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EPA Begins Solidification of Native Sediment in Upper Gowanus Canal Main Channel

Brooklyn, New York

Community Update #3

March 2022

Site Update

Under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), contractors have finished installing pipe pile bulkheads in the main channel of the Gowanus Canal at the entrance of the filled-in former 1st Street turning basin (TB1). These bulkheads will provide structural support to allow dredging of the canal bottom and excavating the fill material in TB1. Once contractors complete the restoration of TB1, the pipe piles will be cut below the surface of the cap at the bottom of the canal. This will allow water to flow with the tide in and out of the turning basin.

Contractors had begun to install pipe pile bulkheads along the east and west abutments of the Carroll Street bridge but stopped because of challenges with installing the pipe piles near the bridge structure. EPA recommended that the contractor take a different approach and stabilize the soft sediment underneath the bridge with cement to ensure that the bridge is structurally supported.

This approach is currently being designed. Due to its age, the Carroll Street bridge needs to be repaired. Plans for these repairs are currently under evaluation in coordination with the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT). The bridge will remain closed until repairs are completed.



Figure 1: Pipe Pile Bulkhead at the 1st Street Turning Basin

Next Phase of Work

Since late October 2021, contractors have been solidifying portions of the original bottom (or native soil) of the northern stretch of the canal using a process called in-situ stabilization (ISS). This process involves adding a concrete mix into the native soil using drilling equipment mounted on barges. Most of the contaminated soft sediment (sediment on top of the native sediment) was removed during the initial dredging, but a layer of soft sediment was left in place as a protective layer to prevent tar from moving up into the canal during the ISS operation. After ISS is completed, the remaining layer of soft sediment will be removed, and a cap will be installed. The solidified portions of the native sediment, along with the protective layer and cap, will prevent contamination from the native sediment and contaminants dissolved in the groundwater from moving into the water of the canal. The ISS, dredging, and capping of this first segment of the canal will continue until the end of 2022.



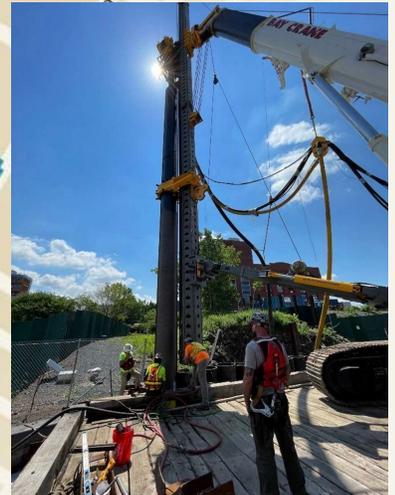
In-situ stabilization drilling equipment staged between 3rd Street and Carroll Street

Bridge and Road Closures

Work in the canal requires frequent bridge closings as they open to allow work vessels to pass by. Temporary traffic disruptions will continue to occur at 3rd Street, Union Street, and 9th Street during the bridge openings. The bridges will need to be closed for an extended period of time during periods of heavy construction activity. It may be necessary to close Huntington Street east of Smith Street as work progresses. Bridge and street closures are being coordinated with NYCDOT.



Auger mixing cement into contaminated native sediment during pilot ISS in 7th Street Turning Basin (conducted in 2015)



Installation of pipe pile bulkhead at the former 1st Street Turning Basin

Environmental Monitoring

During the cleanup activities, air quality, noise, vibration, movement, and water quality are being monitored. Environmental monitoring data is available at the contractor-hosted website at:

www.gowanussuperfund.com

Community Hotline

A hotline has been established that people can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During hours when work is being conducted at the site, complaints and concerns will be relayed to a supervisor at the site and to EPA.

The hotline number is 718-403-2451.

For more information about the site, please contact:

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