Above Focus Spot Threshold

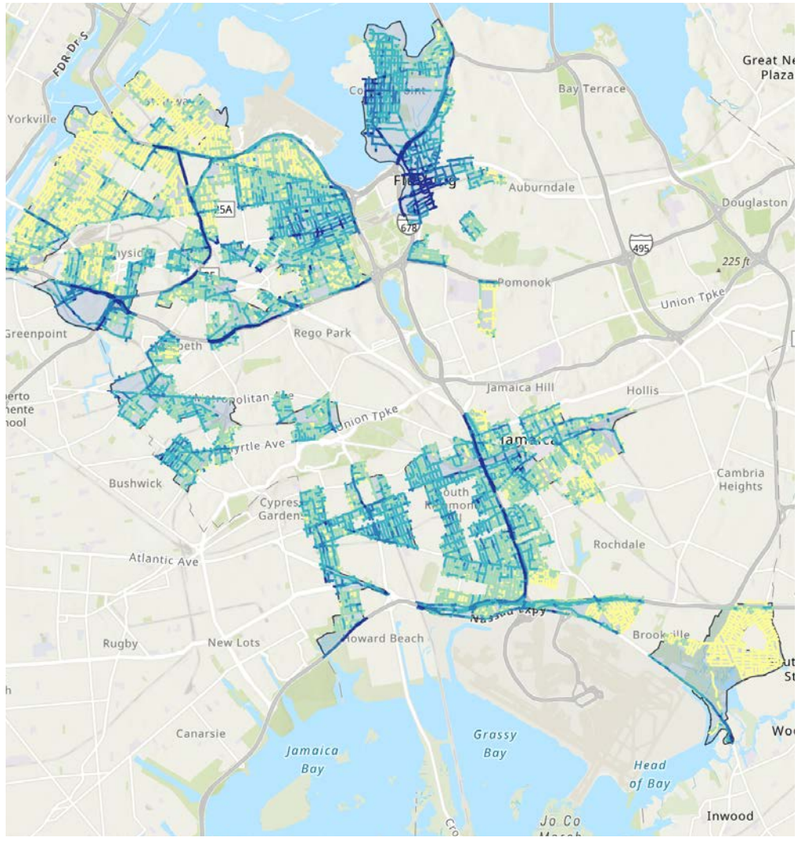
Nitrogen Dioxide

Below Focus Spot Threshold

Nitrogen Dioxide

CAM Study Area

MAP 3: ANNUAL AVERAGE POLLUTANT LEVELS



Annual Pollutant Levels

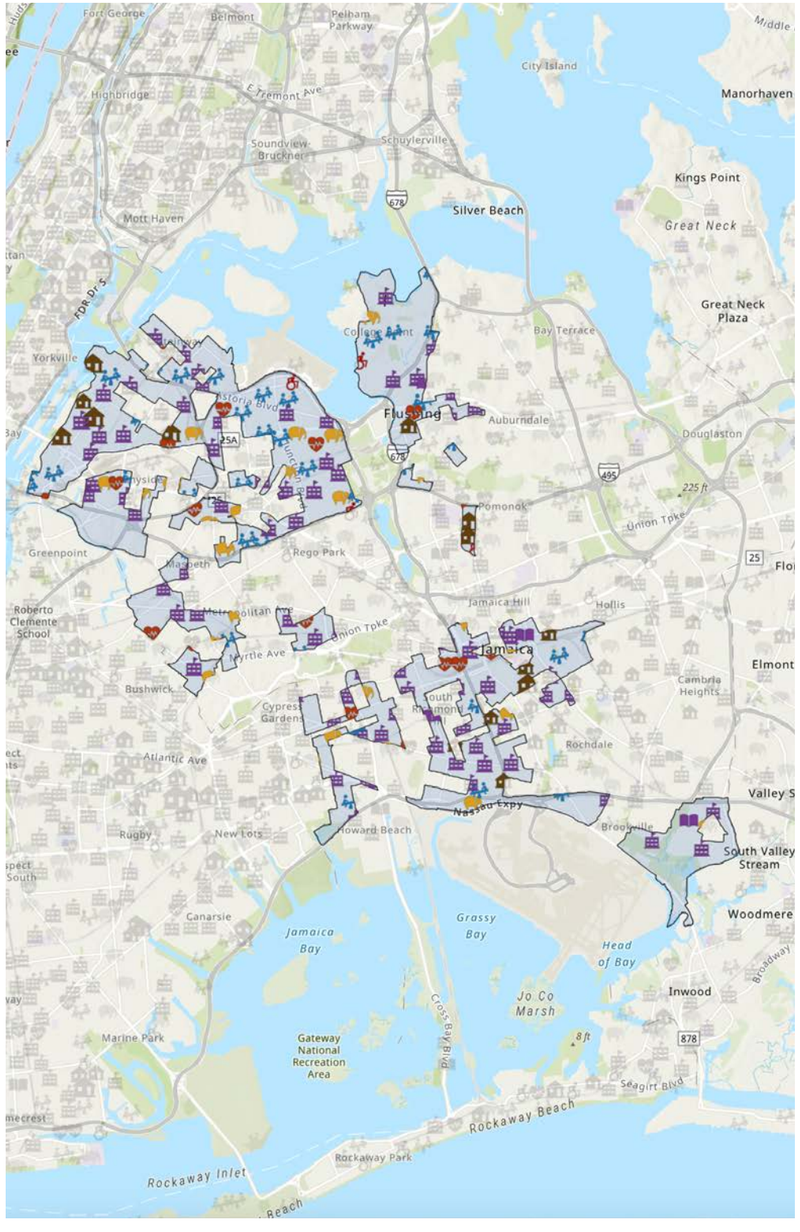
Annual PM2.5

Modeled Concentration ($\mu g/m^3$)

