

# Process Review of the Newtown Creek Community Advisory Group

## DRAFT Findings Report

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Background and Approach**

The EPA Newtown Creek Superfund Community Advisory Group (CAG) is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). An EPA subcontractor, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), was recently hired to provide facilitation support to the CAG. To help the CAG and to get to know its members, CBI conducted a process review (Review) of the CAG. This Review was intended to gauge levels of engagement and satisfaction with the CAG and identify areas for improvement in its operations.

In August and September 2018, CBI conducted 18 interviews with a cross-section of CAG members (e.g., residents, business representatives) and EPA staff. All interviews were confidential to foster candid feedback.

### **Key Findings**

The CAG Review identified seven key findings and a range of implementable strategies for strengthening the CAG process. Input from the entire CAG and the public that were not a part of this review process will be important to shaping EPA's and the CAG's overall response to this Review. The findings, broadly, were:

1. Value of the CAG
2. Pressing questions and concerns about the Site and its cleanup
3. Attendance challenges
4. Meeting improvements
5. Technical knowledge, information, and resources
6. Managing CAG membership
7. Public outreach and awareness

During interviews, CBI asked interviewees to choose the one aspect of the CAG process that, in their opinion, needs the most improvement. Interviewees identified the following four aspects, from most to least cited:

1. Public outreach and expanding membership
2. Meeting presentations and discussion
3. Data transparency
4. Clarity around timeline and pace

### **Recommendations**

CBI recommends the CAG implement the following changes to its process:

1. Hold three to four meetings per year of the general CAG and three to four meetings per year of the Technical CAG. Meeting should be held approximately

every other month but for the December and summer holidays. These should be scheduled at the beginning of each year with specific dates and times, and locations to be determined at least 30 days prior to meetings.

2. Implement a clear agenda planning process.
3. EPA should provide their draft technical presentations, or outlines of such, to the Steering Committee prior to each meeting to the extent possible. The steering Committee should in turn provide timely feedback to ensure the presentations meets community needs.
4. Within the budget allowed, the facilitator should help plan agendas, facilitate meetings, prepare meeting summaries, and support the basic operations of the CAG in terms of notifications, website support, and other support activities.
5. The CAG should develop more detailed process and operating protocols (attached) to address various operational issues, including agenda and meeting planning, engaging the technical consultant, and the role of the facilitation.
6. The process of gathering CAG feedback on technical documents with the help of SKEO and the Steering Committee should continue because this process is working well now.
7. The Steering Committee and EPA should produce background information materials for the Site (e.g., a Site fact sheet) and include periodic updates in subsequent versions.
8. CAG members should identify and designate alternates to attend meetings where possible.
9. The CAG should host a “Community Update” open house/workshop annually to engage the broader community.
10. The CAG could host, from time to time, “issue forums” to bring together a host of agencies, groups, and the public to discuss and advance key topics (e.g., “Promoting green infrastructure now for Newtown Creek’s long-term health”).

## **Appendices**

The interview protocol is included in Appendix A and a list of interviewees is included in Appendix B.

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## 1.0 Background and Approach

The EPA Newtown Creek Superfund Community Advisory Group (CAG) is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). An EPA subcontractor, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), was recently selected by the CAG and EPA to provide non-partisan facilitation support to the CAG. To initiate its facilitation, CBI conducted a process review (Review) of the CAG. This Review was intended to gauge levels of engagement and satisfaction with the CAG and identify areas for improvement in its operations.

The CAG Steering Committee identified a range of CAG members to interview. All active members of the CAG were invited to participate, along with EPA staff. These interviews were confidential, meaning that CBI reported its findings without attribution. Interviewees were welcome to discuss their conversation with anyone they chose. The interview notes were not shared with EPA or anyone else outside of CBI. In some instances, CBI conducted conversations with a small group from the same organization.

In August and September 2018, CBI's Patrick Field and Rebecca Gilbert conducted 18 interviews. Interviewees included representatives from:

- Environmental and community organizations
- Economic development organizations
- Local business representatives
- Educational institutions
- Citizens
- U.S. EPA

The findings included in this report are informed by the insights gained through these interviews. (Individuals who were interviewed are referred to as stakeholders or interviewees in this report.) CBI will report back on its findings to the entire CAG during the meeting scheduled for September 26, 2018.

