

# Onondaga Lake Beach Feasibility Study and Design Public Meeting #2: Responsiveness Summary to Public Comments/Questions

## MEETING DETAILS

### Date and Location

Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 5–7 pm  
St. Joseph’s Health Amphitheater at Lakeview (“Clubhouse”)  
490 Restoration Way, Syracuse, NY 13209

### Attendance

- Total: 48 attendees (scanned sign-in sheets attached)
- General Public:34
- Project Team and Subject Experts:14

### Agenda and Format

5:30–6 pm: Formal presentation (see separate PowerPoint presentation file)

5–5:30 and 6–7 pm: Informal Q+A sessions with project team and agency experts at four topic tables:

1. Site Selection & Design
2. Swimming Safety & Water Quality
3. Parks/Operations
4. Survey & Analysis

### Gathering Public Input

Public input was gathered in the following ways during this meeting:

- **Comment cards**—Accepted at each topic table, at the sign-in table, and by staff circulating the room
- **Scribed notes**—Staff captured conversations throughout the event, including those taken at topic tables and by staff circulating the room
- **Beach Use Poll**—Used to inform the beach Feasibility Study and design by obtaining additional public opinion on preferred uses. Response rates to three general descriptions are included below:
  1. “A great swimming area with deep and shallow water, areas to jump in and swim laps, easy to get in and out of the water.” 25%
  2. “A sandy beach with a mix of sun and shade, as well as plenty of space so I don’t feel crowded in the water or on the sand.” 30%
  3. “A sunny, open sandy beach for laying out and shallow water for wading to cool off.” 45%

Comments and questions are in presented in the following table, along with responses (with references in-text and in footnotes). This document will be posted to the study’s website at [ongov.net/environment](http://ongov.net/environment).

Comment/Question	Response
<i>Topic: General Questions or Comments</i>	
<p>“Why spend resources to study a beach?”</p>	<p>The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of a beach on Onondaga Lake given fiscal impacts, suitability of the study area for public bathing and swimming<sup>1</sup>, and public input through market analysis and public engagement.</p> <p>The study is paid for by a grant from the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS). On December 13, 2017, Onondaga County (County) was competitively awarded an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) grant from the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) to conduct a Feasibility Study for a swimming beach on Onondaga Lake’s northeastern shoreline and complete associated design work for the most feasible beach location. The NYSDOS LWRP funding was applied for because the Onondaga County Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2022 includes \$300,000 for Beach Development at Onondaga Lake Park. This grant supplemented the proposed local expenditure. The Feasibility Study is intended to provide the County Legislature, the State, and the general public with the ecological, financial, health and safety, and public opinion information necessary to make a decision on whether and where to create a public swimming beach on Onondaga Lake.</p>
<p>“Doesn’t seem much different than what is already there, why spend taxpayer money on something we don’t need?”</p>	<p>There is currently no public swimming beach on Onondaga Lake nor is there funding to build a beach. However, this would be a significant recreational enhancement for Onondaga Lake Park that would also have a cost which needs to be considered in addition to an assessment of the usefulness of a beach Onondaga Lake. If results were to support a beach and the County decided to build one, the intent would be to create a swimming area that is little-changed from the existing condition. The addition of park amenities that improve public safety and comfort for visitors while enjoying the waterfront would be the focus of any investment made.</p> <p>The potential to have a beach on Onondaga Lake is the result of the successful work that was performed under the Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) with NYSDEC. It was the State’s goal and intent that remediation efforts bring Onondaga Lake and its tributaries into compliance with water quality standards and criteria associated with a Class B Waterbody. The study area and all potential locations considered are within these class “B” waters on Onondaga Lake so this study process comports with the NYSDEC’s intent of the remedial work.</p> <p>Per the NYSDEC’s publicly available Fact Sheet on Onondaga Lake:</p> <p>“Long considered one of the most polluted lakes in nation, Onondaga Lake water quality has greatly improved over the past 10 years and now supports most uses. Northern Onondaga Lake is a Class B waterbody, suitable for use as a public bathing beach, general recreation and support of aquatic life, but not as a water supply. Public bathing and other recreation use are fully supported although currently there are no designated public beaches on the lake. Previous assessments had indicated these uses to be impaired; however, data for the period from 2002-2012 show pathogen (coliform) standards for protection of contact recreation to be consistently met.”<sup>1</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
<p>“The public doesn’t want a beach, why study it?”</p>	<p>The public has expressed interest in an Onondaga Lake swimming beach consistently over time. Since the 1930s,<sup>2</sup> the County has explored a recreational goal of adding a bathing beach on the northern end of the lake. The 1975 Onondaga County Environmental Plan incorporated future bathing beach plans for Onondaga Lake stating that, “Without question the water resource with the greatest potential for future recreational development is Onondaga Lake.”<sup>3</sup> The Onondaga Lake Partnership Reconnecting with Onondaga Lake 2007 Report<sup>4</sup> cited public interest in a swimming beach on the shores on Onondaga Lake, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the shoreline for public recreational use. A FOCUS on Onondaga Lake 2012 Report<sup>5</sup> reviewed 54 past public surveys and visioning sessions which date back to 1928 regarding the future of Onondaga Lake and undertook a more recent public opinion study with diverse local stakeholders which was comprised of over 1,100 respondents. The 2012 report concluded that a majority of the respondents indicated that having a public beach on Onondaga Lake would be important or very important to them.</p> <p>One goal of the Feasibility Study is to further examine public interest in new beach amenities and swimming access for Onondaga Lake. Results of the 2019 online survey,<sup>6</sup> which collected the opinions of over 2,000 respondents, support that it is reasonable to assume there would be at least 31,600 potential first-time beach visitors in a season. This calculation is based on those who are already using Onondaga Lake Park, believe the lake is safe for swimming, are currently visiting other beaches in the region, and indicated they would use a beach at the park if it were developed.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>The County’s Feasibility Study has examined public interest in a beach and performed a detailed analysis of what building a beach might entail. Each step in the ongoing process has included public comments and full disclosure of report material which is available on the Office of Environment website for Onondaga County. The County has followed project guidance provided by the NYSDOS LWRP regarding the study process and format of meetings. The County has brought together a team of consultants with the necessary expertise in the science, engineering, public health, and policy aspects of a creating a public beach that can help further community utilization of Onondaga Lake.</p>
<p><b>Topic: Market Analysis/Public Survey Report</b></p>	
<p>“Please hire an actual polling company to do an independent sample.”</p>	<p>We did. A major component of the Feasibility Study was focused on gathering public input and feedback. This was captured in a comprehensive market analysis survey, which was conducted by Danter Economic Development Strategies. Danter is a national independent research and consulting firm specializing in market research, demographic information, and developing site-specific market feasibility studies. The company has completed over 17,000 feasibility studies over 30 years, including numerous projects that apply their public polling strategies to recreational project development. This expertise in survey methodology, professionalism, and scope of services are why the</p>

