

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Cuts Ribbon on Cramer Hill Waterfront Park

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The Landfill-Turned-Waterfront Park Will Be the Largest Park in City of Camden

CAMDEN – Governor Phil Murphy today cut the ribbon on Cramer Hill Waterfront Park, a landfill-turned-waterfront park in the City of Camden. The former Harrison Avenue Landfill, which operated from 1952 to 1971, was an 86-acre municipal landfill that was never properly closed and capped, leaving it vulnerable to illegal dumping years later.

The first 24 acres of the landfill were cleaned and converted to the Kroc Center in 2014 with \$22 million in state funds, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) completed the cleanup and construction of the remaining 62 acres with \$47 million from DEP's Natural Resource Damages settlement funds. The site will be the largest park in the City of Camden, dramatically changing the landscape and connecting the community with its waterfront and regional trails for the first time in a generation. The park includes 3 miles of biking and hiking paths, a restored wildlife habitat, playground, and amphitheater, and will provide critical open space and direct access to the waterfront for recreation.

"After nearly 70 years, we are reconnecting the community and City of Camden with its greatest natural resource – its riverfront," **said Governor Murphy**. "The harmful legacy of an improperly capped landfill and a site for illegal dumping plagued this neighborhood and community for far too long. My Administration is committed to a stronger and more resilient Camden for tomorrow, where residents have access to clean, open space. Justice comes in all forms, and today is about environmental justice for the families of Cramer Hill."

"Thanks to the collaborative work by the community and every level of government, the residents are reconnected with the waterfront through this remarkable park," **said U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross**. "Now families can enjoy the outdoors and spectacular views right in their own neighborhood."

The Cramer Hill Waterfront Park project prioritized four areas: shoreline protection, landfill closure, natural resource restoration, and park construction.

Shoreline protection involved regrading and stabilizing over 3,000 feet of shoreline on the Delaware River where municipal solid waste and soil contamination, including pesticides, were exposed on the surface of the unstable, steep slopes and interacting with the tides.

The landfill closure included excavating and redistributing approximately 375,000 cubic yards of solid waste and soil into the center of the landfill, installing a passive gas venting system, and constructing a 2-foot-thick semi-permeable cap of clean fill material along with the establishment of vegetation.

Natural resource restoration involved enhancing and expanding the existing freshwater wetlands by constructing approximately 7 acres of tidal freshwater wetlands on both the Cooper and Delaware Rivers.

The new tidal freshwater wetland complex on the Cooper River connects the 2-acre fishing pond through a 1000-foot-long meandering channel where the public will now have access to launch kayaks and canoes. Three areas of living shorelines were created along the back channel of the Delaware River for a total length of 450 feet. These living shorelines enhance the transition between the existing tidal mudflats and vegetation planted within the riparian zone in the park. Outside of the three areas along the rivers where existing mature trees were preserved for bald eagle foraging habitat, over 375,000 plants, shrubs, and trees were installed throughout the park to reestablish the waterfront and inland habitat which double as another protective layer to the landfill cap.

Cramer Hill Waterfront Park includes 3 miles of hiking and biking paths, an entry plaza, grassed amphitheater, exercise stations, and fishing plaza that extends into the pond.

"Projects like the Cramer Hill Waterfront Park in Camden lift up underserved communities by providing waterfront access and recreational options that support families. The positive energy and impact of projects like this have a real ripple effect toward improving quality of life in the broader area," **said Lisa F. Garcia, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator.** "EPA is proud of our \$1.8 million contribution to this project through our Brownfields grants and we look forward to many more terrific community projects in the future as EPA awards the \$1.5 billion provided under the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for Brownfields projects across the nation."

"This is a great day for the City of Camden and the Cramer Hill community," **said New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette.** "This park is a testament to how we can transform neighborhoods and give back to communities disproportionately burdened by environmental damages. What was once an eyesore is now a place for families to gather, for children to play, and for visitors to appreciate the beauty of Camden's waterfront."

"DEP collaborated with federal partners, local stakeholders, and residents to reconstruct a local blight into not only an environmental justice success, but to create a new community asset," **said New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Justice and Equity Olivia Glenn.** "The rehabilitated landscape is a source of renewal and restoration for the citizens of Cramer Hill, Camden, and the region, now and in the future."

"I grew up in Cramer Hill and I could never have imagined the transformation of this former landfill into such a beautiful community asset," **said Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen.** "The park is not only a \$48 million investment in our neighborhoods, it's an investment in the quality of life for all of our residents and a symbol of revitalization for the community. I am grateful to Governor Murphy, Congressman Norcross and our partners at every level for making this project a reality. This is another sign of change in Cramer Hill. I believe it will be a catalyst for additional development and will help to compliment the adjacent Kroc Center, the new Mastery School, Action Pak and the \$35 million rehabilitation of Ablett Village across the street. The park will be a place of recreation for future generations and all ages."

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