**Question**

Will the proposed sewer construction interfere with us on Baldwin hill road? I live at XX Baldwin Hill Road? If not, is there a plan for it to ever happen?

**Answer**

The proposed sewer project will not be going down Baldwin Hill Road. Once the first 2 phases are complete, which should be sometime around 2024, the Town can assess the appetite for expanding the sewer into other areas, including Baldwin Hill Road.

**Question**

Which residential streets in the Common are included? (The map is too small to see). I live on Adams Street, which I know was included initially. A few months ago a meeting was scheduled for the residential property owners at the Oak Meadows school. I had planned to attend and took unpaid leave from my job. It was canceled at the last minute. The email I received said the plans about which streets would be included were being revised and another meeting just for residents would be scheduled. I've never received a notice if such a meeting was rescheduled. I'm not able to attend meetings in the evening due to my work schedule. I was told via email that if the majority of residents on a given street declined to hook up, that street would not be included. Is that accurate?

**Answer**

I have included a PDF of the [map](#) that should be able to be zoomed in enough to see the streets better. You can also review the sewering district via the Town’s GIS (under the ‘Proposed Common Sewer District Map’ located [here](#)). Residential streets included are: Robinson Road, Adams St, Goldsmith St, Jennifer St, White St, Hillside Rd, Russell St. The residential properties along the main roads are also welcome to tie into the sewer system as well. As discussed below, final decisions to opt in or opt out will be made in the design process. The opportunity to connect a residential street, if there is enough support on that street, remains at this time.

**Question**

The answers I've received as far as exactly which fees will be assessed have been ambiguous. If my street is included, will I be assessed a betterment fee even if I don’t choose to hook up? Will residential property owners be required to get a Title 5 certificate before declining to hook up? What happens to residents who have already paid for a new septic system in the past 10 years?

**Answer**

Residential properties will be under no obligation to connect to the sewer. There are a couple options for your property. You can do nothing and stay on septic; you could pay the betterment which will allow a certain deferment period (currently anticipated to be 10 years) to connect to the sewer in the future, or you could pay the betterment and connection fee which will allow you to connect right away. The current plan does not require you to provide a Title 5 certificate before declining to hook up.

**Question**

Will the residents vote via ballot? How do residents who work second shift hours be able to vote?

**Answer**

Voters can be directed here for information about the October 29, 2018 Special Town Meeting [here](#). It’s a town meeting, where voters must be present to vote. There’s no election / referendum, so there’s no ballot.
**Question**

I would like to know exactly what streets the sewer will be available to initially and how long it will be if your street isn’t on the plan for others who are in the business zone to get it? The map is not readable on line or in print.

**Answer**

We have updated the website to include the PDF of the map. [https://www.littletonma.org/department-public-works/smart-sewer](https://www.littletonma.org/department-public-works/smart-sewer) and you can review it in detail via the Town’s GIS, here.

Phase 1 currently includes:

King St (north of #421), Great road (east of 495), Stevens St, Meetinghouse Rd, Shattuck St

Phase 2 currently includes:

King St (south of #421, Great Road (west of 495), Jennifer St, Goldsmith St, Adams St, Robinson Rd, White St, Hillside Rd, Russell St, Nelson Ln, Beaverbrook Rd

Should the sewer project go through, the first phase should be complete sometime in 2021. Phase 2 would be complete approximately 2023-2024. Once the first 2 phases are complete the town can assess the appetite for expanding the sewer into other areas with sewering needs.

**Question**

We own and live at XX Russell St and have some questions about the sewer project. We notice that some properties in Russell St are already marked as "opt out." When do the opt in/out decisions need to be made? If we opt out, are we still subject to the betterment fee?

**Answer**

The town has not set a hard date yet for the opt in/out decision. There are a couple options for your property. You can do nothing and stay on septic and will not be subject to any fees or betterments; you could pay the betterment which will allow you up to approximately 10 years to connect to the sewer (exact deferment period to be determined during the final design), or you could pay the betterment and connection fee which will allow you to connect right away.

**Question**

Are grinder pumps used in connection to house and commercial properties?

**Answer**

Yes. The proposed sewer system will utilize low pressure technology. In these systems, almost all homes/businesses connected have an individual grinder pump unit located on their parcel. These systems are now common in New England. The costs for these pumps are incorporated into the cost estimates we have circulated to potential customers.

**Question**

As sensible as this project may be, our establishment is a non-profit and cannot afford the cost associated with it. Is there a means to opt out considering if burdened with the cost, we would have to close down?

**Answer**

The sewer system as proposed is considered an opt in/out meaning if you feel tying into the sewer is not in your best interest, you are under no obligation to do so. Please note that one of the financing options we plan to offer is the
ability to amortize the betterment fees at a low interest rate over 20 years so they do not present an excessive burden in a single year.