The interview protocol is included in Appendix A and a list of interviewees is included in Appendix B.

## 2.0 Key Findings

This process review of the CAG identified seven key findings regarding:

- 1) Value of the CAG
- 2) Pressing questions and concerns about the Site and its cleanup
- 3) Attendance challenges
- 4) Meeting improvements
- 5) Technical knowledge, information, and resources
- 6) Managing CAG membership
- 7) Public outreach and awareness

Below is a synthesis of the key findings. Syntheses by stakeholder group are not included to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.

### 2.1. Value of the CAG

*The CAG is valued by CAG members and EPA staff for many reasons including staying informed, engaging directly with other stakeholders, and ensuring their concerns are heard and considered.*

The Review found that interviewees across the spectrum of stakeholder groups see value in the CAG. Interview participants particularly praised the overall purpose of the CAG. Interviewees see the CAG as providing a forum where:

- Stakeholders can connect face-to-face with other stakeholders.
- Stakeholders can be represented at the table where their needs are taken into consideration.
- Stakeholders can act as a watchdog for particular topics of concern.
- Stakeholders can gain access to data about the Site.
- Stakeholders can voice concerns, exchange views, and hear the priorities of other stakeholders.
- Stakeholders can help EPA staff keep the bigger picture in mind.
- Stakeholders can obtain information from, ask questions directly of, and engage with EPA and other agency staff.
- Stakeholders can ensure EPA's plans and ideas are solutions for both the creek and the community.
- Stakeholders can bring the tangible reality of the community's experience around Newtown Creek to the EPA and the PRPs.
- Stakeholders can ensure the cleanup is done in a way that benefits the environment and the community.
- Stakeholders can understand how the cleanup may affect them.
- EPA staff can disseminate accurate information about the Site and the remediation process to the CAG and the public.
- EPA staff can hear from stakeholders about on-the-ground conditions.

## 2.2. Pressing questions and concerns about the Site and its cleanup

*Interviewees mentioned a number of questions and concerns they have about the Site including the scope of contamination, the timeline and pace of clean up, and how cleanup activities could affect businesses that operate on the creek.*

Interviewees have the following questions about the Site and its cleanup:

- What is the full scope of the contamination?
- What is the vision for a completed remediation and the waterway? How will environmental and industrial needs be balanced in that decision?
- What will the cleanup entail?
- What will cleanup activities mean for businesses along the creek (e.g., traffic, staging areas, periods of closure, portions of the creek closed, bulkhead maintenance and insurance coverage, draft depth)?
- Will the cleanup design provide opportunities for green and open spaces? What could this mean for traffic levels in the area?
- What additional data is needed to move forward?
- What is the cleanup timeline?
- How will the cleanup plan address future contamination risk (e.g., additional pressures from development)?
- What contamination sources will the cleanup address? Will it address ongoing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) pollution too?
- Will the cleanup plan recommend capping or dredging activities?
- How much natural restoration will occur and how will those ecosystem services be factored in?
- Will the industry composition and practices around the creek change after the cleanup is completed?
- How can the community learn and apply new ideas about green infrastructure to this area?
- How have some issues been addressed at other Superfund sites?
- How does EPA plan to investigate and address the potential presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination on the Site?
- Will the cleanup be thorough and done correctly?

Interviewees are particularly concerned about:

- While it would be best for all potentially-affected stakeholders to engage in the process early, some stakeholders will not pay attention to the process until active clean-up commences. At that point, it may be too late to provide input.
- Some interviewees perceive the timeline and pace of the cleanup to be too slow and feel its detail and trajectory are unclear.

