



GOWANUS CANAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

your local voice for Superfund

For more information: www.GowanusCAG.org

The following CAG resolution requests formal consideration by the indicated parties to conduct activities related to the Gowanus Canal Cleanup with regard to the concerns and interests of the Gowanus community.

TITLE: Improving Emergency Safe Access - Gowanus Canal Superfund Site

TO: United States Environmental Protection Agency (the “EPA”), Potentially Responsible Parties (“PRPs”), City of New York, NYC Department of Transportation, New York City Department of City Planning, Council Members Brad Lander and Stephen Levin

DATE: October 23, 2018

Resolved, in order to improve safety, we encourage the PRPs, the City of New York (especially DOT and DEP, whose properties abut the Gowanus Canal), and any other property owners who own and/or control land abutting the Gowanus Canal (e.g. street ends, publicly accessible esplanades, private property) to include safe emergency access to and safe egress from the Gowanus Canal. Access points should be provided every 100 feet along the relevant bulkhead section being replaced, substantially repaired, or temporarily installed.

Be it further resolved, access should be accommodated by means of a shoreline ladder, at a minimum, or by other means (see examples along the Gowanus Canal and other New York City waterways). A mix of access/egress opportunities are possible, including floating docks, sandy edges, stepped platforms, davit equipment or other soft edges. Accommodations can be installed on the marine face of any containment barrier or bulkhead and the installation of such barriers or bulkheads should, at a minimum, be designed to provide opportunity for future easy installation of access/egress devices.

Be it further resolved, we urge the placement of emergency communications like [those installed](#) at the Red Hook shoreline.

Be it finally resolved, we encourage the EPA to inform any relevant property owners of the CAG’s recommendations above when discussing replacement of bulkheads along the Gowanus Canal as part of its oversight of bulkhead repair or replacement under the Gowanus Canal Superfund Site Record of Decision.

Background:

At present, the sheer bulkheads lining much of the Gowanus Canal make it difficult, if not impossible, for an individual who has fallen into the waters of the Canal from a bridge, shoreline, or vessel to exit the Canal in a safe and timely manner or to be rescued by emergency response crews on shore, especially at low tide when a wall of sheer steel sheet-piling more than ten feet above



GOWANUS CANAL COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

your local voice for Superfund

For more information: www.GowanusCAG.org

the water level may extend in more than one direction from an individual who has fallen into the water.

Some property owners along the Gowanus Canal have replaced or repaired bulkheads along the Gowanus Canal in recent years at the behest of the EPA, and more such activity is contemplated in order to facilitate the dredging of the Gowanus Canal (see page 90 of the Record of Decision, *Remedy Considerations--Bulkhead Replacement*). The EPA has also indicated that it may need to replace a substandard bulkhead where no other party acts (*Ibid.*) Many of the replacement bulkheads do not provide emergency access and/or safe egress points facing the water.

The CAG considers safe access/egress design features as falling within the EPA's purview as such features soften the edges of the Canal, and, accordingly, fit within the language of the Record of Decision: "To the extent that bulkhead replacement occurs, appropriate consideration will be given to bulkhead preservation, aesthetics and the use of soft edges." (*Ibid.*) This resolution seeks to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the use of soft edges that facilitate safe access to and from the Gowanus Canal.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Gowanus Canal Community Advisory Group Land Use Committee

Please direct responses and inquiries to gowanuscag@gmail.com.