

Northwest Neighborhood Sewer Separation Project – Phase 1

Fact Sheet

What is the NNSSP project for?

Since June 29, 2012 the City of Rutland has been under a State Enforcement Order to reduce combined sewer overflow incidents. A combined sewer overflow (CSO) is an event where the volume of water collected by our combined storm and sanitary sewers exceeds the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant or other infrastructure and ‘overflows,’ or bypasses the plant. This results in the direct discharge of untreated sewage to East Creek or Otter Creek, jeopardizing human health and the environment. The Northwest Neighborhood Sewer Separation Project (NNSSP) will install a new storm sewer system in a fifty acre neighborhood bounded by Crescent St., Grove St., Library Ave., and East Creek. This new system will separate the stormwater from the household sewage and eliminate storm-related overflows from this section of town. It will also reduce the frequency and size of overflows from the rest of the City because eliminating stormwater flows from the northwest neighborhood will free up capacity in the balance of the system.

Why is this needed now?

The Enforcement Order from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources allows the City to violate the law and our sewer plant operating permit with excessive numbers of CSOs as long as we make steady progress toward their elimination. The Order requires the NNSSP to be completed by December 31, 2015, which in turn requires the project to begin this summer.

What happens if we fail to meet the deadline?

If we do not complete the NNSSP by December 31, 2015 we will be in violation of the Enforcement Order. This could result in fines of up to \$25,000 per day levied against the City by the State of Vermont or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

These CSOs must have been going on for a while. Why hasn't this been addressed before now?

It has. Beginning in 1988 the City undertook engineering studies to determine the number and severity of our CSOs and what can be done about them. Prior projects have made a big difference in reducing these events. In 1992-93 the treatment plant was upgraded from 13 to 16 million gallons per day (MGD), and again in 2006 to 22.5 MGD. Other improvements include the installation of huge combined sewer pipes to increase stormwater storage and neighborhood ‘sewer separation’ projects designed to divert the stormwater away from the combined sewers and transmit it directly to city waterways. Tens of millions of dollars have been invested since 1990 to reduce CSOs. The NNSSP is the next major step to address the issue.

What will the project mean for the neighborhood?

In addition to the new storm sewer system which involves 9,600 feet of new piping, the project is planned to install 1,500 feet of new sanitary sewers, 4,500 feet of new curbing, 2,300 feet of new sidewalks, 3 ‘swirl separators’ to treat stormwater before it goes to East Creek, and over half a

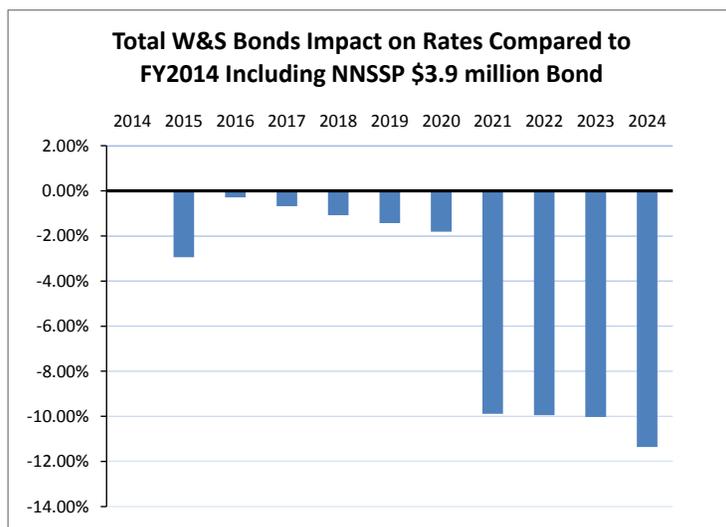
million dollars in new street paving. It will dramatically reduce local storm-related street flooding and increase the available capacity of our wastewater treatment plant. Eliminating stormwater from the sewer system will also prevent combined sewer backups into homes and businesses in the area during high intensity rainfall events. The project will significantly improve the street-level infrastructure in the neighborhood.

What will it cost?

The total project cost is estimated to be \$5.2 million. We expect to receive a 25 percent grant, bringing the local cost down to \$3.9 million. The City will be eligible for 2% financing for 20 years, so the local cost is estimated to be \$238,511 per year for 20 years.

What will the impact be on my water and sewer rates?

For the typical household that uses 1,200 cubic feet of water and sewage treatment per quarter, the net increase will be \$4.45 per quarter. This is about a 3 percent increase over current rates. But because the bond repayments will not begin for a couple of years the impact of the new bond on your bill will be totally offset by reduced payments on older bonds. In other words, the increased cost will be fully offset by savings from retiring older bonds, resulting in no net increase for debt service in the water and sewer bills. The chart below assumes the bond will be for \$3.9 million and repayment begins in 2016. In every year the result is a *reduction* in water and sewer rates to support bonds.



Will this project eliminate the CSO problem?

Unfortunately, no. More work will be required in the years ahead. Twenty-seven percent of the City is currently served by combined sewers so it will take multiple decades of work to eliminate this problem.

Where can I get more information about this?

<http://www.rutlandcity.org> Go to City Departments > Department of Public Works > DPW News and Misc Information > Northwest Neighborhood Sewer Separation Project.