



# Buffalo Environmental Management Commission

## Monthly Energy/Efficiency and Sustainability TIP SHEET July 2010

As part of its City Charter-defined mission to advise the Mayor and Common Council on environmental issues affecting the City, the Buffalo Environmental Management Commission submits a monthly "tip sheet" on a timely topic for information, review and consideration. This month's tip sheet showcases the New York City's environmental review process.

A recent Environment News Service article indicated that New York City launched four measures to make their environmental review process more transparent and user-friendly for small businesses and homeowners. Environmental review is mandatory for any project, public or private, that requires a city discretionary decision. Projects requiring review range from large area-wide rezonings to small changes in property line delineation.

The measures will clarify the requirements and will reduce the time it takes applicants to comply and lessen the need for them to hire expensive consultants and attorneys. The measures include a new Environmental Assessment Statement short form with clear requirements that apply to small projects such as changes in property line delineation.

There is also a clarified full form to better target and improve the analysis of the potential impacts on medium-sized projects. Additionally, an upgraded [Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination](#) website aims to create a one-stop-shop for environmental review, including forms, calendars and review support. For the first time, the website will include a help-line staffed by the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination to answer City Environmental Quality Review-related questions.

Finally, a revised and more user-friendly City Environmental Quality Review Technical Manual is intended to improve the quality of analysis and its reporting. The manual includes new topics that align with modern environmental concerns such as greenhouse gas emissions, sustainability and PlaNYC, and refined infrastructure.

The measures will streamline the certification process, create an improved website, and provide better forms, all in the interest of eliminating the small print and bureaucratic foot-dragging. The new measures will also insure the environmental review process is completed, with better and more modern responses to environmental issues, while making things as simple as possible for everyone involved.

The addition of a greenhouse gas analysis is a major improvement that will give a snapshot of a project's climate change impacts and help identify areas for improvement. Plus, the more detailed infrastructure analysis will give a truer picture of water and sewer needs.

An interagency team representing more than a dozen city agencies, including the Office of Environmental Coordination, Department of City Planning, Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Board of Standards and Appeals, Department of Transportation, and Department of Environmental Protection, has worked to revise the Technical Manual and create new methods to target analysis and improve the quality of review.

If you have any questions regarding the tip sheet please contact Joe Gardella (Interim Chair, BEMC) at [gardella@buffalo.edu](mailto:gardella@buffalo.edu) or Dennis Sutton (BEMC support staff) at [dsutton@city-buffalo.com](mailto:dsutton@city-buffalo.com). We look forward to any input on the monthly tip sheet.

BEMC members are willing to attend any meetings to promote implementation of these programs in the City of Buffalo. BEMC meets the third Wednesday of each month, 8:00 AM, 920 City Hall. The web site address for the BEMC is:

[http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Environmental\\_Management\\_Commission](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/CityServices/Environmental_Management_Commission).