



PROJECT GROUNDWORK
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WERK & WESTBOURNE EHRT FACILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Community Information Meeting – October 22, 2015

What is an Enhanced High Rate Treatment (EHRT) facility?

An EHRT facility is specifically designed to treat and disinfect wastewater flows generated by wet weather (rainstorms, snow melts). EHRT facilities use physical-chemical processes to treat wastewater instead of the biological processes used by more conventional wastewater treatment plants. This allows flows to be processed much more quickly. EHRT facilities operate only when the sewers are full during wet weather events, are much smaller than conventional treatment facilities, and can more easily fit within residential areas and neighborhoods.

Why is Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) building this facility?

The WVEHRT Facility is being constructed to fulfill MSD's federally-mandated Consent Decree requirements to reduce overflows at the Werk and Westbourne location. After studying many options to address the overflows at this location, MSD determined that constructing an EHRT facility is the best solution. Scaled to fit within residential neighborhoods, EHRT facilities are specifically designed to capture, store and treat wet weather flows before they are released into local waterways. EHRT facilities are much smaller than conventional treatment facilities, can process wastewater more quickly, and operate only when the sewers are full, primarily during rainstorms and snow melts.

When will construction begin?

Construction of the WVEHRT Facility is expected to begin in mid-2016.

When will construction of the WVEHRT Facility be completed?

The WVEHRT Facility will be completed and operational by the end of 2017.

Will the WVEHRT Facility stop all combined sewer overflow occurrences at this site?

The WVEHRT Facility will be able to manage a majority of sewer overflow events at the site. If flows entering the facility exceeds its capacity for storage and treatment, excess water will be sent through a course screening system to remove trash and debris and will be released into Schaible Creek. It is important to know that during the beginning of wet weather events, stormwater entering the combined sewer will push forward sanitary sewage already in the system and the WVEHRT Facility will generally be able to store and treat this first concentrated "flush" of the system.

Why not build a facility to stop ALL overflows in the area?

Building a facility that would capture, store and treat *all* overflows from the combined sewer outfall at Werk Road and Westbourne Drive (CSO #522) would require a considerable increase in size of the planned facility as well significant increases in costs. Yet, because the facility is sized to manage a majority of overflow occurrences, the additional capacity needed to capture all flows would largely remain unused. As a good steward of its customers' service fees, MSD must ensure that the funds put toward the EHRT facility are used responsibly and that the facility design maximizes efficiency and effectiveness. We believe we have achieved that with the planned EHRT facility.

Will this facility eliminate sewer odors in the area?

The WVEHRT Facility will remove most of the sewer debris from combined sewer flows being released from the Werk & Westbourne combined sewer outfall and a majority of the flows entering the WVEHRT will be disinfected. These processes will significantly reduce odors created by sewer overflow events. However, some odors experienced during dry weather in the combined sewer located north of the WVEHRT site will not be eliminated by the facility and may still remain.

How much noise can we expect from the facility during construction?

Noise experienced during construction will be comparable to the noise experienced at a typical commercial construction site for a facility such as a large grocery store. Work will take place during normal work hours.

When will the WVEHRT Facility operate?

Once construction is complete, the WVEHRT Facility will operate only if the combined sewer system is full during rainstorms and snow melts. Most equipment and operations will be contained inside the facility, so noises heard outside will primarily be from roof-mounted fans (which sound similar to an air conditioner). Trucks will periodically deliver supplies to the facility, however, deliveries will be completed during daytime hours. Service vehicles will also arrive periodically to perform cleaning and maintenance services. However, these visits will also occur during daytime hours.

Why not build a conventional treatment facility at this site instead of an EHRT facility?

Conventional facilities use a biologically-based treatment process which must be “fed” with a constant supply of organic material, or raw sewage. The combined sewer system overflows at this location intermittently, not enough to support the needs of conventional treatment. In addition, an EHRT facility is a better option for this location because it operates only when needed, is much smaller than a conventional facility, can process flows more quickly, can more easily fit within the existing neighborhood and costs significantly less to build and maintain. Water from both types of facilities must meet federal water quality standards before it is released back into the environment.

What is the difference between the Werk & Westbourne Enhanced High Rate Treatment facility and the Muddy Creek & Westbourne High Rate Treatment facility?

The primary difference between the facilities is that the WVEHRT Facility will use a chemically-based enhanced treatment process to accelerate the settling (separation of solid material from the liquid) and treatment process. This will allow the WVEHRT Facility to process more wastewater more quickly. The Muddy Creek & Westbourne Facility uses the more traditional settling process, which relies strictly on gravity to separate solids from liquids and takes a longer amount of time.

Is my property going to be assessed a special fee to pay for this specific facility?

No. Your property will not be assessed a separate fee to pay for construction of the WVEHRT Facility. The facility is being financed through MSD’s Project Groundwork program, which is funded primarily by all MSD customers through their service fees. Visit www.projectgroundwork.org for more information about Project Groundwork.

Are my rates going to increase because of this project?

Because this project is being funded through Project Groundwork, your property will not be assessed a special fee to pay for the WVEHRT Facility. MSD expects, however, that sewer rates will continue to rise for all its customers over the life of Project Groundwork to help pay for much needed system improvements across its service area. MSD is constantly looking for the best solutions at the fairest price, keeping your safety – as well as your pocketbook – in mind.