<sup>2</sup> “West Shore Park, Onondaga Lake” (1945) *Sargent, Webster, Grenshaw & Foley, Architects*. The Post-War Report, Syracuse-Onondaga Post-War Planning Council, City of Syracuse.

<sup>3</sup> “Onondaga County Environmental Plan” (1975), *Onondaga County Environmental Management Council*.

<sup>4</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1adb/4a65b0f709c00c29a4fb17c167d5befe1d26.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.focussyracuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/F.O.C.U.S.-on-Onondaga-Lake-Report2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport\\_BeachStudy.pdf](http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport_BeachStudy.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/BeachAttendanceProjection.pdf>

Comment/Question	Response
	County selected Danter to design, interpret, and synthesize the electronic public survey. <sup>8</sup> The data and results presented at the second public meeting and in the report reflect the responses submitted and cross-tabulated in the survey. <sup>9</sup>
“The public has not been sufficiently educated about this lake project. Online surveys are completely inadequate.”	<p>The survey, which was conducted as part of the Feasibility Study, was not designed as a tool to educate the public about the beach study, nor does it claim to do so. The survey was designed to gather public input regarding Onondaga Lake and the potential of a beach on its shores. The survey was released and publicized prior to the first public meeting with the intent that interested residents would attend the public meetings to learn more about the project. The purpose of the survey was to gauge public opinion in the context of conducting the Feasibility Study and not intended to supplant any other public outreach regarding Onondaga Lake. All information presented at meetings is available online.<sup>10</sup></p> <p>The Feasibility Study process involves four public education events (3 public meetings and 1 public outreach event) where information is presented and public comments are received. All material related to the study is available online at the <a href="#">Office of Environment website</a> and has been since the start of the study in January of 2019. In addition, there has been extensive media coverage of meetings and study findings.</p>
“57% of people who participated in the internet survey responded they do not consider Onondaga Lake to be safe for swimming, what does this indicate?”	The survey provides vital insight into a generalized understanding of the Lake’s water quality and the need for further public education and outreach on the differing regions of the lake and their respective water quality assessments. In the survey, 57% of respondents said they believed the lake is not safe for swimming. Nonetheless, the majority of the lake, the northern three quarters, is a Class B waterbody, as declared by NYSDEC and has maintained New York State swimming standards according to the New York State Department of Health, for over 10 consecutive years. The need to provide further education and outreach opportunities for the public regarding the appropriateness of the lake for swimming will be incorporated into the Feasibility Study.
<b><i>Topic: Public Participation and County Responsiveness</i></b>	
“Public dialogue is needed.”	This Feasibility Study is structured to include public input throughout the process using various means of communication. In January 2019, a brief electronic survey <sup>11</sup> was sent by email to a target audience (County residents) of over 20,000 people. Addresses were gathered through various County, NYSDEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other local partners’ list-serves, <sup>12</sup> along with being publicized in major local news sources <sup>13</sup> and social media platforms. <sup>14</sup> The survey was made available for 1 month. The County received 2,000 responses that were synthesized into a market analysis report and made available online. <sup>15</sup> Two of the three planned public meetings have been held to communicate updates about the study while gathering additional public feedback. The

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.danter.com/method/default.htm>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport\\_BeachStudy.pdf](http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport_BeachStudy.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/BeachStudyDocuments.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/FinalQuestionnaire.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dec.ny.gov/public/65855.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2019/01/survey-asks-would-you-swim-at-an-onondaga-lake-beach.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/OCEnvironment>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport\\_BeachStudy.pdf](http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/MarketAnalysisSurveyResultsFullReport_BeachStudy.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
	<p>County publicized both meetings through sending press releases<sup>16</sup> to local news sources<sup>17</sup> and posting to websites and social media.<sup>18</sup> Both public meetings were open to the press and received coverage by various news sources.<sup>19 20</sup> The public notifications for both meetings were sent at least 2 weeks prior to the event, and all meeting summaries and information presented have been made public.<sup>21</sup></p>
<p>“Would prefer more accessible public meeting location, such as the Southwest Community Center or the Bishop Harrison Center.”</p>	<p>We appreciate the comments noting that the Amphitheater is not directly accessible by public transportation and thank those who provided suggestions for more accessible meeting locations. The first meeting was held at Destiny USA, a location selected based on its proximity to the study sites, space availability, and public transportation access. The second meeting was held at the Clubhouse at St. Joseph’s Health at Lakeview Amphitheater, selected for its view of the study sites, visible from outside and inside the meeting location, and space availability. We will review the accessibility of multiple locations for our third public meeting and pledge that the selected venue be accessible with public transportation.</p>
<p>“Would prefer town hall meeting format, where questions are publicly aired and heard.”</p>	<p>In developing the plan for the Feasibility Study, several meeting formats were considered, including a “town hall” format; however, formats of both public meetings to date follow research-based facilitation guidelines for engaging individuals in productive conversation to gather feedback and insight regarding complex issues.<sup>22</sup> This style consists of small-groups, facilitated Q&amp;A discussions with topic tables and accompanying “subject experts” to allow questions to be answered by the most appropriate and knowledgeable person in the most comprehensive way practical. This is a time-efficient format that also encourages participation by those who may not feel comfortable asking questions in a larger group setting.<sup>23</sup> This format of the public meetings is consistent with the strategy of engagement currently used by our leading state agencies on similar, complex projects and addresses concerns about the shortcomings of an “open mic” format, which is less effective in generating discussion or answering questions with the responsiveness they deserve.<sup>24</sup> These public meetings should not to be confused with public hearings, which are held by a governing body prior to the adoption or amendment of local laws, nor are they subject to the associated stipulations.</p>
<p>“We need more public meetings on this topic with open questions and answers so everyone can hear.”</p>	<p>The Office of Environment added an education and outreach event on the Feasibility Study during the Onondaga County Save the Rain Clean Water Fair on September 7, 2019. The event was free and open to the public, and the Office of the Environment was present to answer questions and receive feedback from attendees on beach concepts. A third public meeting is currently scheduled for late 2019. We will take this comment under advisement should the project progress to design development.</p>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/PublicMtg\\_2\\_Announcement\\_OnondagaBeach\\_STHLA.pdf](http://www.ongov.net/environment/documents/PublicMtg_2_Announcement_OnondagaBeach_STHLA.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.waer.org/post/public-swimming-onondaga-lake-beach-how-feasible-how-desirable-it>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/OnondagaLakeBeachStudy.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2019/04/onondaga-lake-beach-could-see-thousands-of-swimmers-despite-lakes-reputation.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/news/2019/06/27/onondaga-lake-beach-survey-results>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/OnondagaLakeBeachStudy.html>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide-process-planning>

