

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED ROUTE 50 SOUTHERN WATERSHED SEWER DISTRICT
RESPONSE TO COMMENTS**

Public Hearing held January 25, 2018

- 1) One time hook up fee between \$3,500 and \$10,000 is too much money. Why is there such a large range?**

Connection costs vary on many factors. The largest variable is whether or not the home will need a grinder pump due to low elevation or sewage entering a pressurized sewer. Approximately 90% of the proposed Route 50 sewer district will not require a grinder pump, but will have a gravity flow system instead. For gravity flow parcels, the estimated cost to connect will be closer to \$3,500 to \$4,500, or less. This remains as a range due to varying distances between structures and the main sewer line. The costs for a service lateral installation today are between \$30 and \$40 per foot depending on the distance. The farther the structure is located from the main, the more pipe and digging distance is required. This will be dependent on the unique situation of the particular home, and one reason for the range.

For those parcels that require a grinder pump, we are also in the process of negotiating grinder pump pricing with a vendor on behalf of the Ballston Lake residents for their sewer system. The purchase AND installation of a grinder pump could be between \$5,000-\$8,000. We are offering high cost estimates since the project would take place in the future.

- 2) Sewer fees should be based off of water usage.**

The proposed Route 50 Southern Watershed Sewer District will discharge to a treatment facility that is operated and maintained by Saratoga County Sewer District No. 1. Fees are determined by a Saratoga County document titled the Scale of Charges. This document is included as Appendix B of the Map, Plan & Report which can be obtained on the ballstonsewers.org website, the Town website, and the Town in person. The fees are for operation and maintenance of the sewer system and the Town of Ballston does not set the fee amount.

- 3) Sewer offers an opportunity for growth. Desire places to gather such as restaurants, and appropriate businesses.**

The Town understands that our community is looking for smart, conservative growth within the hamlet areas of the southern portion of Route 50.

- 4) Town of Ballston had an opportunity to get sewers back in the late 1970s. The "Olde Homestead" may have survived if we had sewers. How can we get a restaurant in Town without the infrastructure? We need some positive growth.**

Yes, the addition of a restaurant to any location without a sewer system is challenging, especially in an area of Town that has smaller parcel sizes and a high water table. Full service restaurants use a fair amount of water and installation of septic systems are costly and take up space.

5) How is the \$926 charged? Is this capped after a number of years, or never-ending?

The number \$926 is a worst case annual cost number for a connected structure that has been assigned 1 equivalent dwelling unit (EDU). The \$926 is reached through the following calculation:

$\$926 = \651 (annual capital cost per EDU) + $\$225$ (Saratoga County Sewer District Trunk and Treatment User Fee) + $\$50$ (Saratoga County Sewer District Collector Fee) Prior to connecting, a parcel owner is only required to pay the maximum debt payment portion of \$651.

More information regarding above numbers can be obtained by attending an upcoming Public Session, or reading the Map, Plan & Report. This fee would appear on the County property tax bill. The \$926 (or less) is scheduled for a 30 year time period.

6) When will the first payment appear?

The proposed Route 50 project would not begin until after the Lake project is constructed. The earliest payment would occur in 2021.

7) Will roads be broken up? Will sewers be along sides of road?

The final engineering design has not been completed at this point in time. Typically the sewer is positioned to accomplish the most efficient flow design possible with minimal disturbance. If a road or any other feature is disturbed during sewer installation, restoration will occur. The only exception to this process is the replacement of items that may disturb a functioning sewer system. For example, if a tree is removed with large tree roots, it will not be replaced. The sewer project team will coordinate with the Town highway department to reschedule any planned road resurfacing until after the project.

8) 41,080 feet of pipe are mentioned, does this include pipe to be installed on private property?

The length of pipe that is included in the Map, Plan & Report document is the length of the sewer main that would be installed as part of the project. Lateral installations (from a home to the main) are not included in this number. Lateral installation are the responsibility of the homeowner.

9) Support of sewers for public health reasons

The proposed Route 50 Southern Watershed Sewer District is being considered as a project with the Clean Water State Revolving fund for environmental and public health reasons. The project has scored above the subsidy line and is positioned well for grant consideration. Grant applications are due June 29th to the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

10) Concerned about Guyer development and that this may turn into apartments. Streets already laid out.

The Town zoning code should be evaluated to see whether the Guyer parcel is suitable for apartments. Development of the Guyer parcel is not a focus of the Sewer Committee, or the

Town of Ballston. The Town of Ballston is seeking input on zoning to determine exactly what can/should be built.

11) Does school have to pay to have sewers or does County provide it to them at no cost? Are school taxes going to increase?