### 2.3. Attendance challenges

*CAG members are concerned in general about attendance. Relatively low attendance, particularly by a range of community stakeholders, was attributed to many factors including the long process, the Site's technical complexity, and meeting times.*

The Review found varied perspectives on the reason for relatively low attendance at CAG meetings:

- Long process – Many interviewees felt that it is hard to gain and maintain consistent public interest in this Site when the process is so long and moves at a slow pace. A few suggested the CAG take advantage of key points in the process like announcements of major findings to engage more members of the public and recognize that “in between” participation will be lower and focused on those with a serious commitment to the creek and cleanup.
- Technical complexity – Interviewees noted the technical complexity of the issues involved and the large amount of raw data as a reason for attendance challenges and member fatigue. Some interviewees mentioned that they lack scientific expertise and feel less informed about the Site and its technical aspects than other members. In some cases, this feeling contributes to low motivation to participate on the CAG and attend meetings. Some suggested using orientation of new members, fact sheets, a list of acronyms, poster boards, and brief “primers” during meetings to engage everyone in the conversation.
- Meeting times – Evening meetings are not convenient for some business stakeholders and community members. While they appreciate the effort to avoid meeting during normal business hours, many of the businesses along the creek start early and close for the day around 3pm. Stakeholders with childcare obligations or evening work can also find evening meetings challenging.

### 2.4. Meeting improvements

*Interviewees identified a number of positive aspects of the CAG process and improvements that could be made to the process to keep it inclusive, efficient, and focused on making progress.*

#### 2.4.1 Positive aspects

The Review identified a number of positive aspects of the CAG process, including the following:

- EPA staff have deep subject area expertise. They are responsive to questions and comments during meetings and in one-on-one interactions.
- Meeting frequency is generally good for many current members.
- Interviewees appreciate that the meeting venue alternates between Queens and Brooklyn.
- Participants are respectful of each other and meetings are collegial.

#### 2.4.2 Challenges and options

The Review identified a number of challenges in the CAG process and options for



addressing them:

- Inclusivity – Interviewees believe the CAG could be more inclusive by helping new and infrequent participants feel like their opinion and questions are valued and presenting information and resources in language that is understandable to a non-technical audience. EPA and CAG members should not assume everyone in the room has a deep understanding of the issues.
- Organization – Some interviewees would like the Steering Committee to have more structure. Many activities are done on an ad-hoc basis now and are often done by a small number of volunteers. Good organizational practices could make the group more effective, efficient, and relieve some of the burden from volunteer members. Before each meeting, a group of participants (including EPA staff) could schedule a conference call to discuss recent updates and plan the agenda for the meeting.
- Relationship to EPA – Some CAG members expressed concern about the CAG’s relationship with the EPA. While the interactions are cordial, some stated that EPA is not particularly forthcoming about data, holds information back until its fully complete, does not participate actively in agenda setting when they know the technical program best, and expects the CAG to know things it cannot know because the CAG is not the site regulator.
- Managing expectations – EPA should be more realistic and clear with the CAG about the length of this process and rough time frames for each of the phases.
- Dynamic – Meeting sometimes feel like community members are students and EPA is the teacher. Interviewees would like to change this dynamic to a dialogue.
- Productivity– Some interviewees feel there is too much revisiting of old issues and old data during meetings. They want to focus on the latest information. Discussions can often “go down rabbit holes” and lack structure. Question and answers can become highly technical and leave out less-technical members of the group. Small group discussions may be useful at certain times. Some interviewees suggested providing clear avenues for people to get more information if their question is not answered during a meeting. One interviewee suggested designating seats for CAG members and non-CAG members and allotting time during each meeting for non-CAG member questions and comments.
- Notification, timing, and scheduling – Some members would like to schedule all meetings at the beginning of each year. This would help avoid confusion and late notifications. The CAG could also test starting meetings at 6pm or hold occasional meetings at 3 or 4pm to allow business representatives and workers to participate.
- Recurring agenda items – A few interviewees felt that each meeting should open with a brief reminder of the history and current status of the site for the benefit of first-time participants and CAG members who may have missed a past meeting. One member suggested shortening the question and answer section to 30 minutes. Another member suggested each meeting start with a 10-15 minute presentation on an exciting update or research finding that will keep people coming back to meetings.