<sup>23</sup> <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Governance/Citizen-Participation-and-Engagement/Communication-and-Citizen-Participation-Techniques.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.dot.ny.gov/i81opportunities/community-meetings>

Comment/Question	Response
<p>“Why is there not a ‘no beach’ option in the Beach Bucks Poll?”</p>	<p>The Beach Bucks Poll was a follow-up exercise from the Public Survey to gather further public opinion to inform elements for the design phase of the Feasibility Study. The poll measured the participating public’s opinions on their preferred beach uses captured in three potential design concepts (see page 1 of this document). The design concepts are not mutually exclusive, nor was the poll a formal or final vote on beach amenities or design. The poll was available at the second public meeting and the Clean Water Fair outreach event.</p> <p>The “no beach” option was not included as an option in the Beach Bucks Poll visioning exercise because the intent of the poll was to inform design of a potential beach that best reflects the public opinion. A “no beach” option is already being represented by the current use of the space and thus would not fit in a design visioning exercise. At the second public meeting, those who rejected this activity and requested a “no beach” option were encouraged to submit their opinions as public comments at our various topic tables. Staff from the project team also circulated the room, scribing comments from those attendees who declined to provide written comments so that these sentiments were recorded and responded to. There was no opposition to the poll exercise at the Clean Water Fair. Results of the polls from both events can be found on page 1 of this document.</p>
<p>“County is tightly controlling discussion and not listening.”</p>	<p>The format for the public meetings is purposely structured as described above to allow for interaction between members of the public and the people involved in conducting the study. We are listening. The County acknowledges, records, and responds to each comment submitted verbally and by index card at each public event, as well as the comments submitted electronically on our website submission form and sent through email. These comments and responses will all be included in the final Feasibility Study and design that will be submitted to NYSDOS. When practical, comments will be folded into the suggested design component of the study.</p>
<p><b><i>Topic: Water Quality and Sediments</i></b></p>	
<p>“How was it confirmed that the Lake is now swimmable?”</p>	<p>New York State water quality standards for primary and secondary contact recreation, including swimming, have been met in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake for more than 10 years.<sup>25</sup> The northern basin (or “Onondaga Lake, Northern End” [0702-0003]) segment includes the area of the lake northwest of a line from a point on the west shore 0.25 mile northwest of an unnamed tributary (5a) to a point on the east shore 0.6 miles southeast of Bloody Brook, encompassing more than half of the total lake surface area.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>Please see the following statement from NYSDEC’s publicly available Fact Sheet on Onondaga Lake:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Long considered one of the most polluted lakes in nation, Onondaga Lake water quality has greatly improved over the past 10 years and now supports most uses. Northern Onondaga Lake is a Class B waterbody, suitable for use as a public bathing beach, general recreation and support of aquatic life, but not as a water supply. Public bathing and other recreation use are fully supported although currently there are no designated public beaches on the lake. Previous assessments had indicated these uses to be impaired; however, data for the</p>