Yes, The School District would have to pay the capital improvement payments for the sewers. The School District has been consulted throughout the creation of the proposed district since they are the largest potential user of the district, and the Town understands the impact on the entire School District. There is a combined public information session with the School District scheduled for March 8th, 2018 for those that would like to receive additional information regarding School District impact. The sewer project team cannot comment on school tax, but we can communicate that the School District is aware of the project and has performed the analysis.

12) How much time would an owner be given to determine true costs?

The numbers being presented represent the maximum dollar amounts that can be anticipated. If a grant is received for a portion of the project costs, then debt service costs could be much lower. If there is a unique funding package made available to the Town, then the first payments may not be experienced for a couple of years after the loan is being utilized. The Town will communicate with parcel owners throughout the project as new information is known, however at this time these costs are the maximum.

13) When is project going to happen? Why is this coming up again – more development in the works?

The project is being considered at this time because there is an opportunity for Town residents and businesses to leverage investments made as part of the approved Ballston Lake sewer project. There is a large economic incentive to do the project now, immediately after the construction of the Ballston Lake Sewer system. It is estimated that construction will start on Ballston Lake in 2019 and take one to two years to complete. Using this schedule, the Route 50 project would start construction in approximately 2020-2021, and not be available for connection until late 2021 at the earliest.

14) Can we have specifics on decommissioning existing systems?

Decommissioning of an existing septic system includes the following steps: 1) Pump sewage and water out of septic tank, 2) Disconnect piping to tank, 3) Fill tank with sand or other medium acceptable by code, 4) Inspector that inspects the sewer line connection will also inspect the disconnection of septic system for County and Town records.

15) Financial hardship exemptions? What happens if one person does not pay – what is the mechanism for their share – does it get distributed to others to pay?

If a person qualified for the financial hardship exemption, the \$926 would become \$651 and there would be no connection charges until the person is required to connect. There would be no distribution of payments to others within the district.

16) I just installed a new septic system at my home and on the duplex that I own. People who have new septic systems should be left out of the district until we have to connect.

The Town is in the process of completing a Draft Local Sewer Use Law. The proposed language currently has an exemption clause for parcels with new septic systems. The parcel with the new system would still remain within the Sewer District, and the debt payments would still apply, however the connection requirement and service charges would not apply for a number of years after the sewer system became available. Prior to enactment of the Sewer Use Law, the Town intends to make the draft law available to the public for comment and will also hold a public hearing as required by state law.

17) Downtown Burnt Hills is declining and slipping away. Will this project help? We would like to see restaurants, a grocery store, etc.

The sewer project is being completed as a water quality improvement project, however the Sewer Committee and Town recognize the impact that this infrastructure will have on community development. Sewers are critical to smart development within hamlet areas, and this project would clearly assist with attracting the types of downtown businesses that are being requested by our residents in a manner that is consistent with Zoning, the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the local Burnt Hill's Ballston Lake Business and Professional Association Visioning Committee.

18) Fully in support of this project. Needed for a long time. Our parcel is small and we are looking at alternatives for a new septic system. There is no room on lot. All of the alternatives are too costly.

Yes, the sewer project would assist those with failing septic systems.

19) I am concerned about residential growth because of this project, and sewers allowing for additional subdivision of land.

Most of the residential hamlet area within the Town of Ballston is zoned such that the required lot size is ¼ acre under our new proposed zoning with water or sewer present. Since most of the proposed sewer district currently has public water available, the introduction of sewer would not change the new zoning proposal.

20) Does everyone in the Town get to vote or just people in the District?

If the Town Board decides to proceed with creation of the Sewer District, they will most likely request a public vote. If this occurs, the voting rules are governed by New York State law, and only those who own real property within the proposed sewer district are allowed to vote.

21) Is there a way to get the cost lowered?

Yes, the project team is pursuing grant(s) from New York State and we feel this project is positioned very well. The Ballston Lake project received \$2.5 MM in grant money that is subtracted off of the total project cost. The deadline for the grant application for this project is June 29th and our score/position is comparatively better than it was in the last grant application process.

22) Will connection be optional?

The Draft Ballston Sewer Use Law currently has mandatory connection within 3 years of the sewer system being available to connect. The Sewer Committee expects that the Sewer Use Law will contain exemptions that will allow a parcel owner to delay connection to the system based upon the distance between the structure and the sewer main, the recency of a septic system installation, and for financial hardship.

23) Instead of installation of sewer, recommend inspecting everyone's septic system for performance. Sewer project will not completely resolve phosphorous loading issues in Ballston Lake.

This is an alternative to sewers but would require changes in town law mandating inspection, manpower to enforce, homeowner costs for inspection and an immediate financial hardship on the homeowner/business should the septic system fail.

