

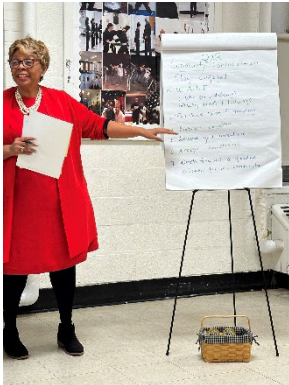


## Curtis Bay and Surrounding Communities Supplemental Environmental Project Listening Session

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7pm to 8:30pm

Held in person at the Curtis Bay Recreational Center (1630 Filbert Street, Baltimore, MD) and on Zoom

### Session Notes



#### Meeting Objective:

Community members and representatives from Curtis Bay and surrounding communities provided their thoughts, questions, and ideas in a listening session on the Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP). The SEP will be administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) as individual grants of varying amounts for projects and efforts designed to improve, protect and/or reduce risk to the environment or public health, with an emphasis on improving water quality and local natural resources in the community.

#### Welcome, Review the Meeting Objectives and Agenda, Opening Remarks, and Small Group Discussions:

Mamie Parker, Ph.D., facilitated this session by providing opening remarks to welcome the in person (26 attendees) and virtual audience (26 attendees), reviewed the meeting objective, reviewed the agenda, and walked us through the listening session. We were joined by Attorney General Anthony Brown who provided opening remarks to the attendees about the historic criminal penalty from the medical waste incinerator located nearby, the SEP provided to the Trust for environmental projects to occur in these communities, and a continued commitment to working for Maryland on this and other similar issues. Kathy Somoza, Trust staff, provided an overview of the SEP, the Trust's role, and types of projects the funding can support. Dr. Parker provided the group with questions to get the small breakout group discussion started. Four in-person and two virtual groups spent the next 30 to 40 minutes discussing project ideas and other priorities.

More about the speakers:

- Dr. Parker at <https://mamieparker.com/about/>
- Attorney General Brown at <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/About-AG.aspx>
- The Chesapeake Bay Trust and Kathy Somoza, Senior Program Officer, at: <https://cbtrust.org/>

**Group Presentations:** We heard what attendees want to see happen in their community and ideas for how these SEP funds could potentially be used. The ideas are presented below as a summary of what we heard in the six small group discussions (four in-person and four virtual small group discussions).

### **Community Priorities:**

- Public safety and community improvements
  - Solar-powered streetlights
  - Reduction in commercial vehicle traffic and road repairs
  - Increase and improvement in facilities to create space for community engagement, such as a job training facility
  - Reducing the number of vacant buildings, which pose an environmental issue and public safety concern
  - Install a barrier to protect a proposed older adult's walking trail and playground
  - Cleaning sidewalks: clean sidewalks that are free of litter and debris help with neighborhood beautification
  - Prevent litter and other debris from entering storm drains to keep them clean
- Local economic impact - give additional points to projects that propose to hire community members and/or create local jobs
- Community-driven projects - ask the community what is needed
  - Continue to connect with current community leaders and support ongoing efforts
  - Incorporate community voice into the funding process and remain transparent with community members
  - Fit the grant-making process (application solicitation, review process, etc.) to the community ideas as much as possible
  - Seek connections and partnerships with other agencies and funding sources
  - Work to intertwine community efforts
- Increase recreational water access

### **Important Points to Consider:**

- How are the funds going to be divided between communities?
- Community member(s) may have ideas and need help to find implementation partners. Who can work with the community?
- Can the Trust provide Technical Assistance for some of the applicants? Quick answer is yes we can!
- Long-term sustainability – Can we catalyze lasting change with one pot of money?
- How do we support organizations already doing important work in our communities?
- Projects should be local and community-owned
- Nonprofits such as community associations, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, can sustainably do the work and be fiscally responsible.
  - Nonprofits and awardees should be transparent with individual community members about the use of project funds and the project's impact
- Connect communities to the proper organizations and/or agencies to advance other goals within Curtis Bay and surrounding communities

### **Project Ideas:**

- Water quality improvement
  - Rain gardens in areas such as Monroe Street, Utah Street, and Gerald Avenue
  - Projects that absorb storm runoff and reduce minor flooding and erosion

- Oyster projects
- Marsh and wetland creation for improved water quality, target Curtis Creek
- Target algal blooms
- Water quality monitoring
  - Water quality testing for drinking water in homes
- Install signage to increase awareness about environmental projects and solutions
- Air quality monitoring
  - Air filters and air purifiers for homes
  - Community has some monitoring stations that come and go – long term monitoring stations owned by the community are needed to understand trends
  - Use findings to inform preventative actions to improve health, environment, etc.
- Workforce development for green jobs
  - Youth engagement
    - Hire local youth to clean streets
    - Support existing job skills programs for young adults
    - Provide fair compensation for services, including hourly rates, stipends, honorariums, etc., and ensure that the safety of the individual is a priority
  - Planting trees
  - Stormwater management
  - Veteran’s engagement
  - Urban agriculture
- Community education and engagement projects
  - Community-led research
  - Pet waste education and clean-up
  - Creative engagement that merges environment and art
  - Educational programs where the community can learn practices to preserve and protect the environment
  - Beekeeping projects and workshops
  - Programs for the elderly to keep them engaged, learning, and participating in activities
  - Youth programs around litter reduction, tree planting, gardens, etc.
  - Food sovereignty projects that establish locally owned and distributed food networks
  - Community tours of existing projects, such as nearby Harbor Hospital rain gardens
- Community greening efforts
  - Tree plantings
  - Native plant/pollinator gardens
  - Create community parks on abandoned lots
- Litter reduction
  - Monitoring – can consider installing cameras in problem areas/heavy dumping areas
  - Community clean-ups
- Curtis Bay has a Small Watershed Action plan that can be used to identify projects
- Assist community members to find funding or other support for project ideas that end up being out of the scope of this funding, such as other Trust grant programs or other services/funders the Trust may

know of and can connect the community with those resources (e.g., community redevelopment resources)

**Review of the Decision-Making Process and Next Steps:** The Trust will take the ideas and questions heard at the listening session and use them to build out a program that will support community-oriented environmental projects. The immediate next steps are to begin drafting a Request for Proposals document and program application process. As the program is “under construction,” the Trust will share slices of the work and ask for community input before finalizing the program. At each major step in the process, the Trust will aim to gather community input to inform the direction and next steps, with the goal of co-creating a program as much as possible and using a process that is responsive to the goals and desires of the community to advance a healthier, cleaner local environment.

**Closing Remarks:** The Trust thanked everyone for their time and the Trust staff were available to further discuss any project ideas for “office hours” up to 8:30 pm. In summary, the listening session gathered many good ideas for how the Trust can ask for project ideas, keep the community involved in the process, and support projects the community wants, needs, and will sustain into the future.