- > 8
- 7.1 - 8
- 6.5 - 7.1
- 6 - 6.5
- < 6

CAM Study Area

MAP 4: SENSITIVE INDIVIDUALS AND RECEPTORS



Sensitive Receptors

Study Area Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive Receptors

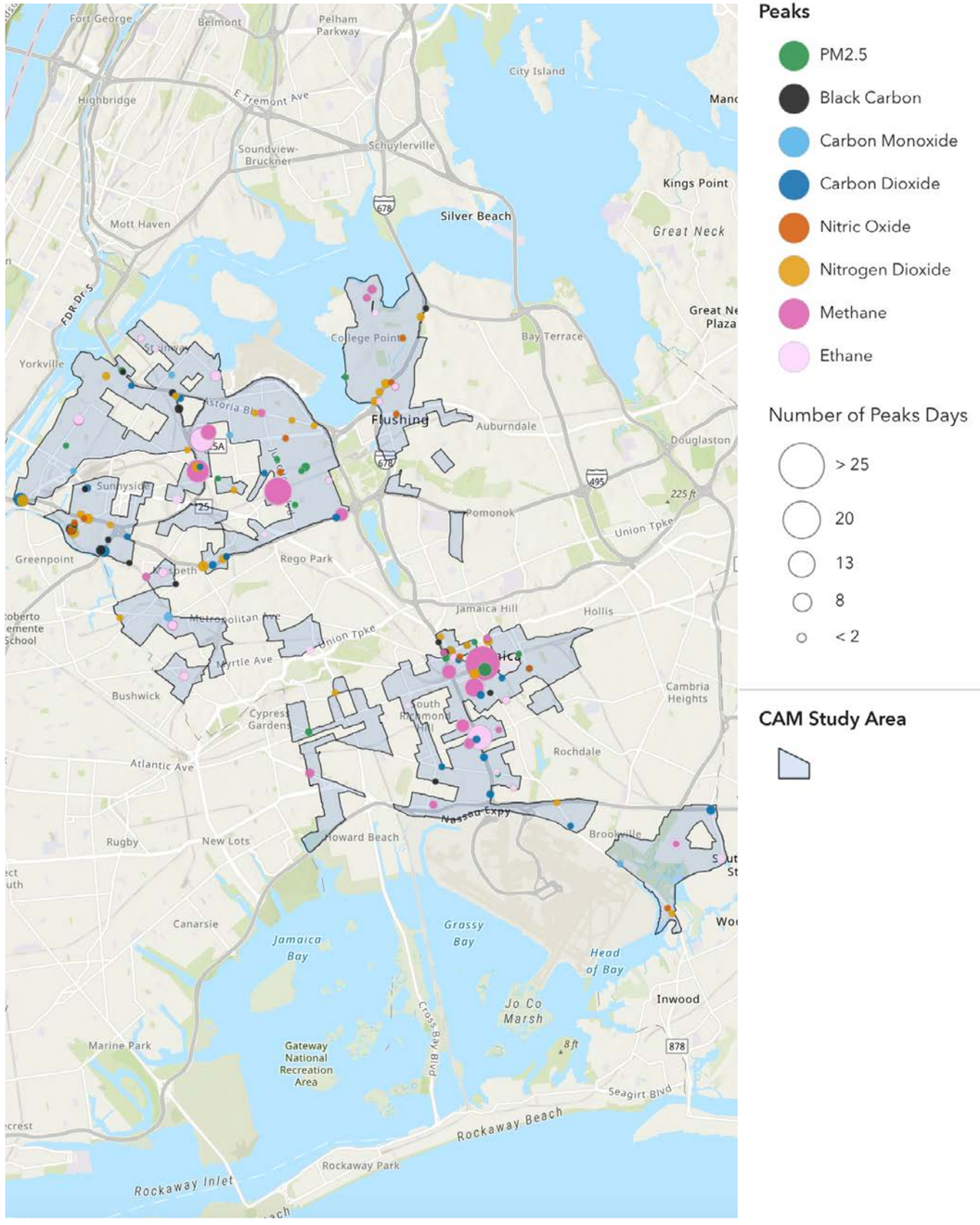
- School
- Public Housing
- Childcare Facility
- Healthcare
- Residential Healthcare
- Playground
- Library

Number of features

- > 78
- 60
- 40
- 20
- < 2

CAM Study Area

MAP 5: POLLUTION PEAKS



Peaks

- PM2.5
- Black Carbon
- Carbon Monoxide
- Carbon Dioxide
- Nitric Oxide
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Methane
- Ethane

Number of Peaks Days

- > 25
- 20
- 13
- 8
- < 2

CAM Study Area

Divestment

Borough President Richards is a trustee of the New York City Retirement System and has a vote as well as influence on the direction of New York City's investments and divestments. Getting to net zero by 2040 will take bold leadership at every level of government, especially now, and the Borough President has committed to a vote in support of divestment.