24) What economic analysis has been performed to determine the return on this investment? What will be the added revenue? What will be the added expense?

Studies obtained show strong potential for return on investment (ROI) and revenue. We do not foresee a major increase in expense related to economic development.

25) What are the underlying assumptions about the economic development that will achieve this analysis?

The assumptions are based on other water projects, vacant and underutilized parcels, density and cost per sq. ft. for development.

26) Is there a place where the visioning team's work can be viewed?

The Visioning Committee is a part of the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake Business Professional Association (BPA). Although they work closely with the Town, and provide input, it is recommended to reach out directly to the BPA.

27) Has anyone analyzed the suitability of the Town for such economic development from the investor's perspective, using the investor's rubric?

No – We have not. The town in general has not been stagnant with regard to development and investment. In fact, the opposite is true, as the town has had to restrict zoning to avoid over development. Along the Route 50 corridor, there have been many new projects without the

addition of sewer infrastructure. We can reference studies that show economic development potential.

28) Has anyone assessed the likely response of the Town's residents to the economic development contemplated?

No, not formally. The condition of Route 50 is a comment we hear all the time. The lack of community based services is another comment we hear all the time. Conversely, we hear that we do not want to become a Malta or Clifton Park. The assessment process underway as the town is forming a visioning committee, then gathers community input, hires professional services and then adopts the appropriate zoning.

29) Has anyone assessed the ability of Rte 50 to handle the additional traffic burden associated with the economic development contemplated?

The Town Board as lead agency under SEQRA will consider impacts relating to traffic as part of its review of the sewer project. While the project may very well result in infill development in an already developed area of the Town, economic development is not one of the drivers of this project. (See Response #32). While it is acknowledged that that the project may create an increased impetus for infill development as stated above, there is no way to predict when such development will occur or to what degree. Any increase in traffic from resulting development can be addressed through proper safeguards in the planning process for future projects. The Planning Board will also consider cumulative impacts resulting from multiple projects that may occur within a certain time frame.

30) What environmental assessment has been performed to determine that the areas to be transitioned to sewer contribute to pollution?

There are two watersheds involved in the proposed Route 50 Southern Watershed Sewer District. The majority of the proposed Route 50 Southern Watershed Sewer District contributes to the Ballston Lake Watershed. There is also a portion of the proposed district that contributes to the Alplaus Kill and subsequently the Mohawk River Watershed.

The first watershed involved is the Ballston Lake Watershed. Numerous studies have been completed that satisfy rigorous New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requirements. The results have subsequently caused this waterbody to be listed as a 303(d) waterbody, impaired for phosphorous with onsite wastewater treatment systems (septic systems) being a contributing factor. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html> More information on the studies that were conducted can be found by contacting NYSDEC Division of Water, or the Ballston Lake Improvement Association.

The second watershed involved is a tributary to the Alplaus Kill. A study is currently being conducted to collect data to determine if there is a public health issue within this tributary caused by failing septic systems. Odors and visual observations have been noted, and preliminary sampling has shown elevated results for fecal and coliform counts. The study is a month-long study and results will be shared with the community.

31) What environmental assessment has been performed to determine that the sources of pollution will be ameliorated by the proposed sewer plan?

NYSDEC has identified failing septic systems as a contributing factor to the phosphorous impairment in Ballston Lake. The installation of sewers would be one of multiple solutions for Ballston Lake. Other solutions will include best management practices and public education to promote clean stormwater, such as erosion control, fertilizers, and minimization of other pollutants present in runoff.

For the tributary to the Alplaus Kill, if a current study determines that fecal coliforms are present at a level in excess of NYSDEC Water Quality Standards, then the installation of sewers will likely be the primary solution needed. Fecal coliforms are bacteria generated within the intestines of warm blooded animals, primarily from humans in this scenario.

32) What properties are included in the sewer plan for reasons other than environmental or economic? Is Nolan Road an environmental or economic target? Hollister Way? Sherwood Lane?

All areas within the proposed Route 50 Southern Watershed Sewer District are included due to aging infrastructure of onsite septic systems, small lot sizes (leaving limited solutions and alternatives to homeowners who are space constrained) and/or the likelihood that they are contributing to water quality issues. Please refer to the watershed overlay map on the Town website, with the understanding that groundwater typically follows the general watershed flow as well. The New York State Clean Water State Revolving Fund is not looking at this project due to economic drivers. It is for water quality reasons. Sewers are typically designed and placed in areas with density and homes, and/or businesses that require the infrastructure to function efficiently. This need exists in the southern hamlet area of Burnt Hills.

