



WWTF
Workshop
March 22,
2023

Lewes Board of Public Works

Agenda

- Review and Discuss FAQ's
- Present Option 1 Visual
- Discuss Next Steps
- Public Comments/Questions
- Conclusion

1. Is option 3a or 3b similar to the discussions the County had with Rehoboth regarding purchasing outfall capacity?

- Although they both relate to the discharge of county wastewater, this is a completely separate discussion between the Lewes BPW and Sussex County. It will be decided based on what is best for the BPW ratepayers and the environment.
- The Rehoboth discussion involved strictly Sussex County buying a portion of the Rehoboth's ocean outfall capacity. Treatment was not part of those discussions.

2. What will happen with the existing Howard H. Seymour Water Reclamation Facility (WWTF) should an option 2 or 3 solution be chosen.

- There have been no discussions of the future use of the WWTF site if Option 1 is not selected.
- The land that the WWTF currently sits on is jointly owned by the BPW and the City.
- It's likely the WWTF would be demolished, and the land restored.
- Discussion on the use is independent from which option is the best for the BPW rate payers.
- Future use of the property will be done jointly with the city.

3. Is there a correlation between the historic beach closures due to bacteria levels and our outfall into the canal?

- No, the discharge of the plant is controlled by the DNREC discharge permit and is monitored and reported monthly to the Department Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC).
- As shown in in the DNREC Data base, (<https://data.delaware.gov/Energy-and-Environment/Recreational-Water-Advisories/ever-58ni/data>) the beach advisories in the ocean and bay near the canal are due to a combination of wildlife, agriculture and extreme rainfall events causing surface runoff.

4. What else would need to be addressed should option 1 be the chosen option?

- Access to the site is the biggest concern, should there be flooding. American Legion Road continually floods from the rising tides in the canal.
- The logistics of how to keep the WWTF operating safely with major construction on the site.
- Sea Level Rise coupled with more frequent and intense storms are the major concerns. The impact of climate change is modeled in a static condition. The impact of waves and the potential for breaches of the dunes which are related to these conditions are not specifically included in the present evaluations. They are all dependent on an individual storm (location of storm, wind direction, tide, number of tide cycles, etc.)

5. Is the 2050-time horizon enough or do we need to look beyond?

- This time horizon allows us to monitor and adjust on a regular basis based on the latest and best data that is currently available.
- The elevation chosen is conservative considering what is currently known. Due to the critical nature of the facility, the upper-level curve, of the Delaware Climate Action Plan SLR projections are being used and a 3-foot freeboard rather than 2-foot is used as an additional factor of safety. More information can be found at <https://documents.dnrec.delaware.gov/energy/Documents/Climate/Plan/Delaware-Climate-Action-Plan-2021.pdf>

6. Will the City be involved in the decision-making process?

- Lewes BPW will coordinate closely with the city. All final decisions will consider this input.
- The decision will be based on the community's input, environmental factors, financial considerations, construction disruption, and risks.
- Future use of the site will be planned jointly with the city since the land is jointly owned.

7. Would the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) discharge permit stay with the BPW?

- The NPDES permit must be held by the organization that is operating the plant.
- For Option 1 or 2, the BPW would hold the permit. For Option 3, Sussex County would seek their own permit.
- If Option 3 is chosen, a firm agreement would need to be put in place between the BPW and Sussex County. This would include what the BPW's role would be in monitoring the operation of the facility among other items listed in FAQ 11.

8. Has the BPW entertained new WWTF designs, methods, etc.?

- The first phase was to determine which options should be considered.
- The second phase was to perform a high-level engineering review of the options identified, including feasibility, cost, impacts, and risks.
- Looking at specific designs for the options that will be pursued, such as types of treatment, suitability of the design given the individual sites, more detailed site evaluations (for example, ground water levels, soils, etc.), and the ability to get the design permitted by DNREC will be the next phase.

9. Has the BPW located a specific site or sites for option 2?

- No specific sites have been identified. A general review of lands available was collected and average cost of the land and the length of piping needed were assumed in the analysis.
- Depending on if Option 2a, 2b, or 2c is chosen and the type of treatment method, would determine the actual acres needed.

10. Will the smell of the current plant be diminished?

- The WWTF is located within a natural marsh and the majority of the odors come from the marsh, especially at low tides.
- There have been some isolated issues from the plant. We have changed the operating procedures at the plant to address them, especially during the summer when the temperatures are elevated.
- There has also been a historic issue with the pump station at the intersection of Gills neck and Savannah. An odor filter was added to this pump station. When maintenance is being performed on this pump station there can be some occasional odors.

11. Are there concerns over loss of control by the BPW if Option 3 is chosen.

- BPW would remain as the sewer system operator. This would include the collection system, pump stations, customer service and billing.
- A detailed agreement would be developed between the BPW and Sussex County. This would include how operating and capital costs will be shared, the plant upgrade decision making process, monitoring of the plant operation, NPDES reporting, etc.

12. Should the BPW wait and consider which option to pursue in the future?

- Waiting creates several issues:
 - 1. The availability of land and the cost will become more challenging given the growth around Lewes;
 - 2. Option 3 may no longer be available;
 - 3. The risk for a major storm outside of what has been considered in hardening the existing WWTF in Option 1.

13. What is the impact of climate change on the inflow/infiltration into the sewer system?

- Inflow into and around manhole covers along with other structures will be minimized by watertight covers coupled with routine maintenance
- Inflow due to low lying fixtures inside houses (showers, toilets, floor drains), is outside the control of the BPW. This would be part of the City's building code.
- Increased infiltration due to the increase in ground water related to SLR.
- The BPW has a Mitigation Committee that is evaluating risks to all the BPW Utilities. Specific recommendations have been made with respect to the sewer infrastructure and facility storm loadings.

14. How can I stay updated on the future discussion and reports?

- The BPW has created a specific page on the BPW website to place all of the information that pertains to the Wastewater Treatment Facility Long-Range Planning: <https://www.lewesbpwde.gov/wastewater-treatment-facility-long-range-planning/>
- Attend regular BPW monthly meetings.
- Make sure customer service representatives have an up-to-date email address on file for you.
- The BPW will hold future Public Workshop's to keep the public informed of the next steps.

Option 1 Visual:

- The Lewes BPW is be working with GHD to provide visuals from several viewpoints (American Legion Road, Savannah Road and Gills Neck Road) so that the public can gain an understanding of the viewshed associated with option 1 i.e., hardening the existing facility.

Next Steps

- No decision on a particular option has been made.
- BPW has established monthly meetings with the City for coordination purposes.
- Staff is working with Sussex County to establish a basis of a potential agreement, oversight, cost, long-term risks/benefits, etc...
- Staff will also be reviewing information from Sussex County related to compliance, historic effluent quality, injuries, etc...
- The evaluation of design and field conditions continue for all options.

Next Steps

- The BPW will hold monthly BPW workshops to provide updates, seek feedback and move closer to making an informed decision related to the WWTF.
- *Those Tentative Dates are:*
- **April 12th- 6:30pm (Margaret H. Rollins Community Center)**
- **May 17th- 6:30pm (City Hall)**
- **June 14th- 6:30pm (Margaret H. Rollins Community Center)**

Public Comments/Questions:

Conclusion

- We want to thank you for your continued input in this decision-making process. We look forward to and encourage residents and ratepayers to attend the future workshop!

