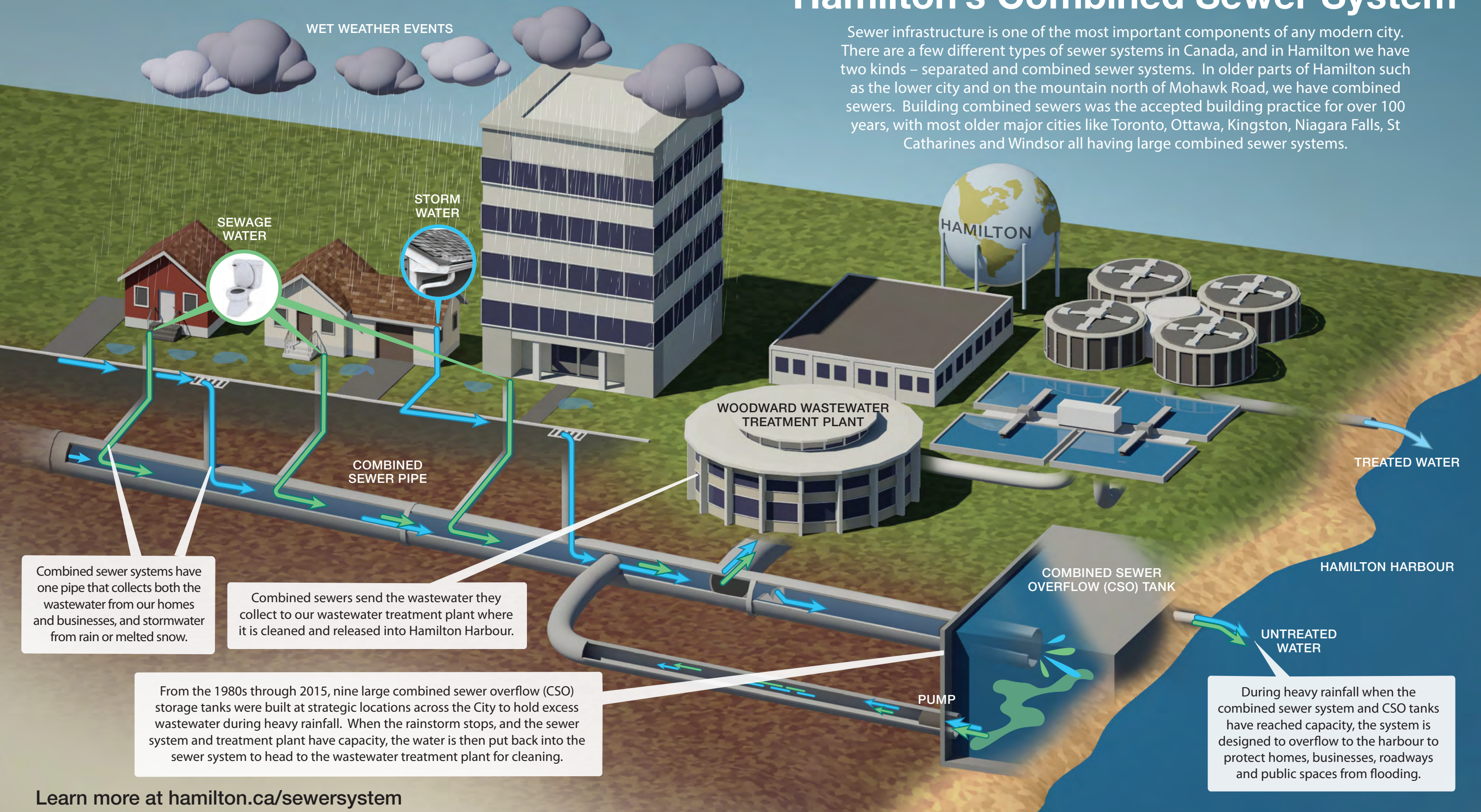


Hamilton's Combined Sewer System

Sewer infrastructure is one of the most important components of any modern city. There are a few different types of sewer systems in Canada, and in Hamilton we have two kinds – separated and combined sewer systems. In older parts of Hamilton such as the lower city and on the mountain north of Mohawk Road, we have combined sewers. Building combined sewers was the accepted building practice for over 100 years, with most older major cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Kingston, Niagara Falls, St Catharines and Windsor all having large combined sewer systems.



Combined sewer systems have one pipe that collects both the wastewater from our homes and businesses, and stormwater from rain or melted snow.

Combined sewers send the wastewater they collect to our wastewater treatment plant where it is cleaned and released into Hamilton Harbour.

From the 1980s through 2015, nine large combined sewer overflow (CSO) storage tanks were built at strategic locations across the City to hold excess wastewater during heavy rainfall. When the rainstorm stops, and the sewer system and treatment plant have capacity, the water is then put back into the sewer system to head to the wastewater treatment plant for cleaning.

During heavy rainfall when the combined sewer system and CSO tanks have reached capacity, the system is designed to overflow to the harbour to protect homes, businesses, roadways and public spaces from flooding.