



Carter H. Strickland Jr.  
Commissioner

Angela Licata  
Deputy Commissioner  
Environmental Planning and  
Analysis  
alicata@dep.nyc.gov

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
Flushing, NY 11373  
T: (718) 595-4398  
F: (718) 595-4479

NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF DRAFT GENERIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
AND PUBLIC MEETING

CEQR No.: 07DEP063R

Project: Mid-Island Bluebelt Drainage Plans

September 23, 2011

A Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) has been prepared by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the proposed Mid-Island Bluebelt Drainage Plans. Acting as lead agency and in accordance with the requirements of the *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR)* process as set forth in Executive Order 91 of 1977 and its amendments and Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law establishing the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as set forth in 6NYCRR Part 617, DEP is hereby certifying this Draft GEIS as complete.

A Positive Declaration and a Draft Scope of Work for this Draft GEIS was issued on April 12, 2010. A public hearing on the Draft Scope of Work was held on May 16, 2010 in Staten Island. The period for submitting written comments remained open until May 31, 2010. A Final Scope of Work was issued on September 30, 2010, finalizing the scope of analysis for the Draft GEIS based on comments received. This Draft GEIS was prepared based on the methodologies and issues identified and described within the Final Scope of Work.

This Draft GEIS is being circulated for public review with this Notice of Completion. For a hard copy of the Draft GEIS, please contact the person listed at the end of this Notice. The Draft GEIS will also be available for inspection by the public at the repositories listed below and on the DEP website ([www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)).

One public hearing will be held to receive oral and written comments on the Draft GEIS. This hearing will be held on:

Thursday, October 27, 2011  
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM  
Staten Island Community Board #2 Offices  
Community Services Building, Sea View Hospital  
460 Brielle Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314

The public comment period will remain open for an additional 30 days after the close of the public hearing. Written comments will be accepted until November 27, 2011. Notification of this public hearing will be sent to all parties receiving this Notice of Completion and will appear in regional and local newspapers at least 14 days before the hearing. This will be followed by preparation and circulation of the Final Generic EIS, which will include written responses to address public comments made on the Draft GEIS. Written comments should be sent to the contact person listed at the end of this Notice.

### **Project Description**

On behalf of the City of New York, DEP proposes to amend the drainage plans of three watersheds in the Mid-Island region of Staten Island, Oakwood Beach, New Creek and South Beach, an area approximately 5,000 acres in size. The project area is generally bounded on the west by Great Kills Park (within the Gateway National Recreation Area [GNRA]) and the mapped but unbuilt Willowbrook Parkway right-of-way, and on the east by the Staten Island Expressway. The northern boundary extends along a number of Staten Island Greenbelt parks including LaTourette Park, Richmond County Country Club and Reeds Basket Willow Swamp Park. The southern boundary is Lower Bay. The Mid-Island watersheds are located within Staten Island Community Boards 2 and 3.

The three proposed amended drainage plans would provide comprehensive stormwater management and address chronic flooding of streets and properties in Mid-Island while preserving and enhancing existing wetlands under DEP's Bluebelt Program. Best management practices (BMPs) would be included to provide improved stormwater conveyance, attenuation of stormwater velocities, management and control of stormwater volumes and pollutant removal to reduce flooding of private properties and public streets in the three watersheds. In total, 31 BMPs would be constructed within the watersheds on land that DEP has acquired or is in the process of acquiring, or land owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) or New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). In addition, the proposed action would construct three new outfalls to Lower Bay. These outfalls are proposed to convey stormwater runoff to Lower Bay to further reduce local flooding. The proposed action also includes new designs for additional and upgraded sanitary sewers for wastewater conveyance to the Oakwood Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and street reconstruction after sewer construction.

DEP's Staten Island Bluebelt Program was initiated in the late 1980s as a multi-purpose program to protect and restore natural resources while providing appropriate stormwater management. The Bluebelt Program was launched by initiating property acquisition for permanent protection of the land ensuring its use for stormwater management. Bluebelt wetlands are then integrated into the stormwater management system. Thus, drainage is controlled without constructing extensive sewers that would otherwise fill in and eliminate wetlands. Moreover, wetlands are restored and enhanced under the Bluebelt Program. With the success of the Bluebelt Program in other watersheds, the concept of utilizing existing wetlands for stormwater management is now proposed for Mid-Island watersheds where a large wetland complex still exists and upgraded sewer infrastructure is needed.

