

Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Citywide Public Meeting – Summary of Meeting and Public Comments Received

On December 11, 2014 DEP hosted a Public Meeting to initiate the water quality planning process for long term control of combined sewer overflows throughout the City. The two-hour event, held at Hostos College served to provide overview information about DEP's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Program, present information on the Citywide watershed characteristics and status of waterbody improvement projects, obtain public information on waterbody uses, and describe additional opportunities for public input and outreach. The presentation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/dep/ltcp>. Approximately 35 stakeholders from different non-profit, community, planning, environmental, economic development, governmental organizations and the broader public attended the event and one reporter from local Brooklyn papers.

The Citywide LTCP Public Meeting was an opportunity for public participation in the LTCP. As part of DEP's LTCP Public Participation Plan, Citywide Long Term Control Planning process will be posted on DEP's website, shown above. The public will have more opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the development of Citywide waterbody-specific LTCP. Specific questions asked during the public kickoff meeting are summarized below with DEP's responses for each.

Q1: What kind of data is collected to evaluate a needs assessment? Community Board 8 has been directing individuals to call 311, is this appropriate?

A1: 311 is a good place to start. The other component is local land use meetings.

Q2: Are the LTCP plans available to the public?

A2: Yes, submitted LTCPs to date are available on the DEP website: (Alley Creek submitted June 2014, Westchester Creek submitted June 2014, and Hutchinson River submitted September 2014.) The Flushing Creek LTCP will be available after the first of the year (December 2014).

Q3: Once they are submitted to DEC, then they are available?

A3: Yes, future LTCPs are still in development and will be available on DEP's website once submitted to DEC.

Q4: Does the public get to comment on the actual LTCP?

A4: The public can comment on the LTCP once submitted to DEC and posted on the DEP's website.

Q5: Will the DEP be responding to the SWIM and other letters that have been received?

*A5: Yes, DEP will respond to the letters received from the public.
Note: Address on Advertisement directed the public to the main bldg. at XXX College*

Q6: Will the responses to such letters be available to the public?

A6: Yes they will be available online at DEP's website.

Q7: For the lower income families, what are some recommended BMPs for cost savings for individual families?

A7: The best way to save money on water bills is through water conservation. DEP has a variety of programs to offer assistance such as automated meter reading and a Multi-family Conservation Program. DEP has also offered a rain barrel giveaway program for single-family homeowners that are interesting in collecting rainwater for non-potable uses such as watering lawns or washing cars.

Q8: Does DEP have a program to reduce nitrogen in Jamaica Bay to help shellfish function?

A8: Yes DEP is just beginning the nitrogen program and its goal is to reduce nitrogen by 50 percent. Clams are already being introduced to Jamaica Bay. DEP wants to implement these programs and other planned construction projects first, then observe how the ecology responds and if Jamaica Bay will rebound.

Q9: What about the tributaries?

A9: The tributaries are man-made. In some cases there is a diminishing return for the investments.

Q10: Sludge in Coney Island Creek has been building up over the years. Are there plans to dredge or install aeration?

A10: No, there are currently no dredging plans currently for Coney Island Creek. The Coney Island LTCP will be submitted in June 2016.

Q11: What is DEP doing to incentivize Green Infrastructure (GI) on private?

A11: DEP offers a grant program for private property owners who are served by combined sewers in New York City. Under the GI Grant Program DEP provides up to 100% reimbursement for the design and construction of green infrastructure practices such as rain gardens, permeable pavers, and green roofs. To date over \$11.5 Million has been committed to through the program. More information is available at nyc.gov/greeninfrastructure. The City also offers a Green Roof Tax Abatement to incentivize construction of green roofs on private property. In 2012 DEP promulgated a new stormwater rule which requires new construction and major building alterations to significantly increase the amount of stormwater they manage onsite. Green infrastructure practices can be used to meet the new requirements and DEP provides guidance on the design and construction of these practices. DEP is also investigating other incentive programs to further green infrastructure on private properties. .