**Question**

What will this really cost taxpayers? The message that users will pay the price has been heard. However, taxpayers who may never be end users are asking what will it truly cost taxpayers. Without the completed design and plan, I know that is a difficult question to answer but something needs to be said before people will agree to spend more tax dollars on further designs.

**Answer**

There are several costs to taxpayers related to the sewering of town buildings – most notably the assessment (betterment) equivalent, and the annual O&M costs. The finance plan outlines these costs (in 2019 dollars), based on the town’s current contribution and projected 72 EDUs and related flow estimates. The Town’s betterment equivalent for 72 EDUs is $1.656M. Depending on whether this is drawn from fund reserves or paid over time (equivalent to assessed and apportioned betterments) - this impacts the local tax rate by 4.6 cents to 5.8 cents ($0.046 to $0.058 per $1,000 value) over 20 years. Operation and maintenance costs for town properties, including the current town O&M line item for wastewater operations is anticipated to be approx. $184,000 per year - this impacts the local tax rate by ~10.2 cents ($0.102 per $1,000 value) annually.

**Question**

Another comment has been aren't most Town buildings (which already have working systems) planning to hook up? And if so, what would additional costs or savings be to taxpayers. Isn't this throwing away what the Town has already spent money on? Or is there a message that those systems need to be replaced (when?) and what the cost savings of doing this would be?

**Answer**

The primary component of existing town wastewater infrastructure is the High School wastewater treatment facility. The High School plant will be ~20 years old when the proposed Smart Sewer system goes on line. Without the proposed project, the High School plant and other town wastewater systems will eventually need repair or upgrades. The Smart Sewer project is intended to make beneficial use of some components of the town’s existing wastewater systems.

**Question**

At Third Thursday there was the question about design expenses. Will those expenses that taxpayers are fronting the bill on ever be returned to taxpayers?

**Answer**

If the project commences to construction, these costs will be recovered from all users through a combination of betterments, assessments, fees, and CWERC revenues. If the project does not proceed to construction, these costs will not be repaid to the general fund.

**Question**

Besides the cost of design, build and operation; what about any cost savings - perhaps operational?

**Answer**

Operational efficiencies are planned under the Smart Sewer program, and are factored into the financial plan. Connecting the Town to the sewer will incur costs for the Town, but will also alleviate certain costs that the Town
currently bears. For example, once the high school wastewater treatment plant reaches the end of its useful life the Town will not be burdened by the costs to rebuild or refurbish that system.

**Question**

Is there any description of how the system may be more easily expanded after phase 1? (Can others hook up without further years of design effort?)

**Answer**

The design funding up for a vote on October 29 addresses the design of all phases of the system. The proposed system will have some built in capacity for changes to the properties served. If the Town seeks to expand the system in the future, these changes are expected to be cost effective, and costs would be passed on to any new connections.

**Question**

Environmental impact?

**Answer**

The Smart Sewer project will primary have some short-term local impacts (construction related vehicles, traffic, etc.) and beneficial long-term impacts (resource recovery, nitrogen reduction, etc.). The overall impacts will be addressed in an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) filing with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection before project construction.

**Question**

Maybe it would help to have an explanation of both betterment/hookup fees and user fees?

**Answer**

We provided this at the last public meeting when explaining the slide, and expect to do so again at the forum on October 24. In general, betterment assessments pay a share of capital project costs – the costs to build. These payments, under Massachusetts law, must be fair and proportionally assessed to the properties that are served by the project. Betterments are assessed when service to a property is made possible - even before physical connection. Betterments fees may be paid up front (at owner’s option) or apportioned over 20 years and paid through the local tax billing. Connection fees are one-time fees, typically charged upon physical connection to the sewer system. User charges are then paid periodically by properties based on actual water use (equivalent to sewer use).

**Question**

What might a sewer mean to the potential for affordable senior housing or a senior center?

**Answer**

If the town so chooses, capacity may be made available in the system for senior housing. The above-ground implications of the sewer system are subject to zoning and

**Question**

I heard that Gino (I think) had been talking about the possibility of multi-story buildings being built in the town center; need to be careful that that idea doesn't get expressed as turning Littleton's common into a city feel.

**Answer**

This is a zoning question and is currently being addressed by the Planning Board and the Master Plan Implementation Committee. While it may technically be possible with a sewer, the feedback from the community through the MPIC is
that these sorts of development options are not desired by the community. Additional zoning changes may be required to realize the above-ground implications of the sewer in the manner that the community desires.

**Question**

As residents of New Estate Road, we are concerned that 39 Ayer Road is being considered as the treatment plant site. Since New Estate Road is raised above the neighboring industrial area, it is especially vulnerable and is already currently subjected to multiple disturbing noise sources coming from various directions--Middlesex Construction, Fiba, Potpourri and LELWD--which produce noise which is not effectively blocked by any obstructions, and they propagate directly towards the residential buildings creating noise pollution.

In addition to possible increased noise, we are even more concerned about possible emissions of microbial aerosols or strong odors that would affect the residents of New Estate Road.