- Using technology to enable remote participation and knowledge – Interviewees were generally supportive of using remote participation technology and video recordings in CAG meetings. This would be particularly helpful for those CAG members and members of the public who may struggle to attend evening meetings.
- Venue – An interviewee noted that the wastewater treatment plant meeting room is loud and they have difficulty hearing presentations in that space. It is generally important to hold meetings that are close to public transportation. Consistent meeting locations could help avoid confusion about where a meeting is being held and reduce workload for the person who books meeting venues.
- Meeting frequency – Interviewee opinions on meeting frequency were mixed. Some felt that the current frequency was appropriate while others wanted monthly meetings. Some interviewees noted that they would probably not attend more frequent meetings. Some felt meeting frequency should depend on whether there is a lot of information to cover, or if the site is in a mode of investigation and document review where there is little new to report. Some interviewees were open to trying webinars in addition to meetings.
- Meeting length – One interviewee suggested shortening meetings and avoiding running over time.
- Meeting summaries – An interviewee noted that the approval of meeting summaries takes too long. They suggested the CAG and EPA design a better process so that the people who did not attend a meeting can stay up-to-date on the Site's progress.

## 2.5. Technical knowledge, information, support and resources

*Interviewees made suggestions for how to improve technical presentations and resources including improving presentation delivery, developing fact sheets, and revising the websites to make it easier to find information.*

Interviewees had suggestions for how EPA and the CAG could better help CAG members and members of the public better understand the documents and data presented at CAG meetings:

- Presentations at CAG meetings
  - Some interviewees expressed frustration that discussions and presentations seem to re-visit past information.
  - EPA needs to be more forthcoming about data and information and work as it progresses. EPA staff should explain investigation results without seeming to gloss over it by using phrases like “there is so much data, we do not want to bore the group with all of it”.
  - The Steering Committee should have an opportunity to review draft presentation slides and provide feedback to EPA before each meeting. In turn, however, this requires the CAG to identify topics early to give time for the EPA team to coordinate with technical consultants, prepare and vet draft presentations internally, and engage with a subset of the CAG ahead of time.

- Some EPA presenters are highly skilled. EPA should use them as their primary presenters.
- Some interviewees expressed concern about trusting the data and interpretations of that data that EPA technical staff present.
- Materials
  - Have a short glossary of terms available at meetings.
  - Develop factsheets or infographics about the process and the technical information.
  - A concise summary of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, written for a non-technical audience, will be essential for the CAG to effectively engage with this document. In addition, a presentation focused on this document should be scheduled. Technical assistance should be provided to the CAG to help them understand this document and the pros and cons of different remediation options.
  - An easy-to-find, single depository for all Site documents should be available on the EPA website.
- Website
  - Revise EPA and WordPress websites so that all documents are easier to find.
- Communications
  - Alert members when there are updates or new documents available and when they need to be responded to.
- PRP and NY DEP Participation
  - Many members appreciate that the PRPs are involved as well as DEP around storm water and CSOs. Members find the additional technical information and access to it useful. However, these same members are wary of that information, believe it can be biased due to the interest of parties paying for cleanup, and want EPA's active engagement in helping translate, review, and weigh the information presented.
- Engagement with the TASC consultant
  - Some CAG members mentioned that Skeo and their provision of technical support on key documents has been very helpful. Some noted that the process of engaging them with EPA's support, gathering comments, and consolidating them into singular responses has been both efficient and effective. Transitions between Skeo staff for this Site, however, should ensure that all relevant documents and information are passed to the new staff member.

## **2.6. Managing CAG membership**

*Interviewees identified stakeholders who are currently underrepresented on the CAG and how to recruit and orient new members.*

### **2.6.1 Engaging and building commitment from current members**

Interviewees had the following suggestions for engaging and building commitment from current CAG members:

- Keep the Steering Committee fresh: bring on motivated new members and allow less-engaged or over-committed members to rotate off. Expectations for committee participation should be clear.
- Develop and make available guidelines for the CAG operations.
- EPA staff should strive for greater data transparency and communicate about the process more clearly.
- EPA staff could send out monthly or bimonthly email updates on the Site status to CAG members.
- Present new information at meetings and make progress – people want to feel like they are achieving something.
- Arrange a meeting with CAG members from other Superfund sites to share best practices and lessons learned.
- Identify and follow up on action items from meetings.
- Tighten the relationship between Technical Committee members and CAG members.

