

The City of Baltimore's Modified Consent Decree Public Information Session was held on January 23, 2019, in the first floor conference room at the Maryland Department of the Environment (1800 Washington Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21230). DPW Legal Chief Paul De Santis welcomed attendees and gave a [presentation](#) on the Modified Consent Decree and the City's progress under the Decree over the past 12 months.

A breakout session followed the presentation where attendees could engage directly with subject matter experts at learning stations in the conference room. The learning stations highlighted the primary activities of the Modified Consent Decree and the City's progress in those areas. Verbal responses were provided to citizens' questions, and comment cards were also available for submittal and collection throughout the session.

A summary of each learning station and the questions/comments received is provided below.

Learning Station 1. Collection System Tools

The main focus of this learning station and its content was to educate the public about the City's Collection and Transmission System, Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) structures, and the hydraulic model and its application to the design, rehabilitation, and operation of the Collection System. The learning station also highlighted the implementation of Paragraph 9 construction projects. Finally the learning station discussed the benefits of the level of protection and reduction in SSO volume once improvement projects are completed. The station included the City's hydraulic modeler and the engineer who oversees the Consent Decree design and construction projects.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- How many miles of sewer lines have been replaced?
- How much is the budget every year?
- What work is in my area?
- Can you describe Baltimore City & County coordination for projects?
- Any projects in Canton neighborhood?
- How do you prioritize a project?
- Is there enough money to fund the projects?
- Where is the most infiltration in the system?
- What are the maximum sizes of PVC pipe used?
- When a house is demolished is the sewer lateral cut?
- How do you plug sewer laterals?
- How many miles of pipe are in the collection system?
- Can you describe the City/County coordination for the sewer line improvement project near the county line near Edmondson Ave & Overbrook Rd?
- Can you describe City/County coordination for line metering within the Jones Falls sewershed?
- Can you explain the SSO structures which have been found since 2002?
- How many miles of water and storm lines?
- Local media expressed interest in accompanying a crew in the field performing replacement/lining of pipe.



Learning Station 2. Communications/Local Economic Development

The main focus of this learning station and its content was two-fold:

To ensure effective and accurate communications with the public, get feedback, and help the public navigate information on the DPW website;

To ensure the public understands the City's ongoing efforts and program developed to support small business development.

The learning station included representatives from the DPW Division of Communications and Community Affairs and the DPW Small Business Development program.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- How much resources (time & costs) are expended to respond to Building Backups?
- Of unoccupied homes in Baltimore City, how many are unoccupied due to sewer backups?
- Can you explain why flushable wipes say flushable but instructions describe discarding in the trash?
- Suggestion to continue to communicate progress of the program in user friendly ways for the public, ensuring data presented is not complicated and easy to understand.
- Local non-profit expressed that it was great to see transparency and a job well done by DPW.
- Interest expressed in having an HR representative describe contracting opportunities with DPW and budget.
- What % of the Small Business Development program alumni are M/WBEs?
- What's the demographic for women in business in Baltimore area?

Learning Station 3. Collection System Maintenance

The main focus of this learning station and its content was to inform the public about the Collection System, maintenance and inspection activities happening as a result of the DPW Office of Asset Management (OAM) programs and the DPW Utility Maintenance Division (UMD). These programs ensure that the Collection System is operated and maintained appropriately. In addition, the station highlighted some "do's and don'ts" for customers to help the Collection System operate properly. The learning station included the Chief of OAM and the Division Chief of UMD.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- Can you explain the sewersheds and how sewage flows into the City from the County?
- Which wastewater treatment plant are sewage flows directed to?
- Can you describe the efforts to locate and reduce inflow/infiltration in the collection system?
- Can you describe the OAM Root Control and FOG abatement programs?
- What is the difference between Baltimore City and County water and sewer billing?
- Can you explain the Metropolitan District Fund?
- How is the City addressing water leaks?
- Suggestion for the DPW Maintenance Division to investigate repeat sewer backups occurring in the Grove Park neighborhood.



Learning Station 4. Compliance

The main focus of this learning station and its content was to provide information on water quality monitoring, sanitary discharges of unknown origin (SDUOs), and illegal connection enforcement performed by DPW. The station walked citizens through water quality data available online and provided an overview of how these compliance actions are reported in: the City's Calendar Quarterly Report and the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Annual Report. The Chief and a Pollution Control Analyst of the DPW Office of Compliance and Laboratories were on-hand to answer questions and engage directly with citizens.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- How much is the City paying annually in sanitary sewer overflow fines?
- Are the waterway monitors city employees or contractors? And how many are staffed to cover the City?
- Where and how can you report construction material and debris left at job sites after work has been completed?
- Even though there has been improvement in the water quality of City streams, are they safe for recreation?

Learning Station 5. Facilities

The main focus of this learning station and its content was to provide information on the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Headworks Project. The Headworks project includes facilities for equalization storage, an influent pumping station, fine screening, and grit removal. The project will alleviate the flow backup currently caused in the Collection System by a hydraulic restriction originating at the Back River WWTP. The project is also projected to reduce SSO volume by a considerable amount. The learning station included the DPW Acting Chief for the Bureau of Water & Wastewater, the Facilities section lead, and the project manager for the Back River WWTP Headworks Project.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- What are the upcoming/future projects for construction phase?
- What is the schedule for the upcoming/future construction projects to be advertised?
- How will the new equalization tanks and pumps at Back River WWTP operate during wet weather events?
- How is the Back River WWTP Headworks project coordinated with the overall Consent Decree program?
- How do you plan to account for extreme weather events at Back River WWTP?
- How much flow can the facility handle? How much during wet weather?
- Is the City considering using the Construction Management-At-Risk (CMAR) delivery method for other projects?
- Can you explain the benefits of the CMAR delivery method?
- Is the City considering using the Design- Build (D/B) delivery method for projects?



Learning Station 5. Facilities (continued)

Questions/comments posed at station:

- Does the City experience issues with availability of skilled labor force?
- How will the Emergency Response Plan address Building Backups and SSOs?

Learning Station 6. Regulatory Requirements

The main focus of this learning station and its content was to provide an overview of the City's response to sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and Building Backups, new resources to assist residential customers, and steps customers can take to reduce SSOs and backups. The learning station included representatives from the DPW legal office and DPW's Consent Decree program management team.

Questions/comments posed at station:

- Suggestion to include sewage backup guides as annual excerpts to water bills and make sewage backup guides more prominently available on DPW's website.
- Baltimore City resident expressed interest in help with addressing basement backups.
- Of the \$2 million budgeted annually for the Expedited Reimbursement Program,
 - How much was distributed to residents in 2018?
 - What is done with the remaining funds?
- Under the current pilot program, how many applications for the Expedited Reimbursement Program have been denied because they occurred during rain events larger than 5-year and 10-year storms?
- Does the City have a timetable for finalizing approval of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) by MDE and EPA?
- Will the City post the approved ERP online when available?
- Is the City on track for annual review of the ERP?
- How is the City going to allow residents to weigh-in on the Expedited Reimbursement Program during the required 18-month evaluation period?
- Suggestion to disregard 5- and 10-year Level of Protection (LOP) in 18-month evaluation period and going forward.
- Will a plan for addressing acute and catastrophic failure in lateral lines that cause building backups be published?
- Baltimore City resident expressed interest in the outlook for the Expedited Reimbursement Program.