Edgemere Solar Farm

In 2024, OUS recommended that at least part of the former Edgemere Landfill should become a solar farm. The 118-acre site is currently located at Conch Place and Edgemere Park Road in Edgemere, jutting out into Jamaica Bay. Borough President Richards is collaborating with DCAS, NYC Parks, NYC Sanitation and the New York Power Authority (NYPA) to assess the potential for renewable energy on the former landfill. Key stakeholders will continue to conduct the analysis needed to support sustainability, resiliency, and public access for any future repurposing of the site.

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

Community Air Monitoring Results For Queens

New York State Community Air Monitoring (CAM) Initiative 2022–2023

Identifying Air Pollution Sources and Solutions

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) completed community air quality monitoring effort in 10 disadvantaged communities (DACs) in accordance with the New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. DEC worked with the mobile air monitoring contractor Aclima, Inc. for one year to screen for local air pollution sources using vehicles equipped with sensor technology. The goal of this effort was to collect street-level data to identify higher and lower levels of pollution in the community. DEC will use the results to identify sources contributing to the higher levels, while considering community input and knowledge about types of pollutants released from local sources. Collectively, the information gathered will help the development of air pollution reduction strategies. DEC provided interactive story maps with mapping tools to explore the data. Below is a summary of findings and some maps that can be found in the story maps.

Scan QR link for more CAM information and story maps

Locating Air Pollution Sources
(See Map 1: Air Pollution Sources and Traffic)

Pollution sources in Queens include 14 solid waste handling and recycling facilities; four electric, utility, and sewer services; nine concrete and asphalt plants; a combined nine hospitals and medical service providers; seven commercial printing operations; a lot of automotive body repair shops, dry cleaners, and gas stations, petroleum distribution, and truck fleets.

Traffic is a major source of pollution in DACs. Major traffic routes in the study area are expressways such as I-678 (the Whitestone and Van Wyck), I-295 (Clearview) and I-495 (Long Island Expressway).

Scan QR link for survey

Expressing Community Concerns
(Fill out the Survey Form)

Community members expressed air quality concerns about pollution from the NYC Transit Authority bus depot at Fresh Ponds; pollution around the roadways of Eliot and Myrtle avenues and in Ridgewood neighborhood; and buses along 23rd Avenue traveling to LaGuardia from Harlem. Other air quality community concerns were expressed for the following areas: the area from Merrick Boulevard up to 180 th Street; side streets by Detective Keith L. Williams Park on Liberty Avenue between 172nd and 173rd Streets; near the school by 107th Avenue and Wren Place; and 180th Street between Liberty and Sayres avenues. Residents who live on Douglas and Liberty avenues close to garbage trucks that often idle as they wait to transport garbage and recycling to the waste transfer stations are concerned about air quality. In addition, the community is concerned about pollution from the Long Island Railroad that cuts through the Jamaica neighborhood.

Scan QR link for survey

Using the Data to Identify Areas with Higher Pollutant Levels
(See Map 2: Air Pollution Focus Spots, Map 3: Annual Average Pollutant Levels, and Map 4: Sensitive Individuals)

IN QUEENS, HIGHER POLLUTANT LEVELS WERE FOUND:

- In Flushing along and near the Van Wyck and Whitestone expressways and at the crossing points along the section of the Brooklyn/Queens boundary from Borden and Greenpoint Avenues to Flushing Avenue
- Along Douglas and Liberty avenues, near the railroad, along the Van Wyck Expressway, and along part of Atlantic Avenue in Richmond Hill
- Near areas with waste transfer stations, railyards, autobody shops, asphalt plants, scrap metal processors, vehicle dismantling facilities, and some industrial and manufacturing businesses and facilitators

Higher traffic volume and large vehicles traveling to these facilities are likely contributing to these higher levels of pollution because mobile monitoring mainly measures street level pollution providing detailed information for people who live close to sources like a busy road or truck route.

Some of these higher pollutant levels were found near sensitive individual locations like schools, daycares, and public housing.

All modeled annual pollutant levels for fine particle matter or $PM_{2.5}$ were below EPA's annual standard of 9 $\mu g/m^3$. The average annual $PM_{2.5}$ level in Queens was 6.50 $\mu g/m^3$.

Understanding What These Data Mean

(See Maps 5, 6 – Mobile Source Indicators)

In areas with congested roadways and large truck and bus traffic. Health impacts from air pollution may be from a single pollutant or may be felt from a mixture of pollutants such as traffic-related air pollutants or TRAP which is a mixture of gases (including nitrogen dioxide or NO_2) and particles (like $PM_{2.5}$ and black carbon or BC). Many health studies link increased health risks from TRAP exposures including increasing the risk of asthma and heart and lung disease. Children, the elderly, and people with existing heart or lung disease are more vulnerable to the effects of TRAP. Additionally, traffic like other sources of air pollutants can also have negative quality of life impacts such as noise and odors.