### **2.6.2 Underrepresented stakeholders**

Interviewees feel that the following stakeholders are underrepresented on the CAG:

- Business owners who will be directly affected, including maritime and land-based transportation.
- People who work for the creek-side businesses.
- Numerous community members who do not live near the creek. They are “out of sight, out of mind,” but they will need to care as cleanup commences and that could then shift development across the whole community.
- Though the surrounding communities are diverse, CAG member participation remains somewhat older, English-speaking and mostly white. The CAG should be representative of the neighborhood demographics.
- Environmental justice communities.
- Communities at the head of the creek (e.g., Bushwick, Ridgewood, Maspeth).
- Tenant associations.
- More participants from Queens.
- New residents.
- Fishermen.
- Groups who receive money from the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund.
- LaGuardia Community College students.
- Greater participation by the City.

### **2.6.3 Improving member recruitment**

Interviewees feel that the CAG could recruit new members by:

- Clarifying the criteria for membership – Make membership criteria and expectations clear on the CAG websites and in communication materials.
- Improving communications to the public and members of the public who attend a meeting – Have sign-up cards for joining the CAG at meetings. Use fact sheets from time to time to engage people. Attend community fairs and other existing events to inform and recruit.

- Motivating people to participate – People will be motivated to serve on the CAG if they see tangible improvements to the region through citizen participation on the CAG. Until the remedial investigation and feasibility study is further along, this could prove difficult, some noted.
- Improve the two Site websites and make the links for resources and to join the list-serve easier to find.

#### **2.6.4 Improving new member orientation**

There is no established method for orienting new CAG members but interviewees feel that this is an area for improvement. They had the following suggestions:

- Orientation meetings – Hold new member orientation meetings when appropriate, either in-person or via webinar/recorded video, via the CAG co-chairs or facilitator. These meetings would review the Site's history, current status, and the focus moving forward. They would communicate to new members where their input would be most useful and expectations for participation. New members would also be guided through the website and have the opportunity to ask questions in an informal setting. A boat-based tour of the creek could also be included.
- Create background materials packet – The CAG and EPA could assemble a packet of background materials that is given to each new member. The packet would include a history of the Site, the process, a glossary of key terms, relevant stakeholders, websites links, a list of contacts, CAG operating procedures and groundrules, and a general calendar of meetings.
- Re-visit old topics when appropriate – EPA staff should recognize during meetings when it is important to re-visit old debates and topics for the benefit of new members. Members should also recognize when it is time to move beyond long-standing debates that are not resolvable and decisions have been made.
- Annual refresher on Site – An agenda item during the first meeting of the year could be a short refresher on the Site's history and current status.

### **2.7. Public outreach and awareness**

*Many interviewees want to see greater public outreach about the Site through or in conjunction with the CAG.*

#### **2.7.1 Challenges**

Interviewees noted a number of challenges to improving public engagement with the Site and the CAG:

- The business community and the residential community generally do not overlap.
- Staying involved is daunting for people with limited time and resources.
- The process is a very long one.
- Many potentially-affected stakeholders are not currently attending meetings or attuned to the issues. Until there is real progress or a major milestone, many people have higher priority items to attend to.
- Despite many committed, long-term CAG participants, the group has lost people along the way without picking up replacements.

### **2.7.2 Proposed options**

Interviewees had many suggestions for how EPA, CBI, and the CAG could better engage the public:

