

## Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Long Term Control Plan Public Meeting #2 Public Status Update Meeting

### Summary of Meeting and Public Comments

On October 19, 2017 the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) hosted a public meeting to provide a status update for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) for Jamaica Bay and Tributaries. The nearly two-hour event, held at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Center in Broad Channel, Queens, provided stakeholders with information regarding: the one-year time extension for the Jamaica Bay and Tributaries LTCP; details about planned projects in the Jamaica Bay watershed; an overview of Southeast Queens Green Infrastructure and Bluebelt Projects; and described additional opportunities for public input and outreach.

Approximately 15 stakeholders from 7 different non-profit, community, planning, environmental, economic development, and governmental organizations and the broader public attended the event, as did representatives from DEP and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Information presented included:

- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Committed CSO Mitigation Projects;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Projected Wet Weather Volumes;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Revised CSO LTCP Submittal Date;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries LTCP Status and Schedule Update;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Regional Ongoing and New Projects;
- Southeast Queens Program Overview;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Green Infrastructure and Bluebelt Projects;
- Jamaica Bay and Tributaries Public Outreach and Education;
- Summary of Next Steps, Additional Information and Resources; and
- Discussion and Question & Answer Session.

The Jamaica Bay and Tributaries LTCP Public Status Update Meeting provided an opportunity for DEP and the public to discuss the extension and other projects within Jamaica Bay watershed. The following summarizes the questions and comments from attendees, as well as responses given. The presentation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/dep/ltcp>.

**Q1: An attendee asked if there is an outfall discharge pipe from the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).**

A1: DEP stated yes and that the Jamaica WWTP is shown with the red triangle symbol on slide 6. The actual outfall pipe is not shown on the slide but it discharges in the middle of Grassy Bay [speaker pointed to location].

**Q2: An attendee asked where is the JFK Airport expansion and how does it impact the LTCP.**

A2: DEP stated that it is uncertain of the details surrounding the expansion but there is a large interceptor which runs along the northeastern portion of the JFK Airport that needs to be considered during the airports expansion.

**Q3: An attendee asked when the Spring Creek Pilot results will be available.**

A3: DEP stated that the results are expected to be posted on DEP's website in the spring of 2018. DEP explained that the pilot does not include dechlorination but that the three approved LTCP projects that include chlorination will also include dechlorination.

**Q4: An attendee asked how dechlorination is performed.**

A4: DEP stated that another chemical is added to the wastewater, sodium metabisulphite. The 26<sup>th</sup> Ward WWTP has been discharging chlorinated effluent for several years at concentrations of about 2 mg/L. DEP has performed several evaluations, but have found no detrimental ecologic impacts.

**Q5: An attendee asked if there is any concern about the impacts of disinfection to wildlife.**

A5: DEP is aware that community groups have expressed concerns about the impacts of disinfection to wildlife and stated that any disinfection projects will include environmental assessments during the design phase.

**Q6: An attendee asked how has the shut-down of the Jamaica water wells impacted groundwater and the ability to infiltrate rainfall into the ground.**

A6: DEP stated that there are ongoing discussions regarding this issue. Evaluations are underway to study the water quality impacts of pumping groundwater to tributaries of Jamaica Bay.

**Q7: An attendee asked if the intent of the sewer build-out is to separate the sewers.**

A7: DEP stated that the primary goal is to address flooding and identify early action sewer improvements for expediting relief in areas that are flood prone. DEP is also looking at GI opportunities for intercepting runoff before it enters the sewer system.

**Q8: An attendee asked if new storm sewers will increase CSO discharges.**

A8: DEP stated that new sewers are being designed for the purposes of improving conveyance capacity and relieving flooding. The new sewers will typically divert stormwater from combined and sanitary sewers to separate storm sewers, thereby reducing CSO discharges.

**Q9: An attendee asked if catch basin hoods are included in the sewer build-out for the purposes of floatables control.**

A9: DEP stated that hoods will be provided on catch basins.

**Q10: An attendee asked if DEP has considered how they will address contaminants introduced to the soils by GI projects.**

A10: DEP stated that they have been collecting data for nearly five years on GI assets to determine whether pollutants in storm runoff are captured or bypass the facility. They are also looking at maintenance procedures for proper removal and disposal of contaminants. This may require periodic removal of the top layer of permeable soil media or other measures to maintain facility performance and address captured pollutants.