In general, DACs are disproportionately burdened with a higher number of air pollution sources and more traffic due to proximity to highways and routes for diesel vehicles traveling to commercial businesses and industrial areas. A long history of unjust land use decisions and disinvestment contributes to socioeconomic, environmental, and health disparities found in DACs today.

Taking the Next Steps – Reducing Air Pollution

Scan QR link for strategy worksheet

In 2025, DEC will work with the DAC Community Advisory Committees (CACs), the Climate Justice Working Group, and other state agencies and stakeholders to develop air pollution and exposure reduction strategies. The CACs will help communities prioritize areas for air pollution reduction goals, with a focus on areas with higher pollution levels near sensitive individual locations (for example, schools, childcare facilities, public housing). Some existing air pollution and exposure reduction strategies include:

- Rules that increase the sale of new clean zero emission cars, light duty trucks, and medium- and heavy-duty trucks;
- City, county, and regional plans calling for energy conservation and increased efficiency in buildings and multimodal transportation;
- Using low-emission street cleaners with vacuums to reduce road dust;
- Installing indoor air filtration systems and requiring that air intake for buildings is away from nearby sources; and
- Properly designing and maintaining roadside vegetation barriers to reduce exposure to pollution from roads with heavy traffic

Getting Involved – Community Engagement/Outreach

Let us know if you are interested in participating in one of the Community Advisory Committees which have been formed in each of the 10 study communities, by sharing your air quality concerns and describing your interest in an email to CLCPA.CAM@dec.ny.gov or by calling (518) 402-8402. Information and updates will be posted on the DEC Community Air Monitoring web page.

Contact Information

Division of Air Resources | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation | 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233
P: (518) 402-8402 | CLCPA.CAM@dec.ny.gov | www.dec.ny.gov

Flooding, Resiliency, Nature and Ecosystems Updates

In combined sewer systems, stormwater runoff and wastewater flow into the same pipe and are treated at a wastewater treatment plant. However, when the combined volume of rain and wastewater is greater than the capacity of the treatment plant's delivery pipes – or is too great for the plant to treat – the excess untreated wastewater and storm runoff gets discharged directly into nearby waterways, an event called a combined sewage overflow (CSO). This toxic brew of raw sewage, household and industrial wastewater, and street runoff causes sudden and often dramatic spikes in fecal bacteria and other pollutants in the water. This is a major issue throughout Queens and all of New York City – luckily, OUS has a fine-tuned understanding of the problem as well as some creative, new solutions.

OUS partner New York Lawyers for The Public Interest (NYLPI) compiled data that highlights the current flooding reality:

- Queens residents are at higher than average risk for flooding at all levels of storm intensity
- Queens residents made over 4,000 backup complaints involving private sewer systems to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2022 alone — nearly six times as many as Manhattan.
- Neighborhoods like Southeast Queens, which have seen historically less investments by the City and tend to be Black, Brown, and low-income, disproportionately bear the burdens of flooding and sewage backups.[1]
- In a historically redlined area of South Jamaica, Queens, a community of 20 homes is connected on a failing shared private sewer line requiring frequent repair and maintenance, costing the community approximately $10,000 per year.
- Since the 1970s, the groundwater table in Southeast Queens has risen approximately 40 feet, drastically increasing all types of flooding in the area.
- East Elmhurst also faces persistent ponding and requires more gray and green flood prevention infrastructure.

1 Kriston Capps & Christopher Cannon, Redlined, Now Flooding, BLOOMBERG (March 15, 2021); Office of the New Comptroller, Bringing Basement Apartments Into the Light, 6 (Aug. 30, 2022).

HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURE TO STORMWATER FLOODING IN NYC

LIMITED STORMWATER FLOODING (1.77IN/HR) - CURRENT SEA LEVELS

BOROUGH	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	DESIGNATED HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING (DAC)	PERCENT OF FLOOD-EXPOSED HOUSEHOLDS DESIGNATED AS DAC
Brooklyn	1,093,381	34,592	3.16%	26,156	75.61%
Bronx	577,502	15,552	2.69%	14,341	92.21%
Manhattan	948,747	42,773	4.51%	21,925	51.26%
Queens	879,516	39,491	4.49%	18,037	45.67%
Staten Island	178,811	14,526	8.12%	2,631	18.11%
Citywide	3,677,957	146,934	3.99%	83,090	56.55%

MODERATE STORMWATER FLOODING (2.13IN/HR) - CURRENT SEA LEVELS

BOROUGH	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	DESIGNATED HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING (DAC)	PERCENT OF FLOOD-EXPOSED HOUSEHOLDS DESIGNATED AS DAC
Brooklyn	1,093,381	68,862	6.29%	45,844	66.57%
Bronx	577,502	42,103	7.29%	36,249	86.10%
Manhattan	948,747	83,615	8.81%	48,926	58.51%
Queens	879,516	77,841	8.85%	38,188	49.06%
Staten Island	178,811	21,697	12.13%	4,160	19.17%
Citywide	3,677,957	294,118	8.00%	173,367	58.94%

HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURE TO STORMWATER FLOODING IN NYC

MODERATE STORMWATER FLOODING (2.13IN/HR) - 2050 SEA LEVELS

BOROUGH	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	DESIGNATED HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING (DAC)	PERCENT OF FLOOD-EXPOSED HOUSEHOLDS DESIGNATED AS DAC
Brooklyn	1,093,381	87,493	8.00%	60,092	68.68%
Bronx	577,502	49,708	8.61%	43,649	87.81%
Manhattan	948,747	103,672	10.92%	55,096	53.14%
Queens	879,516	98,158	11.16%	49,239	50.16%
Staten Island	178,811	22,602	12.64%	4,907	21.71%
Citywide	3,677,957	361,633	9.83%	212,983	58.89%

EXTREME STORMWATER FLOODING (3.66IN/HR) - 2080 SEA LEVELS

BOROUGH	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING	DESIGNATED HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK OF FLOODING (DAC)	PERCENT OF FLOOD-EXPOSED HOUSEHOLDS DESIGNATED AS DAC
Brooklyn	1,093,381	424,424	38.81%	208,624	49.15%
Bronx	577,502	174,508	30.22%	157,702	90.37%
Manhattan	948,747	307,581	32.42%	131,357	42.71%
Queens	879,516	356,668	40.55%	137,195	38.47%
Staten Island	178,811	56,918	31.83%	19,275	33.86%
Citywide	3,677,957	1,320,099	35.89%	654,153	49.55%

Sources

- US Census tracts, year 2019 (to align with NYSERDA Disadvantaged Communities)
- MapPLUTO release 24v4, New York City Department of City Planning
- 2015–2019 American Community Survey population and housing units by tract (to align with NYSERDA Disadvantaged communities)
  - Total population: Table B01003
  - Total housing units: Table B25001
  - Accessed via IPUMS NHGIS
- NYSERDA Disadvantaged Communities
- NYC Stormwater Flood Maps

Provided by Beta NYC (Andrew Kittredge)

BOROUGH STORMWATER FLOODING

BOROUGH	COUNTYFP	TOTAL_POP	AVG_HH_POP	HH_PLUTO POP	N _HH FLOOD	N_POP_FLOOD	PCT_HH HH
Bronx	005	1,435,068	3.01779488758056	587,506	45,481	137252.329282051	7.7
Brooklyn	047	2,589,974	2.54264618438813	1,097,613	69,568	176886.809755514	6.3
Manhattan	061	1,631,993	1.8965076636186	988,169	86,814	164643.416309385	8.8
Queens	081	2,287,388	2.73248049209779	888,501	79,282	216636.518374497	8.9
Staten Island	085	474,893	2.57275016789843	179,223	21,703	55836.3968938996	12.1

BOROUGH STORMWATER FLOODING KEY

- **COUNTYFP:** The borough's FIPS code
- **total_pop:** The population affected by stormwater flooding
- **avg_hh_pop:** The average household population
- **hh_pluto:** Number of households derived from MapPLUTO dataset
- **n_hh_flood:** Number of households affected by stormwater flooding
- **n_pop_flood:** Number of people affected by stormwater flooding, calculated by multiplying avg_hh_pop by n_hh_flood
- **pct_hh_flood:** Percent of households affected by stormwater flooding, calculated by dividing n_hh_flood by hh_pluto, then multiplying by 100

Save the Sound

OUS partner Save the Sound also compiled data of Queens waterways that intersect with the Long Island Sound and gave grades to three sections: the Western Narrows — which includes water between the East River and Long Island Sound — and both Flushing Bay and Little Neck Bay. As shown here, there is a lot of work to be done to improve the health of our waterways.

SOUND HEALTH EXPLORER
a project of Save the Sound®

Western Narrows

2023

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Water Clarity
- DOC Dissolved Organic Carbon
- Chlorophyll a

A B C D F N/A

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	13in	18in	10in	21in	16in	18in	14in	10in	6in	10in	8in	16in	13in	23in	15in	18in

The Western Narrows recieved an F (49%) similar to 2020 (45%). While the overall grade percentage has increased, this part of the Sound is still suffering from nitrogen pollution stemming from human waste and stormwater runoff. The area is densely developed, heavily populated, and has very little exchange with the Atlantic Ocean.

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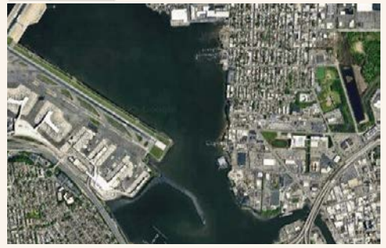
Action for our region's environment.

SOUND HEALTH EXPLORER
a project of Save the Sound®

Outer Flushing Bay

Guardians of Flushing Bay Monitoring Group



2023

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Water Clarity
- Chlorophyll a
- Seaweeds
- Oxygen Saturation

A B C D F N/A

	2021	2022	2023
	23in	15in	18in

Outer Flushing Bay received a C+ (77%), moderatly good grade. Dissolved oxygen and oxygen saturation both received poor grades, while all other indicators graded B or higher in 2023.

