



S.W.I.M. Coalition

Stormwater Infrastructure Matters: utilizing
stormwater as a resource, not a waste!

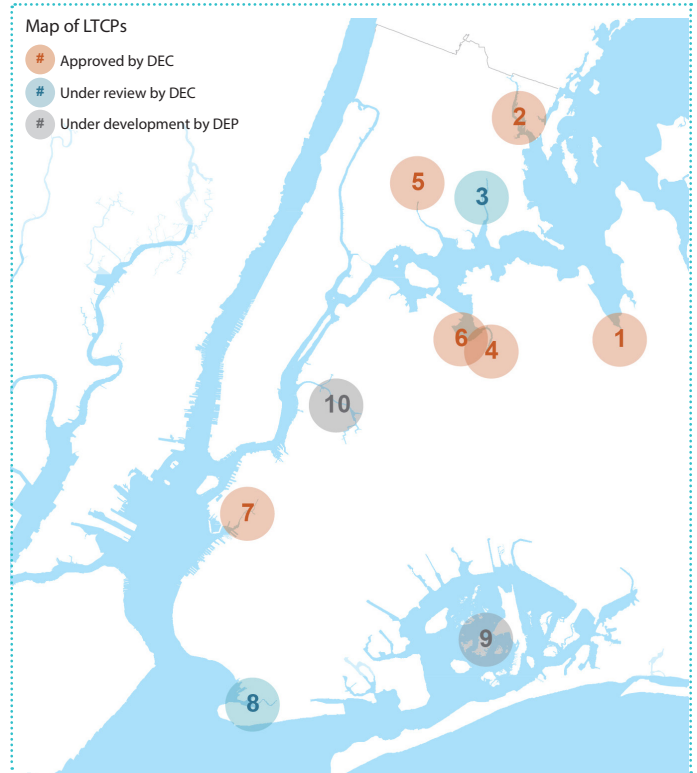
FACT SHEET – APRIL 2017

NYC Combined Sewer Overflows – UPDATE

What's happened: In March 2017, the State approved the City's deeply flawed plans to address massive combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in five waterbodies: **Bronx River, Flushing Bay, Flushing Creek, Alley Creek, Hutchinson River** and the **Gowanus Canal**. The news was quietly announced in a newsletter three weeks after the plans were approved (the newsletter excluded the Gowanus Canal). Plans remain under review for Coney Island Creek and Westchester Creek. Plans are under development for Jamaica Bay, Newtown Creek, the Harlem River and the East River & Open Waters.

Here are the details:

The City's CSO Long Term Control Plans (LTCPs) have been met with [strong objections](#) by SWIM and our member organizations. The plans, [as submitted by DEP](#), fall far short of what is needed to clean up our waters:



- Public health not protected:** The plans fail to meet federal health standards for safe contact with the water.
- Short-changing green infrastructure:** The plans ignore cost-effective opportunities to reduce CSOs with green infrastructure on public and private property.
- Too much raw sewage overflow:** After the plans are implemented, each waterbody will still overflow 100's of millions to over a billion gallons of sewage annually, with up to 35 overflows per year.
- Chlorination instead of reducing overflow:** Three plans use chlorine disinfection, with zero reduction in CSO volume (Flushing and Alley Creeks, Hutchinson R.). This may not effectively reduce pathogens, and may introduce a new pollutant into the waterways - chlorine. The technology remains untested.
- Zero new requirements for one waterbody:** The Gowanus Canal plan uses an existing "flushing tunnel" to help disperse – not reduce -- raw sewage discharges. Separate from the LTCP, the City is required to build two CSO tanks as part of the Superfund process. The tanks will reduce CSO into the Canal by more than half.
- Decades of delay:** The plans allow, on average, more than a decade to complete construction of system upgrades.
- Secretive process:** The public process is not reaching much of the community or allowing for meaningful input.

