

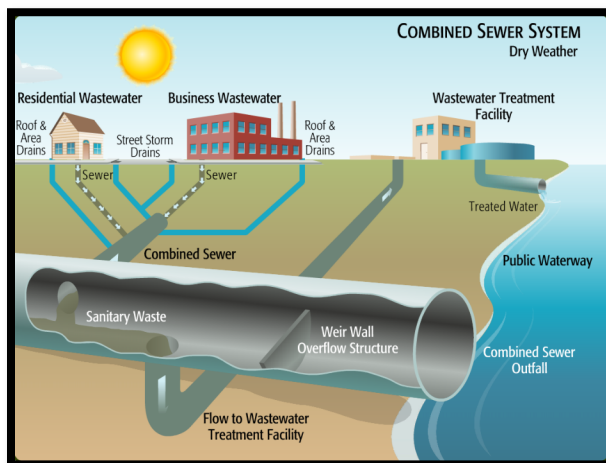


The City of Elizabeth: The Future of our Waterways is in Your Hands

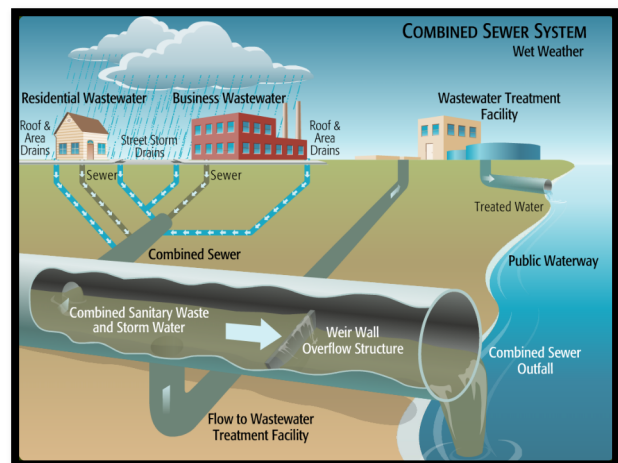
Did you know that the City of Elizabeth, like many older urban areas, has a Combined Sewer System (CSS) that discharges into local waters during heavy rainfall?

Combined Sewer Systems are typically located in older urban areas and were constructed to provide for the transportation of sanitary sewage, industrial discharges and stormwater within the same pipe. The combined sewer system in the City of Elizabeth is designed to transport all sewage flows and some wet weather flows for treatment at the Joint Meeting of Essex & Union Counties (JMEUC) Wastewater Treatment Plant. The system is also designed to discharge excess flows from the Combined Sewer System owned and operated by the municipality as a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) discharge into the adjacent waterways. The City of Elizabeth has 29 combined sewer outfalls, which discharge to the Elizabeth River, Arthur Kill and Newark Bay. The transport and treatment systems owned and operated by the City of Elizabeth and JMEUC have limited capacity and if CSSs were not permitted to overflow, the community would flood. The City of Elizabeth is working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce the number of CSO events that take place every year to improve water quality in Elizabeth's receiving streams.

When it's dry...



When it's wet...



What can you do to help? SLOW the FLOW

As a community and as an individual you can help reduce the amount of water that enters the Combined Sewer System during wet weather events, but this will take a shift in thinking. In the past, homeowners have treated stormwater as something that should be diverted off their property as quickly as possible. This has resulted in flows in the combined sewer system that can exceed the treatment plant's capacity.

By taking a few simple and inexpensive steps, such as using rain barrels and planting rain gardens, you can hold some of the rainwater on your property during the storm. The water you retain can be used on your property for watering plants or released to the sewer system gradually during dry weather.



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The Clean Water Act Establishes Water Quality Requirements

More than 40 years ago, the Clean Water Act established the goal of making all rivers fishable and swimmable. The Act established water quality criteria for receiving waters as well as a permit system regulating the discharges to the receiving waters. The primary goal of the Clean Water Act was directed at upgrading wastewater treatment plants. As existing treatment plants were upgraded and new treatment plants built, the quality of the receiving waters began improving. Nevertheless, the waterways were still not meeting water quality standards.

In 1995, all Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) discharges were also brought into the discharge permit system under the General New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) Permit for Combined Sewer Systems. The purpose of the permit was to reduce the pollutant loadings of CSOs on the receiving waters.

The City of Elizabeth has been evaluating options to meet the requirements of the permit. Members of the community have been providing feedback and input into the planning process. More information will be provided as the plans are finalized.

The City of Elizabeth, Keeping Your Community Green & Clean

Trumbull Street Green Infrastructure (under construction)



Levee along Elizabeth River



Solids/Floatables Control Facilities – netting frame



Verona Gebhardt Pumping Station – box culvert



For more information on the City of Elizabeth's CSO Long Term Control Plan, contact dloomis@elizabethnj.org