<sup>25</sup> [http://static.ongov.net/WEP/AMP/2017\\_AMPREPORT/AMPReport\\_2017.pdf](http://static.ongov.net/WEP/AMP/2017_AMPREPORT/AMPReport_2017.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
	<p>period from 2002-2012 show pathogen (coliform) standards for protection of contact recreation to be consistently met.”<sup>28</sup></p>
<p>“This is still a Superfund site. If you want to build a beach, make it NOT a Superfund site anymore.”</p>	<p>It is important to distinguish between the water quality and remedial history of the area proposed for this project in the northeastern portion of the lake and the very different history in the other areas of the lake. The remedy completed in other areas of the lake was part of a Superfund process approved by NYSDEC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and subject to an ongoing monitoring program and 5-year reviews. The areas of the lake being assessed for a potential swimming beach have been determined by NYSDEC to be safe for swimming. The process for adding a public beach for the Onondaga Lake will require change in site use designation that will be managed by NYSDEC.</p> <p>Even prior to any remediation, the results of the Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) approved by the NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern end of the lake exhibited unacceptable risk to adults or children potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake.</p> <p>Please see the following statement from NYSDEC’s publicly available Fact Sheet on Onondaga Lake:</p> <p>“Long considered one of the most polluted lakes in nation, Onondaga Lake water quality has greatly improved over the past 10 years and now supports most uses. Northern Onondaga Lake is a Class B waterbody, suitable for use as a public bathing beach, general recreation and support of aquatic life, but not as a water supply. Public bathing and other recreation use are fully supported although currently there are no designated public beaches on the lake. Previous assessments had indicated these uses to be impaired; however, data for the period from 2002-2012 show pathogen (coliform) standards for protection of contact recreation to be consistently met.”<sup>27</sup></p>
<p>“Also, what happens when the remedy fails? Will Honeywell still be around? Will the public remember this Superfund site?”</p>	<p>A similar comment (R-2.6) was submitted and responded to by NYSDEC in the 2006 Responsiveness Summary to the Record of Decision (ROD). The response was: “Post-remediation monitoring and maintenance of the cap and other components of the remedy will ensure that the remedy will not fail. In addition, as is noted in the ROD on page 81, because this remedy would result in contaminants remaining on site above levels that allow for unlimited use and unrestricted exposure to site media, CERCLA requires that the site be reviewed at least once every five years. The five-year review<sup>28</sup> will formally evaluate the results from monitoring programs established as part of this remedy to ensure that the remedy remains protective of human health and the environment. Based on these reviews, it is possible that NYSDEC and EPA could pursue further remedial action with Honeywell, which would be addressed through a modification of the ROD and/or the Consent Decree.<sup>29</sup>” (p. 18, Attachment 1, 2006 Responsiveness Summary<sup>30</sup>)</p>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/wioswegoonondaga.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/02/372861.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/34998.html>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation\\_hudson\\_pdf/cdrsp2.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/cdrsp2.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
“What happens if/when the cap fails?”	If the cap fails, NYSDEC and USEPA could pursue further remedial action with Honeywell (see the response to the previous comment).
“Restoration goal should be to restore natural ecosystem (fish species and abundance rather than focusing on human recreational use).”	<p>There are currently projects being implemented around Onondaga Lake which are focused on ecological restoration and are being funded by Honeywell, in partnership with Onondaga County, through the Natural Resources Damages Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) consent decree. This study is evaluating a potential project, a beach on Onondaga Lake, which would meet restoration goals for the lake that address human recreational use.<sup>31</sup></p> <p>In addition, in the 2005 ROD for the site, NYSDEC noted, “Anticipated recreational uses of the lake include fishing without consumption restrictions and swimming” (p. 27, July 2005 ROD<sup>32</sup>). Onondaga County is actively working on ecological restoration projects and recreational projects, both of which seek to restore lost uses of Onondaga Lake.</p>
“Honeywell should be required to set up a trust fund to pay for potential future impairments to barrier wall/possibility of a cap failure. Don’t want it to become a taxpayer issue to repair/remediate if cap fails.”	This comment is outside of the scope of this Feasibility Study. However, a similar comment (R-2.4) was submitted and responded to by NYSDEC in the 2006 Responsiveness Summary to the ROD produced by NYSDEC. The response was: “The requirements of Paragraphs 68-73 of the Consent Decree require Honeywell to provide the State with an annual reporting of its financial status and to provide specific financial assurance in the event the State determines that Honeywell is unable to complete the Remedial Program. It should be noted that financial assurance is not routinely required in the context of state cleanup orders, but was considered and included in this Consent Decree in response to public comment on the ROD. The State believes that the provisions of the Consent Decree provide adequate assurances for the completion of the remedial program. Further, should Honeywell fail to maintain adequate funds to complete the cleanup, the state and/or federal Superfunds may be drawn upon to complete the cleanup.” (p. 17, Attachment 1, 2006 Responsiveness Summary <sup>33</sup> )