**Q11: An attendee asked if DEP is looking at newer forms of GI.**

A11: DEP stated that they are looking at strategies used in other communities and countries. Copenhagen is particularly aggressive in their application of GI. While allowing street flooding may not be a strategy that is appropriate for DEP, other strategies may be adaptable to NYC. Pilot studies are being performed. Some newer approaches include joint City/school owned parks which will provide benefits to the school children, as well as the surrounding neighborhood. At JHS 218, a synthetic turf field was installed along with trees and permeable pavers in place of the original paved playground.

**Q12: An attendee stated that rain barrels are provided to interested homeowners and asked if there are programs with incentives for installing cisterns to capture runoff and re-introduce it to the ground.**

A12: DEP stated that currently there is no program to provide incentives for installation of cisterns. However, the team will bring this thought back to MS4 program leadership for consideration. DEP also has a robust rain barrel giveaway program.

**Q13: An attendee asked if Bluebelt projects will be an issue with attracting birds to the airports.**

A13: DEP stated it will review and follow-up on the question.

**Q14: An attendee asked if DEP has a design center for GI.**

A14: DEP stated that standard details, design criteria, and capacity requirements are provided on DEP's website.

**Q15: An attendee asked if standards have been developed for cloudburst designs and for GI to be applied in separate storm sewer areas.**

A15: DEP stated that these standards are under development and cloudburst designs are being piloted.

**Q16: An attendee asked if rain gardens are the same as bioswales.**

A16: DEP stated that they recently changed the terminology to rain gardens instead of bioswales.

**Q17: An attendee asked if DEP considers the impact of oysters on reducing the nitrogen loads.**

A17: DEP stated that the impact of oysters on nitrogen loading to the Bay is not currently considered. While it is not clear whether the impacts can be accurately measured and accounted for in determining nitrogen allocations, the water quality will ultimately benefit from oyster beds.

**Q18: An attendee asked if year 2040 is still used for LTCP planning and design.**

A18: DEP stated that this is correct.

**Q19: An attendee stated that Long Island directs most of its stormwater runoff back into the ground and asked if it is possible in the Jamaica watershed as well.**

A19: DEP stated that due to the groundwater levels, the poor infiltration rates of the soils in some areas of the watershed and the high level of impervious cover, DEP does not believe that this is feasible in Jamaica.

Attendees expressed concerns that application of GI will further increase the groundwater table and the frequency of basement flooding.

**Q20: An attendee asked about resiliency projects within Jamaica Bay watershed.**

A20: DEP stated that resiliency is taken into consideration in planning projects as they evolve. Coordination is ongoing.

**Q21: An attendee asked if new stormwater retention requirements will address the runoff associated with the proposed redevelopment of downtown Jamaica.**

A21: DEP stated that builders are required to comply with the 2012 Stormwater Performance Standard and many install detention tanks. It is expected that new development will expand upon existing facilities for compliance with the stormwater requirements. DEP is also assessing wastewater capacity needs associated with the more aggressive rezoning of the Jamaica Redevelopment Zone.

**Q22: An attendee asked if new projects will require LEED certification.**

A22: DEP stated that they do not require LEED certification, but stormwater management practices will need to be addressed and coordinated among agencies.

**Q23: An attendee asked if new school toilets are using grey water.**

A23: DEP stated that the new school toilets installed through the conservation program are not using grey water; they use potable water. Low flow toilets are being installed.

**Q24: An attendee asked if inclusion of GI will allow developers to build more floors on buildings.**

A24: DEP stated that not necessarily, but DEP is discussing stormwater banking and credits to encourage developers to maximize the management and control of stormwater runoff.

**Q25: An attendee asked if DEP has a policy requiring the usage of waterless urinals.**

A25: DEP stated not yet.

**Q26: An attendee asked how is the \$1.7 billion in storm sewer build-out improvements being funded.**

A26: DEP stated that capital projects such as the sewer build-out are funded through water rates and the capital fund. The latest 10 year capital program is budgeted for about \$16.3 billion, but extends beyond storm and sanitary sewer improvements. This budget covers all DEP programs. The \$1.7 billion storm sewer program has been encumbered. Further funds will be committed for future projects.