

Community matters

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

OCTOBER 2007

What is “Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich” and why is it so important?

“Clean Rivers, Clean Harbor, Sound Norwich” is a community wastewater project that addresses the impact our city’s wastewater plant and pipeline network has on the future and the quality of our harbor and rivers. The project involves changes to the wastewater infrastructure that will:

- Bring Norwich current with state and federal environmental mandates
- Upgrade the city’s aging wastewater infrastructure to reduce treatment plant odors
- Minimize the discharge of untreated waste into local rivers during wet weather
- Reduce nitrogen from sewage discharge, making our rivers, harbor and Long Island Sound cleaner
- Power the sewer plant using recaptured methane gas, reducing Norwich’s energy costs

- Prepare Norwich to meet current growth and future business development needs.

In early September, nearly 100 city residents and community leaders turned out to learn about nitrogen removal, odor control, combined sewer overflows. They also toured the treatment plant. Excitement surrounding new development projects and the renaissance of downtown underscore the importance of Norwich’s wastewater treatment project and its impact on our city’s future.

A summary of various aspects of the project follows. To learn more, visit our website at www.norwichpublicutilities.com.

NPU is committed to involving our community as we move forward in the decision-making process. For more information, call us at 860-887-2555 or send an email to communitymatters@npumail.com.



It’s been over 30 years since the last major expansion of our wastewater facilities.

or later it becomes necessary to think about the plant and the benefits a

Why is the upgrade necessary, and why now?

A wastewater plant is often taken for granted. People know it exists, but they don’t want to think about it as long as the process works correctly and does the job. But sooner

municipal sewer system provides to the community. When deciding to upgrade the Norwich Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), like all decisions made that involve a lot of money, it’s important to know why it is necessary – and why now is the time to start.

The volume of waste is projected to increase

Norwich’s WWTP must comply with volume requirements (amount of flow to the plant) and treatment levels set by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Projected growth,

due to regional and local development and population increases, is expected to substantially increase the volume of waste coming into the plant. Current treatment processes need to be expanded to accommodate this increase.

Odor control measures are needed

Current measures to reduce or disguise wastewater odors are insufficient. In order to provide adequate odor control, substantial capital improvements must be made to the facilities, especially in light of new development projects downtown.

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Why is the upgrade necessary, and why now? ...continued from front

Long-Term Control Plan is required by CTDEP

By October 2009, Norwich must submit a comprehensive Long-Term Control Plan for approval under order of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. This plan will address combined sewer overflows which occur



As Norwich grows, wastewater treatment infrastructure, such as the clarifying tanks shown above, will need to be expanded to accommodate increased flows.

during wet weather, when the combined system gets overloaded. Combined systems are designed to transport both sanitary sewage and storm water through a single pipe to the treatment facility. When

this pipe overflows, the wastewater dumps into the nearest water body. In the mid-1970s there were 43 active combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in Norwich; as of today there are 15 active CSOs remaining.

Energy opportunities

A by-product of secondary wastewater treatment is methane. With this upgrade, the methane gas can be used as an energy source for the plant — as a fuel for heating the digester and other plant buildings, and for generating electricity.

Nitrogen credits and the Long Island Sound Nitrogen-Reduction Program

Local waterways suffer from serious problems that can be directly linked to nutrient over-enrichment (nitrogen) from the rivers and streams that feed into the coastal waters. One identified source of these nutrients is discharge from wastewater treatment plants.

In 2002, new regulations were enacted in Connecticut that limit total nitrogen discharge from wastewater treatment plants; these limits become more stringent each year up to 2014. Our WWTP does not meet the current limits; therefore we pay “credits” for discharging nitrogen. As limits become more stringent, we will be required to purchase more credits each year at an ever-increasing cost per credit. To achieve compliance with the total nitrogen regulations and avoid the cost of purchasing credits, new equipment is required and existing facilities must be modified.

Aging infrastructure

Much of the equipment and infrastructure at the WWTP and the pumping stations have been in continuous operation for over 30 years. Despite the fact that these systems have been responsibly maintained throughout the years, inevitably they will reach the end of their useful life.

For more information on the wastewater project, visit our website at www.norwichpublicutilities.com.

Potential Funding Sources

State of Connecticut Clean Water Fund:

provides financial assistance to municipalities for planning, design and construction of wastewater collection and treatment projects.

Long Island Sound Restoration Fund and Aid to Distressed Communities:

funds available for planning and design costs leading to nitrogen removal upgrades.

Connecticut Governor's Economic Diversification Fund: possible grant funds for municipalities promoting regional diversification projects.

Capital Connection Fee Regulation: collected from new sewer users and those users who make changes to their homes or businesses that increase the burden on the sewer system.

General Obligation Bonds: some of the costs of the upgrade could be covered by these bonds issued by the City.

State and Tribal Grant (STAG) Program: grant funds available to address environmental and public health threats.

Sewer Use Fee: monthly fee paid by NPU sewer customers. Since the project will benefit the entire community and even the region, Norwich sewer customers are not expected to cover the entire cost of the upgrade.



Here to Serve You

Visit a special link on our web site for more information:
www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.
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