“Does capping sediment keep it from being a potential issue for swimmers?”	The options for the swimming beach are only located in areas that were not required to be capped as part of the remediation program. Based on results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC, the northern basin of the lake does not exhibit unacceptable risk to adults or children potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake.
“There has not been adequate sediment sampling to prove the areas under consideration are safe.”	The NYSDEC- and USEPA-approved all work plans for the frequency and justification for sediment sampling used in the 2005 Lake Bottom Remedial Investigation (RI). This process included the potential of the Class B waters being considered for a public bathing beach with recreational activities that include swimming and wading. In addition, the results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake exhibited unacceptable risk to children or adults potentially exposed to sediment by swimming, walking or wading in the lake.
“Could there be contaminant transfer to northern end of lake?”	Remediation has addressed contamination in the lake. This includes the south and north basin. Please see previous answers regarding the integrity of the lake bottom cap.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/ec/files/onondaga/US%20FWS%20Fact%20Sheet-December%202018.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation\\_hudson\\_pdf/onondagalakerod.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/onondagalakerod.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation\\_hudson\\_pdf/cdrsp2.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/cdrsp2.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
<p>“What happens during times of high-water flow/levels? Does contaminated sediment move towards Willow Bay?”</p>	<p>Representatives from Onondaga County will determine when it may be appropriate to close the beach during high water levels.</p> <p>Please see the prior answer regarding sediment migration.</p>
<p>“Need to discuss potential public health impacts of sediment quality, not just water quality.”</p>	<p>The results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake exhibited unacceptable risk to adults or children potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake. As a result, the sediment concentrations were not a key consideration for the selection of the beach location since each of the options are in the northern basin.</p>
<p>“What happens if the sediments are stirred up by the activity in the area, is there potential for new threats to public health?”</p>	<p>The results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake exhibited unacceptable risk to adults or children potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake. As a result, the sediment concentrations were not a key consideration for the selection of the beach location since each of the options are in the northern basin. The Remedial Investigation, which provided the data used in the exposure scenarios within the HHRA, used sediment depths of 0-3 feet for “surface sediment” so the stirring up of sediment has been addressed in the HHRA.</p>
<p>“What about the impacts from Metro Treatment Plant outflow?”</p>	<p>Under the ACJ, Onondaga County invested in improvements and upgrades to the Onondaga County Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, the elimination and/or reduction of the impacts of the combined sewer overflows on the lake and its tributaries through programs like Save the Rail, and a lake and tributary AMP designed to evaluate the impacts of the improvement projects on the water quality of the lake and tributary streams. These improvements in water quality due to Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades, paired with remediation by Honeywell, have allowed Onondaga Lake to be designated as safe for swimming by New York State Regulations.<sup>34</sup></p> <p>As previously noted, Onondaga Lake has met water quality standards continuously, in the north basin, for the last decade. In addition, just as with any other County beach, a beach on Onondaga Lake will be subject to regular sampling as proscribed by the New York State Department of Health.</p>
<p>“The water quality data is conducive to a bathing beach. How will you separate the discussion between water quality and sediment?”</p>	<p>The results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake exhibited unacceptable risk to adults or children potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake. As a result, the sediment concentrations were not a key consideration for the selection of the beach location since each of the options are in the northern basin. Water quality has improved so much that Onondaga Lake’s north basin has met NYSDOH standards for public bathing for ten years straight. It is our hope that providing this information will help address these concerns.</p>

