

Q & A Response: The Bellwether District Public Meeting – September 17, 2024

The list below shows questions received during The Bellwether District’s virtual public meeting held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM ET. During the meeting, The Bellwether District team provided updates on environmental remediation, development, and community and workforce related efforts.

Note: Questions are transcribed directly as asked.

Q 1: My question is about hotel accommodations. Do we have a need for any? We're right down the street from the project, and if it's needed, I'd love to talk to someone about a partnership. [Note: Questioner is a sales manager at Embassy suites, Philadelphia Airport]

Thanks very much for reaching out. You could either use our contact form, which is thebellwetherdistrict.com/contact, or you could also put your email address in the Q&A. It's not something everyone can see, so it's not like you're sharing it with the world. I can shoot you an email and we're happy to have that conversation. And maybe I'll just use that to say a couple of additional things, because we do often have people in and out of town. We use the airport very frequently. One of the stories that some of our leaders of the company who were responsible for the acquisition of the property always tell is that the refinery used to kind of be the gateway to Philly, for people coming in through the airport at least, and the fact that that's no longer there really puts a much better welcome to Philly, a much better entry way to the city, and it's only going to get better from there once all those trees are planted and the roads are improved. So, we're privileged to be a part of that.

One other thing I wanted to mention is we do have a special option on that contact form, again the thebellwetherdistrict.com/contact, where, if you are a business, locally especially, who wants to work with us, if you know of a business that you'd refer, and we employ everything from obviously construction contractors and construction related businesses to photographers. We employ DJs, food trucks, anything that you can think of from a production standpoint. We employ graphic designers. So, if you know, or you are an owner of a local business, and you want to get entered into our database for opportunities, again, if you fill out that form, there's an option that says “work with us at The Bellwether District.” If you fill out that information, that goes to our team, and it also goes to a team that we have working on our Economic Opportunity Plan to try to provide equitable opportunities to local minority- and women- owned businesses. It goes straight to that team as well. So please encourage anyone who either owns or knows someone who owns a local business to make sure that they're in touch with us.

Q 2: How many people join this meeting?

Right now, we have 31 people. We've had a total of about 50, and I will say, that's actually a little bit of a low turnout for one of these meetings. We usually get closer to 100. I don't know if it's that everyone's just kind of getting back in the swing of things in September, but a typical meeting for us is closer to 100. So, we got a little bit of a light turnout tonight.

Q 3: At next week's event, is there parking, or do we have to take the shuttle?

The shuttle is definitely encouraged because there's limited parking, but there is some parking available. I want to say we can probably park about 30-40 vehicles, max, along the site. There's some limited parking in a lot, and then there's also parking along the frontage road that's alongside Passyunk.

So, the answer is yes, there is parking. If you want to be sure that you're not going to be stuck looking for parking, I definitely encourage taking the shuttle.

Q 4: Is perimeter air monitoring for VOCs or dust being performed at other locations on the site? I am specifically asking about AOI 8, which I drive past daily on 76E and can smell the VOCs coming from the site. I have observed dust clouds on windy days, traveling across the highway from the site towards residential neighborhoods. [Note: Question originally posed at Evergreen public meeting]

Evergreen shared with us your question about monitoring for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and dust at the perimeter of The Bellwether District project. The safety of our workers and neighbors is paramount and we have detailed health and safety protocols in place. We are currently demolishing underground pipes from the former refinery and performing earthwork – which means the moving of soil. Before earthwork could begin, we worked with PADEP and US EPA to develop a Soil Management Plan, which was approved by the regulatory agencies in 2020. This plan gives us the ability to move soil around the site provided we comply with requirements for sampling, tracking, reporting, and addressing waste materials, if encountered during earthwork. Moving soil has the potential to cause odors. In areas where odors are encountered during work, work is stopped, and mitigation measures like use of odor suppressing foams are used when work resumes in that area. In addition to following these soil handling protocols, we also monitor VOCs and dust at the perimeter of our site. A Perimeter Air Monitoring Plan describing the details of the monitoring and action levels is available on our website – <https://www.thebellwetherdistrict.com/community/>. Under the Community section, click on Environmental, and then Air Monitoring. You can find monthly reports with the monitoring results in the same section of the website. There are four monitoring locations in the area referred to by Evergreen as Area of Interest 8 (AOI 8). If you observe odors or any conditions that concern you, please report it by utilizing the following form – <https://www.thebellwetherdistrict.com/contact/> – or contact number – (267) 807-2075.