DEP has determined that the appropriate approach is to prepare a GEIS because the proposed project is in the planning phase, designs are conceptual, anticipated project build-out is 2043 and numerous capital projects would need to be implemented over several decades to develop detailed designs and construct. The attached Draft GEIS presents the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS) for amending the existing drainage plans for the three watersheds and was prepared well in advance of project build-out to inform the amended drainage plan approval process and obtain the necessary permits from other agencies (see below list of Required Permits and Approvals).

This Draft GEIS assesses the potential for environmental impacts and related mitigation to occur under the proposed project. In accordance with *CEQR* guidelines, potential impacts were examined comprehensively and the technical analyses are based on proposed drainage plan amendments and RWCS conceptual BMP designs. As capital projects to implement the amended drainage plans are initiated, additional information and studies would be completed to develop final designs and assess potential significant adverse environmental impacts. Minor Modifications, per *CEQR* and if necessary, would document potential significant adverse impacts identified during design phases that differ from the initial findings or are not assessed as part of the Final GEIS for the proposed project.

#### **Required Permits and Approvals**

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for actions within navigable waters (e.g., construction of structures or activities within freshwater or tidal wetlands) as per Title 33 Code of the Federal Register, Parts 320-330<sup>1</sup>;
- NYSDEC permits for activities in tidal and freshwater wetlands and adjacent areas as per Article 24 6NYCRR Part 663 Freshwater Wetlands Permits and Article 25 6NYCRR Part 661 Tidal Wetlands;
- NYSDEC permits for activities within coastal erosion hazard area that is designated along the Lower Bay shoreline as per Article 34 6NYCRR Part 505 (variance under subsection 505.13);
- NYSDEC State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permits for surface water outlets and discharges in accordance with Article 17 6NYCRR Part 750-757;
- NYSDEC approval under the SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity;
- NYSDEC permits for use of herbicides in and around wetlands (to control invasive plant species, such as Japanese knotweed);
- NYSDEC incidental take permits for endangered and threatened species of fish and wildlife and species of special concern in accordance with Environmental Conservation Law 11-0535

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to 33 CFR Section 320.3(e), coordination will be required with the U.S. Coast Guard for the proposed outfalls in tidal waters and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-Fisheries Service (NOAA-FS) and National Marine Fisheries Service-Protected Resources Division (NMFS-PRD) may also require notification if the USACE determines that the proposed project may affect species or habitat under their purview.

Part 182 where impacts have been identified with respect to rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife that is protected under this law;

- Construction of any BMPs on NYSDEC property (e.g., Richmond County Country Club) requires NYSDEC approval in accordance with all applicable regulations including a concurrent use and occupancy agreement;
- Licenses and agreements between DEP and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for activities within the Willowbrook Parkway right-of-way;
- New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) coastal zone consistency review under the permit review process (all of the watersheds in their entirety are in the coastal zone);
- Licenses and agreements between DEP and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for activities under the Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT) tracks;
- Permits, licenses and agreements between DEP and DPR for activities in City parkland including tree clearing (e.g., Reeds Basket Willow Swamp Park, Last Chance Pond Park, and Willowbrook Parkway right-of-way, since it is managed by DPR) including the need for any controls relative to Asian Longhorned Beetles (although not currently in the City's quarantine zone these areas may be added at a future date);
- City Planning Commission (CPC) authorizations for work in the Special South Richmond Development District (SSRDD) and the Staten Island Special Natural Area District (NA-1) as well as coastal zone consistency review;
- CPC and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene approval of the proposed amended drainage plans;
- Review by Staten Island Community Boards 2 and 3, the Staten Island Borough President, CPC, and the City Council for future street de-mappings related to siting of BMPs in street beds, and acquisition of sewer easements as per the requirements of ULURP;
- DOT approval for any in-street work; and
- License agreements or other forms of approvals with private landowners for any temporary work on private lands and sewer easements for any permanent infrastructure that would be on private lands and would require maintenance access.

### **Significant Impacts and Mitigation**

A full assessment of potential impacts was undertaken in preparation of the Draft GEIS. The proposed project has potential significant adverse impacts in three natural resources areas: vegetation and trees, rare, threatened, and endangered species, and tidal wetlands. DEP has examined mitigation measures to reduce the potential significant adverse impacts identified above where feasible or practicable.

With respect to vegetation and trees, DEP would develop site-specific tree and topographic surveys as the first step in the final design process for the purposes of further protecting large trees and tree stands, and determining the minimum necessary tree clearing. DEP would also develop a tree replacement plan for trees that could not be avoided and would need to be cleared. DEP would review final designs with DPR and NYSDEC for BMPs sited on City or State

parklands and would coordinate with NYSDEC on tree clearing as part of the freshwater wetland permit process and DPR on tree replacement plans.

