



BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

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December 2, 2019

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Vincent Sapienza
Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
59-17 Junction Blvd.
Flushing NY, 11373

Dear Commissioner Sapienza,

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The Environment and Sanitation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 is pleased to support the NYC Department of Environmental Protection's plan to daylight Tibbetts Brook as part of its Combined Sewer Overflow reduction effort in its Open Waters Citywide Long Term Control Plan. The DEP proposal, which was presented to our community on October 2, 2019, embraces the principal tenets of Bronx Community Board 8's January 2018 resolution of record on the Long Term Control Plan. That resolution calls on DEP to collaborate with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to "treat the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook inside and outside of Van Cortlandt Park as a critical Green Infrastructure project." Daylighting Tibbetts Brook has been a Bronx community priority for decades. DEP's Option 2, which reroutes Tibbetts Brook from the Broadway sewer to the planned "Putnam Trail South" along the CSX rail corridor in open channel, is a giant step forward and demonstrates, we believe, the immense return on investment of Green Infrastructure projects in general.

To maximize the effectiveness of Option 2, the Environment and Sanitation Committee recommends that DEP look closely at all available options at 230th Street to remove Tibbetts Brook's water from the sewer system and reduce the burden on W056, a Tier 1 outfall site in the City of New York. These options include routing water from Van Cortlandt Lake and Tibbetts Brook into the Harlem River and innovative water reuse operations, such as recycling, irrigation, and ground source heat generation at the site, which is contiguous to NYCHA's Marble Hill Houses and other high density residential buildings.

The Environment and Sanitation Committee also takes this opportunity to applaud DEP for its role in seeking a resolution to the current impasse over the acquisition of the CSX Railroad right of way. DEP's Long Term Control Plan in Bronx Community District 8 may well shape its outcome. In 2011, Bronx Community Board 8 approved a ULURP for the NYC Department of Parks to acquire this property for the purpose of creating a linear park. Our committee supports all DEP efforts to maintain the natural bottom for Tibbetts Brook along this future park and thanks the agency for its collaboration with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation on its recent underground surveys conducted to determine underlying conditions.

*Serving the neighborhoods of Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights,
Marble Hill, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Village*

Lastly, we recommend that DEP take the economic model of the Tibbets Brook daylighting – which promises to yield the best return on investment in terms of CSO reduction in the Citywide LTCP – as an opportunity to implement Green Infrastructure installations and operations in Bronx Community District 8 as the “preferred alternative” for CSO reduction. Since 2015, the Environment and Sanitation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 has collaborated with the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality to identify flood-prone and runoff areas of Community Board 8 and advocate for CSO reduction through rain gardens, enhanced tree pits, green roofs, and enhancement of wetlands. We applaud the modification to DEP’s Green Infrastructure Grant Program to make the financial terms and conditions less onerous for grantees, and seek to work closely with the agency on other green infrastructure programs such as Public Retrofits, Right of Way, and the new Private Incentive Program.

To that end, we recommend that DEP take full advantage of local expertise and national benchmarks and invest in consultancies, training, and best management practices that will ensure the effectiveness of its current green infrastructure operations, expand its programs, meet its DEC-mandated Green Infrastructure spending goals, and optimize their contribution to the Long Term Control Plan.

The Environment and Sanitation Committee is truly grateful that DEP has listened to Bronx Community Board 8’s past resolutions concerning the Long Term Control Plan in this district and is prepared to serve as an active partner in the pursuit of its goals.

Sincerely,


Rosemary Ginty,
Chair, Bronx Community Board 8

Robert Fanuzzi,
Chair, Environment and Sanitation Committee

CC: Angela Licata, Deputy Commissioner
Pinar Balci, Assistant Commissioner
Mikelle Adgate, Senior Advisor Strategic Planning