<sup>34</sup> [http://static.ongov.net/WEP/AMP/2017 AMPREPORT/AMPReport\\_2017.pdf](http://static.ongov.net/WEP/AMP/2017 AMPREPORT/AMPReport_2017.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
<p>“I appreciate the abundance of water quality data from the many decades of research on our little lake. We don’t need more data to know the water is swimmable. Can’t wait to swim at Willow Bay.”</p>	<p>The County appreciates the acknowledgement of Ambient Monitoring Program (AMP) and hopes those who are able can help engage the community in this new reality of a swimmable portion of Onondaga Lake.</p>
<p><b><i>Topic: Site Selection Matrix</i></b></p>	
<p>“Were the categories used in the Matrix used for Site Selection weighted?”</p>	<p>Yes, the categories in the matrix were weighted using a point system for each criterion.</p>
<p>“Why is Sediment Quality not included in the Matrix used for Site Selection?”</p>	<p>The results of the HHRA approved by NYSDEC indicated that no areas in the northern basin of Onondaga Lake exhibited unacceptable risk to children or adults potentially exposed to sediment by walking or wading into the lake.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the sediment concentrations were not a key consideration for selection of the beach location since each of the options are located in the northern basin.</p> <p>In addition, the proposed sand layer will reduce any potential for direct contact with the underlying sediments that the regulatory agency already stated did not pose unacceptable risk from dermal contact. Note that this sandy material is typical for public beaches in New York State. The placement of this material is focused on creating an enjoyable beach experience; the long-term stability of the sandy substrate is not required as a health and safety measure for people using the beach. An appropriate maintenance schedule for sand replenishment will be considered during the design phase.</p>
<p>“How large would the beach be?”</p>	<p>The final footprint of proposed beach will be presented in the Site Design shared at and made public after the third public meeting. Please see the Project Boundary Map for the preliminary estimate size and location of the proposed site at Willow Bay.</p>