33) Maintenance of the Sewer will be performed by Saratoga County Sewer District. Will town employees will be required to participate in the maintenance the proposed sewer? What are the incremental costs? How will this impact the town's expenses including benefits and retirement?

The Town of Ballston has just approved an Operation & Maintenance Agreement between the Saratoga County Sewer District (SCSD) and the Town of Clifton Park for the Ballston Lake Sewer project. If the proposed Rte 50 Sewer District moves forward, a similar agreement would exist between SCSD and the Town of Ballston for the proposed Route 50 Sewer District. Town employees would not be conducting any maintenance on the sewer system. The costs are included in the service and collector fees noted in the Map, Plan & Report document. There would be no impact on the Town's expenses including benefits and retirement.

34) Will the Town of Ballston ever have to secure specialized equipment to service the proposed sewer?

No, see above question.

35) What controls or limitations are put on SCSD billing rates?

SCSD billing rates are voted upon and approved by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors on an annual basis. The Town of Ballston and Sewer project committee do not contribute to this process.

36) A number of people have indicated that sewers enhance property values – what data is available to support this?

The Sewer Project team cannot comment on the value of a property with or without sewer. This is not within our scope.

37) At the end of the meeting, Bill Goslin noted that enabling the proposed project now will save us "40%" compared to what it would cost a year from now. Is there data to support this figure?

Yes. Councilman Goslin was referring to the pipe change along the West side of Ballston Lake. As mentioned at the beginning of the public hearing, this project is being offered now, before construction on the Ballston Lake Sewer system begins. If the Route 50 proposed Sewer District is going to happen, the pipe along the West side of the Ballston Lake would be made larger, along with a larger pump station to handle the additional capacity. *(The engineers cannot simply put a larger pipe in the ground to begin with, because without the additional volume of sewage from the Route 50 area, the flow would not occur properly.)* If the proposed Rte 50 sewer district does not proceed, then a pipe sized only for the lake project and standard excess capacity considerations would be installed.

If Rte 50 decided they wanted to proceed AFTER the Lake project is constructed, they would need to install an entire new pipe alongside of the Lake project pipe. This would require 30,000 feet of new pipe from Main Street Pump Station to Shenantaha Park. It costs \$200/foot to design and install. Therefore a year from now the pipe alone would be \$6,000,000 more plus the cost of the main street pump station upgrades versus minimal incremental costs today.

The total project cost for the proposed Route 50 sewer District is \$15.78 million. \$6 million is approximately 40% of that cost.

38) Request that the Town Board communicates details of project as much as possible.

In addition to the website, the Town is holding four public information sessions to communicate more effectively. There will also be a fifth session that is a public forum conducted with BHBL School District. Please attend one of these sessions.

Public Sessions @ Town of Ballston Community Room

2/13 at 10:00 AM

3/1 at 6:00 PM

3/14 at 10:00 AM

3/20 at 6:00 PM

Public Forum at High School (Spartan Room - F/K/A the Red Room) 3/8 at 6:30PM

Please register for a Public Session using one of the following methods:

1) ONLINE: <http://signup.com/go/vPRYXgp>

2) PHONE: 518-605-6236, Please leave the following information in voicemail: Name, Address, Session date you wish to attend and # of people, Phone number

39) Will the driveway entrances be repaved again after the work is completed?

Yes, restoration will occur to pre-construction conditions.

40) Is there really a \$500 mandated engineering inspection fee, and for what?

SCSD must inspect the connection of a structure to the sewer main to confirm the work has been properly performed. This fee is currently a maximum of \$500 for a grinder pump connection. The fee is currently set at \$300 for a gravity connection inspection. These rates are set by the SCSD, and not the Town of Ballston.

41) What is the average cost to have our existing septic systems deactivated?

One of the requirements to deactivate a septic system is to pump and fill the tank with sand. Our current estimate to perform these tasks is about \$800.

42) Will there be any grants to homeowners to help offset these costs?

The project team is pursuing grants with the Environmental Facilities Corporation which we believe we are well positioned to receive. If received, the grant money would reduce the project costs for all parcel owners within the proposed sewer district. New grants are constantly being offered. The sewer project team monitors these offerings to determine if there is anything available to help homeowners, and will keep everyone informed.

43) Will each resident have to hire a company to do the hookup, or will the Town provide this service for a fee?

The Town will assist residents by providing specifications and names of contractors who can perform these types of services. The Town cannot tell a resident who they should use for their own hookup for it is their decision. A homeowner would contract directly with the company who performs the connection service. The connection is inspected by the County to ensure proper work is being completed. The Town will provide specifications and more information for connection at the appropriate project time. It is also recommended that neighbors seek group rates from contractors to have an efficiency in contractor bidding and pricing. Guidance would be provided to residents.