

SEWER EXTENSION FACT SHEET

February, 2022

1. **Why My Neighborhood?** *Three primary reasons: the Town explores mainline sewer extensions to a neighborhood, the town-wide Sewer Facilities Plan study, and interest presented by residents. The Facilities Plan is a comprehensive study of the sewer collection system of operations in Avon. Among its content is development of priority areas for mainline sewers based on many factors such as: age of septic systems, soil conditions, proximity to existing sewers, groundwater depth, and septic system failure history. Older developments with tight soils and / or high groundwater tables often result in failing septic systems. Failed septic systems pose a health risk and can be very expensive to repair / replace.*
2. **Are homeowners required to connect to public sewers?** *Homeowners are not required to connect to the public sewer.*
3. **Will there be any kind of inspection of existing septic systems to determine if they are functioning properly as part of the project?** *No*
4. **What will the sewer cost each property owner?** *Construction of the sewer is paid for by benefitting property owners, known as a "Benefit Assessment". Each property owner is assessed a share in the cost of the project. The assessment will be determined once construction is completed and all final costs are determined. State law mandates a public hearing process for such assessments which includes an appeal period. The Town has historically allowed property owners to pay down the assessment amount with modest interest over an extended period – typically 10 years. We cannot prepare a preliminary estimate until the preliminary design is completed.*
5. **What are the factors that go into the cost of the Benefit Assessment?** *The Benefit Assessment is essentially derived by construction cost of the sewers divided by number of benefitting properties. Sewer construction costs are impacted by the environmental challenges encountered during construction, the cost of materials and labor, the length of sewer per residence, and type of sewer (gravity or low-pressure). The most recent gravity sewer benefit assessments were done for the Winding Lane neighborhood in January, 2019 at a cost of \$17,670.64 per residence. The only low-pressure sewer benefit assessment the Town has levied was done in 2018 at a cost of \$11,241.88 per residence. In both cases, the AWPCA allowed a 10-year payment program at a non-compounding low interest rate.*
6. **What do you mean by gravity or low-pressure sewer?** *As the name implies, "gravity" sewers flow the sewage by gravity. These pipes are pitched from high to low so that the sewage flows down-hill through the system. These sewers are generally more expensive to install because they tend to be deeper in the ground and must be pitched in a straight line from manhole to manhole. The primary advantage to this type of system is that they require minimal maintenance. "Low pressure" sewers flow sewage by small pumps located at each residence that pump the effluent along a smaller pressure pipe. The advantage of these systems is that they can be installed relatively shallow and follow the ground surface shape. They also require much smaller mainline pipe so materials and installation costs are lower. The primary drawback is that each property being served requires a pump.*
7. **Are there any other administrative costs associated with connecting to the sewer?** *There are two other costs associated with connecting to the sewer: a Connection Charge, and a Sewer Permit fee. The current Connection Charge amount is based on the number of bedrooms: 1 and 2 bedrooms incur a charge of \$3400, 3 and 4 bedrooms incur a charge of \$4000, larger than 4 bedrooms incur a charge of \$4600. The current*

sewer permit fee is \$50. **It is important to note these costs are not required to be paid until you connect to the sewer.*

8. **Once a property is connected, are there any other costs?** *Yes, there is an annual sewer-use fee paid in two installments and based in part by the amount of water that is drained through the sewer system. The average base charge for 2022 will be \$515 per dwelling unit.*
9. **What will it cost to connect each house to the sewer?** *Each house is unique when you consider the route of the sewer lateral which is the way each property connects to the sewer main. The location of the sewer pipe exiting the building, the amount and types of landscaping disturbed, the length of the lateral (distance from the street), the types and amount of restoration all impact the cost of connecting. Property owners that wish to connect to the sewer will contract directly with a licensed sewer contractor and negotiate their own deal.*
10. **How do you justify the expense of sewers?** *Installation of sewers is not cheap. When one compares the cost of sewer construction to septic system repair / replacement, the cost to connect is a more viable option. An argument can be made that public sewers are much more environmentally friendly than individual septic systems. Public sewers also require much less actual space on a property than a septic system, allowing owners more freedom to make use of their property. Finally, many realtors will concede properties connected to public sewers sell much more readily than those with septic systems.*
11. **Where can I go if I have more questions?** *The Engineering page located on the Avon Town website has more information. Residents with specific questions concerning sewers in Avon are encouraged to contact the Engineering Department at: 860-409-4322.*