

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE ZOOM WEBINAR ON JANUARY 19, 2023

How was the survey conducted? Homeowners in the Perna Lane area attended the August 2020 WPCA meeting to inquire how to restart the project. WPCA board advised the homeowners that the criteria for moving forward with the project was 2/3 of the owners in the Phase must be in favor of the project. The homeowners started a neighborhood petition hoping to get 66% of the owners in favor of the project. They used the existing survey and information sheet that WPCA prepared and sent out to the homeowners on 2 previous occasions.

Where will the second pump station be located?

WPCA has a few places in Perna Lane where a pump station can be located. If we are considering your parcel, WPCA will reach out to you in the next several weeks to discuss the pump station location.

How are you handling the disproportionate costs to Phase 1 for the main infrastructure shared by all three phases? What happens with these costs when Phase 2 and 3 are built? That is a Board decision. WPCA does not allocate costs for the backbone system to Phase 2 and 3 to pay for at a later time when they are built. If Phase 2 and 3 never go forward, they become stranded costs and would be paid for by all the users of the system, which is not fair. What would likely happen is there will be a credit/reimbursement to the homeowners in Phase 1 when Phase 2 and 3 are connected.

What other 17 homes are expected to have grinder pumps? We will have to get back to the group about who will need a grinder pump. A list of homes requiring a grinder pump can be posted on the WPCA website. This list is based on the initial design and could change as the design is finalized. If it changes, the list will be updated.

Are homeowners responsible for replacement of the grinder pump when needed?

The WPCA supplies the pump and the pump becomes the homeowners. If the pump fails, the owner will be responsible to repair/replace.

Who pays for the electric for the pump? The homeowner will pay the electric cost.

What happens when the pump/check valves fail? Typically, a check valve at the property line and a second check valve at the tank itself is provided. So there are 2 lines of defense against a backup. Grinder pumps with low pressure sewers have successfully been used, lasting 10 to 15 years without issues. Manufacturers have service contracts. There is an initial warranty period for the new pumps, usually a minimum of 1 year.

What is the red indication on High Ridge Road in front of their house? The red line shown in front of the house indicates the depth of the sewer. Red is a deeper sewer.

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Can you identify the house that will need grinder pumps? A list of homes requiring a grinder pump can be posted on the WPCA website. This list is based on the initial design and could change as the design is finalized. If it changes, the list will be updated.

If you sell your home before the assessment is paid off, who is responsible for the paying the remaining assessment? The purchaser of the property would assume the assessment costs. It is an assessment and it runs with the land. The assessment is filed on the land use records in the Clerk's office. You would disclose this cost to the buyer before the sale.

Are homeowners required to hook up once the sewer is in place and operational. Yes, the Stamford Ordinance stipulates the following:

Sec. 200-32. - Use of public sewers.

- A The owner(s) of all houses, buildings or properties used for human occupancy, employment, recreation or other purposes situated within the City of Stamford and abutting on any street, alley or right-of-way in which there is now located or may in the future be located a public sanitary sewer of the City of Stamford, shall, at the option of the WPCA and at the owner's(s') expense, be required to install a building lateral to connect their building drain to the public sewer in accordance with the provisions of this article, within one hundred eighty (180) days after the date of official notice to do so, provided, however, that such requirement shall not be imposed on any house, building, or property within the sewer avoidance area.
- B. It shall be unlawful for any person to construct or repair any privy, privy vault, septic tank, cesspool or other facility intended for the disposal of sewage if public sewers are available.

What are the requirements for connecting? By City Ordinance, everyone will be required to connect to the new sewer system. The Health Department will not allow you to remain on septic or have 2 systems. When you abandon your septic system, you don't have to remove the septic tank. The standard practice is that you would remove the top of the tank, crush the septic tank in place and fill with gravel. You don't have to touch the leaching fields.

Can you confirm that if the septic fails, the land is not large enough to replace the system? In most instances in the Perna Lane area, that is correct. If you did have a failing system, it would be very difficult to repair or replace a system with lot sizes averaging a quarter of an acre. The State Health Code has specific setback requirements from a property line, house foundation, retaining wall, etc. In some instances the lots in this area are so small that they would never satisfy the code requirements.

When will garbage collection from the city be available? Garbage collection will be available following completion and acceptance of the sewers. The Stamford Board of Representatives will pass a resolution to change the district classification from C (non-sewered district) to CS (sewered district) and taxes will be based on the new district.

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If you have a washer and dryer in the basement, would this require an additional grinder pump? A list of homes requiring a grinder pump will be posted on the WPCA website. This list is based on the initial design and could change as the design is finalized. If it changes, the list will be updated.

The concept is to provide service to the first floor of each house. In some cases, the sewer will be deep enough to service the basement as well. In other cases, it will not. If you have a bathroom or a washing machine in your basement, they do make pumps that you can pump up to your first floor lateral and from there flow by gravity. Every house has to be looked at individually. If you have questions, you can call WPCA to specifically discuss your house, or you can call a plumber. If you have a sewer pipe that goes out the back of your house and it would have to be rerouted around the house to the front, it may be less expensive to reroute the plumbing inside and come out the front. It is a case by case basis which is why it is difficult to estimate this cost.

Do you now the location of the pump station? The main pump station will be located off High Ridge at Turn of River Road north of the Merit Parkway. We're looking at another smaller pump station on Perna Lane. The exact location is still to be determined.

Difference between a grinder pump and ejector pump? A grinder pump is a tank that collects the waste from your entire house, grinds it up and then pumps it through a small diameter line out to the street. It can be located outside your house, or in the basement if you have room, and intercepts the line from your house to your septic tank. An ejector pump is smaller and is used to pump waste from one bathroom, one washing machine up to the first floor lateral when it will flow to the system in the street.

What time is the next WPCA public meeting and how do we get invited? The next board meeting is January 30th. It is a zoom meeting and the link is available on the WPCA website.

Is there a way to extend the cost to a longer period of time? The Board has determined that assessments will be paid over 15 years but, the ordinance allows the WPCA Board to establish repayment schedules from 10 to 20 years. Interest is charged on the unpaid balance at the rate that the WPCA is paying on the bonds used to fund the project.

If you have a grinder pump and lose power can you still use water and flush your toilet?

You can still use Aquarion water if you lose power. The two are not connected. There is some capacity built into the tank for a few flushes after the power is off. Without power you would need a generator to run the grinder pump.

What happens if the project is turned down? The Board has voted to proceed with the project and the funding is in place.

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What does this project mean for land requirements? The project will not change the zoning in the district. Any change to that would have to go through the zoning commission. If you want to put an addition on you house, you will still need to meet setbacks and requirements of the zoning ordinance.

Who conducted the survey? Were both pros and cons presented to the homeowners? The survey was conducted by homeowners in the Perna lane area. To be fair, they used the existing survey and information sheet that was prepared by WPCA and sent out to the homeowners on 2 previous occasions.

Will there ever be another opportunity for another survey from a potentially unbiased third party? There are two parties involved in this project, the WPCA and the residence of the Perna Lane area. There is no opportunity for a third party to be involved.

Who do we call with questions? You can address any questions to Ann Brown, WPCA Supervising Engineer @ abrown2@stamfordct.gov or 203-977-5896. I will either answer the question or direct it to someone who can.