

November 19, 2009 Meeting Summary

In this section we provide a summary of the discussion for the November 19, 2009 meeting. The meeting consisted of three major discussions:

- 1) What updates are needed to MWA's Waterfront Action Agenda and Green Harbor Task Force White Paper.
- 2) What are the indicators we should have on a Regional Waterfront Scorecard.
- 3) What can we do to work together to attract greater regional funding for our Harbor.

A summary of the discussion and what we accomplished at the meeting follows:

1. Updates:

What Updates are Needed to the [Waterfront Action Agenda](#) and Green Harbor White Paper?

Air Quality:

The harbor is affected by water quality issues related to atmospheric deposition – including truck traffic and harbor vessels. This requires solutions such as engine retrofits and alternative energy solutions.

Oysters:

It is important to look at the harbor from an ecosystem approach with an emphasis on oysters, eelgrass, water quality, and benthic habitat. To promote oysters, we need to track funding for restoration projects.

Oysters could be the key that unlocks the public's understanding of the harbor and the need for restoration. We could have a "billion oysters" effort like NYC Mayor Bloomberg's million trees program. We could have oysters as the mascot to attract celebrities to the cause and go to community boards and other important bodies to build support. A great image would be a visual of an oyster with an apple in the center as the pearl.

Green Infrastructure:

Green infrastructure is an important method for improving water quality in the harbor and reducing CSOs, as well as other benefits. There are barriers to green infrastructure implementation such as no interagency collaboration in planning, development, or maintenance agreements for green infrastructure projects. There are no monitoring protocols for stormwater management techniques.

There may be a model for green infrastructure in the NYC Department of Transportation's Green Streets program. It is also important to note NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) has a best management practices (BMP) design manual coming out soon.

New Waterfront Development Guidelines:

We need new waterfront development guidelines that call for restoration to occur alongside and integrated with waterfront development. We need to have guidelines based on the Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TECs) and Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) to guide development. We also need to take an ecosystem approach to development rather than depending on regulators to guide development. An example of what development guidelines could include is developing ways to attract shellfish on pilings while protecting the pilings. This would require a bio attractive medium with high surface to volume ratio such as limestone and crushed shells that would give us thousands of acres of vertical habitat. Design guidelines should include a regional mitigation plan with critical areas protected through mitigation banks.

Well Designed Edge:

We can restore wetlands edges by removing “habitat suppressing debris” – picking it up is one of the fastest way to improve habitat. It could be done using boats and nets with assistance from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and volunteers.

Water Quality:

To improve water quality more pump out stations are needed throughout the harbor.

Climate Change:

We need a strategic assessment of how to approach climate change and sea level rise from a harbor wide and drainage area or basin by basin approach. New Jersey at this time is not addressing climate change adaptation.

Educating Public:

To educate the public and get them behind the funding needed for this work, we should be conducting virtual tours via helicopter of the Harbor, especially of Jamaica Bay. The tours could be on DVD and emphasize everything from storm drains to habitat. We should also be looking to a “Treasured Landscape Approach” to highlight important projects and help agencies prioritize projects.

We should target 3 out of the following ten elected officials to push our agenda:

- Jose E. Serrano – U.S. Congress District #16 (NY)
- Fred Madden – NJ State Senate District #4 (NJ)
- Jerrold Nadler – U.S. Congress District #8 (NY)
- Maurice Hinchey – U.S. Congress District #22 (NY)
- Nydia M. Velaquez – U.S. Congress District #12 (NY)
- Steve Rothman – U.S. Congress District #9 (NJ)
- Albio Sires – U.S. Congress District #13 (NJ)
- Carolyn Maloney – U.S. Congress District #14 (NY)
- Brian Kavanagh – NY State Assembly District #74 (NY)
- Anthony Wiener – U.S. Congress District #9 (NY)

2. Scorecard:

At this point in the Task Force meeting we discussed and developed indicators for a Regional Waterfront Scorecard:

Indicator/ performance metric	Method	Target Value
Awareness		
# of tourist Waterfront destinations	Research	
# of school field trips	Survey	
# of kids on water	Survey	
# of environmental workshops	Survey	
Environmental Indicators		
New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) state of the estuary report to define indicators	Survey	
# of acres of Habitat lost	Survey	
# of acres of restoration	Survey	
Tons of carbon emissions emitted by Port Authority	Research	
# of clean air action strategies for Port Authority	Survey	
# of oysters surviving	Survey	
# of oyster programs	Survey	
# of guidelines	Research	
# of BMPs: rooftop stormwater detention, green roofs, landscaping, porous pavement, infiltration basins and vegetated swales.	Research	
# of Climate Change Task Forces in NY and NJ	Research	
# of state and federal strategies for adapting to Climate Change, sea level rise and storm surges	Research	
PlaNYC goals	Research	
PlaNYC's Best Management Practices (BMP) Task Force to develop a stormwater management plan	Research	
NYC DEP's Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan-gallons captured by green infrastructure	Research	
# lbs or items of debris removed	Survey	
# hrs reducing debris, volunteer hrs	Survey	
Funding		
Track money for restoration projects (federal, state, local)	Research	
Federal Restoration Funds NY/NJ	Research	
State Restoration Funds NY/NJ	Research	
Local Restoration Funds NY/NJ	Research	
\$/person moved	Research	
\$/ton of freight	Research	
\$/environmental restoration and protection	Research	
Green infrastructure projects not funded	Research	