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation\\_hudson\\_pdf/onondagalakerod.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/onondagalakerod.pdf)

Comment/Question	Response
<p>“I like the idea of a Willow Bay Beach, but have several concerns: what about the seaweed and the wake from the powerboats entering the lake?”</p>	<p><b>Wind and Wake Energy</b>—Wind/wake energy were a part of the site matrix and have been considered in the site selection from the beginning of the study and will be continued to be addressed and mitigated in the final design. Willow Bay, the site selected for design, currently has rock jetties that extend out from the Seneca River Outlet that naturally help to protect Willow Bay from wind-generated waves from the prevailing wind directions (from the west and northwest). These rock jetties also protect the site from boat wakes as boats enter and leave Onondaga Lake into Seneca River. The two other potential sites, Willow Bay 1B and Bloody Brook, are both subject to wind-generated waves from prevailing westerly winds and do not have an existing protective barrier.</p> <p><b>Seaweed</b>—Like most lakes in this area, nearshore areas of Onondaga Lake support growth of rooted aquatic plants (macrophytes, or weeds) referred to as submerged aquatic vegetation. Currently, the abundance of these plants is relatively low and would not interfere with recreational enjoyment. Submerged aquatic vegetation, and the maintenance of, will be addressed in the Feasibility Study part of operations and maintenance by Onondaga County Parks. Plans include the addition of a sand layer to create more enjoyable beach recreation. This additional sand substrate will reduce the habitat for weed growth. Currently, lake bottom sediments at this site consist of shell fragments, sands, and gravelly materials that extend upwards along shoreline.</p>
<p>“Proximity to I-90?”</p>	<p>Potential noise issues will be assessed and addressed in the Feasibility Study. The general areas of the park being evaluated for a beach are already open to other recreational uses (e.g., Willow Bay kayak rentals, shelters, and picnic areas<sup>36</sup>). It is not anticipated that noise from the Thruway would have a significant impact on the siting or operation of the beach. Noise from the Thruway is currently buffered by tree cover, and it may be recommended that this buffer is maintained or enhanced within the Feasibility Study and design work. The County plans to maintain the trees on site, which will also continue to reduce the noise pollution in this area of the lakeshore.</p>
<p><b><i>Topic: Parks Maintenance and Operations</i></b></p>	
<p>“The park is currently free to use, and I support a beach unless there is an admission fee.”</p>	<p>It is anticipated that there will be no fee for using the beach.</p>
<p>“What will the beach cost and who will pay for it?”</p>	<p>The estimated cost of a beach will be presented as part of the third public meeting. There are no funds allocated for the construction of a beach on Onondaga Lake. This study will provide further information to facilitate community dialog about potential recreational uses of Onondaga Lake.</p>
<p>“Will it [a beach] be accessible? Will there be public transportation?”</p>	<p>Any facilities or infrastructure constructed will be fully accessible in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Public transportation options will be assessed based on demand, however, it is the goal of the County to have public assets be accessible to public transportation options.</p>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.ongov.net/environment/images/ContextMap.jpg>

