

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

On June 26, 2012 DEP co-hosted a Citywide Public Kickoff Meeting and Open House to initiate water quality planning processes for long term control of combined sewer overflows with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The 5-hour event, held at the Newton Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Visitors Center in Brooklyn, provided overview information about DEP's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Program and included interactive "Information Stations" with poster displays; presentations given by DEP and DEC staff at two different times; and a public question and answer period following each presentation. More than 60 stakeholders from over 30 different non-profit, community planning, environmental, economic development, governmental organizations and the broader public attended the event.

The Citywide Public Kickoff Meeting and Open House was the first of many opportunities for public participation as part of the LTCP development process. As part of DEP's LTCP Public Participation Plan, posted on DEP's LTCP Program website (www.nyc.gov/dep), the public will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the development of waterbody-specific and citywide LTCPs. DEP will also use feedback from the public to continue to improve the Public Participation Plan throughout the planning process. Annual updates to the Public Participation Plan based on public feedback will be critical to sustaining a meaningful public participation process over the next several years. Below are specific questions about the Public Participation Plan asked during the kickoff meeting. DEP provides responses to each to ensure the larger community is informed of opportunities for public participation moving forward.

- I appreciate DEP's involvement. Social media and other outreach communication tools would be useful to target and educate a broader and larger audience about the LTCP process and CSOs.
 - *One of the goals of the LTCP Program and the Public Participation Plan is to target and educate the broader public and a wide range of stakeholders. A number of communication tools are described in the Public Participation Plan including use of social media to achieve this goal. DEP would appreciate any specific suggestions on which social media outlets to use and how best to use them be forwarded to LTCP@dep.nyc.gov.*
- How soon and how often will DEP meeting with Community Boards and other community groups?
 - *DEP has already begun meeting with these groups and will continue to conduct meetings with elected officials, Community Boards and other community groups early and often, to establish a process for solid, two-way communication and ensure that these groups receive information in a preferred format. The need for these meetings will be identified at the onset of each waterbody-specific LTCP development process and scheduled throughout the process to ensure these groups have the most up-to-date information to provide feedback on the LTCP development process and help ensure meaningful participation from the broader watershed community.*
- Will DEP convene a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) during the LTCP process?
 - *DEP convened CACs in the past and similar mechanisms for obtaining input from informed stakeholders and technical experts are described in the LTCP Public Participation Plan. Potential initiation of a citywide public advisory committee or expanded expert participation as*

part of the LTCP Program may be employed as needed for specific activities such as review of water quality data or alternatives evaluations.

- Will communities have input on LTCPs before they are drafted and after drafts are sent to DEC?
 - *Yes, DEP in coordination with DEC will hold public meetings at the start of each watershed specific LTCP development as well as at critical LTCP milestones including review of alternative analyses and draft plan review. However, DEP will continuously seek out public input throughout the LTCP development process.*
- Since Alley Creek is the first LTCP to be drafted, when will details be provided about when and how DEP will interact with the public?
 - *DEP will be releasing a public participation schedule prior to the kickoff meeting for the Alley Creek LTCP anticipated in early Fall 2012. All documents will be posted on DEP's LTCP Program website and forwarded to interested stakeholders within the Alley Creek watershed. A portion of the kickoff meeting will also be dedicated to presenting this public participation schedule and receiving feedback from attendees. DEP will replicate this process for the development of each waterbody-specific LTCP. In the meantime, please refer to the Public Participation Plan on DEP's website for additional details about how DEP will interact with and involve the public.*

The following is a summary of additional written and verbal public comments received during the June 26th meeting related to water quality concerns, consideration of alternatives and the overall LTCP planning process. DEP will incorporate these comments into the development of waterbody-specific LTCPs moving forward and as appropriate.

- Please provide the community with more detail about the Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) process for the waterbodies that cannot meet water quality standards including which waterbodies will go through the UAA process.
- Stakeholders, especially people who use Flushing Bay for canoe and kayaking, thank you for posting CSO advisories on the DEP website. Rowers and boaters are most concerned about dry-weather events, when pollution from other sources makes Flushing Bay unsafe for recreation. CSO advisories should be communicated to a broader public.
- Presentation slides indicate that LTCP completion for Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek would not occur until the third quarter of 2013 and second quarter of 2017, respectively. These LTCPs should be developed sooner, in coordination with their Superfund designations.
- DEP must take steps to prevent further pollution of Newtown Creek. It does not make sense to clean creek sediments, leaving an antiquated system in place to address sewage. People and urban wildlife deserve a clean creek to enjoy.
- Ecological restoration should be considered as an alternative during the LTCP process, similar to what is used on Staten Island. Ecological restoration and dredging at Newtown Creek, for example,

might result in a meaningful improvement. All agencies involved in the LTCP process should coordinate to see if new opportunities and initiatives would be possible.

- Ecological restoration would improve water quality but some departments are having issues with it because of potential shading. DEC's marine resources staff should coordinate with LTCP staff. "No go" areas should be proposed in the future, in terms of shading, barges and permanent structures.
- Please consider bioremediation as an alternative to aeration, specifically in tidal tributaries that do not support boat traffic, for example, Dutch Kills. These sites can be used for intertidal marsh restoration and introduction of filter-feeding invertebrates, to naturally clean contamination.
- DEP should more aggressively explore the use of grey water systems and provide incentives, or increase existing ones, for residents who want to use water recirculation and recycling devices. There should be improved coordination between involved agencies to promote these strategies.