

**Urban Waterfront Action Group (UWAG) Meeting
Tuesday, January 22, 2019**

Participants:

A sign-in sheet Submitted has been submitted with the meeting summary..

Meeting Summary:

The meeting began at 10.05 with a presentation by Josh Lippert, Floodplain Manager for the City of Philadelphia, detailing the floodplain regulations for development in the City. This was an informational presentation. SEPTA and Urban Engineers then presented three infrastructure mitigation projects: the Sharon Hill Flood Mitigation Project, the Manayunk/Norristown Embankment Stabilization Project, and the Jenkintown Flood Mitigation Project. Meeting materials and project descriptions were provided to the committee prior to the presentations.

1. Sharon Hill Flood Mitigation Project

Dennis Stefanski, Project Engineer at SEPTA, presented the project background and concept plan for mitigation of flooding from the Hermesprota Creek on the SEPTA Route 102 tracks in Sharon Hill. SEPTA's mitigation plan includes creating a drainage basin on adjacent PECO property and that will improve and control flow from the tracks into the creek. Joe Musil of Urban Engineers indicated that the project managers had a pre-application meeting with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). At that meeting it was determined the project would need a Chapter 105 permit, a chapter 106 Permit, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit review. Joe noted that all of the proposed mitigation improvements are outside of the floodway of the stream. Dennis did not expect any impact on historic resources.

Randy Brown, PA DEP / CZM, noted that US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) review can be addressed through state review and impacts do not meet threshold required for ACOE permitting. Jim Boyer, USACOE, noted that final design should be completed before beginning permit applications.

2. Manayunk/Norristown Embankment Stabilization Project

Dennis Stefanski described the flooding issues common to the Manayunk / Norristown Regional Rail line. These issues are exacerbated by unstable streambanks and the Schuylkill River's proximity to the railroad tracks. Dennis reported that SEPTA has identified three priority sites for streambank stabilization and presented SEPTA's proposed use of a new stabilization system. The project would provide a hard bank armoring solution to the failing streambank slope. The system would adjust to further bank scour. This project would not mitigate flooding but would prevent further streambank degradation. Dennis noted that this system was selected because traditional methods are cost prohibitive due to the locations of these sites and railroad regulations. Dennis noted that this was a design build project.

Jim Boyer, USACOE and Dennis discussed how the proposed system functioned and clarified that the system would hold the grout that armored the stream bank and no concrete or grout would be poured in the water column. Joe Musil explained that the mat would be filled with the grout like a balloon and would extend into the river approximately 30 feet beyond the mean high water line. The mat would then settle to bedrock should scouring occur behind the mat.

Joe acknowledged that these three locations would each need individual permits and asked at what point in design SEPTA could apply for the necessary permits. Jim replied that final design would be needed to submit and approve permit applications. Any significant changes to the design would then need to be reviewed by DEP and USACOE.

Randy Brown expressed concern about covering between 650 and 850 feet of natural streambank with concrete and asked that other methods be considered where feasible. Dennis explained that the difficulty of these sites determined the need for this proposed mitigation strategy. Jim noted a need to coordinate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Historical Commission. Joe noted that PNDI clearances were expired.

Dennis clarified that this project is strictly bank stabilization and not flood mitigation.

3. Jenkintown Flood Mitigation Project

Dennis Stefanski presented information on proposed flood mitigation efforts on the Tookany Creek in Cheltenham Township. Flooding on the creek is eroding streambanks along the Lansdale / Doylestown Regional Rail Line. SEPTA intends to address this damage through a variety of strategies that include stream widening, increasing stream sinuosity, replacing culverts, and installing retention basins. SEPTA intends to phase this project and would complete 100% design of phase 1 before pursuing permits. Phase 2, which includes a culvert replacement will require service disruptions and will need to be included in SEPTA's five-year capital plan.

Joe Musil noted that the total project would include replacing 3 bridges and 1 culvert and widening 2 stream segments. Joe asked how the project should be classified. Can some restorative aspects of Phase 1 be used for resource mitigation in phase 2?

Jim Boyer responded that the phases would need to be submitted together in order to get mitigation credits.

Randy Brown recommended that this project be classified as a restoration project even though it probably does not qualify for a restoration waiver. Randy noted that the project may qualify for a small projects joint project and if the bridge replacement is removed, the project may qualify for a General Permit.

Dennis Stefanski said that SEPTA prefers one large project for Phase 1 that could be completed by 2020. Dennis reiterated that the culvert replacement would need to be in SEPTA's capital program and that issues with the Township are also delaying how SEPTA will proceed with that phase.

Jim Boyer stated that this could be classified as a small project and as long as there were no wetland impacts may qualify for a General Permit 11. Jim noted that since the project is longer than 250 linear feet of stream that the USACOE would have a separate review of the projects.

Joe Musil reported that this project was funded by FTA and had gone through the FTA NEPA process. He asked if FTA could be the lead federal agency. Jim responded that he would need to review the FTA 106 findings. Randy agreed that the funding agency is usually the lead federal agency and that the resource agency would review the FTA NEPA findings.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.