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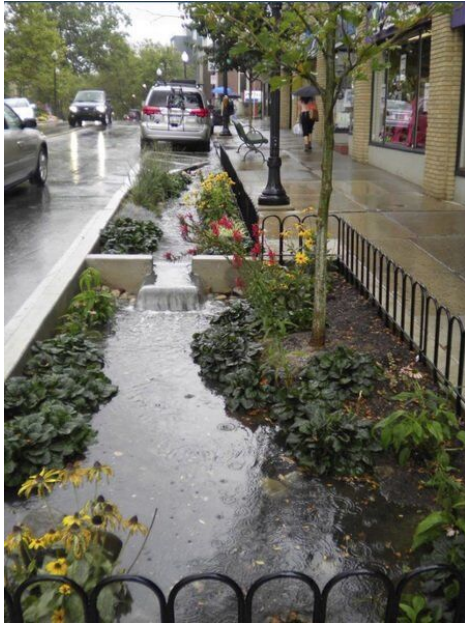
EDITOR'S PICK FEATURED

Work looks to improve disinfecting and overflows of waste water in Lockport

Work looks to improve disinfecting and overflows of waste water in the city

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Parts of South, Pine and Washburn streets are planned to look more like this to keep rainwater from combining with waste and overflowing into the Erie Canal. The use of vegetation and soil absorbs the rainwater, ultimately stopping it from ending up in nearby waterways with the combined sewage overflow that occurs during heavy rain. (Photograph submitted)



A disinfection system, propelled by state funds including a Water Infrastructure Improvement grant (WIIA) of more than \$500,000, is in the works for the Lockport Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Typically, disinfection systems in wastewater treatment plants use chlorine to disinfect then add chemicals to de-chlorinate the water before releasing it. The reason for this is that chlorine leaves a "residual disinfectant" which is illegal in creeks and waterways where there are aquatic lifeforms.

"That is a pretty chemically intensive process," Mike Marino, CEO of Nussbaumer & Clarke, Inc, said.

As an alternative Marino said that the disinfection system will use ultraviolet light to disinfect the waste water before it reaches its discharge point, which is in 18-Mile Creek.

The project is funded by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to the tune of a \$1 million Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) grant, as well as, the WIIA grant and a no-interest loan from working with New York State Environmental Facilities Corp. (NYSEFC) of up to \$2 million.

"It's a \$3.25 million project," Marino said. "We have moved into design. We designed the system. It was bid out for late summer. There's two contractors that have been selected. SGC Construction (Solid Ground Concrete Construction) will be doing the general construction part of it and Weydman Electric has the electrical portion of it. They should be starting construction in about a month or so."

Marino said that the goal is for construction to finish in May of 2022.

Other water projects are also in the works to find ways to use green infrastructure or separate sewage lines to stop Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO) into 18-Mile Creek and the Erie Canal. Roughly, 70% of the City of Lockport uses a combined sewer system in which sanitary waste and storm water are run through one pipe which leads to the wastewater treatment facility, but also can overflow into the waterways during heavy rain.

The city has applied through the NYSEFC to receive funds from a Green Infrastructure Grant Program (GIGP) to reduce overflows.

"We're trying to find ways to reduce that from happening," Marino said. "In the past that has meant replacing broken sewers or lining broken sewers, but this is a different technology."

In green infrastructure, the goal is to gather existing rainwater with green vegetation and other soils and absorb the rainwater before it goes down the drain.

"There will be porous pavers. There will be areas along the curb that will include planting and trees. There will be inlets on the curb to allow that rainwater to get in to these areas and absorb back into the vegetation and soils as opposed to getting into the combined sewer system," Marino said. "It's a streetscaping element to it along with helping the combined sewer overflow situation."

The current project of this nature will be on portions of Pine, South and Washburn streets and will be funded by a GIGP grant of \$1.5 million which the city is required to match 10%. Marino said the city plans to use a portion of its Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funds – a \$10 million fund for the area – to match 10% of that cost, as well as pay for the parts of the project that the GIGP grant cannot be used for, together which comes to approximately \$500,000.

Other projects will use separate sewer lines, ultimately stopping the rainwater and wastewater from ever mixing in the first place. One such project was High Street where the city did a bore under Transit Road on High Street to take the sewer away from the Erie Canal in 2018.

Marino said the project, the High Street Sewage Project, cost approximately \$1.5 million and funding was secured through the New York Rising program where the city qualified because of some flash flooding in 2013.

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