

## MEDIA

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# SPLASH! SHELL OF PILOT POOL LIFTED BY CRANE INTO WATER AT PORT NEWARK

After a decade of shaping new bathing policy and mastering the art of river water filtration, the pilot version of + POOL floats towards the next phase of build-out aiming to be installed at Pier 35 for final testing at scale in 2026.



*The 320 ton shell of the pilot + POOL was craned into the water at Port Newark, July 30, 2025. Courtesy Friends of + POOL.*

**For Immediate Release**

Port Newark, NJ. August 4, 2025.

On Wednesday, July 30th, at Port Newark, Friends of + POOL celebrated as the 320 ton pilot pool was set into the water by a specialized marine crane once deployed in a secret CIA spy operation in the 70's, and most recently used to clear debris from the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge. The Chesapeake1000 crane was towed to NYC to execute the unique transfer of the 640,000 lb. structure from a dry tow barge into the waters of New York Harbor. The now floating pool shell was tugged in the water from the Donjon Marine Co. shipyard at Port Newark to the Reicon Group shipyard in Staten Island where the pool itself will be built.

The structure will remain docked at the shipyard during the pilot pool's final phase of development, which includes following newly adopted health agency protocols before construction of the pool can begin. Once + POOL has received agency sign-off, the pilot pool will be constructed in the water at the Reicon Group shipyard. This includes installing

all below deck components (ie. filtration system, pool, piping and valves) for final onsite testing in Spring 2026 at Pier 35. Public swimming will be contingent upon completing the pilot pool's final filtration testing at scale and fully building out the facility for safe public use once testing is complete.

The project is the world's first water-filtering, floating swimming pool. The pool draws in river water from which it floats, filters the water through its walls into the pool, and then pumps the clean, filtered water back into the river. This innovative design will deliver safe access for public swimming in the East River at Pier 35, just north of the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges.

The project serves as a pilot operation ahead of design and construction of the iconic plus-shaped 9,000 sq. ft. + POOL. The pilot facility is anticipated to be in operation at Pier 35 until construction of the larger pool takes place and the pilot pool can be moved on to test another site for river swimming.

**What's next?**

1. This Summer, weekly water quality testing continues with the Interstate Environmental Commission to collect additional baseline data.
2. CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) modeling is completed, which helps ensure that our filtered water (tested in Summer) flows at its best.
3. Final design of all the elements that go into and onto the pilot pool (pool, filters, piping, decking, railings, bathrooms, first aid, lifeguard stands etc.) is submitted to regulatory agencies for final review.
4. With agency sign-off, build-out of the pilot pool and filtration system begins at Reicon Group shipyard in Staten Island in winter 2026.
5. The 2,000 sq. ft. rectangular pilot version of the pool is installed in the river at Pier 35 in spring 2026 for final evaluation.
6. Data from the 2026 testing of the pilot pool is submitted to the New York City Department of Health as part of the new process of permitting a different kind of bathing establishment for safe public use.
7. Final retrofitting of the facility's above deck components (decking, railings, bathrooms, etc.) is completed.
8. The facility is installed on site and final inspection for a certificate of occupancy takes place.
9. The pilot facility opens to the public and operates at Pier 35 until it is replaced by the full, 9,000 sq ft. plus-shaped pool.
10. The pilot pool moves on to test more sites for public swimming access.

**Why Each Step Matters**

+ POOL remains committed to providing free swim education, bringing river swimming

back to NYC, and advancing job creation through its annual operations (filtration system maintenance, water quality testing, aquatics staff & lifeguards). A little over a year ago, there was no pathway to building this kind of innovation for NYC. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams, a massive interagency collaboration across city and state government has ushered in a new set of rules for engaging with the river in an effort to open up public waters across the state, making New York a leader in the [Swimmable Cities](#) movement.

In January 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul announced the [new regulations](#), funding for the construction of a pilot + POOL, and the [NY SWIMS initiative](#), the largest investment in public swimming facilities since the WPA. + POOL is anticipated to be the first innovation permitted by local authorities using the new regulations and a catalyst for other organizations to propose ideas for swimming safely in New York's waterways.

In summer 2024, Friends of + POOL successfully [tested its water treatment process in the river at Pier 35](#) and submitted findings to NYC and NYS permitting agencies. The [detailed filtration report](#) is available on the nonprofit's website. Global built environment consultancy Arup engineered the filtration system. This summer, weekly water quality testing at Pier 35 continues in partnership with the Interstate Environmental Commission in an effort to continue to establish baseline criteria. The nonprofit continues its learn to swim programming with more than 2,000 kids, teens and adults becoming water safe through the free and low-cost lessons.

#### **About Friends of + POOL**

Friends of + POOL was founded in 2015 to build, operate, and maintain + POOL, educate the public on the issues affecting our water quality, and promote water stewardship. The nonprofit develops educational, recreational, and cultural programming that enhances the lives of New Yorkers, including free learn-to-swim and environmental education programs. Visit [pluspool.com](https://pluspool.com) to learn more.