

August 3, 2026 Water Quality Meeting Addendum: E-Mails sent & responses

From: Joan Rodriguez <jblue406@aol.com>
To: Alicia H. West <awest@dep.nyc.gov>; Victoria Sacks <sacks.victoria@epa.gov>
CC: WQ
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2026 at 07:47:17 PM EDT
Subject: What is the plan once the CSO tanks go live?

We know CSO's will impact the delicate ecosystem the community is trying to rebuild in and around the Gowanus Canal. Even when the CSO tanks go live, CSO's will continue to be released into the Gowanus Canal.

What will the City do if the tanks are insufficient to maintain the current SC status of the Canal?
How much sedimentation will the City allow?
At what locations?
What is the trigger for the City to re-dredge?
Does the City have a re-dredging plan?
If re-dredging is required, how will the City prevent damage to the current remedy/cap?
What methods, monitoring/verification, approvals, enforcement and repair/notification steps would apply if cap disturbance occurs?

Is there a long-term control plan for the CSO tanks? Has it been updated to address the current SC classification of the waters of the Gowanus Canal? Does the LTCP address any of the questions above?

Alicia's response [bold and italics added]: The Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) for the Gowanus Canal was accepted and approved by NYSDEC in 2017. The LTCP recognized that—based on the upgrades to infrastructure in the area completed in 2014, such as the upgrade to the Gowanus pumping station and its force main that conveys sewage to the treatment plant, and the planned future work—no further action was required. This completed work reduced CSOs by approximately 200 million gallons a year.

The **combined sewer overflow tanks** were mandated by the EPA as a part of the superfund remedy as a requirement of CERCLA; they **are not a part of the LTCP**. With the combined capacity of 12 million gallons, the tanks will further reduce the amount of combined sewage overflow into the canal. In fact, the projected CSO volume reduction exceeds what is required by the EPA's Record of Decision.

Our modeling projects a 62% reduction in combined sewer overflows with the new combined sewer overflow tanks, full rezoning buildout, and new stormwater rule in place. That's a reduction of 163 million gallons from a baseline of 263 million gallons a year to 100 million gallons a year.

If directed by the EPA, the Superfund potential responsible parties are required to perform dredging of sedimentation in accordance with an EPA-approved work plan. Sedimentation enters the canal with the tides, through outfalls and also through the flushing tunnel.

Please let me know if you have other questions.
Best,
Alicia

If the LTCP does address the questions above, at some future date could you give a presentation on these issues at a General CAG meeting?

Victoria's response: She referred to Tom Mongelli. Joan followed up 8/9/2026

From: Joan Rodriguez <jblue406@aol.com>
To: Alicia H. West <awest@dep.nyc.gov>
cc: WQ
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2026 at 07:56:09 PM EDT
Subject: Bond-Lorraine Sewer Plan

At two recent Gowanus community meetings the issue of the Bond-Lorraine Sewer came up. I was told at the Gowanus Oversight Task Force Meeting that there is currently NO funding for replacement of the Bond-Lorraine Sewer in the City's budget. The CAG Water Quality Committee seeks information regarding the City's plan to replace the Bond-Lorraine Sewer including, but not limited to:

From where will the funding for sealing & replacement of the Bond-Lorraine sewer be found?

The Gowanus Community Advisory Group was informed at a CAG General Meeting that EPA believed developers were funding the work on Bond-Lorraine.

If that is so, are developers sealing the old sewer AND building the new one? To what extent is this envisioned to be DEP contracted work as opposed to developer work?

Has DEP has provided specs to the Department of Design and Construction to put this work out to bid?

What is the anticipated time line for completion of:

sealing of the current Bond-Lorraine sewer and

construction of a new sewer assuming the old Bond-Lorraine sewer will be replaced (in the same place or elsewhere)?

If it will be replaced elsewhere, where exactly?

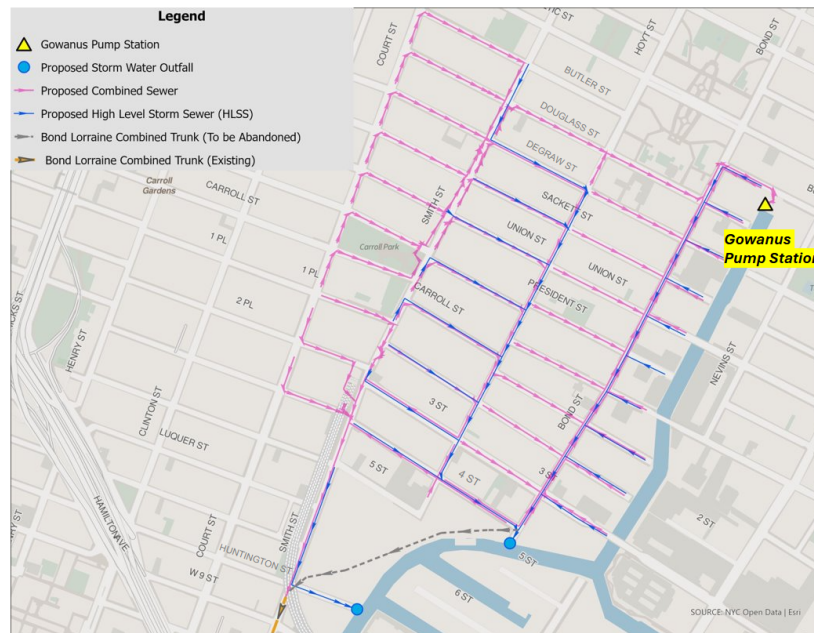
Alicia's response July 31:

