

Long Term Control Plan (LTCP)
Hutchinson River and Westchester Creek Meeting #3
Summary of Meeting and Public Comments

On September 16, 2015 DEP hosted the third public meeting for the water quality planning process for long term control of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in Westchester Creek and the NYC portions of the Hutchinson River. The two-hour event, held at the Public School 071 Rosa E. Scala in the Bronx, provided information about DEP's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) development for Hutchinson River and Westchester Creek. DEP presented information on a summary of previous public meetings, the LTCP process, the Hutchinson River and Westchester Creek watershed characteristics, the LTCP's proposed final recommendations, and provided opportunities for public input. The presentation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/dep/ltcp>.

Approximately twenty people from the public attended the event as well as representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The following summarizes the questions and comments from attendees as well as responses given.

Hutchinson River

Q. An attendee asked if the HP-024 disinfection alternative will provide new pipes and if there are any other inputs going into the pipes? They also asked why the outfall ends where it is currently proposed to end?

A. DEP replied that this alternative will provide new piping for disinfection and that the pipe length was designed so the chlorine disinfection has the proper amount of contact time.

Q. An attendee asked what the DEP is doing for toxicity issues within the Hutchinson River.

A. DEP replied that there will be a study conducted in Spring Creek on chlorination to help understand and control toxicity in the waterbody. The results will factor into the Hutchinson River disinfection preferred alternative. If control is not possible to the level that would minimize toxicity issues, the DEP will develop a dechlorination process.

Q. An attendee asked to reiterate the current Dissolved Oxygen (DO) criteria.

A. DEP reviewed the DO criteria for the Hutchinson River and stated that a Use Attainability Analysis Study will be conducted to help better understand any DO issues in the Hutchinson River.

Q. An attendee asked for more detail on fecal loading and related criteria.

A. DEP explained that there is an issue upstream that could be attributed to sources other than CSO, , but overall the fecal coliform results are pretty good.

Q. An attendee asked what the DEP is doing to help reduce Total Residual Chlorine (TRC)?

A. DEP stated that they would like to reduce TRC. The attendee then realized she was referring to Pelham Bay Park East, where the DEP mentioned that Pelham Bay Park East does not have any major water quality issues.

Q. An attendee asked how will project alternatives be affected if another Hurricane Sandy arrives in NYC? The main concern was if the alternatives will rely on pumps to convey flow.

A. DEP answered that the project design is based on gravity for conveyance and will not have any reliance on pumps to convey flow.

Q. An attendee asked when is the last chance for the public to comment on any of the alternatives.

A. DEP stated that the public can submit comments on the preferred alternatives through October 30, 2015.

Q. An attendee asked if the funding for the alternatives would not be better spent if put to Green Infrastructure (GI) projects instead?

A. DEP explained that Green Infrastructure is already planned for the Hutchinson River waterbody and forecasts call for an 11% of annual volume reduction in CSOs. At present, DEP is looking at as many GI locations as possible but not sure if there is enough space available to further reduce CSO volume equivalent to what the preferred alternative will provide. NYC will continue to look for more GI opportunities, but stated that it will be hard to construct additional projects related to GI due to area topography.

Q. An attendee asked if the DEP is currently doing any bulldozing for the LTCP projects?

A. DEP stated no bulldozing is currently taking place for LTCP work.

Q. An attendee stated that there needs to be more access locations into the Hutchinson River for recreational use.

A. DEP mentioned they will talk to NYC Parks regarding the issue.

Q. An attendee asked about the impacts of Westchester and if DEP's plan will trigger action under the state's authority to address those impacts?

A. DEP stated that Westchester is currently not under DEP jurisdiction. The DEP is currently under a Consent Order from the EPA which states that the DEC is supposed to mitigate. DEP deferred to DEC representative Paul Kenline, who responded that he would relay the question to DEC.

Q. An attendee was curious on why NYC and Westchester County cannot work together with the State to mitigate CSOs in the Hutchinson River?

A. DEP responded that they are doing the best they can within their jurisdiction, which does not include Westchester County to mitigate CSOs in the Hutchinson River.

Q. An attendee asked if the cost for the projects include Westchester County?

A. DEP stated that the costs only reflect projects within NYC jurisdiction and only those costs will affect NYC rate payers.

Westchester Creek

Q. An attendee asked if disinfection in the new relief sewer was considered?

A. DEP responded that it was considered, but will not be implemented.

Q. An attendee asked if the DEP would consider using a higher standard for water quality in Westchester Creek because there is a big park nearby and people fish near the southern end of Westchester Creek?

A. DEP explained that fishing is a secondary contact criteria and is not recommended at this time. DEP explained that it is also not recommended to upgrade the current standard, but they are measuring pathogen levels against SB standards. DEP then mentioned to submit the comment regarding access during the formal comment period.

Q. An attendee stated that the enterococcus results are not as favorable as the fecal coliform results and the DEP should consider implementing projects that will improve enterococcus as well.

A. DEP stated they did analyze both fecal coliform and enterococcus when determining water quality improvements. While taking into consideration both parameters, the Consent Order mentions to implement projects that will improve fecal coliform, which the DEP took into consideration when selecting the preferred alternative.

Q. An attendee asked how much of the 64% CSO volume reduction goes into the East River?

A. DEP stated that much of the CSO has been diverted to the WWTP. It is supported by the fact that water quality data within the East River at the mouth of Westchester Creek is at 99% compliance.

Q. An attendee mentioned that 5,000 – 8,000 people use the parks within the Westchester Creek area and that it is important to reduce CSOs in this area.

A. DEP understands that many people use the nearby parks and the DEP is doing their best to reduce CSOs with their preferred alternative. DEP also mentioned that post-construction compliance monitoring will take place for the implemented projects. Additional benefits may result beyond what is currently suggested.

Q. An attendee asked if the DEP can consider GI for drainage areas with separate sewers?

A. DEP stated they will consider GI for drainage areas with separate sewers, but not at this time. The LTCP program is focused on reducing CSOs at combined sewer drainage areas. There is another program that focuses on separate sewer drainage areas, where GI for those areas can be considered.

Q. An attendee asked where the flow from the Rockaway Expressway is routed?

A. DEP stated that they do not know at the moment where the flow goes, but if it's a separate sewer system, the flow will go to the storm sewer.

Q. An attendee asked if Tibbetts Brook is currently being considered in the Bronx GI upgrades?

A. DEP stated that it is not included in this project but it is currently in separate conversations.

Q. An attendee asked if the DEP could explain what is a weir modification?

A. DEP stated that the work would take place within the sewer system and would involve physically raising a weir to allow more flow downstream. This was determined with the goal to 'do no harm.' The construction will take large and small storms into account.

Q. An attendee asked about a double barrel pipe traveling from CSO-29 to CSO-24.

A. DEP mentioned that the double barrel pipe they are referring to is part of the existing sewer.

Q. An attendee asked how the LTCP projects will be constructed?

A. DEP stated that construction for the projects will most likely be 'open cut' through roads and streets. This will involve road and street closures and detours, in which they will notify the community. The DEP will do its best to coordinate with the DEC with construction on future projects to prevent streets being torn up multiple times or extended detours. However, the DEP mentioned that due to other project milestones, this may not be possible for all projects.

Q. An attendee asked how much area does a pilot permeable pavement project occupy?

A. DEP stated about 25,000 square feet and that the pilot study results will be available on the DEP website.