We hope that if this project is approved, the planners would consider putting the plant in an area further removed from residential areas.

**Answer**

We plan to control construction traffic for the Smart Sewer program, as well as limit traffic for ongoing plant operations so these will not significantly impact New Estate Road. Other localized noise impacts will be limited and mitigated, such that the CWERC should normally not have a noticeable impact on the area. Methods used to mitigate sound may include the use of sound attenuating enclosures for equipment such as aeration blowers and standby power generators. Additional methods such as sound dampening louvers and externals hood/baffle systems which can direct sound down to the ground will also be utilized. Architectural elements such as acoustical CMU units, acoustical panels and acoustically rated doors and windows will also be evaluated for inclusion in the design of the facility. Landscaping can also be utilized as a solution to minimize noise migration from the facility. Additionally, MassDEP requires that noise from a newly constructed facility not exceed 10 dB above ambient conditions at the property line. If noise from the facility exceeds 10 dB above ambient conditions, MA DEP may require additional noise mitigation measures.

Similarly, parts of the CWERC where air emissions and odors may be generated will be designed to be enclosed (contained), and odorous air from process areas will have treatment systems (such as activated carbon) to treat air before release. These are common, highly effective mitigation measures and there is every reason to believe the CWERC will control odors as effectively or better than the currently operating treatment system at the high school.

**Question**

Has there been a decision made on where the plant will be situated?

**Answer**

The DPW site was selected based on the proximity to the discharge site and because the town currently owns the land.

**Question**

Who will be running it and handling the billing for the sewer?

**Answer**

This has not been decided yet and will be resolved during the design process. Our current treatment plant is located at the High School and is run by Littleton Water Department (LELWD).
Does this mean we will be creating a sewer department for the town and adding employees and equipment?

Answer
The town will most likely hire a consultant to run the plant, similar to the way the high school system is run. The specifics of this arrangement will be resolved during the design process.

Question
How many businesses in the common are planning on hooking up?

Answer
Currently 40 property owners indicated they are interested in hooking up.

Question
If we are planning on revitalizing the common area where is the parking going to be?

Answer
I would refer this question to the Master Plan Implementation Committee and Town Planner Maren Toohil (mtoohil@littletonma.org). The sewer allows the Town to go forward with a variety of above-ground options, but the MPIC and the Planning Board are evaluating what above-ground options the Town wants to implement.

Question
What is the projected lifetime of the existing WW plant at the high school?

Answer
A 20-year life-cycle is typically estimated for mechanical equipment. Typically, structures have a longer life, but are very much subject to service conditions. The existing WWTF at the High School will be approximately 20-years old at the start of the Smart Sewer Project if it moves forward.

Question
What is the projected capacity of the existing WW plant at the high school? How much capacity are we currently using?

Answer
The design capacity of the Littleton HS WWTF is 17,500 gpd (max day flow). Recent data from June 2018, when school was in session, indicates that the facility had average daily flows of approximately 7,000 gpd. Data from July 17, 2017 indicates that the facility saw flows of 17,000 gpd. There is, therefore, little available capacity for maximum daily flows.

Question
If the Town is a major contributor to the Smart Sewer, what is the projected share to the tax payer for the construction (I assume the Town is going to pick up a portion of the cost as a user)?

Answer
There are several costs to taxpayers related to the sewering of town buildings – most notably the assessment (betterment) equivalent, and the annual O&M costs. The finance plan outlines these costs (in 2019 dollars), based on the town’s current contribution and projected 72 EDUs and related flow estimates. The Town’s betterment equivalent
for 72 EDUs is $1.656M. Depending on whether this is drawn from fund reserves or paid over time (equivalent to assessed and apportioned betterments) - this impacts the local tax rate by 4.6 cents to 5.8 cents ($0.046 to $0.058 per $1,000 value) over 20 years.

**Question**

What is the projected annual cost to the Town for its use of the Smart Sewer? As a ratepayer, what is the impact on the Town's budget for hooking into the sewer line?

**Answer**

Operation and maintenance costs for town properties, including the current town O&M line item for wastewater operations is anticipated to be approx. $184,000 per year - this impacts the local tax rate by ~ 10.2 cents ($0.102 per $1,000 value) annually. Hook-up fees for the Town of Littleton are currently budgeted at $10,000.

**Question**

If the sewer requires a land purchase, who picks up that tab (the Town or the sewer user)? If using existing land, does the Town get a break or reimbursement for the use of its land?

**Answer**

The project financing plan currently includes a $100,000 budget for Land/Legal and Finance related costs. A significant land purchase is not anticipated, as the land for siting of the CWERC is currently Town owned (Littleton Highway/LELWD site), as is the land for the effluent discharge (Littleton High School athletic fields). The finance plan does not include a “break or reimbursement” for utilizing Town owned land, other than the innate cost savings of not needing to acquire land.