With respect to rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife and plant species, DEP would compile the relevant seasonal data and perform site investigations to determine nesting or foraging at BMP sites and to confirm the presence or absence of plants in sensitive areas (e.g., wooded hummocks) as the initial step in the final design process. DEP would incorporate information into final BMP designs to avoid foraging, nesting and sensitive areas and incorporate additional impact avoidance measures into the proposed project to mitigate impacts. DEP would provide inventory data to DPR and NYSDEC to support their review of final designs and NYSDEC's permitting processes, as necessary.

With respect to tidal wetlands, in coordination with DPR, DEP has identified an area for potential tidal wetland creation at DPR's Crescent Beach Park. DEP will continue coordination with DPR and discussions with NYSDEC and USACE to identify additional potential wetland mitigation sites, as necessary.

These impacts are unavoidable as they are a function of the proposed BMP site locations within the watersheds, which require siting along existing stream channels and within the watershed wetlands, to achieve the project objectives of comprehensive stormwater management, flood reduction and wetland enhancement. These impacts have been minimized to the extent possible in the proposed amended drainage plans and would be further minimized through proposed mitigation and final designs. For a detailed description of potential significant adverse impacts and related mitigation measures, please refer to Natural Resources sections in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, Chapter 8, "Mitigation," and Chapter 9, "Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts."

### **Contact Person**

Erin Morey, Project Manager  
New York City Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Environmental Planning and Analysis  
59-17 Junction Boulevard, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, New York 11373  
Phone: (718) 595-6443  
Fax: (718) 595-4479  
Email: [erinm@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:erinm@dep.nyc.gov)

  
Angela Licata  
Deputy Commissioner

Attached: Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement  
Repository List

c: Diane Savino, NY State Senator-District 23  
Andrew Lanza, NY State Senator-District 24  
Nicole Malliotakis, NY State Assemblyperson-District 60  
Lou Tobacco, NY State Assemblyperson-District 62  
James Molinaro, Staten Island Borough President  
James Oddo, NYC Councilperson-District 50  
Vincent Ignizio, NYC Councilperson-District 51  
Dana Magee, Staten Island Community Board 2 Chairperson  
Debra Derrico, Staten Island Community Board 2 District Manager  
Frank Morano, Staten Island Community Board 3 Chairperson  
Charlene Wagner, Staten Island Community Board 3 District Manager  
Robert Kulikowski, NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination  
Michael McSweeney, NYC City Clerk and Clerk of the Council  
Robert Dobruskin, DCP  
Jackie Harris, DCP  
Wilbur Woods, DCP  
Len Garcia-Duran, DCP  
Jim Garin, DEP  
Dana Gumb, DEP  
Julie Stein, DEP  
Terrell Estes, DEP  
Erin Morey, DEP  
Narayana Venugopalan, DDC  
Hervé Carrié, DDC  
Adena Long, DPR  
Kevin Forma, DPR  
Mike Browne, DPR  
Bill Tai, DPR  
Gina Santucci, LPC  
Amanda Sutphin, LPC  
Naim Rasheed, DOT  
George Stafford, NYS Department of State Coastal Zone Consistency  
Venetia Lannon, NYSDEC  
Steve Zahn, NYSDEC  
John Cryan, NYSDEC  
Joe Pane, NYSDEC  
Uchenna Madu, NYSDOT  
Ruth Pierpont, NYSOPRHP  
Stacey Jensen, USACE  
Mary Ann Miller, USACE  
Sandeep Mehrotra, Hazen & Sawyer  
Robert White, AKRF, Inc.

## **Repositories**

Dongan Hills NY Public Library Branch  
1617 Richmond Road  
Staten Island, NY 10304

Great Kills NY Public Library Branch  
56 Giffords Lane  
Staten Island, NY 10308

Huguenot Park NY Public Library Branch  
830 Huguenot Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10312

New Dorp NY Public Library Branch  
309 New Dorp Lane  
Staten Island, NY 10306

Port Richmond NY Public Library Branch  
75 Bennett Street  
Staten Island, NY 10302

Richmondtown NY Public Library Branch  
200 Clarke Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10306

South Beach NY Public Library Branch  
21-25 Robin Road  
Staten Island, NY 10305

St. George NY Public Library Branch  
5 Central Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10301

Todt-Hill-Westerleigh NY Public Library Branch  
2550 Victory Boulevard  
Staten Island, NY 10314

Staten Island Community Board 2 Offices  
Sea View Hospital, Lou Caravone Community Service Building  
460 Brielle Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10314

Staten Island Community Board 3 Offices  
655-218 Rossville Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10309

NYC Department of Environmental protection  
59-17 Junction Blvd., 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373