

Potomac River Tunnel



SCOPING MEETING NEWSLETTER
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR
THE POTOMAC RIVER TUNNEL PROJECT



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BACKGROUND

The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water) is proposing to construct the Potomac River Tunnel on and in the vicinity of National Park Service (NPS) land in the National Capital Region within the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Rock Creek Park, and the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, DC.

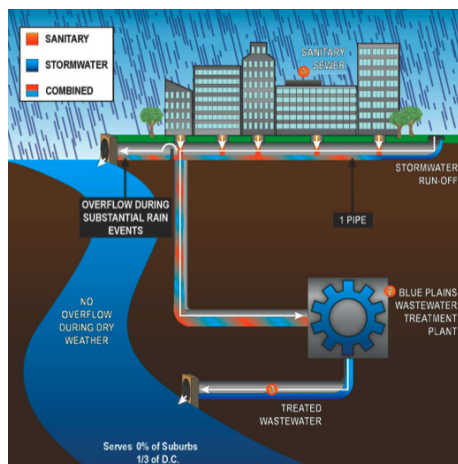
In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (C), the National Historic Preservation Act



(NHPA), and other laws, regulations and policies, DC Water and the NPS are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will

evaluate potential impacts of the construction of the Potomac River Tunnel on the natural, cultural, and human environment. DC Water is responsible for the construction of the Potomac River Tunnel; however, a large portion of the project facilities would be located on or beneath NPS lands. Therefore, the NPS and DC Water are co-lead agencies in the development of the EIS.

the U.S. Department of Justice. The Consent Decree establishes schedules for construction of the tunnels and related CSO control facilities, including a 2025 deadline to place the tunnels into operation. The project is needed because



CSOs contribute to water quality impairment in receiving waters. CSOs impair water quality by increasing water bacteria levels; contributing to low dissolved oxygen in water (increasing the potential for fish stress or fish kills and impacts to other aquatic life); and increasing the amount of trash in waterways.

ABOUT THE POTOMAC RIVER TUNNEL

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to construct a tunnel and supporting infrastructure to control combined sewer overflows (CSOs) when the combined sewer system capacity is exceeded during storm events. The project is needed to comply with the 2005 Federal Consent Decree entered into by DC Water, the District, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and

The Potomac River Tunnel is a component of DC Water's Long Term Control Plan (LTCP), also known as the DC Clean Rivers Project. The DC Clean Rivers Project is a massive infrastructure program designed to control the discharge of untreated stormwater and waste water during heavy rainfalls. The DC Clean Rivers Project is an ongoing program that will

reduce CSOs into the District's waterways, which include the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers as well as Rock Creek. The project meets court-ordered CSO control objectives and water quality standards and is being designed to comply with the requirements of the 2005 Federal Consent Decree.

Once fully implemented, the DC Clean Rivers Project will reduce CSOs by 96 percent.

The Potomac River Tunnel will be located approximately 100 feet below ground. Once constructed the tunnel would have approximately 21 to 58 million gallon CSO storage capacity, depending on the final project configuration selected.

**LTCP
MODIFICATION
FOR GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE**

DC Water is proposing to modify the existing LTCP to include Green Infrastructure. If the modification is agreed to by EPA and the government of the District of Columbia, the implementation of Green Infrastructure would reduce the scope of the Potomac River Tunnel.

Additional information on the proposed modification can be found at <http://www.dwater.com/education/green.cfm>.

**NEPA AND
SECTION 106
PROCESSES**

NEPA provides a broad national framework for protecting the environment and requires all federal agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts of any proposed project. The NEPA statute and implementing regulations set forth a process to evaluate potential impacts as well as requirements for documentation of decisions resulting from that process. The fundamental features of the process include defining the project's purpose and need and the

range of reasonable alternatives to be considered; determining potential environmental impacts of the Federal action; coordinating with relevant agencies; public involvement; determining mitigation for unavoidable impacts; and documenting the analysis and decisions through an EIS, an environmental assessment, or a categorical exclusion supported by the administrative record. Impacts associated with the Potomac River Tunnel will be analyzed in an EIS, which is the most detailed of the three levels of NEPA analysis.



Section 106 is the portion of the NHPA that is concerned with the review of Federal undertakings for their effects on historic properties. Section 106 requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) with a reasonable opportunity to comment. The Section 106 process is conducted concurrently with NEPA and includes formally initiating the Section 106 process with the State Historic Preservation Office; identifying historic properties; assessing adverse effects to historic properties; resolving adverse effects to historic properties (if applicable); and implementation of a memorandum of affect (MOA), which outlines agreed-upon measures that the agency will take to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effects (if applicable).

POTOMAC RIVER TUNNEL STUDY AREA



HOW TO COMMENT

A 60-day public scoping period will be in effect from July 2, 2014 through August 31, 2014. During this time, the public is invited to comment on the proposed action, and identify potential issues or concerns for consideration in the EIS. Interested parties are also invited to participate in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA. If you wish to comment, you may submit comments electronically or directly by mail.

• **Online at:**

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/PotomacRiverTunnel>

• **Mail to:** DC Clean Rivers Project
c/o Potomac River Tunnel EIS
DC Water and Sewer Authority
5000 Overlook Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20032

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you may request in your comment that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

NEXT STEPS

Following the scoping period, DC Water and the NPS will develop a range of alternatives for construction of the Potomac River Tunnel that meet the project's purpose and need. The input provided at agency and public scoping meetings

is used to help develop these alternatives, which will be analyzed in accordance with NEPA and the NHPA and provided to the public for additional input and comment. Below is the project timeline.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Public and Agency Scoping	July 2, through August 31, 2014
Public Scoping Meeting	July 31, 2014
Analysis of Public Scoping Comments	September 2014
Alternatives Development	Fall 2014
Public Meeting to Introduce Alternatives	Winter 2014-2015
Draft EIS Released to Public/Agencies	Spring 2015
Final EIS Released to Public/Agencies	Winter 2015-2016
Public Hearing on Final EIS	Winter 2015-2016
Issuance of Record of Decision	Spring 2016



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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