

Sewer Discharge Site Public Forum FAQ

October 14th, 2020

Q: From a process standpoint, why is the funding request up now for the discharge site before approval for the design and construction of the full system at the spring 2021 town meeting? Why would the funding for the discharge site not be included with the full project at the same time as the rest of the project?

A: The discharge site is necessary regardless of the complete buildout of the sewer system. We currently have a \$1.5M MassWorks grant that could potentially expire if we do not use it soon. The existing discharge site is in need of upgrades and this is an opportunity for the town to build a discharge site that will suit the town's future need and upgrade the site at the same time.

The MassWorks grant team has actually extended the grant expiration date for this money multiple times. They would like to see this project start to move forward.

No matter what happens in the future with the sewer system, we view the discharge site as a fixed piece of any solution moving forward. So this is useful and necessary now.

Q: How much will it cost to just sewer the common?

A: The engineering firm CDM Smith has provided us with draft estimated costs. For phase 1A which includes the common area, CDM Smith expects construction to cost \$36.3M and design to cost \$2.5M.

\$2.2M has already been approved for design and construction of a sewer system and only about \$225,000 has been spent from that fund to date.

\$1.6M has also been appropriated for the purchase of land for the treatment facility which has not yet been spent.

Q: How much money has been appropriated to date and how much has been spent?

A: \$4,252,000 has been appropriated to date, and approximately \$675K has been spent to date.

Q: How much will it cost to sewer all four phases as explained in the presentation?

A: For a centralized treatment facility, CDM Smith estimates that it will cost approximately \$70M for construction and \$1.2M annually for operations and maintenance.

Q: When can I expect to see another funding article for design and construction?

A: After Special Town Meeting on October 17, 2020, CDM Smith will have the needs assessment completed. LWD and the Sewer working group will review the analysis and make recommendations to the Board of Water Commissioners on how to best move forward. It is our hope that we have the ability to propose a design and construction funding article for the 2021 Spring Town Meeting.

A site will also be chosen for the treatment facility before any funding article is brought before town meeting.

Q: Will you purchase a site without approved funding for design and construction of the sewer system?

A: No – any site that the Select Board and Board of Water Commissioners pursues, the purchase and sale agreement will be contingent upon design and construction funding authorization at a future town meeting.

Q: How much will the discharge site cost me annually?

A: Assuming the remaining \$1M is borrowed over a 20 year period at a 2% interest rate, the sewer budget would increase by around \$61,000. The existing Sewer budget is part of the town's general operating budget. The existing sewer budget is just under \$142,000, and represents 0.5% of the total town operating budget. The additional \$61,000 would increase the sewer budget to 0.7% of the total town operating budget.

To put that into perspective, the average annual property tax bill in Littleton is \$8,270. The sewer budget accounts for \$41.35 of that. Approving this article would add \$16.54 for a total of \$57.89 annually.

Q: Will the discharge site smell bad? What will it look like?

A: The discharge site is different than the treatment facility. The discharge site is actually underground and odorless. It's really just a large leach field. What could potentially be an odor issue now is the existing sewer treatment plant at the high school. However, the long term plan would be to replace that treatment plant with a centralized treatment plant at a different location than LHS.

Q: What will construction of the discharge site look like at the high school and how long will it take? What protections against dust, noise, etc. will be afforded to the school occupants and abutters?

A: We've heard the residents in the area speak loud and clear about dust and noise mitigations. We will go above and beyond to ensure that all mitigation measures are in place before construction would begin. This is an excavation centric project.

Q: Will the Littleton High School fields be finished with grass?

A: This is a question that will need to be answered by the School Committee. We would at least return the field to existing conditions. We have not had any discussions with the school committee regarding this project yet.

Q: Can you speak as to how the boundaries of the phases were determined?

A: The CDM Smith needs assessment goes into detail on how things were defined. The phases were largely created based on the areas that are most in need in terms of environmental needs

and economic needs. The boundaries are fluid and can be adjusted as needed, as long as it's feasible.

Q: Where do the remaining funds go if this is not approved to move forward?

A: The funds were authorized by very specific town meeting articles. The funds cannot be spent outside of the boundaries of the town meeting authorizations.

Q: How would you feel if this was happening in your backyard?

A: The sewer discharge site will be used as a school playing field. An existing discharge site at the school is used as a ball field. The discharge process happens underground and will not be perceptible to field users and neighbors.

Q: In the Peer Review Report provided by CDM Smith, Section 4 addresses the review of the financial plan. Can you speak further to CDM Smith's concerns?

A: CDM Smith was concerned with some of the funding sources that the previous financial analysis was counting on. Moving forward, CDM Smith realizes that they need to put forth a realistic analysis. LWD staff will be continuously exploring grant and funding opportunities to help supplement this project.

Q: Will the proposed discharge site have the ability to scale up beyond the 175,000 gallon per day (GPD) projected flow for all phases laid out by CDM Smith?

A: The proposed 175,000 GPD discharge site capacity has been approved by MassDEP. However, Weston and Sampson's original hydrogeological report made note that they believed the LHS site could support a larger capacity discharge. This would need to be further explored, but is a potential option if Littleton ever needed to expand the site in the future.

The 175,000 GPD discharge site would be sufficient capacity to complete all four proposed phases of CDM Smith's needs assessment.

Q: How long will the discharge site take to construct? When would construction of the discharge site likely start?

A: We estimate that design of this discharge site will take 6-9 months and then construction would be another 6-9 months. We can't say for certain when construction would begin yet, however, we will keep all residents informed throughout the process.