



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

APR 19 2018

The Honorable Stephen T. Levin,
New York City Council, District 33
410 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

RE: Resolution of the Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group

Dear Council Member Levin,

On April 4, 2018, you received from the Gowanus Canal Superfund Site Community Advisory Group (CAG) a copy of a resolution passed by the CAG on March 27 proposing a Community Visioning Process for the north end of the canal. I am writing you to encourage your involvement in the visioning process, which is a process that gives members of the community another opportunity for thoughtful engagement as EPA continues its important work to clean up the canal.

As you know, the north end of the Gowanus Canal is where the City of New York will be constructing a combined sewer overflow (CSO) retention tank. That project is required as an important element of EPA's 2013 Superfund cleanup decision for the site.

EPA has also directed the National Grid company, a potentially responsible party (PRP) for the site, to design the necessary excavation of soil contaminated with coal tar from beneath the swimming pool area of the Thomas Greene Park. EPA will be directing National Grid and possibly other PRPs to carry out this project, which will require the removal of the pool and associated recreational facilities; the temporary replacement of the pool during the construction work; and the subsequent restoration of the pool and associated facilities.

The March 27 CAG Resolution proposes an active community engagement and visioning process with the CAG and other community stakeholders. Among the activities that the Resolution suggests will have an impact on local businesses and residents are several for which EPA has responsibility under the Superfund program. These include the design and construction of the CSO retention tanks (including the above-ground elements of the tanks); the removal of contaminated soil from the Thomas Greene Park and the temporary and permanent pool and related park facility replacement projects; and the retention and restoration of historic structures.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of EPA's Superfund program and we have long encouraged active community engagement regarding the potential impacts of Superfund cleanups, including the design of construction projects required to carry out such cleanups. For the Gowanus Canal, we have worked closely with the CAG to provide this kind of input. We

would welcome additional timely community input through the sort of visioning process proposed by the recent CAG Resolution.

If the proposed visioning process is initiated, it will be important for all parties to be cognizant of the ambitious schedules to which the cleanup projects will be held. We anticipate making final decisions quite soon about the cleanup of coal tar contamination beneath the park and pool, and the size of the above-ground portion of the CSO retention tank. I note that technical decisions pertinent to the cleanup work would, in any case, not be appropriate subjects for the proposed visioning process. As EPA makes such technical decisions, we will continue our practice of taking into account the community's concerns and priorities, and keeping the public fully apprised.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further. You can reach me at 212-637-5000, or your staff can speak with Sophia Rini, Acting Chief of the Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Branch, Public Affairs Division, at 212-637-3670.

*Best
Wishes*

Sincerely,



Peter D. Lopez
Regional Administrator

Cc's:

Honorable Nydia Velazquez, Congresswoman, NY 7th District
Honorable Velmanette Montgomery, State Senator, 25th District
Honorable Jo Anne Simon, Assemblymember, Assembly District 52
Dr. Feniosky Peña-Mora, Commissioner, Department of Design and Construction
Vincent Sapienza, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection
Marty Maher, Brooklyn Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Mitchell J. Silver, Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Honorable Inez D. Barron, Council Member, District 42
Honorable Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Council Member, District 36
Honorable Laurie A. Cumbo, Council Member, District 35
Honorable Chaim M. Deutsch, Council Member, District 48
Honorable Rafael L. Espinal, Jr., Council Member, District 37
Honorable Carlos Menchaca, Council Member, District 38
Honorable Antonio Reynoso, Council Member, District 34
Honorable Mark Treyger, Council Member, District 47
Honorable Kalman Yeger, Council Member, District 44
National Resource Damages (NRD) Trustees
Gowanus Canal Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)
Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group