

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
BROOKLYN-QUEENS AQUIFER FEASIBILITY STUDY
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

PURPOSE/FUNCTIONS

The Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is an advisory body made up of community partners from the public and private sectors. Its purpose is to assist the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in conducting its Brooklyn-Queens Aquifer (BQA) Feasibility Study, by providing guidance and input on water quality, flooding, health and related environmental issues and outreach to groups and individuals throughout the area.

The BQA Study is designed to investigate the use of groundwater from aquifers to supplement the city's drinking water supply and reduce flooding in Southeast Queens. The Study also includes a cooperative effort with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to clean up groundwater at the West Side Corporation (WSC), a DEC Class 2 hazardous waste disposal site.

The CAC will be an essential component of the Study's Community Outreach Program and will play a central role in advising DEP. It is being specifically established to:

- Provide for the representation of a variety of interests throughout project planning and implementation.
- Review project data and findings.
- Review and provide input on preliminary recommendations and alternative plans.
- As appropriate, participate in planning related to the Station 6 groundwater treatment plant, in particular the programmatic and architectural aspects of the community-use portion of the facility.
- Serve as a community liaison and communications channel, in order to maintain ongoing dialogue on project goals, issues, and concerns.
- Advise the project team with regard to planning an ongoing program of community outreach activities. This will include determining appropriate times and forums for

presenting information to Community Boards and other constituencies, in order to ensure timely receipt and consideration of public input as part of the decision-making process.

- Assist DEP in screening and selecting candidates for the Scientific Review Panel.

MEMBERSHIP

An effective CAC is a group that represents a broad variety of community interests. The CAC for the BQA Study will consist of approximately 25-30 members, including elected officials, representatives of Community Boards, civic leaders, members of environmental and neighborhood organizations, residents, and institutional representatives. It is anticipated that CAC membership may change over the duration of the project to accommodate emerging circumstances and needs. Membership changes will be considered either by the full CAC or by a membership subcommittee. This will include developing criteria for adding and removing members, making recommendations on specific membership changes, and providing orientation for new members.

Membership Responsibilities. CAC members will generally be appointed because they represent a constituency or organization in the project area. Organizational representatives must be able to speak on behalf of their group and voice its perspective by actively soliciting its members' concerns, views, and recommendations. It is important that CAC members attend meetings regularly and share their views with the entire group in order to work towards building consensus on critical project issues.

Designation of Alternates. Members are encouraged to designate one or more alternates to represent them when they are unable to attend a CAC meeting. Alternates will be subject to all of the membership responsibilities outlined above. In order for the CAC process to work effectively, all members and alternates must remain informed and up-to-date on issues pertaining to the project. Alternates will therefore receive all information and materials related to the CAC and are strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.

Subcommittees. The CAC will be a working committee. As such, it is anticipated that issue-specific subcommittees will be established as needed and at the discretion of the CAC.

Subcommittee membership will be determined by the CAC, and only members of the CAC will be appointed to serve on a subcommittee.

GOVERNANCE

Facilitation and Scheduling. CAC meetings will be facilitated by the project team. The Committee will meet monthly or more frequently, as required. The agenda, date, time, and location of meetings will be determined jointly by the CAC and project team but shall generally be the first Thursday of each month.

Process by Majority Vote. The decision-making process for the CAC will be a majority vote of members present for those items on the agenda. (A majority will be defined as half plus one of the number of CAC members present.) Items requiring a vote that are not on the agenda will be deferred to the next meeting, prior to which time they will be placed on the agenda. Agendas will be sent out with the Minutes of the previous meeting at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting.

Public Access. All CAC meetings will be open to the public, including the media. Members of the public will be allowed to speak for a period of 15 minutes at the end of each meeting, prior to any voting. The CAC may occasionally decide, by a majority vote, that it is necessary to discuss certain items in executive session. The Committee will enter into executive session under limited circumstances only and will comply with all restrictions outlined in the New York State Open Meetings (Sunshine) Law.

Meeting Documentation. All CAC meetings will be documented by means of Minutes recorded by project staff. The Minutes will reflect any decisions reached by the group, as well as dissenting opinions. Minutes will be circulated to CAC members, alternates, and meeting attendees and made available to the public and press upon request.

Distribution of Materials by CAC Members. CAC members may prepare and distribute written materials for consideration by the full committee. All materials should be forwarded to the project team for distribution to the CAC within two weeks of the next meeting in order to provide adequate time for review by committee members. All information distributed by e-mail will be sent by regular mail as well.