

Raintree Road Sewer Extension Project
Frequently Asked Questions
June 29, 2016

Planning, Act 537, Service Area

1. Why is public sewer being extended to my neighborhood?

West Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors completed a Sewage Facilities plan (commonly referenced as an “Act 537 plan”) which identified on-lot septic systems that were malfunctioning, suspected of malfunctioning or had the potential of malfunctioning. Areas that have a concentration of on-lot system malfunctions were identified as “sewage needs areas” and a plan was required to address how the malfunctions would be resolved.

An area referenced as “Raintree Road” was identified as a sewage needs area. The area is located along Raintree Road and Marietta Pike. The most recent Sewage Facilities Plan approved by PADEP noted the solution to the sewage needs area was an extension of public sewer using low pressure sewers including sewage grinder pumps.

Pennsylvania law (Act 537) requires that all municipalities in the state prepare an official plan to address its short and long term sewage needs. The resulting Plan, called a Sewage Facilities Plan (or more commonly an “Act 537 Plan”) must be adopted by each municipality through ordinance, and the plan must be approved by the state agency that oversees all sewage planning (the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, or PA DEP).

West Hempfield Township adopted its Act 537 Plan, and the Plan was approved by PA DEP on June 13, 2007. It was subsequently revised on June 1, 2016 to incorporate changes that relate to the Raintree Road sewer extension.

A hardcopy of the West Hempfield Township Act 537 Plan is available at the LASA office 130 Centerville Road, Lancaster PA 17603 Monday through Friday 8:00 am through 4:30 pm. A digital copy is available at the LASA website at www.lasa.org, on the homepage under “News/Documents”. Click on “Documents”, then under “Act 537 Plans” click on “West Hempfield Township”.

What were the results of the surveys and well testing done in the Raintree Road areas as part of the Act 537 Plan? Why did this result in our neighborhoods being characterized as “needs areas”?

The results of the surveys and testing are detailed in West Hempfield Township’s Act 537 Plan. The Act 537 Plan is available for review at the LASA website at www.lasa.org.

A summary of the results is as follows:

On Lot Disposal System in Project Area: 16
Survey Results Received: 8 (50% of project area responded)
Confirmed Malfunctions: 4 (50% surveyed)
Suspected Malfunctions: 2 (25% surveyed)
Potential Malfunctions: 1 (13% surveyed)
Wells with Bacteria Contamination: 4 (100% of those tested)

2. Will my house be served by public sewer?

There is a link on the LASA webpage to a drawing that shows the project area highlighted with each parcel to be served. See the LASA website at www.lasa.org. From the Quick Links on the left-hand side click “Raintree Road Sewer Project”.

3. If my septic system is working fine, then why do I need to connect to the public sewer?

West Hempfield Township Ordinance requires that all homes within 150 feet of the sewer main must connect to the public sewer system.

If our well water is treated, or if we have public water, can installation of public sewer be avoided?

The purpose of public sewers is to replace the numerous failing (and potentially failing) on-lot sewage (septic) systems serving the homes in the Raintree Road area. Eliminating these septic systems will ultimately reduce not only groundwater contamination but will also eliminate the surface discharge of untreated sewage resulting from failing on-lot septic systems. Ultimately, public sewer will reduce the occurrence of disease and environmental pollution. The failure of one septic system in your neighborhood can affect everyone that lives there. Treating the drinking water or using public water does not eliminate the potential to spread disease from failing septic systems.

Is LASA making a profit from this project? What is the relationship between LASA and the Township?

LASA, as a Municipal Authority, is a non-profit incorporated governmental agency. The Authority is an independent agency of the Commonwealth, and is not part of the Township government. There is no direct association with West Hempfield Township, except for the fact that the Township is one of LASA’s seven founding municipalities and as a result the Township Board appoints one of the seven members of the Authority Board. All revenues are used to operate and maintain the system, there is no profit.

Is the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy (CBTS) the driving factor for public sewer?

No. The sole reason for the sewer extension is to remedy a sewage needs area identified in the West Hempfield Township Act 537 Plan. The public sewer option was identified in the

Act 537 Plan as the most cost effective way to address the needs area. Although replacing the failing on-log systems with public sewer can benefit water quality within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, there is no direct relationship between the sewage needs in West Hempfield Township and the nutrient issues within the Chesapeake Bay.

Will the quality of our well water improve and if so how long will it take?

