

Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Bronx River Public Meeting – Summary of Meeting and Public Comments Received

On February 12, 2015 DEP hosted a Public Meeting to initiate the water quality planning process for long term control of combined sewer overflows in the Bronx River waterbody. The two and a half hour event, held at the Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education at 290 Simpson St., 6th Floor, Bronx, NY 10459 served to provide overview information about DEP's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Program, present information on the Bronx River watershed characteristics and status of waterbody improvement projects, obtain public information on waterbody uses in Bronx River, and describe additional opportunities for public input and outreach. The presentation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/dep/ltcp>. Approximately 78 stakeholders from 36 different non-profit, community, planning, environmental, economic development, governmental organizations and the broader public attended the event, and 3 media representatives.

The Bronx River LTCP Kickoff Public Meeting was an opportunity for public participation in the LTCP. As part of DEP's LTCP Public Participation Plan, Bronx River Long Term Control Planning process will be posted on DEP's website, shown above. The public will have more opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the development of Bronx River waterbody-specific LTCP. Specific questions asked during the public kickoff meeting are summarized below with DEP's responses for each.

- What is a CSO?
 - CSO stands for “combined sewer overflow”. New York City, like many older urban communities, is largely serviced by a combined sewer system where stormwater that falls on roofs, streets and sidewalks, and wastewater from homes and businesses are both carried through a single sewer line to treatment plants. On some rainy days, when the sewer system is at full capacity, a diluted mixture of rain water and sewage can be released into local waterways. This is called a combined sewer overflow (CSO).

- Does snow melt cause CSOs or does it only happen in warm weather?
 - It is not necessarily a warm weather activity; CSOs occur during large storm events and is not typically caused by snow melt. Sometimes if it warms very quickly, snow melt could cause a CSO.

- How does the dry and wet sampling data compare?
 - As the data slides show, water quality is better in dry weather.

- You mentioned there is something going on upstream causing poor water quality upstream of BR1; but it is not unknown what is going on, right?
 - Correct, there are known illicit discharges in Westchester County and they are under Consent Order mandate to address those.

- How many samples were collected?
 - 12 dry and 34 wet weather samples were collected at each of the 9 sampling locations.

- What is a green roof?
 - Green roofs are installed on rooftops and consist of a vegetated layer on top of engineered soil and a drainage layer. DEP builds green roofs to collect rainwater before it goes into sewer system and contributes to combined sewer overflows.
- What are permeable pavers?
 - Permeable pavers are installed in sidewalks, walkways, or parking lots. The pavers have void spaces that allow rainwater to “infiltrate” into stones and soils below. DEP constructs permeable pavers to collect rainwater before it goes to the sewer system and contributes to combined sewer overflows.
- Are you still doing the rain barrel program and can you explain what they do?
 - Yes, the program is still active. For more information visit www.nyc.gov/dep. Rain barrels collect rainwater from rooftops and store it for non-potable uses such as watering lawns and gardens. By harvesting rainwater for these purposes, homeowners are able to save money on their water bills.
- How many trees have been planted in Bloomberg’s million tree program?
 - The MillionTreesNYC program is different from the NYC Green Infrastructure Program. DEP’s understanding is that the program is very close to meeting its 2015 goal. For more information on the MillionTreesNYC program or to request a tree in front of your house, call 311 or visit MillionTreesNYC.org.
- How was the 10% Green Infrastructure goal determined?
 - In 2010 DEP released the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan which set the goal to manage 1” of stormwater runoff from 10% of the impervious area of the combined sewer areas of New York City. Each watershed then has its own unique green infrastructure target, which when added together equals the 10% goal by 2030.
- Are there special structural needs for green roofs?
 - It depends on the property, but yes, the building must have adequate structural capacity to accommodate a green roof. A Professional Structural Engineer should determine the structural capacity of a building before a property owner decides to construct a green roof.
- What is a roof farm?
 - A rooftop farm is similar to a green roof but has deeper soils and edible or agricultural plants. Examples include the 1-acre rooftop farm at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- What is the difference in a soil bed?
 - There are two standard types of green roof systems. An *extensive* green roof is 4” or less and an *intensive* green have 4” or more. Rooftop farms are considered intensive green roofs and can have a soil depth up to 12”.

- Who maintains bioswales?
 - DEP maintains all of the bioswales its funds. Maintenance responsibilities include a variety of activities from removing litter to caring for the plants. DEP has individual maintenance agreements for green infrastructure that is located on public property such as public housing or public schools,
- Has the predictive modeling been adjusted to account for the added GI and explain the impact?
 - The green infrastructure target for the Bronx River watershed is to manage 1” of stormwater runoff from 14% of the impervious area of the combined sewer areas. Current modeling projects a 10% CSO reduction in the Bronx River watershed once this green infrastructure target is reached. Green infrastructure collects stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as streets, sidewalks and rooftops in order to reduce the runoff that contributes to CSOs.
- What are you doing about stormwater?
 - There is a separate MS4 Permit that is coming in March/April that will address SW impacts.
- Do you have a date set of the 2nd public meeting?
 - There is no firm data but it will likely be in April.
- Why is stormwater combined with sanitary sewer flows? Why not separate?
 - Sewer separation helps if flooding is the concern but doesn't necessarily make sense to reduce CSOs because of the increased stormwater runoff that overflows , more frequently to the waterbody which may have a negative impact on water quality.
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- What is dissolved oxygen improvement?
 - Aeration, like the bubblers you see in the parks.
- What other waterbody would flow be relocated to?
 - CSO flows would directly discharge into the East River rather than flowing through the Bronx River into the East River.
- Today we heard from you; what are you getting from us?
 - We are collecting your questions and live feedback plus soliciting emailed and other future feedback.
- How will the new water quality standards impact the LTCPs?
 - All LTCPs have included evaluations against the new standards.
- When is the LTCP Report available for public review?
 - The Bronx River LTCP will be submitted to DEC on June 30, 2015. It will be posted on the DEP website and is available for public comment then.
- Will DEC have input on the LTCP Report?

- Yes, they will provide comments once the LTCP is submitted. DEP and DEC also have regular meetings throughout the development of the LTCP where input and guidance is provided on the analyses and development of the LTCP.
- You may need to dumb-down the presentation to reach the broader audience.
 - Yes, we are trying to strike a balance of broad stroke concepts and details behind it all.

Meeting Summary prepared by:

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