CHALLENGES

- Climate Change
- Sewer Discharges
- Stormwater Runoff
- Marine Debris

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a project of Save the Sound®

Inner Flushing Bay

Monitoring Group

2023

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Water Clarity
- Chlorophyll a
- Seaweeds
- Oxygen Saturation

A B C D F N/A

	2021	2022	2023
	23in	15in	18in

Inner Flushing Bay received a D- (62%), a poor grade but an improvement since 2021. Dissolved oxygen and oxygen saturation both received an F in 2023.

CHALLENGES

- Climate Change
- Sewer Discharges
- Stormwater Runoff
- Marine Debris

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Outer Little Neck Bay

Monitoring Group

Interstate Environmental Commission

2023

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Water Clarity
- Chlorophyll a
- Seaweeds
- Oxygen Saturation

A B C D F N/A

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	10in	8in	16in	13in	23in	15in	18in

Outer Little Neck received a C- (71%), a moderately poor grade. Dissolved oxygen received a poor grade, while indicators were a C or above.

CHALLENGES

- Climate Change
- Algae Blooms / Excess Nitrogen
- Sewer Discharges
- Stormwater Runoff

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Inner Little Neck Bay

Interstate Environmental Commission

Monitoring Group

Interstate Environmental Commission

2023

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Water Clarity
- Chlorophyll a
- Seaweeds
- Oxygen Saturation

A B C D F N/A

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
10in	8in	16in	13in	23in	15in	18in

Inner Little Neck received a D (64%), a poor grade. Dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a and oxygen saturation all received F grades in 2023.

CHALLENGES

- Climate Change
- Sewer Discharges
- Algae Blooms / Excess Nitrogen
- Stormwater Runoff

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Newtown Creek Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Project & Revitalization

Every year, over 1.2 billion gallons of untreated sewage flow into Newtown Creek. New York City has been dumping raw sewage into the creek since 1856, and our sewage system is over a century old.

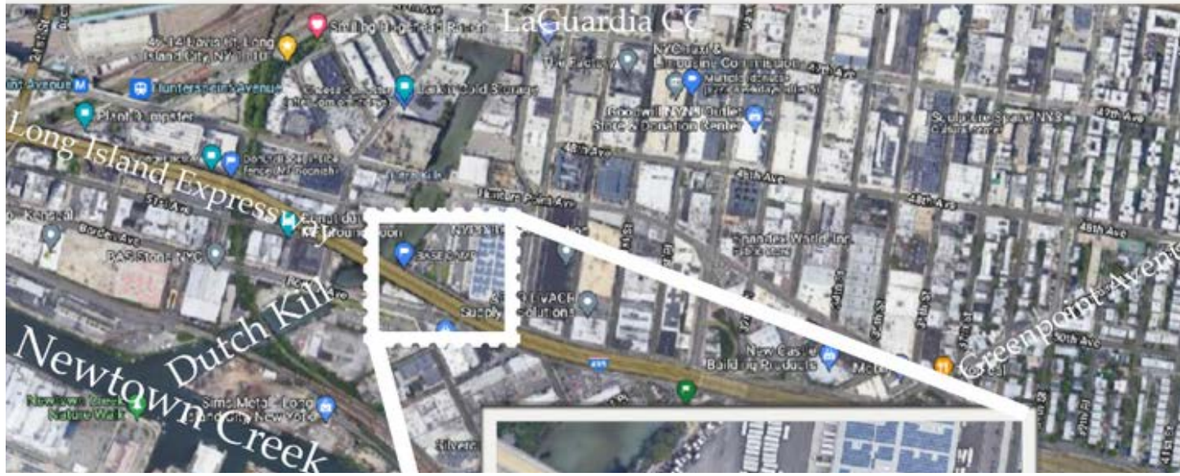
The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released a Draft Scope of Work in February 2025, proposing a 3.26 mile-long tunnel with a storage volume of 50 million gallons to intercept overflow at the four largest CSO outfalls which discharge into the creek. The tunnel would allow the stored sewage to be pumped to the Newtown Creek wastewater treatment plant in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

Proposed Shoreline Design for 29th Street

NCA NEWTOWN CREEK ALLIANCE | Interval Projects | and the Steering Committee of the Dutch Kills Loop project