It is impossible to predict the extent and/or the time it will take for the quality of the groundwater to improve after public sewer is installed. However, the adverse impact on the groundwater from failing septic systems will immediately be eliminated after the on-lot systems are pumped and filled with stone.

Responsibilities and Costs

What is the Township's role?

The Township is responsible to develop, adopt, and implement its Act 537 Plan. The Plan calls for the extension of public sewer to the Raintree Road area. So the Township is obligated under Act 537 to see that public sewer is extended to this area.

What is the role of the Lancaster Area Sewer Authority?

West Hempfield Township is a member municipality of the Lancaster Area Sewer Authority (LASA). As a result LASA is the provider of public sewer to most areas of West Hempfield Township detailed in the approved Act 537 Plan. The Lancaster Area Sewer Authority will design, fund, and construct the public sewer extension to the Raintree Road area. LASA will then be the sewer agency for the Raintree Road area customers, which includes long term operation and maintenance, billing, and customer service.

4. What will the sewer service cost me?

There will be several different fees that will need to be paid as part of the connection to public sewer. Some are one-time fees and others will be on-going. The following is a brief explanation of each fee:

- Tapping and Connection Fee: This is a one-time fee covering the costs for capacity in the sewer collection and treatment system paid to LASA at the time of connection. The fee is currently \$2,380 for the Tapping Fee and \$750 for the Connection fee.
- Service Line Inspection Fee: This is a \$35 fee paid to LASA for inspection of the sewer service line into your house.
- Service line plumbing costs: This is a one-time amount paid to your plumber for the construction of the sewer service line from your house across your yard to the connection point at the sewage grinder pump basin. The costs for this construction can vary depending on your unique situation. We encourage you to contact several plumbers early

in the process to obtain good prices. Depending on the length of the service line, the depth of the service line, and any obstacles that will need to be avoided, the cost could be approximately \$2,400.

- Septic tank pump out and fill: For the purpose of safety, West Hempfield Township Code requires that your septic tank be pumped out and filled with stone or acceptable fill after you are connected to the public sewer. The one-time cost paid to your plumber will vary, but we estimate the cost to the homeowner at \$600.

- Quarterly sewer bill: There is an on-going user fee for sewer service. After connection to the sewer system, LASA will bill you on a quarterly basis for your sewer use. The fee covers the costs for collecting, transporting and treating the sewage from your home. The bill that is charged to all LASA customers located in West Hempfield Township is currently \$89.40 per quarter. The quarterly fee is a flat fee based on “per residential unit” and not based on water usage.

System Design and Characteristics

What type of sewage system will be designed?

The sewage system being designed is called a “low pressure sanitary system” or LPSS. It consists of individual sewage grinder pumps at each property and a system of small diameter underground pipes under slight positive pressure.

Why a low pressure system – and why do I need a sewage grinder pump?

Grinder pumps are required where gravity sewer service is not cost effective. In the case of Raintree Road, the cost of running gravity sewer to each property was prohibitively expensive, and some of that cost would have been charged to the individual property owners. Instead, we opted to run a “low pressure” sewer extension to serve the Raintree Road area, which would include an individual grinder pump at each property. The grinder pumps will pump sewage into the sewer under low pressure. The low pressure sewer will eventually discharge to the LASA gravity system and ultimately flow by gravity to the LASA sewage treatment plant in Washington Boro.

What is a sewage grinder pump?

A sewage grinder pump is simply a small low horsepower sewage pump with grinding cutters. As it pumps the sewage it grinds up normal sewage solids for ease of pumping and to reduce blockages. The pump is located in an in-ground basin and operates on a float system – the pump starts when the sewage level reaches a pre-set high level float in the basin and will pump down the basin until a low level float turns the pump off.

What do I need to do to operate and maintain my grinder pump?

You do not really need to do anything special to operate or maintain a grinder pump, but you do need to remember that certain materials will damage grinder pumps and are prohibited from being discharged into a grinder pump system. Prohibited materials or discharges include the following:

1. Diapers, baby wipes, adult wipes, or shop rags
2. Feminine products, sanitary napkins or tampons of any kind
3. Cloth of any kind
4. Glass or metal or plastic products of any kind
5. Excessive amounts of oil and grease of any kind
6. Lubricating oils
7. Kitty litter
8. Other large non-wastewater items such as toys
9. Seafood shells
10. Explosive or flammable materials, including but not limited to gasoline or kerosene
11. Paint thinner, solvents, or antifreeze

You will also be required to sign a “Grinder Pump and Easement Agreement” outlining the responsibilities of LASA and the property owner.

