

February 8, 2022

Sewer Expansion – Highwood, Candlewood, Carriage, Brookmoor Areas

Dear Resident;

You may recall that several years ago there was interest by residents in your neighborhood for the Town to consider construction of Town sanitary sewers there. Due primarily to financial constraints and uncertainty surrounding Avon's share in the cost of the Farmington Sewer Treatment Plant expansion, Avon decided to hold off on capital projects for the period. Now that this issue has been resolved, the Town and Avon Water Pollution Control Authority (AWPCA) are exploring and prioritizing capital projects like mainline sewer expansions.

In an effort to gauge interest, the AWPCA has asked that we solicit input from residents in the three neighborhoods being considered for mainline expansion. We have prepared an online survey which can be accessed by clicking the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YLNMH5L>. Residents that prefer to fill out a survey on paper, we have included the same survey within this letter. We ask residents that prefer the printable form to scan and email their form to: vdicenso@avonct.gov or to send it to:

Town of Avon Engineering
60 West Main Street
Avon, CT 06001

As you may recall, the Town installed groundwater monitoring wells several years ago for the purpose of determining fluctuations in groundwater elevations in the area over time. We have been checking the elevations throughout the period and have observed only minor changes with time. What this means, as presented previously, we believe that managing groundwater during sewer construction will likely increase the costs of construction substantially, particularly if gravity sewers are installed. Accordingly, we believe that the most cost-effective installation in your neighborhood will be low-pressure sewers. The primary benefit of this type of sewers is that they can be installed at a much shallower depth than gravity sewers (4 feet rather than 8 to 12 feet), generally following the contour of the ground surface. This results in a much lower construction cost. The primary concern residents have concerning this type of sewer is that each residence being served must have a pump. Low pressure sewer technology has an extensive positive history, including installations in Avon.

Residents on Brookmoor Drive and Highwood Circle: Since each of these roads were paved recently, contrary to our normal practice of installing sewers within the paved area, we would either push to install the mainline sewers in the shoulder or to eliminate your streets from consideration.

It is our hope that we get a good response to the survey as this will likely be the basis for prioritizing mainline extension capital projects for the next 3-5 years. We would like to thank you in advance for your time and attention. Residents that provide their email address will receive update emails. Depending on results, the AWPCA will likely conduct public information meetings to provide additional details to residents.

Residents with additional questions are encouraged to contact the Avon Engineering Department at 860-409-4322.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Baril, P.E., GISP
Town Engineer

Mainline Sewer Expansion Survey – February 2022

1. Resident Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

2. Would you like to be contacted by email with future information concerning this?

_____ Yes _____ No

Email: _____

3. I/we have read the Sewer Extension Fact Sheet

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments: _____

4. Please indicate your general opinion regarding the construction of sewers in your neighborhood:

Strongly

Approve

Approve

Disapprove

Strongly

Disapprove

Comments: _____

5. If the sewer extension requires you to have a pump, will this affect your answer to Question #4?

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments: _____

6. Do you know your septic system location, configuration, and age of the leaching part of your system?

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments: _____

7. Do you have any plumbing fixtures in your basement / lowest floor level?

_____ Y _____ N If yes, please list them _____

8. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns you would like addressed?

SEWER EXTENSION FACT SHEET – February, 2022

1. **Why would the Town considering bringing sewers to my area?** *There are two 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 document that studied many aspects of operating the sewer collection system in Avon. Among its content is development of priority areas for mainline sewers based on many factors such as ages of septic systems, soil conditions, proximity to existing sewers, depth to groundwater, and septic system failure history. Older developments with tight soils and /or high groundwater tables tend to result in failing septic systems, which not only pose a health risk but also are often very expensive to repair/replace, making public sewers a worthy consideration.*
2. **Are homeowners required to connect if the Town constructs sewers in the street?** *Homeowners are not required to connect to the public sewer.*
3. **Is there going to 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. This means that 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 as the cost of the construction of the sewers divided by the 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 the type of sewer (gravity or low-pressure). The most recent gravity sewer benefit assessments were done for the Winding Lane neighborhood in January of 2019 and were \$17,670.64 per residence. The only low-pressure sewer benefit assessment the Town has levied was done in 2018 and was \$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 the 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 2 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 that these costs are not required to be paid until you are interested in connecting 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 to name a few. Property owners that wish to connect to the sewer will contract directly with a licensed sewer contractor and negotiate their own deal. Costs are impacted by distance from the street, impediments to the installation such as ledge, trees, and landscaping, and the restoration required.*
10. **How do you justify the expense of sewers?** *Installation of sewers is not cheap. However, when one compares the cost of sewer construction to septic system repair/replacement, the costs are typically quite favorable. In addition, the 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 have told us that properties connected to public sewers sell much more readily than those with septic systems due to the uncertainty of the longevity and costs to replace/repair a septic system.*
11. **Where can I go if I have more questions?** *The Engineering section of the Town's website has more information, however residents that have specific questions concerning sewers in Avon are encouraged to contact the Engineering Department by phone at: 860-409-4322.*