Comment/Question	Response
“Parking volume capacity?”	The Feasibility Study inventoried existing parking space and traffic patterns at the three potential sites and evaluated the need for additional parking and traffic pattern adjustments based on attendance projections. This analysis and design will ensure safe parking and traffic patterns for the projected attendance with minimal alterations to the existing infrastructure. The results will be presented in the final design for Willow Bay (Site 1A) at the third public meeting and will be posted to the project webpage.
“What will the impact of a beach have on existing park uses and users? Will existing amenities at Willow Bay be changed?”	It is the County’s goal to maintain mature trees and utilize existing infrastructure where possible. Existing amenities to remain include picnic tables and grills in the Willow Bay Area. Onondaga County Parks is the entity that currently maintains grills and picnic tables in the Willow Bay Picnic Area; these amenities and others associated with a beach would continue to be maintained by Onondaga County Parks. In addition, current trails and amenities in the area will be maintained.
“Interested in maintaining boating rental areas for current area.”	Kayak and boat rentals will continue to be available at Willow Bay so long as a vendor chooses to utilize the availability of the site. It is the County’s goal to maintain existing infrastructure as possible, including the boat and kayak rentals, if a beach is constructed in the Willow Bay Area. Public responses from the online survey also indicate a strong, continued interest for these rentals in the Willow Bay Area if the beach is approved, and the Site Design will take this into account.
“More traffic/crowding in area given projected 31,000 new visitors?”	Regarding the concerns of overcrowding based on the 31,000 projected visitors to a beach on Onondaga Lake, this number reflects the number of users throughout the summer season and does not reflect an anticipated number of users for a given day. The Feasibility Study used survey responses, existing and projected usage, and parking capacities to estimate necessary parking spots and traffic flows to accommodate more users at Willow Bay. This will be presented in the final design shared at the third public meeting. Onondaga County Parks will use the numbers presented in the Feasibility Study to ensure traffic patterns and parking spaces are designed and constructed to maximize safety and convenience.
“How will the beach swimmers share space with boaters and anglers?”	Preliminary renderings show that swimming will not extend into the lake’s outlet to the Seneca River. As with all County Parks swimming beaches, swimming areas will be clearly marked and/or roped off to prevent those swimming/wading in the lake from entering waters where watercrafts are in use or anglers are active. This visible delineation of the swimming area will also be coupled with signage to prevent anglers from casting their lines into the Willow Bay swimming/wading area. These safety features will be included and shown on the Site Design presented at third public meeting.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Sign-In Sheets

SIGN-IN SHEET			
Onondaga Lake Beach Feasibility Study and Design   PUBLIC MEETING #2   June 26, 2019   St. Joseph's Health Amphitheater			
NAME	ORGANIZATION / AFFILIATION	EMAIL	ZIP CODE
Holly Granat	Citizen		13088
GARRY KLINT	CITIZEN		13080
Renee Kittleman	Onondaga Audubon		13008
Dori Joiner	Onondaga Audubon		13215
Joe Dctor	Liverpool Village Resident		13088
Janaki Suryodevara	Onondaga County		13204
Bill Langley	ONONDAGA CITY PARKS		13215
Joe Walsh	Onondaga County		13021
Karen DeRush	PRYARDS		13202
DEE KLEES	Focus		13205
MARY KUTW	CITIZEN		13204
Elaine Denton	citizen		13104
Nathan Antonacci	Citizen		13204
Richelle Brown	Resident		13027
IRENE WORKMAN	CITIZEN		13070
Jane Schwenke	Citizen		13090

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SIGN-IN SHEET			
Onondaga Lake Beach Feasibility Study and Design   PUBLIC MEETING #2   June 26, 2019   St. Joseph's Health Amphitheater			
NAME	ORGANIZATION / AFFILIATION	EMAIL	ZIP CODE
Marianna Kaufman	Resident, Syr peace council, Onondaga Solidarity Council		13224
Lindsay Speer	Resident, Creating Change Consulting		13210
David Coburn	Resident		13090
Nodesia Hernandez	<del>Resident</del> Resident		13090
Melanie Vitardi	Resident		13063
Peggy Chase	county leg		13206
Melisa Kohan	Anchor QEA		13078
Uy mona	Ecologic		
Liz Myers	Ecologic		13244

In addition to those noted on sign-in sheets above, the following project team members attended this meeting:

1. Travis Glazier, Office of Environment
2. Shannon Fabiani, Office of Environment
3. Katie O' Doyle, Onondaga County
4. Isabelle Harris, Onondaga County
5. Keith Ewald, B&L
6. Nicole Cleary, B&L
7. Olivia Mallon, B&L
8. Liz Myers, EcoLogic LLC
9. Liz Moran, EcoLogic LLC
10. Michelle McGinnis, EcoLogic LLC
11. Matt Henderson, Anchor QEA
12. Betsy Henry, Anchor QEA
13. Ken Danter, Danter/Economic Development Strategies

**Appendix B: Complete List of Comments Submitted at the 6/25/2019 Public Meeting**