LASA will own, operate, and maintain the grinder pump.

How (where) will my grinder pump basin be located? One of the first steps LASA will take in designing the low pressure sewer system serving your property will be to identify where in your yard to locate the grinder pump basin.

We will do this by performing a survey (or inspection) of your property. We will ask you to sign a “Survey Authorization Form” authorizing access your property to do the survey or inspection work. This form will allow the Township, LASA, and its engineer to enter onto your property to locate existing utilities, locate your existing building lateral and septic system, and collect any other necessary design information. They might take pictures during the survey. They will carry proper identification. The inspection should take about 15 to 20 minutes, and an adult member of the household must be present during the inspection.

Do I need to provide a right-of-way?

Rights-of-way will be needed from property owners for the Authority to operate and maintain its portion of the sewer system on your property. There is an agreement that property owners will need to sign that outlines conditions related to the right-of-way.

Where will the sewer main be placed?

Most sewer mains will be placed in the public rights-of-way.

5. Will the homeowner have any input on where they can connect to the sewer?

Once the project is awarded to a contractor, the location of the sewer service lines and grinder pump will be marked. Homeowners will be given an opportunity to consult with a plumber and move the connection point to a more advantageous location.

6. If I have a sump pump, can it be connected to the public sewer?

You may not connect sump pumps to the public sewer. The sump pump must discharge somewhere other than into the LASA system.

7. Will I need to modify the plumbing inside my house?

Modifications may be necessary if sinks, toilets, and showers, are located in your basement. The Authority will design the sewer system to serve the first floor of each house. Basement service may be possible depending on the elevation of your basement in comparison to the elevation of the sewer main. If you have plumbing facilities in your basement, there are options available to allow service to those facilities. We recommend that you contact a plumber to discuss your individual situation.

Construction

What will be the effect on my yard, trees and bushes?

LASA will contract with a reputable contractor to install the sewer mains. LASA's contractor will install the pipe to the grinder pump basin and will install the grinder pump basin on your property. LASA's contractor will restore the roads, driveways and sidewalks to their original condition. If we disturb your lawn, it will be restored. The contractor will determine the timing and sequence of road and yard restoration.

If trees and bushes are in the right-of-way, or if they overhang into the right-of-way, they may need trimmed or removed by the contractor. LASA does not replace trees removed from a right-of-way since they could obstruct access to the sewer line in the event that future maintenance of the sewer is necessary.

Can anyone with a backhoe install the private service line?

There are no licensing or special qualifications required to install the private service line, but all service lines must be installed according to LASA specifications, and the installation must be inspected (and must be approved) by a LASA inspector. We encourage the use of an experienced professional with adequate insurance, since this work is dangerous.

Will the construction create inconveniences?

Possibly, but we will do everything we can to minimize the disruption. The contractors will begin work early each day. During construction, you may experience short delays and

inconveniences upon entering or exiting your property. Also, roads and yards will be disturbed. Please be assured they will be restored to their original condition upon completion of the construction project. We ask for your patience.

Schedule

7. What is the project schedule?

Public meeting	July 13, 2016
Mapping and House Surveys:	July to October 2016
Preliminary Design:	September to November 2016
Planning and Permitting:	July 2016 through January 2017
Final Design:	February 2017 to March 2017
Advertise and Bid:	March 2017
Construction:	June 2017 to December 2017
Connections:	January 2018

See the LASA website for a detailed schedule. From the Quick Links on the left-hand side click “Raintree Road Sewer Project”.

Questions or Concerns, Miscellaneous

9. Who do I contact if I have specific questions?

The general LASA office phone number is 717-299-4843. Contacts are as follows:

General [Mike Kyle](#), Authority Executive Director at 717-344-5832
Engineering [Scot Fertich](#), Authority Engineering Director at 717-344-5830
Costs [Mike Lehman](#), Authority Financial Director at 717-344-5823
Field work [Albert Knepp](#), Authority Facilities Director at 717-344-5831

You can email any of the above by clicking on their name.

10. Where can I view additional information about the sewer system?

More information is available on the LASA website at <http://www.lasa.org>, on the homepage. From the Quick Links on the left-hand side click “Raintree Road Sewer Project”.

When does the LASA Authority Meet?

Meetings are held at 7:30 am at 130 Centerville Road, Lancaster PA 17603. LASA Board meetings are held every fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 am except for November and December, when they are held the third Thursday of the month, same time and location. Agendas and minutes are posted on the LASA website at www.lasa.org.