

VALUE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Elissa Stein Cushman
Deputy Commissioner and General
Counsel, Legal Affairs

DEP's strategic plan promotes eight core values, with none, in my view, being more important than the value of Integrity. Integrity means conducting oneself in a manner that is ethical, professional, and honest. It is a core tenet of the way we approach our work in the Bureau of Legal Affairs and a value that is reflected across the entire agency.

We all know that lawyers are often poorly represented in tv, books, and film. Just think of Saul Goodman/Jimmy McGill of "Better Call Saul" and "Breaking Bad" fame. But these stereotypes are clearly misplaced when describing the government lawyers who have chosen to dedicate their lives to serving the public interest. In the Bureau of Legal Affairs, we are always mindful of the need to operate within the bounds of the law, and with a steady eye on the conflicts, procurement,



civil service, EEO and other rules that protect us and the public we serve.

Often the bounds of the law and the "right" course of action are not immediately apparent. Anyone in the agency is encouraged to seek guidance from the Bureau of Legal Affairs when faced with challenging situations. Sometimes integrity involves accepting that one's own view of right and wrong does not override the law. An example of this may be when you feel you know that a given contract action will allow the City to get work done more quickly at a cheaper price, but it would require you to ignore certain procurement rules. At those times, it's important to remember that the rules are set up to protect the integrity of the broad operations of government, and those safeguards can quickly fall apart when people start substituting their judgment for the rules. In the end, you would have a system that leaves room for favoritism, reduced competition, increased prices and lack of faith in government. Again,

when in doubt, please reach out.

Integrity, though, is not just following the law. A broader view of integrity means keeping your word to your colleagues, subordinates, and your boss. It means admitting when you've made a mistake so that it can be rectified and so someone else is not blamed. It means speaking up and reporting when you witness bullying, disrespectful behavior, or sexual harassment. It means constantly thinking about your own behavior and how you deal with those around you, particularly in times of enormous stress, which we all confront at DEP from time to time.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you to the multitudes of DEP employees who come to work every day determined to make their contribution to the people of this City, and who regularly put self-interest aside to ensure the public good and the integrity of the agency. I am continually impressed by the values of those with whom I have the pleasure to work and provide counsel.

Spotlight on Safety

EHS Insights



Persis Luke
Assistant Commissioner
Environmental, Health
and Safety

Continuous improvement can sometime seem like an elusive goal—but progress is possible!

Two of DEP's Strategic Initiatives are related to these efforts. #4 is focused on enhancing our safety culture. We do know that behavioral change as well as a culture change must occur together in order to be successful. Behavioral change is related to how we, as employees, accept and live out our commitment to working safely. Culture change derives from organizational level commitment from the top.

#40 is focused on shoring up our EHS management

systems, setting positive (leading indicator) goals, and further developing accurate ways to measure our success in meeting these goals.

The term "continuous improvement" is equated with the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" process—the foundation of any strong management system. We "plan" for safety through the integration of agreed upon policies, procedures, and processes that are effective at reducing harm or risk. Examples of this are "prevention through design" or "hazard assessments." We "do" by following our procedures and policies. We "check" through our systems of quality assurance, process control, or audits. We "act" by implementing corrective actions identified during the "check" of our systems. The 4-step process repeats...hence it is continuous.

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



This month, DEP is celebrating our value of integrity. If you know someone who embodies this value, please send an email by March 19th to values@dep.nyc.gov, and include the name of who you are nominating, their bureau, and a brief description of how they embody this value.

Journalists Tour Paerdegat Park



Fifteen journalists from the Resilience Journalism Fellowship at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY recently toured the Paerdegat Basin Natural Area in Bergen Beach, Brooklyn. Participating Fellows hailed from Uruguay, Peru, and the Philippines, as well as various states, and cover environmental news for NPR, National Geographic, and Mother Jones, among other outlets. Also partaking was **Dale Willman**, Fellowship program manager, and **Adam Parris** and **Helen Cheng** of the Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay. **John McLaughlin**, managing director of the Office of Ecosystem Services, BEPA, guided the group through the diversely planted 5-acre Ecology Park, which includes a salt marsh and freshwater wetlands, along the southern shore of the Basin. The Park highlights many of the plant community types that exist, or once existed, in New York City. The park is part of DEP's comprehensive, [\\$455 million upgrade of the Paerdegat Basin area](#), which has led to significant improvements in water quality and aesthetics.

Students Partake in Watershed Debate



Students from the Columbia Secondary School in Manhattan traveled up to the watershed last week to participate in a mock town hall with their peers from the Tri-Valley School in Grahamsville. The forum was a valuable opportunity for students from the City and watershed to learn about the difficult decisions and sacrifices that drove development of the water supply in the Catskills during the early and mid-1900s. Students from each school were asked to play the roles of Catskill residents, New York City residents, New York City lawmakers, and aqueduct workers to better understand the needs, wants, and concerns of each group. Over the course of a two-hour discussion, the students debated the upsides and drawbacks of water supply construction for each stakeholder group, and whether all the stakeholders could reach a fair and equitable compromise. The town hall was moderated by **Adam Bosch** from the Bureau of Public Affairs, and a panel of experts included **Jennifer Gargliano** from the Bureau of Water Supply and **Sean McAndrew** from the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction.

Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 38 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott** (not pictured). We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Wajeedah Anderson, Corey D. Barr, Anasthasia M. Blair, Jamia N. Brown-Dunn, John A. Bullock, Brenda J. Colbert, Richard K. Davilla, Quaran K. Davis, Rushane A. Dennis, Tracey Dutton, Shannon M. Figueroa, Antoinette T. Gomez (not pictured), **Brandon Grant, Tyree Haigler, Shenika Harden, Malcolm A. Hill, Darrill E. Hiller, Ervin Hot, Octavia M. Jackson, Jeanieva E. Johnson, Kyle X. Jones** (not pictured), **Karol Kaluza, Elephtherios I. Kotsanis, Liam S. Lachner, Maya R. Landy, Ronald L. Lawyer, Tyrell D. McGhee, Raquan M. Moore, Kevin D. Peart** (not pictured), **Lawrence T. Ray, Damon D. Reardon, Jenny Reis, Veronica J. Rivera** (not pictured), **Brandie Roberts, Tilackdharry Ramdial Rupram, Rowie L. Samaco, Brandon C. Taylor, and Joseph N. Tucker** with BWSO.

DEP at Building Trade Show



DEP will be hosting a booth at BuildingsNY 2019 on April 2 and 3 at the Javits Center, where staff will meet with property owners, managers, and the design community to discuss topics ranging from water bills, green infrastructure, and sustainable development in the city. Visit DEP at Booth 657 and [click here](#) for more information.

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.