

CAPT Jesse Cannon
United States Navy Civil Engineers Corps
1619 Lisbon Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122

Dear CAPT Cannon,

Thank you for your questions regarding the Permanent Protection System for the Outfall Canals which were submitted through the New Orleans District's Environmental (NOLA Environmental) Internet Site. Your questions are first stated as you submitted them, and each is followed by a response. Because of their similarity, with respect to the establishment of Citizens Committees by the Corps of Engineers, your questions #5, #6, and #7 are given a common answer.

1. From slides 45 & 46, "Snapshot of Public Comments," explain how those and other comments will be evaluated. Explain the factors needed in a comment for the USACE to reconsider and change any decision as it applies to a final pump station location at the outfall canals at 17th Street, Orleans Avenue, and London Avenue.

The Permanent Outfall Protection Product Delivery Team (PDT) utilized an established Alternative Evaluation Process (AEP) as a logical systematic process for recommending a proposed action alternative amidst sometimes competing and complex criteria. This AEP is being utilized throughout the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System to ensure programmatic consistency across the system. Specific to your questions Public Comments were considered during the AEP process and are considered through the entire Alternative Arrangements process for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Col. Lee the NEPA authority also considers public comments on Individual Environmental Report #5 before a final decision is made. The Corps is always seeking new and innovative ideas as it strives to reduce risk to the greater New Orleans area. Public comment is one method of receiving input for such ideas. Public comment, along with environmental and socio-economic impacts, engineering feasibility, cost and other factors are part of the information presented to the commander for him to base his decision.

2. Mr. Ashley, one of the USACE presenters at the meeting, stated that the USACE will present the "best technical solution" for the permanent pump station locations at the three outfall canals. Explain how the USACE will resolve a situation in which the "best technical solution" is believed not to be the best solution for the citizens and property owners proximate to the proposed permanent pump station locations.

The Corps of Engineers is committed to providing the best solution for protecting the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish from storm surge induced flooding through the 17th Street, Orleans Avenue, and London Avenue Canals, while not impeding the ability of the area's internal drainage system to function. Relevant factors, technical and social, are being considered in arriving at an ultimate system solution. Local and national

interests are also considered during this process to arrive at the best technical solution that will meet the greatest common good.

3. *In the "Site Alternative Evaluation Criteria" slides (47-52), existing land use, which includes impacts on residential areas, is listed last. Explain where this criterion ranks in terms of priority to other criteria, how ranking was determined, and how it will be "weighted" as compared to other criteria.*

As part of the AEP factors such as "Reliability/Risk," "Constructability," "Real Estate," "Costs-Construction &RE," "Natural Environmental Impacts," and "Land Use" were considered by the PDT. Each factor was assigned a "weighting" by the PDT. During the July 2008 Public meeting these were not presented in any particular order of importance on the referenced slides of the presentation. Weights ranging in value from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) were assigned by the PDT to each factor as follows: Reliability/Risk assigned the highest weighting and the lowest was weight give to Real Estate Acquisition Time, all other factors were weighted in between.

4. *Specifically address the pros and cons of low-rise pumps (e.g., concrete volute and others) and associated structures, construction costs, compactness of design, maintenance costs, and feasibility of application for each of the outfall canal locations as compared to pumps, systems, and structures being considered for the permanent locations at the outfall canals.*

In an effort to provide the most efficient and most reliable engineering solutions to protect the citizens and property of the Greater New Orleans area, while balancing the concerns and feedback from the public, all innovative designs including different types of pumps will be considered. We are also working in concert with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, in addressing their suggestions, concerns, and operational guidelines.

In the coming months, we will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) during the procurement process to award a design-build contract for the design and construction of the selected alternative. The RFP will encourage contractor creativity and innovation while meeting many other performance criteria, and could possibly include the incorporation of low profile (rise)/concrete volute pumps as we move forward with the implementation of the permanent protection system for the outfall canals. The Corps is working diligently to implement the Greater New Orleans Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System to provide safe and reliable hurricane protection.

5. *Establish an independent "Peer Review Committee" to evaluate the USACE decisions on permanent pump station locations at the outfall canals. The Peer Review Committee should be comprised of citizens in the impact area as well as independent professional engineers. Decisions reached by the Committee must be considered by the USACE if they differ from conclusions reached by the USACE.*

6. Establish a Citizens Design and Construction Committee to participate with the USACE in the preparation of the bid package for the pump stations for each of the outfall canal locations to ensure the public interest and concerns are addressed.

7. Similarly, establish a Citizens Design and Construction Team to participate with the USACE and its winning contractor for the design and construction of the permanent pump stations at the outfall canals to ensure the public interest is represented and its concerns, especially quality of life, are addressed.

Your questions #5, #6, and #7 refer to the common topic regarding the establishment of a “Peer Review Committee,” a “Citizens Design and Construction Committee,” and a Citizens Design and Construction Team;” and these three questions are collectively answered as follows. The United States Army Corps of Engineers encourages local citizen participation to the maximum extent possible to ensure the public interest and concerns are addressed. As part of the study process, public participation has been encouraged through such avenues as the Public Meetings that have been and will continue to be conducted; and through electronic means such as the www.nolaenvironmental.gov web site. Local citizens are encouraged to form such local committees as they deem appropriate to represent their interests and the Corps will interact with those committees to the maximum extent available. Such committees are a local concern and activity and the Corps will not establish such local committees as part of the study process. Rather the Corps will continue to interact publically through appropriate channels such as Public Meetings and Partnering Sessions throughout the design build process.