

# Beaver Creek Clean River Project

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is the Beaver Creek Clean River Project needed?

Hidden below the City of Albany's streets, buildings and parks are 900 miles of sewer pipes. Although parts of the sewer system are more than 100 years old, it works remarkably well—except when there's a heavy storm. Our sewer system collects both wastewater and stormwater into a common sewer network for transport to nearby treatment plants. However when there's heavy rain, the sewers cannot handle the extra volume and some of the overflow is discharged through an outfall channel into the Hudson River. This occurrence is called a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). The City of Albany is required to remedy the situation under a Consent Decree that was signed with the State and Federal governments in 2014. Capital District communities discharge an average of 1.2 billion gallons of untreated combined sewer flows each year. Albany's Beaver Creek Sewer District discharges about 530 million gallons, approximately 45 percent of the volume.

### What are the goals of the project?

The primary goal of the Project is to reduce the volume of untreated flows discharged to the Hudson River through the creation of a CSO satellite treatment facility. The Project supports the City's CSO Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) to achieve State and Federal water quality standards in the Hudson River, and which improves the "quality of life" for Albany residents and other Capital District communities. The Project will treat 300 million gallons of CSO's annually and is consistent with the City's sustainability programs and initiatives.

### Why is the project to be located in Lincoln Park?

A series of sewer lines from the Beaver Creek Sewer District merge into a single main trunk sewer line that is beneath Lincoln Park. The satellite facility must be located in the immediate vicinity of this existing sewer line. While it was investigated, the facility cannot be near the river, because City ordinances prohibit constructing critical infrastructure within the river's floodplain. The project location allows for much needed rehabilitation of the existing Beaver Creek sewer where sink holes are exhibited in the park. In addition, the improvements provide for the mitigation of surface discharges which occur in the ravine, which presently result in periodic health hazards to the public and nuisance odors.

### What other improvements are being made to the ravine in Lincoln Park?

The project will create a new garden area within the ravine, which will include recreational and educational features for the nearby schools and the community. This includes outdoor classroom space, walking paths, a wetland boardwalk, play features, a meditation labyrinth and environmental and historical signs. More details about the garden space can be found on the Project website.



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### How does the CSO satellite treatment facility work?

During wet weather periods, solid materials (debris, trash and leaves) will be screened-out and conveyed directly to the Albany County South Treatment Plant through a new sewer pipe connection. This will allow the solid materials to bypass the outfall channel to the Hudson River. The remaining flows will then be disinfected with chlorine in underground tanks prior to being dechlorinated and sent back to the Beaver Creek Trunk Sewer. After this process, typical overflows to the Hudson River will be free of solid materials and treated for bacteria and viruses.



### What is the difference between a wastewater treatment plant and a CSO satellite treatment facility?



A wastewater treatment plant provides physical, chemical and biological processes to remove contaminants and produce treated wastewater. The Albany County South Treatment Plant provides for screening, primary settling of solids, secondary biological treatment, and disinfection. The CSO satellite treatment facility provides for screening and disinfection only, and is intended to improve the water quality of overflows to the Hudson River. The screening and disinfection functions will be located completely underground, with only small above ground buildings to serve as access points for staff.



### Will the project impact traffic?

The proposed driveway for the facility will be along the west side of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. This location was selected to avoid impacting traffic flow patterns for Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology. Staff will only need to be at the facility during wet weather periods and for occasional maintenance. Deliveries to the facility will be about once or twice per month, and will be scheduled during off-school hours.



### Does the project create safety issues due to the storage of chemicals?

No, the Project proposes to use liquid chlorine, similar to that used to disinfect the swimming pool in Lincoln Park, along with a dechlorination chemical. Chemical tanks will be located underground, and will be installed with double containment systems to protect against a potential spill. Stored chemicals are chemically stable and do not pose an explosion hazard for the facility or adjacent properties.

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### What is the project's schedule for completion?

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2020, with completion in 2024.

### What is the cost of the project?

The Project is a component of the LTCP, which has an overall cost to the Albany Water Board (AWB) of \$60 million. These costs were estimated in the LTCP that was approved by the NYSDEC and agreed upon by the Albany Pool Communities in 2014. The Beaver Creek Clean River Project is estimated to cost \$45 million, and the Albany Pool Communities have received a \$10 million Inter-municipal Grant award to offset this project cost. The cost of the project is the responsibility of AWB, so there is **no impact to the tax payer**; rather the costs are part of the water and sewer rates paid to Albany Water Board.

### Will the project result in lost park lands in the city?

The facility will be located in an area of Lincoln Park which is not presently used for public recreational purposes, and will preserve all active and passive recreational areas within the park. The New York State Legislature has approved a park land alienation for the Project, which requires new park land of equal size to the land occupied by treatment facility to be created somewhere else within the community.

### Will the project create odor or air quality issues?

No, the screening and disinfection functions will be located underground and the facility will employ comprehensive odor control measures:

- Air will be treated with carbon filters prior to release to the atmosphere
- The Project will eliminate surface discharges and sewer vents in the ravine

### Will the project impact the aesthetics or environment within Lincoln Park?

The vast majority of the facility will be constructed underground and out of view of the general public. Architectural features for the small buildings will be influenced by elements of the historic pool house in Lincoln Park. Landscaping features and green infrastructure will further naturalize the facility.



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