On the next page are details of the eight LTCPs that have been submitted to the DEC (numbers correspond to the map above), including the five that have been approved. The table includes the baseline CSO volume (before the LTCP), how much volume the LTCP will mitigate, the number of times a CSO event will happen with the LTCP implemented, the capital cost of the infrastructure project, and whether or not DEC has approved the plan.



Waterbody	Proposal	CSO Volume (in millions of gallons per year)			Number of overflows/year (after LTCP)	Cost**	Anticipated Construction Completion	Approved
		Baseline*	Reduced in the LTCP	Volume w/ LTCP Implemented				
1. Alley Creek	Seasonal chlorination at existing CSO tank	132	0	132	16	\$7.6 M	2024	Yes
2. Hutchinson River	Extend an outfall pipe and add chlorination	323	0	323	unreported by DEP	\$90 M	2030	Yes
3. Westchester Creek	No new infrastructure planned	289	0	289	31	\$0	N/A	Not yet
4. Flushing Creek	Seasonal chlorination at existing CSO tank	1,196	0	1,196	14	\$7 M	2025	Yes
5. Bronx River	Redirect CSO to East River	455	170	285	31	\$150 M	2026	Yes
6. Flushing Bay	New CSO storage tunnel	1,405	746	659	14	\$670 M	2035	Yes
7. Gowanus Canal	No new infrastructure planned***	263	-	-	-	\$0	N/A	Yes
8. Coney Island Creek	No new infrastructure planned	74	0	74	unreported by DEP	\$0	N/A	Not yet

*The baseline does not necessarily reflect present-day conditions. It assumes implementation of grey infrastructure from previous plans as well as green infrastructure that will manage stormwater from 10% of the impervious surfaces of the combined sewer area.

**DEP presents "escalated" costs, to show expenses in future years when the money would be spent. The numbers would be much lower if presented in "2017 dollars".

***DEP must meet Superfund requirements to build two CSO storage tanks, which will reduce CSO by over 150 MG. The State does not oversee this requirement in the LTCP process.

During the LTCP process, DEP is required to hold three public meetings; the first to introduce the LTCP to the community, the second to discuss the types of infrastructure they will propose for the waterbody, and the third to walk through the submitted plan. Both the Bronx River and Flushing Bay LTCPs had not yet had a third public meeting, leaving the community insufficient time to understand and comment on the proposed LTCPs before DEC approved them. Moreover, DEC never invited – or responded to – public comment on any of the plans after DEP submitted them.

Timeline of LTCP Public Meetings and Approvals

Waterbody	Public Meeting 1: Kick Off	2nd Public Meeting	LTCP Submitted or Due to DEC	3rd Public Meeting	DEC Approval
1. Alley Creek	October 2012	May 2013	November 2015*	November 2015	March 2017
2. Westchester Creek	February 2014	May 2014	June 2015	September 2015	-
3. Hutchinson River	March 2014	September 2014	September 2014	September 2015	March 2017
4. Flushing Creek	June 2014	October 2014	December 2014	October 2015	March 2017
5. Gowanus Canal	October 2014	May 2015	June 2015	??	March 2017
6. Bronx River	February 2015	May 2015	June 2015	??	March 2017
7. Flushing Bay	September 2015	October 2016	December 2016	??	March 2017
8. Coney Island Creek	November 2015	April 2016	June 2016	-	-
9. Jamaica Bay & Tributaries	September 2016	-	June 2017	-	-
10. Newtown Creek	November 2016	-	June 2017	-	-
11. East River & Open Water**	-	-	December 2017	-	-

Dashes signify tbd

*The Alley Creek LTCP was submitted three times: June 2013, November 2013 and finally in November 2015.

**Includes Harlem River.

Stay updated on this issue! SWIM will send alerts and updates on actions you can take. Join our [email list](#), follow us on Twitter [@SWIMcoalition](#) and on the web at www.swimmablenyc.info regularly. For more information contact us at swimmablenyc@gmail.com.



Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM) is a coalition of 70 member organizations dedicated to ensuring swimmable and fishable waters around New York City through natural, sustainable stormwater management practices.

