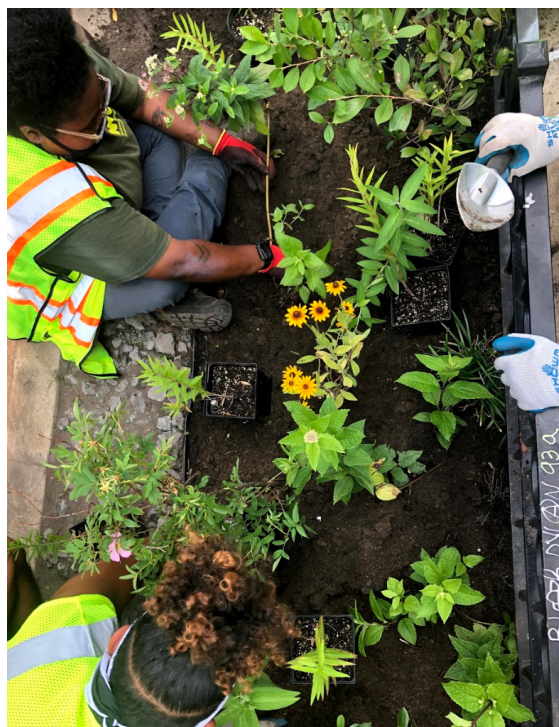


**New Green Infrastructure Stewardship Coalition Launched to Build Green Job Opportunities to Address the Climate Crisis:** *Four community stewardship organizations kick-off a collaborative project to steward New York City green infrastructure to combat climate change and provide education for community volunteers and job training for low-income New Yorkers*

On **July 21st**, the Bronx River Alliance, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, The HOPE Program, and Newtown Creek Alliance were joined by representatives of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, New York State Senator Julia Salazar, Council Member Brad Lander, and Assembly Member Emily Gallagher and Democratic candidates for NYC Council Districts 33, 34 and 39, to kick-off a brand new citywide partnership directed at providing community-based support for the City's green infrastructure maintenance program.

Before a brief speaking program, attendees got their hands dirty, weeding, pruning, removing litter and planting native plants in rain gardens along [Waterbury Street and Meadow Street](#), just a few blocks from Newtown Creek. This stewardship ensures that these rain gardens are healthy, beautiful and ready to soak up the next big storm. Event participants celebrated the City's continued commitment to installing thousands of similar rain gardens throughout New York City.



This event marks the beginning of a new collaborative effort between the four community-based organizations aimed at improving rain garden performance, increasing co-benefits such as community beautification and urban heat island mitigation, providing local jobs and workforce development, and engaging local communities in the stewardship of their green spaces. This project will pilot watershed-specific approaches that can be scaled up to a citywide solution for sustainable green infrastructure maintenance and workforce development.

“Over the past year, our green spaces have been our lifelines - providing respite, beauty, clean air and calm. At the same time, the city budget for green space maintenance has been stretched thin, impacting the health of parks, street trees and rain

gardens across the City. As we look towards recovery and a new NYC administration, it's time to forward a long term vision for sustainable maintenance so this critical infrastructure can thrive across all of our neighborhoods." said **Gowanus Canal Conservancy Executive Director Andrea Parker**.

"As recent flash floods and heat waves have shown, the City's infrastructure is ill equipped to handle our increasingly extreme weather events. Building and maintaining green infrastructure to manage storm water and soften our harsh urban surfaces offers a low cost tool in fighting the increasing impacts from climate change we face, especially within dense industrial areas like where we stand today. " said **Newtown Creek Alliance Executive Director Willis Elkins**.

"The HOPE Program is honored to partner with community-based organizations in meeting the urgent need for expanded green infrastructure (GI) in New York City. Not only does GI promote climate change mitigation, divert stormwater, and support a host of additional environmental benefits, but it also drives sustainable and reliable local, green-collar jobs. Community partnerships such as this are a win/win as our local economy continues its long recovery and as we build New York City into a model for green big cities." said **The HOPE Program Executive Director Jennifer Mitchell**.