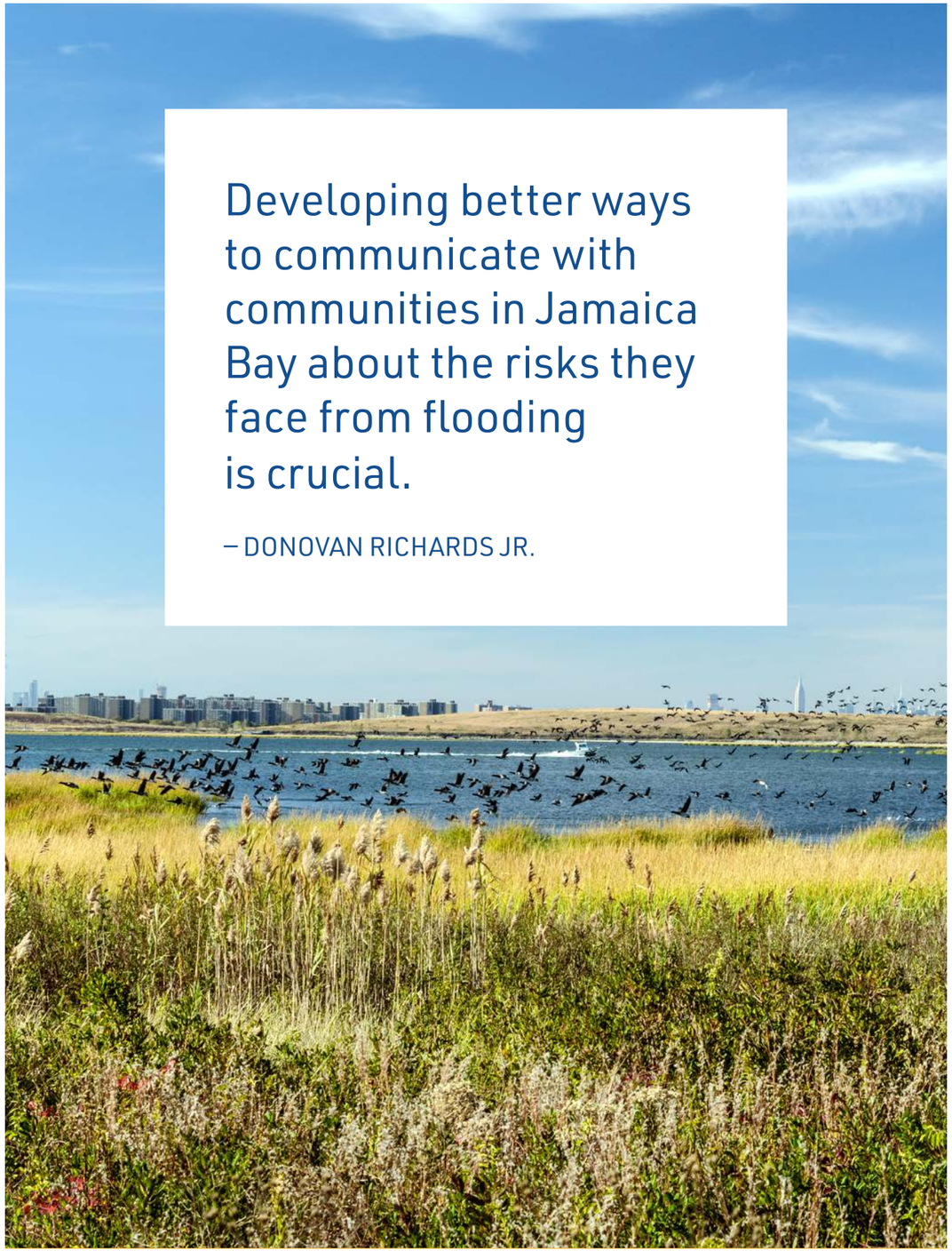
The project's core focus is to reduce CSO and improve water quality conditions in Newtown Creek and will require the acquisition/easements of a number of public and privately owned parcels, including some near the Dutch Kills tributary. There is an opportunity to enhance these planned City efforts by incorporating additional public benefits — namely waterfront access, open space and ecologically beneficial plantings with the acquisition/easement properties. OUS partner **Newtown Creek Alliance** (NCA) has been the most important community advocate for these improvements.

OUS partner **Big Reuse** hopes to revitalize land near Newtown Creek, which has historically been plagued with illegal dumping, into a beneficial community space through a land agreement with NYC DOT and City Council discretionary funds.



- Create a resource center for outdoor public/community projects and urban agriculture where composters, community gardeners and other orgs pick up mulch or soil amendments.
- Provide an educational space for community learning.
- Increase Big Reuse's capacity for environmental, community-based composting and street tree work by providing a storage space for new trees, compost, mulch, tools, vehicles, equipment and supplies.
- Explore the possibility of creating an Office of Environmental Remediation (OER) Clean Soil Bank in Queens.
- Prevent harmful environmental impacts by monitoring & enforcing environmental law compliance and preventing future illegal dumping, oil transfers, auto fluid discharge and commercial waste infractions.
- Integrate this space with NCA and the Montauk Cutoff Dutch Kills Loop vision, complementing their broader vision. The waterfront space at Borden Avenue could be managed in partnership with NCA for community access and use.

Last, but certainly not least, we close out our Flooding section with a meaningful win: OUS partner **Stony Brook University** was awarded a New York Sea Grant for improving risk communication for extreme rainfall events in vulnerable coastal communities in and around Jamaica Bay.



SEA GRANT LETTER

April 20, 2023

New York Sea Grant
125 Nassau Hall
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, NY 11794

Dear New York Sea Grant,

If the proposal led by Professors Finn, Reed, and Gilbert entitled "Improving Risk Communication for Extreme Rainfall Events in Vulnerable Coastal Communities: A Case Study for Jamaica Bay" is funded, my office will support it by publicizing workshops held by the research team, connecting them with key community stakeholders, and providing information on our experiences working with constituents in Jamaica Bay to prepare for recovery from past flooding events.