- Develop an outreach plan for businesses operating along the creek and their workers.
- Create a short factsheet to have available at each meeting.
- Develop a regular, digital newsletter to update the public on the Site's progress. This should not replace face-to-face engagement.
- Develop a social media strategy and implement it.
- Hold gatherings about the Site in more informal spaces (e.g., happy hour event) where possible.
- Invite public figures to meetings (e.g., EPA Region 2 Administrator) on occasion and advertise their attendance.
- Collaborate with the Community Board to improve regular communication between these entities.
- Be a guest speaker at other groups' meetings or table at community events and local businesses.
- Hold meetings to do visioning exercises for the Site.
- Consider recording and posting video of CAG meetings, or enabling remote participation.
- Utilize CAG members' networks.
- Identify and collaborate with other organizations on key issues affecting communities City-wide (e.g., CSOs).
- Reach out to underrepresented stakeholders.
- Hold meetings at established venues. Explore options for new venues in new areas.
- Engage with stakeholders at relevant businesses (e.g., post fliers about the Site in fishing supply shops).
- Offer a boat-based tour of relevant sites along the creek.
- Improve communication about attending and joining the CAG (e.g., clear criteria for membership). Communication should be in multiple languages.
- Hold an annual "community update" meeting, work hard to get as many people there as possible, and share the past year and what's coming up in the next, and use this meeting to engage and maybe recruit new members.

### **2.8. Priority process improvements**

During interviews, CBI asked interviewees to choose the one aspect of the CAG process that, in their opinion, needs the most improvement. Interviewees identified the following from most to least cited:

1. **Public outreach and expanding membership** – Interviewees want to recruit new CAG members and raise awareness of the Site in the public eye. They would like to bring in new people and new viewpoints. Clarity around membership criteria and expectations should help.

2. **Meeting presentations and discussion** – Interviewees would like to see improved meeting productivity through clearer presentations that cover information in more detailed, but well explained, involving new information whenever possible and avoid re-visiting old information unnecessarily. Presentations should be for a non-technical audience wherever possible. This could help address a negative dynamic some interviewees mentioned between the CAG and EPA staff, and issues with retaining members and the public. Facilitation of group discussion by CBI will be an improvement.
3. **Data transparency** – Interviewees would like to feel that data and resources are more transparent and accessible to the public.
4. **Clarity around timeline and pace** – Interviewees want EPA to be clearer about the timeline and explain more fully why the cleanup is not moving faster.

### 3.0 Recommendations

CBI recommends the CAG implement the following changes to its process. We have included suggested changes to the CAG 2012 ground rules to memorialize these recommendations.

1. Hold three to four meetings per year of the general CAG and three to four meetings per year of the Technical CAG. Meeting should be held approximately every other month but for the December and summer holidays. These should be scheduled at the beginning of each year with specific dates and times, and locations to be determined at least 30 days prior to meetings.
2. Implement a clear agenda planning process, ideally involving a subset of EPA staff and Steering Committee members, with facilitation support, who work together to formulate an agenda at least 6 weeks in advance of meetings to ensure time for presentation development and member notification.
3. EPA should provide their draft technical presentations, or outlines of such, to the Steering Committee prior to each meeting to the extent possible. The steering Committee should in turn provide timely feedback to ensure the presentations meets community needs.
4. Within the budget allowed, the facilitator should help plan agendas, facilitate meetings, prepare meeting summaries, and support the basic operations of the CAG in terms of notifications, website support, and other support activities.
5. The CAG should develop more detailed process and operating protocols (attached) to address various operational issues, including agenda and meeting planning, engaging the technical consultant, and the role of the facilitation.
6. The process of gathering CAG feedback on technical documents with the help of SKEO and the Steering Committee should continue because this process is working well now.
7. The CAG should produce background information about the Site including a Site fact sheet and occasional updates. The EPA should have an opportunity to

review and comment on such CAG outreach materials and such materials should have a clear disclaimer that the document is a product of the CAG, and not the US EPA.

8. CAG members should identify and designate alternates to attend meetings where possible. The CAG co-chairs and facilitators, and made available to the US EPA, should maintain an up-to-date list of members and interested parties
9. The CAG should host a “Community Update” open house/workshop annually to engage the broader community. These events would: a) provide an update on progress over the last year; b) preview what activities are expected in the coming year; c) highlight key issues as appropriate; d) perhaps include a tour or visit to the site; e) seek to recruit members of the public for CAG participation.
10. The CAG could host, from time to time, “issue forums” to bring together a host of agencies, groups, and the public to discuss and advance key topics (e.g., “Promoting green infrastructure now for Newtown Creek’s long-term health”). Note that the US EPA has to expend funds on Superfund-related activities only and cannot necessarily support nor participate in certain activities that may be valuable to the community but not within the purview of EPA.



## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### Newtown Creek Process Review Interview Protocol

#### Introduction

- Newtown Creek Community Advisory Group (CAG), with the assistance of EPA, has retained a facilitator, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)
- To help the CAG and to get to know its members, CBI is conducting a set of conversations over the summer
- These conversations are intended to help identify what the CAG is doing well, what its needs are in the coming year and years, and what it can do better
- The conversations with CBI will be confidential – this means that CBI will report the findings without attribution (no name or organizational affiliation attached) but you are welcome to discuss our conversation with anyone you choose. The notes from interviews will be shared with no one, including EPA, outside of CBI staff.
- CBI will report back on its findings and process recommendations during a fall CAG meeting
- Thank you for taking the time to speak with CBI and for sharing your perspective.

#### Background

- What is your experience with the CAG?
  - How long have you been involved? How often do you attend?
- What is the value of the CAG to you? Please describe the benefits to you and your organization.

#### Substance, Content, and Technical Assistance

- What are the most pressing questions you have about this site and its cleanup (*CBI as needed can prompt on the following general elements of cleanup*)?
  - Timeliness
  - Thoroughness
  - Technologies
  - Restoration and reuse
  - Other?
- What is your view on the value, role, technical information and support, the following parties offer the CAG?
  - EPA
  - Responsible parties, Newtown Creek Group (the polluters)
  - The City's DEP
- What help and preparation does the CAG need to have to be ready to engage with the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for this site when it is released? (*The RI/FS process is a multi-year, multi-phase study and will characterize environmental conditions in Newtown Creek and connecting tributaries to determine the nature and extent of contamination, assess risk to human health and the environment, and evaluate potential cleanup alternatives.*)

### **Process**

- What process items are working well around this site? (*CBI can provide prompting examples if needed as listed below*)?
  - Agendas and agenda development
  - Presentations
  - Notification
  - Frequency of meeting
  - Times of meetings
  - Location of meetings – ideas of accessible and comfortable locations?
  - Member interactions in meetings
  - Other
- What could be improved and how?

### **Membership**

- Current members
  - Are you clear on the role/responsibilities of CAG members?
  - How do we engage and build commitment and energy from our current members?
- If we were to expand membership to include others who may be interested in and/or affected by the cleanup, who else should be included?
  - Do you have contact information for them?
- How could we better orient and “on-board” new members?

### **Outreach**

- What outreach activities around this site do you feel are important to support the CAG’s work and role (*CBI can provide prompting examples if needed as listed below*)?
  - “Remote” participation in CAG meetings through a teleconference, webinar, or other tool
  - A periodic community newsletter
  - Fact sheets on the project overall and key decision points
  - A broader community “list serve”
  - Periodic public workshops and meetings
  - Social media presence (Facebook, LinkedIn, other)
  - CAG website
  - Other
- What role and responsibilities do CAG members themselves have in reaching out to their constituents and the public? What entity could supplement the CAG members’ outreach efforts?

### **Wrap-up**

- In summary, what do you think is the most important role or function of the CAG?
- What is one thing in the CAG process that needs the most improvement?
- Is there anything that we haven’t touched on that you would like to share?

## Appendix B: List of Interviewees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Leah	Archibald	Evergreen
Erik	Baard	HarborLAB, LIC Community Boathouse
Lisa	Bloodgood	Newtown Creek Alliance
Mike	Dulong	Riverkeeper
Sarah	Durand	LaGuardia-CUNY
Michael	Devigne	Queens Business Outreach Center / Maspeth Industrial Business Association (MIBA)
Willis	Elkins	Newtown Creek Alliance
EPA staff		U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Christine	Holowacz	GWAPP/NCMC
Louis	Kleinman	Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Dorothy	Morehead	CB 2 Env. Comm. Chair, NCA HarborLab
Johanna	Phelps	Landscape Architect
Paul	Pullo	Metro Terminals
Chrissy	Remein	Riverkeeper
Mike	Schade	Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, Neighbors for Allied Growth
Mitch	Waxman	Newtown Creek Alliance
Charles	Yu	Long Island City Partnership
Marina	Zurkow	Citizen