Green infrastructure		
# of NYC DEP pilot projects	Research	
# gallons of stormwater captured from NYC DEP pilot projects	Research	
Restoration: Track how we are advancing TECs from the CRP		
Acres of coastal wetlands restored	Research	
Acres of habitat for waterbirds restored	Research	
Acres of coastal and maritime forests restored	Research	
Acres of oyster reefs habitat restored	Research	
Acres of eelgrass beds restored	Research	
Miles of shorelines and shallows created/restored	Research	
Yard ³ of rock habitat for fish, crab and lobsters placed	Research	
Sq. Feet of Dam Removal for Tributary connections	Research	
Yard ³ for enclosed and confined waters excavated/filled	Research	
Yard ³ of contaminated sediment excavated	Research	
# of public access points created/upgraded	Research	

3. Funding:

The discussion continued to follow up on the ideas from the Waterfront Scorecard, Waterfront Action Agenda, and Green Harbor White Paper by addressing how to increase regional funding for the waterfront.

How do we reach the funding goals from the Score Card? How do we as a region attract more funding? How do we reach funding goals?

Sources and Types of Funding:

Private Money:

Private money is a source of funding however, it will not cover the amount needed for large public projects, harbor restoration projects, or infrastructure improvements. The environmental community and this task force should be working to build capacity to ensure public funds are brought to our region for these projects.

Private money used for organizations such as the Central Park Conservancy to help maintain infrastructure, develop programming, or raise public awareness is an important source of funding once projects are established. Private money could be attracted for management of specific areas such as through adopt-a-watershed programs.

Enforcement Penalties:

Enforcement penalties can be a source of funding for remediation since funding from settlements is required to go back to the areas where damage is done.

Clean Water Act:

There is funding available through the Clean Water Act. It is possible for our harbor to receive more funding. The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) which is a program similar to the New York-New Jersey HEP receives almost \$13 million annually. LISS also has a congressional caucus which is now non-existent for the NY-NJ Harbor.

Jamaica Bay:

In 2001 in Jamaica Bay, environmental groups were able to get funds for projects through legislative briefings, separate and joint with elected officials. These meetings consisted of showing a Power Point presentation targeted to the electeds with requests for funding for projects and programs leveraged with other funding.

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Funding:

USACE provided input to the Transportation Infrastructure Authority Committee on WRDA the first week of December 2009. It is important to track this funding and work for funding for the CRP through WRDA.

Homeland Security Funding:

It may be possible to couple security funding at Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTP) with funding for oyster projects that are located near WWTPs. WWTP security could prevent oyster harvesting and the attractive nuisance problem.

Fees:

It may be possible to raise funds through anchorage fees. Economic research found that the fee for containers could go up without affecting demand. Container fees could provide money for CRP funding and Port clean air initiatives. Fees from fishing licenses do not and would not generate significant funding.

General Impressions:

Funding sources are not predictable, therefore reliable funding from fees may be the most sustainable revenue. New Jersey's beach restoration program provides an example of sustained funding. There should be a way to better make the case that there are three major components to the harbor as a nationally significant port - the three components are transportation, commerce, and the environment. How do we combine these and tap into funding for transportation and commerce for funding for restoration?

What funding should we track now?

- Track WRDA funding and work with the USACE for working with our congressional delegation for more funding.
- Work for funding for the NY-NJ HEP through the Clean Water Act.
- Work for better funding for the estuary through the National Estuary Program - our region receives \$500,000 annually vs. the \$20 million received by the Long Island Sound Study.

- We must link funding for restoration to green jobs.
- We should fully flesh out performance criteria metrics and integrate or use as part of the waterfront scorecard.
- It is important for elected officials and the National Estuary Program to account for what it really takes to do restoration in the harbor due to high costs in the NY-NJ region for land and all related services needed for restoration projects.
- One of the reasons we do not have better funding for the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Estuary program is that we have no message to sell to elected officials. The region needs a philosophy for environmental protection and restoration before this can happen.