Developing better ways to communicate with communities in Jamaica Bay about the risks they face from flooding is crucial. It helps to increase awareness about the potential dangers associated with flooding, which can be life-threatening. It can help individuals and communities to better understand their vulnerabilities and develop strategies to mitigate these risks. In addition, effective communication can facilitate cooperation and collaboration among different stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, and residents, to ensure that everyone is working together to reduce the impact of flooding on the region.

In addition to developing better ways to communicate with communities in Jamaica Bay about the risks they face from flooding, working with NYC Emergency Management and developing toolkits for organizing in response to disasters can further enhance preparedness efforts. By partnering with emergency management agencies, communities can access valuable resources and expertise to help them plan and respond to disasters effectively. Developing toolkits can also provide a practical guide for residents to organize themselves and their neighborhoods in the event of an emergency. This can include identifying vulnerable populations, establishing communication protocols, and setting up neighborhood response teams. Overall, these collaborative efforts can help to ensure that communities are better prepared to deal with the impacts of flooding and other disasters.

Studying and mapping strong communication strategies is life-saving work and paramount to our neighbors' safety.

Sincerely,

Donovan Richards Jr.
Queens Borough President

Transportation and Walkability Updates

Borough President Richards has been partnering with local advocacy groups to realize the vision for a connected and protected greenway network throughout the borough.

The Eastern Queens Greenway

The Eastern Queens Greenway, which will create a continuous 13-mile path connecting Flushing Meadows Corona Parks to Cunningham and Alley Pond Parks via the Kissena corridor, has made progress in recent years. A robust public engagement process, known as "Destination Greenways," resulted in designs for each segment of the greenway — several of which are now slated for construction, including Kissena Corridor Park and Peck Park. This greenway includes the Motor Parkway, which Borough President Richards is working to extend to the Queens County line, where it will link to segments in Nassau County, as well as the beloved Joe Michael's Mile along the Cross Island Parkway. The project also includes upgrades to every park along the route and seeks to connect users with local history, culture, and businesses.

LETTER REGARDING BOTANICAL GARDEN BRIDGE

March 12, 2025

Commissioner Sue Donoghue
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioners Donoghue and Rodriguez,

I am writing in support of a proposed ADA-compliant and bicycle-friendly rehabilitation to the Flushing Meadow Park Pedestrian Bridge (Bridge ID #2248090) over College Point Boulevard, also known as the "Botanical Garden Bridge."

This proposed project would be critical to the completion of the Eastern Queens Greenway, which would connect the Kissena Corridor parks through a continuous 13-mile off-road path for pedestrians and cyclists. A multi-year public engagement plan called "Destination Greenways" resulted in designs for several segments of the Greenway, several of which are funded and slated for construction.

Rehabilitation of the Botanical Garden Bridge would enable all vulnerable road-users to avoid crossing College Point Boulevard (a Vision Zero priority corridor) at grade-level. This is important because over the last 10 years there have been 53 crashes on College Point Boulevard between Blossom Avenue and Booth Memorial Avenue, resulting in one pedestrian fatality and 72 total injuries.

Full rehabilitation of the bridge would also address the span's current lack of wheelchair-usable ramps. The existing bridge has steps on the east side leading into the Queens Botanical Garden, making the span unusable for wheelchair users, families with strollers, and cyclists alike.

This proposed rehabilitation project would have the added benefit of connecting the densely populated Flushing community with Flushing Meadows Corona Park, giving residents easy access to green space and the many facilities, programs, and institutions within the park.

I thank you for your time and attention to this important matter, and I look forward further discussing with you and with representatives of your respective departments about how this proposed rehabilitation project can be funded and implemented. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Donovan Richards Jr.
Queens Borough President

Queens Waterfront Greenway

PROJECT BACKGROUND

New York City also secured a RAISE grant from the federal government to develop two greenways in Queens: a Waterfront Greenway along the East River and the Long Island Sound and a Southeast Queens Greenway, which will extend the Jamaica Bay Greenway to the county line.

The public engagement process for the Queens Waterfront Greenway began in 2024 with three in-person workshops to solicit input on different segments and one virtual workshop at the beginning of 2025.

NYC DOT, in partnership with DPR and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), is initiating a community-based process to develop a plan for closing the gaps in current bike and pedestrian infrastructure to make it easier for residents to access parkland and waterways. When complete, this new portion of the Queens Waterfront Greenway will constitute a continuous 16-mile corridor connecting Gantry Plaza State Park to Astoria Park along the East River and to Fort Totten following the Long Island Sound.

Recently, Western Queens has benefitted from public and private investment in both housing and waterfront amenities along the East River, including five miles of two-way bike path along Vernon Boulevard, completed in 2013. By fully connecting parks, greenspace, and outdoor recreation, the Queens Waterfront Greenway will better link Queens residents to waterfront open space.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Queens Waterfront Greenway Implementation Plan will outline a comprehensive strategy to create a continuous and accessible path by identifying a series of short-term and long-term projects.