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LEAD AGENCY DECLARATION AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

New York City Department of Environmental Protection
Green Infrastructure Program

CEQR No. 12DEP054Y

March 8, 2012

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), assuming lead agency status, has prepared an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) in accordance with the requirements of the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process as set forth in Executive Order 91 of 1977 and its amendments, Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law establishing the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its regulations as set forth in 6NYCRR Part 617, and the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation State Environmental Review Process as required for obtaining financing under the State Revolving Fund program. Attached for your review is a copy of the EAS, parts I and II.

NYCDEP, on behalf of the City of New York, is preparing the Green Infrastructure Program as part of an adaptive management approach comprised of “green” and “grey” projects to improve water quality in priority waterbodies within the City as outlined in the New York City Green Infrastructure Plan published in September 2010.

The primary object of the Green Infrastructure Program is to reduce combined sewer overflow (CSO) and improve water quality while enhancing the City’s urban environment. The initial phase of the Green Infrastructure Program, and the subject of this environmental review, is the implementation of green infrastructure projects to manage one inch of rainfall on 1.5% of the impervious surfaces in combined sewer areas through 2015. The projects would be designed to control stormwater at its source and to reduce the need for end-of-pipe stormwater storage and treatment systems (or “grey” infrastructure) by managing stormwater through controlled release, infiltration, and evapotranspiration (“green” infrastructure technologies).

Almost two-thirds of New York City’s sewer system is a combined system that collects both sanitary wastewater and stormwater runoff from properties and streets. During heavy rainfall or snowmelt, flows can exceed the capacity of the sewer system and the treatment plant. To manage flow levels at the treatment plants and to prevent flooding upstream during rain events, New York City’s 149 miles of interceptor sewers are designed with “regulators” that have overflow weirs to divert combined stormwater and wastewater into New York City’s surrounding waterways when flows exceed the capacity of the system (twice dry weather flow).

In 2008, the City published its *Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan* and NYCDEP began to design and build green infrastructure pilot projects to test various technologies around the City. The pilots are installed with monitoring equipment to determine the level of performance for each type of installation; the monitoring period is currently underway and will continue over the next few years. The data collected as part of the pilot projects will be integrated into the design and approach for the proposed Green Infrastructure Program. In 2010 the City published the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan which identified key components to using green and gray technologies to manage stormwater and improve water quality in a cost-effective manner.

In 2011 the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) modified a 2005 Consent Order covering combined sewer overflows to include green infrastructure and cost-effective grey infrastructure for meeting water quality standards. The Consent Order requires that the City manage the equivalent of stormwater generated by one inch of precipitation on 10% of impervious surfaces citywide in combined sewer areas by 2030, starting with 1.5% of impervious surfaces citywide in combined sewer areas by December 31, 2015.

The primary areas by which the Green Infrastructure Program would be implemented are the Green Infrastructure Capital Program, the Green Infrastructure Grant Program, and Neighborhood Demonstration Areas. The Green Infrastructure Capital Program represents the large majority of funding NYCDEP has budgeted for green infrastructure program implementation, which would mostly be installed in street and sidewalk right of way spaces, on public buildings and on other publicly owned hardscapes such as playgrounds, schoolyards and parking lots. The Green Infrastructure Grant Program is designed to encourage partnerships between NYCDEP and local stewards and community groups through the funding of green infrastructure projects on private property. The Neighborhood Demonstration Areas consist of three neighborhoods, one each in the Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek and Bronx River watersheds, where some of the first projects will be built and where the before and after flow conditions will be closely monitored to further the understanding of the effects of green infrastructure from a neighborhood perspective. The Green Infrastructure Program would be implemented alongside an outreach effort responsible for ensuring that the public understands the Program's goals and objectives.

Typical green infrastructure technologies that are likely to be employed in the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Program include rooftop systems (such as green roofs and blue roofs); right of way installations such as bioswales and stormwater Greenstreets; infiltration systems such as rain gardens, porous paving, or rainwater harvesting; and detention systems such as stormwater chambers and perforated pipe systems.

If you have any objections to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection leading the environmental review for purposes of facilitating local and State review, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Terrell Estes at (718) 595-4473.

Written comments should be addressed to Terrell Estes, Director of Wastewater Review and Special Projects, at the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis 11th Floor, 59-17 Junction Boulevard, Flushing, New York 11373 or by email to terrelle@dep.nyc.gov.



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