They state that they intend to eliminate the old brick Bond-Lorraine sewer, including the section under Public Place:

"As presented at the 6/9 town hall, DEP is planning to address sewer back-ups that happen when rainstorms overwhelm the sewers west of the canal. We are looking at installing new dedicated storm sewers that will drain rainwater off the street and free up capacity in the combined sewer during rainstorms. The combined sewer ("Bond-Lorraine") beneath the Gowanus Green development site will ultimately be sealed and abandoned in place.

DEP funds capital sewer work with utility funds, i.e. water bills. DEP will fund the project and DDC will complete the design and construction. We plan to turn the project over to DDC for full design by the end of the year. The developers are not responsible for this work. I'm including below a drawing that illustrates where the new dedicated storm sewers are planned as well as the realignment of the combined sewers."

Gowanus Proposed Sewer Upgrades



July 2026

- DEP is planning to address sewer backups that happen when rainstorms overwhelm the sewers.
- DEP is looking at installing **new dedicated storm sewers** that will:
 - ✓ Drain rainwater off the streets
 - ✓ Free up capacity in the combined sewer during rainstorms
- The combined sewer ("Bond -Lorraine") beneath the Gowanus Green development site will ultimately be sealed and abandoned in place.



From: Joan Rodriguez <jblue406@aol.com>
To: Alicia H. West <awest@dep.nyc.gov>
Cc: WQ
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2026 at 08:04:01 PM EDT
Subject: Real time monitoring of Gowanus Canal Waters

In light of the recent court decision requiring DEP to report out CSO events (Matter of Riverkeeper v. New York City Dept. of Env'tl. Protection, 2026 NY Slip Op 03444, 2d Dept), the Gowanus Water Quality Committee would like an assurance that these reports will be made available to the public in the very near future. Please share information as to where we can access this data specifically for the Gowanus Canal. (See requirements set forth below.)

We would like DEP to deploy monitors along the canal/outfalls (storm-event focused) and publish results (e.g., open data/dashboard) with public health context, including, but not limited to, at the Bond Street and 22nd Street Outflows.

In addition, the waters of the Gowanus should be monitored daily for enterococcus bacteria levels and O2 levels as the current SC designation for the waters of the canal demand at least a level 3 rating.

REQUIREMENTS PER THE COURT'S DECISION

The same notification shall also be provided within the same timeframe to the general public . . . through appropriate electronic media, including, but not limited to, electronic mail or voice communication as determined by" the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (hereinafter DEC) (ECL 17-0826-a[2]). The required information to be distributed, "to the extent knowable with existing systems and models," includes "the volume and treated state of the discharge," "the date and time of the discharge," "the expected duration of the discharge," "a brief

description of the steps being taken to contain the discharge except for wet weather combined sewer overflow discharges," "the location of the discharge, with the maximum level of specificity possible," and "the reason for the discharge" (*id.* § 17-0826-a[1][a]-[f]). SPRTKA further provides that DEC "shall promulgate rules and regulations that are necessary for the implementation of this section" (*id.* § 17-0826-a[4]).

Pursuant to 6 NYCRR 750-2.7(b)(2)(ii)(b), "[a]s soon as possible, but no later than four hours from discovery of the discharge, owners and operators of [publicly owned treatment works] and [publicly owned sewer systems] must notify the general public of untreated or partially treated sewage discharges, including combined sewer overflows, to waters of the State except underground waters, through appropriate electronic media as determined by [DEC]." The reports shall, "at a minimum, include to the extent knowable with existing systems and models," among other things, "the date and time of discovery of the discharge and a brief description of the reason for the discharge," "the location of the discharge including the receiving water effected by the discharge," "the estimated volume and treated state (untreated or partially treated) of the discharge at the time of the report," and "the expected duration of the discharge and the total expected volume of the discharge" (*id.* § 750-2.7[b][2][i][a]-[c], [e]).