"Green Infrastructure provides so many benefits to New Yorkers, from mitigating combined sewer overflows in our waterways to cooling our neighborhoods during extreme heat events to mitigating flooding we've seen during recent "storm bombs." Through this partnership, we will work with NYC DEP to ensure that NYC successfully implements and stewards this critical tool in the City's toolbox for mitigating and adapting to climate change. This coalition will also push to ensure that jobs are created for low-income New Yorkers and communities of color who are most impacted by our climate crisis." said **Bronx River Alliance Executive Director Maggie Greenfield**.



[Gowanus Canal Conservancy](#), [Newtown Creek Alliance](#), [Bronx River Alliance](#), and The [HOPE Program](#) bring local expertise in GI maintenance, job training, education, and engagement, and will use funding from the *NYC Green Relief and Recovery Fund* to collaborate across the city. They will focus on three priority watersheds that drain to the most polluted waterways in NYC: the Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek and the Bronx River. These watershed communities are

impacted by multiple environmental injustices, including exposure to raw sewage in our waterways, flooding, extreme heat, and lack of accessible green space.

“From green roofs to pocket parks to living shorelines, the City needs to approach its green infrastructure investments in a more strategic and systemic way,” said **Arturo Garcia-Costas, Program Officer for the Environment at The New York Community Trust and co-chair of the NYC Green Fund**, “It is so exciting to see this coalition of groups come together to showcase the full range of benefits – jobs, greener communities, cooler streets, less stormwater runoff – that a truly integrative approach to green infrastructure could produce.”

“New York City must dramatically and quickly increase our investment in resilient climate infrastructure, as we’ve seen all-too-clearly in just the past few days” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “Green infrastructure is a fast, cost-effective solution to acute climate change impacts like local flooding, heat islands, and poor air quality. I am grateful for the strides that DEP has made to advance this work through infrastructure upgrades and regulation, like the new Unified Stormwater Rule. I especially salute the leadership of CBOs in developing models for community engagement, education, and workforce development. This community stewardship pilot demonstrates the inclusive approach that we must take to meet the demands of the climate crisis. I look forward to working with DEP, Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Newtown Creek Alliance, Bronx River Alliance, and The HOPE Program to support and expand this model.”



“SWIM Coalition is thrilled to see this pilot program that connects workforce development with environmental sustainability. We see this as an opportunity to harness a long-term solution for Citywide green infrastructure maintenance as well as a mechanism for Just Transition in environmental justice frontline communities. We look forward to supporting the work of these organizations,” said **Julie Welch, Program Manager, SWIM Coalition**.

Through this partnership, the collaborating organizations aim to re-evaluate the City’s approach to maintenance of this critical infrastructure, build long-term capacity for local GI management, provide green-collar jobs, and catalyze a citywide network of community groups and committed residents working towards cleaner waterways and healthier neighborhoods.



**Speakers at the event are listed below, with links to video:**

Willis Elkins, Newtown Creek Alliance

Andrea Parker, Gowanus Canal Conservancy

Maggie Scott Greenfield, Bronx River Alliance

Arturo Garcia Costas, New York Community Trust

Joanna Larson, The HOPE Program

Mikelle Adgate, NYC DEP

[Brad Lander](#), District 39 Councilmember, Democratic Candidate for NYC Comptroller

[Emily Gallagher](#), NYS Assembly D50

[Julia Salazar](#), NYS Senator D18

[Jennifer Gutierrez](#), Office of District 34 Councilmember Reynoso,  
Democratic Candidate for NYC Council District 34

[Dan Wiley](#), Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez

[Shelby Garner](#), Office of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

[Benjamin Solotaire](#), Office of District 33 Councilmember Levin

[Steven Fox](#), Office of Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

Lincoln Restler, Democratic Candidate for NYC Council District 33

[Shahana Hanif](#), Democratic Candidate for NYC Council District 39

[Shino Tanikawa](#), NYC Soil and Water Conservation District

[View more photos from event, courtesy of Mitch Waxman.](#)

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