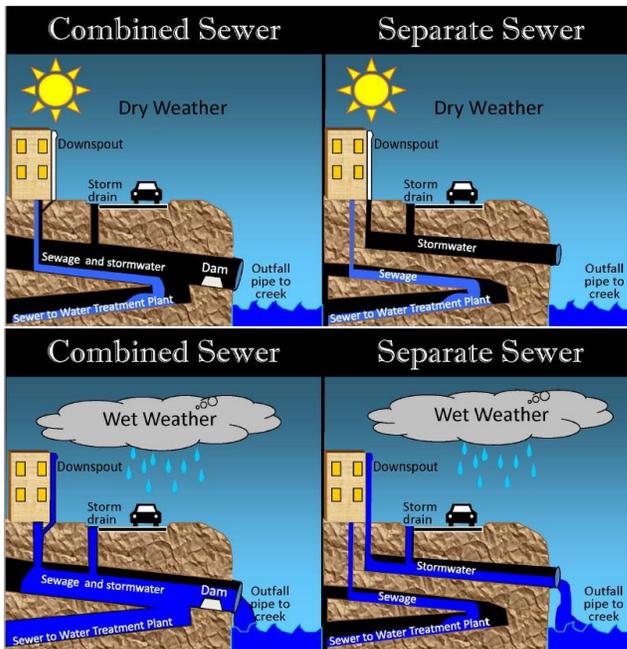


Fort Lee's Combined Sewer System

Fort Lee, along with Hackensack and Ridgefield Park have drainage areas with "Combined Sewer Systems" (CSS). During heavy rainfall some of the excess flow may be discharged into the Hudson River. In Fort Lee, a good rule of thumb is to assume any area south of Main Street has sanitary and storm sewers that are either directly or indirectly combined.

CSSs 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. In the case for Fort Lee, the combined sewers were designed to transport all sewage flows and some wet weather flows for treatment at the Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA) Water Pollution Control Facility in Little Ferry. The excess flows that are discharged from the Combined Sewer System into the Hudson River are known as Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs).

During a rainfall event, there are "regulators" which act to direct as much flow as possible to the interceptor sewer.



Once the capacity of the sewers is reached, the excess flow is then diverted to the Hudson River resulting in a CSO "event."

CSOs are lawfully permitted and greatly regulated by the NJDEP through a special discharge permit issued to the Borough. The permit has many requirements with which the Borough must comply.

In the 1990s, netting facilities were constructed to capture trash and litter that enters the sewer system, usually by people throwing cups, etc. into catch basins on the street, and prevents it reaching

the Hudson River.

In 2015, the NJDEP issued a new CSO permit that requires that the Borough develop a Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP). Since this is a regional issue, the BCUA, Fort Lee, Hackensack and Ridgefield Park have joined together to form the BCUA CSO Group. The LTCP will evaluate the means, costs and effectiveness of alternatives to reduce the frequency and volume of CSO discharges and will establish a plan, cost, and construction schedule for implementation of the plan. The LTCP is required to be submitted to NJDEP by June 1, 2020. However, the costs to construct potential improvements to comply with NJDEP regulations will be very high. Due to the extent, complexity and costs involved, the NJDEP expects that towns may need as long as twenty-five to thirty years to fully implement all aspects of the LTCP.

What can you do to help now? 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. This requires that people first understand what a combined sewer is and how our individual actions can have great impact. For example, runoff from roofs and driveways often directly flow into neighboring catch basins. This greatly contributes to the excess flows during a rain event that result in CSO discharges. If you can retain some of the rainwater on your property during the storm, such as with rain barrels, the water can be used for plants or released to the sewer system gradually during dry weather. The BCUA has a homeowner's rain barrel incentive program. Go to http://www.bcua.org/vertical/sites/%7BF76805AC-71CD-427F-AD9B-9E08876F224A%7D/uploads/II_brochure.pdf for more information on this program,

BCUA is Currently Studying Alternatives

The BCUA CSO Group is near completion of the various studies and investigations needed to develop the LTCP. The Borough has a "CSO Team" comprised of several members of the community and Borough personnel that are intended to educate and obtain public input on the work being undertaken. There will be future opportunities for additional public input and comments. The Borough will also keep all residents informed as this program continues.

You can find more information following these links:

- CSO Notification System
<http://njcso.hdrgateway.com>
- Borough of Fort Lee
- <http://www.fortleenj.org>
- The City of Hackensack
<http://www.hackensack.org>
- The Village of Ridgefield Park
<https://www.ridgefieldpark.org>
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection CSO Page
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/cso.htm>
- Clean Water New Jersey
<http://www.cleanwaternj.org>