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## Brooklyn

# Gowanus Canal 'Sponge Park' moves ahead as Bloomberg administration allocates cash for Brooklyn greenspace

Waterway is finally sponge worthy! Plants and soil will soak up water so it doesn't overwhelm sewage plants on rainy days.

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BY [REUVEN BLAU](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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**These artificial wetlands will act like pollution-absorbing sponges around Brooklyn's Gowanus Canal.**

The so-called Sponge Park along the grimy Gowanus Canal has finally soaked up enough public cash to move forward.

The \$1.5 million park, whose name refers to how it uses vegetation and special soil to retain water to prevent sewer overflows on rainy days, is finally a go, thanks to a mix of city, state and federal grants.

A full greenway alongside the infamous 1.8-mile Lavender Lake was announced with great fanfare in 2008.

But the innovative project stalled due to a lack of money and the ongoing debate about how to clean up the fetid waters.

On Wednesday, the Bloomberg administration announced it would build a smaller park where Second St. dead ends at the gross river's western bank.

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"This is an important step in the right direction but we need to do a lot more to clean the canal," said Councilman Brad Lander (D-Park Slope).

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The idea was the brainchild of the advocacy group the Gowanus Canal Conservancy and the landscape architecture firm dlandstudio.

The state also kicked in \$535,000 last year through a “green innovation” grant.

The construction is expected to begin in 2014, and the park will be open by the summer of 2015, city officials said.

The work includes digging up a part of the street and installing concrete cells filled with special soil, which will store and filter the stormwater before it empties into the canal.

Special plants with roots and leaves that absorb water will be planted to help soak up the extra rain water — which would otherwise overwhelm sewage treatment plants and spew untreated sewage into the renowned corpse of water — a federal Superfund cleanup site.

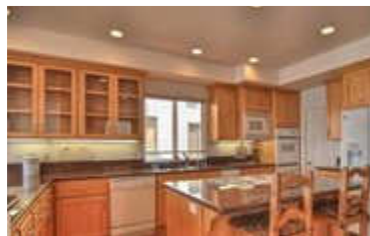
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**LISANNE** 13 hours ago

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Of course Bloomberg approved it. This park is right in the middle of the Lightstone Project apartment complex that he also approved despite the fact that it lies on toxic land. Free landscaping!

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**NOO YOKA** 8 hours ago

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No, not at all. Wetlands must be restored throughout this city because the loss of them has led directly to many of the problems we are facing now with water pollution and flooded streets. It is much cheaper to keep the water from overwhelming the treatment plants than to cope with waterborne disease later. In the case of this canal, I fear people might dissolve if the water ever flowed out of the banks of the Gowanus and into people's basements.

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