Q12: Was the program for parking lots successful and will it be extended?

A12: Yes the program was successful because there was a good rate of compliance. However, many elected to pay into the program rather than improve parking lots.

Q13: The City Resiliency plan was initially on the agenda, why was it removed?

A13: DEP felt the agenda was already filled with lengthy, dense material.

Q14: What did DEP learn from Hutchinson River LTCP process?

A14: Westchester County contributes a large portion of the loads to the Hutchinson River. Westchester County stormwater has poor water quality; illicit connections contribute to the high stormwater pathogens. Any improvements DEP makes would be masked by Westchester County loads. For purposes of the LTCP, loads from Westchester County were turned 'off' during water quality modeling.

Q15: Would it make more sense to do a TMDL instead of a Waste Load Allocation (WLA)? Isn't that a more complex process?

A15: A WLA is a version of TMDL. It is up to the state to implement a TMDL.

Q16: Will the Bronx River LTCP be done in a similar format as Hutchinson River?

A16: Yes.

Q17: Why isn't the Harlem River on the LTCP list? There is a lot of recreation in the Harlem River.

A17: The Harlem River has not been broken out separately in the Consent Order. It is covered in Citywide LTCP due Dec 2017.

Q18: The public outreach in the past included a Citywide Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to engage the greater city advocates and local communities. Why has the model changed? We had balance before and should go back to that model.

A18: DEP appreciates this feedback and will take that back and discuss internally. The Public participation plan was written with the goal of striking a balance between larger organizations and local community groups. The Water Infrastructure Committee was also developed to fill the gap.

Q19: Other city planning public groups should be invited to Water Infrastructure Committee.

A19: We do speak with other groups.

Q20: How does disinfection work and does it work better in a tank?

A20: Yes, it works best in a tank. Alley Creek and Flushing Creek propose disinfection in existing tanks.

Q21: Have you considered the impact of chlorine?

A21: We are still working on understanding Total Residual Chlorine (TRC) impacts. Alley Creek LTCP proposes a pilot program for disinfection of the tank.

Q22: How is aeration considered a CSO improvement?

A22: Aeration is listed in the toolbox because it helps to improve water quality in the waterbody.

Q23: How does DEP define the goals of the program? How do you reconcile the claim that a waterbody is 'swimmable' when in reality the public won't swim in the waterbody 3 days after rain?

A23: You cannot reconcile the fact that we have CSO's and still be able to swim 100% of the time.

Q24: What is the method for DEP to determine how far to go?

A24: DEP is trying to prioritize waterbodies because 100% CSO abatement in all waterbodies in the next 20 years is not feasible. Some waterbodies and tributaries are manmade and not natural habitats. We have to determine how much investment is going to be made then make decisions. The final decision will be made in the future with the Citywide DEP (2017).

Q25: What is the Food Waste Pilot Program?

A25: Energy and water are closely integrated. It is important to capture energy in sludge and to reduce energy to treat sludge.

Q26: Will the public hear about this plan?

A26: Yes, DEP will post information on this program to the website.

Q27: Is there a feedback mechanism in how LTCP projects perform?

A27: Yes for constructed projects as well as an ongoing HSM program for sampling waterways. There is a post-construction compliance monitoring (PCM) program.

Q28: Will the PCM results be incorporated into the LTCPs?

A28: No, the LTCP proposes a project plan, then the project is built and PCM begins. Therefore, the PCM program is outside of the LTCP timeline.

Q29: When is the next GI Grant program rollout?

A29: There will be a grant program in 2015 though specific dates have not yet been set. We encourage interested applicants to contact DEP for more information.

Q30: How will DEC's new water quality standards impact the LTCPs?

A30: We don't know how it will impact the plans that have been submitted already. Future LTCPs will continue to evaluate future standards like the past LTCPs did.