City does not comment on pending litigation and City has asked for leave to appeal to Court of Appeals.

--- Forwarded Message -----

From: Joan Rodriguez <jblue406@aol.com>

To: Victoria Sacks <sacks.victoria@epa.gov>; Thomas Mongelli <mongelli.thomas@epa.gov>;

Natalie Loney <loney.natalie@epa.gov>

Cc: full CAG

Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 10:18:39 AM EDT

Subject: **NAPL leaks and remediation at the head of the Canal**

Good morning, Victoria and Tom:

At last night's General CAG meeting Tom reported out answers to the questions below. I'm not sure if the last question was answered. I asked if we could have those answers in writing since he was reading them anyway. Would you please provide the answers in a reply to this email? We would greatly appreciate that.

Thanks,

Joan Salome-Rodriguez

Gowanus CAG Water Quality Committee

EPA's Response from Victoria Sacks 8/3/2026

- Why did NAPL appear after the supplemental dredging, and do EPA and the Trust know where it is coming from?

- The plan seems focused on sealing pathways near the Douglass Street end, but it would be helpful to understand whether the source has been fully identified.

Even a drop of NAPL can produce large sheens. The basis for this work is that there is a pathway below the closure sheet connecting the old bulkhead to the new bulkhead as the closure sheet does not go as deep as the bulkhead wall. This work will in essence, extend the closure sheet to

the depth of the bulkhead wall effectively closing this pathway. The Trust is also planning to repair the façade of the street end as there may be preferential pathways where small amounts of sheens can be produced. If we find that there continue to be large sheens, we will need to evaluate the work and do more.

- Is this work expected to permanently stop contamination from moving into the Canal, or is it more of a containment measure? The plan includes jet grouting, AquaBlok, structural concrete, and sealing cracks, but the community should understand how success will be measured and how long the remedy is expected to last.

The work is expected to minimize sheening at the head end of the canal in the vicinity of Douglass Street end.

- How will the work be monitored while it is happening? Since the work involves contaminated material, divers, barges, grout, and sediment disturbance, it would be helpful to know what water-quality monitoring, visual inspection records, odor controls, and public updates will be provided.

Monitoring will follow the monitoring plans and health and safety plans that were approved for the remedial action work in RTA1. This is a continuation of that RTA1 work.

- What happens if more contamination is found than expected? The plan suggests that inspection findings could lead to changes in the scope, so it would be useful to know who makes those decisions, whether EPA approval is required, and whether the public will be informed.

If this mitigative action does not work, we will reevaluate and develop a new plan to deal with these sheens. EPA approval is required. The community will be informed as this develops at monthly CAG meetings

- Will the community receive before-and-after documentation, including photos, videos, maps, inspection results, and a plain-language explanation of whether the action worked?

The main concern is that this not be treated only as a technical repair. The community needs transparency about the source of the contamination, the risks during the work, how success will be measured, and what will happen if NAPL returns.

There will be a report documenting the work. EPA can share this with the community

- If they find lots of NAPL does a collection well make sense at the source? Who would monitor?

This is something that will be evaluated if and when it comes up.

8/9/2026 follow up sent to Victoria, Natalie and Michael Sivak, cc Whole CAG

Hi, Victoria:

Following up on the issue of the NAPL leaks in RTA 1 with some questions from Mark Yarish, PhD and Susan Yung on the Water Quality Committee:

Why did NAPL appear after the supplemental dredging, and do EPA and the Trust know for sure where it is coming from? The plan seems focused on sealing pathways near the Douglass Street end, but it would be helpful to understand whether the source has been fully identified.

Is this work expected to permanently stop contamination from moving into the Canal, or is it more of a containment measure? The plan includes jet grouting, AquaBlok, structural concrete, and sealing cracks, but the community should understand how success will be measured and how long the remedy is expected to last. What is the metric for measuring success?

How will the work be monitored while it is happening? Since the work involves contaminated material, divers, barges, grout, and sediment disturbance, it would be helpful to know what water-quality monitoring, visual inspection records, odor controls, and public updates will be provided, including when and whether the flushing tunnel is off or on.

What happens if more contamination is found than expected? The plan suggests that inspection findings could lead to changes in the scope, so it would be useful to know who makes those decisions, whether EPA approval is required, and whether the public will be informed.

Will the community receive before-and-after documentation, including photos, videos, maps, inspection results, and a plain-language explanation of whether the action worked?

Once EPA has nailed down for certain the source of the contamination, what is the contingency plan if the current remedy fails?

We hope this work will not be treated as only a technical repair. The community needs transparency about the source of the contamination, the risks during the work, how success will be measured, and what will happen if NAPL returns.

Thanks again for sharing this and for helping keep the community informed.

We appreciate your communication on these issues,
Joan.