

West Village Wastewater Ordinances – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the background of developing the draft Wastewater Ordinances?

Community discussions regarding expansion of municipal wastewater service in the West Village have been going on for several years. The topic has been recognized in the Town Plan, as has the importance of economic development in the West Village which could be facilitated with municipal wastewater service.

In 2009, voters at Town Meeting approved a question supporting the Selectboard's consideration of a municipal wastewater facility to provide wastewater disposal for residential and commercial use in the West Village. A citizen task force was appointed by the Selectboard to examine the issue. The task force submitted its findings to the Selectboard in 2011 and a presentation was made at Town Meeting 2012.

The Wastewater Task Force and consideration of the question of municipal wastewater service lapsed for several years and was renewed in 2015, resulting in a report to the Selectboard in 2016 (see the full report at: [https://www.charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B5618C1B5-BAB5-4588-B4CF-330F32AA3E59%7D/uploads/1_-_Final_Report_7-12-16\(2\).pdf](https://www.charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B5618C1B5-BAB5-4588-B4CF-330F32AA3E59%7D/uploads/1_-_Final_Report_7-12-16(2).pdf)). An advisory vote in 2017 reconfirmed support of wastewater allocation for non-municipal uses. The task force was reconstituted into the West Village Wastewater Committee and has been meeting regularly over the past two years to review earlier work on the topic and to draft a Sewer Use Ordinance and a Sewer Allocation Ordinance. Throughout the entire process over the last approximately 10 years there have been numerous presentations and discussions with public participation and input, in addition to two town votes for further study of allocating wastewater capacity.

What is the process for adopting the Ordinances?

State statute sets forth the process for a municipality to adopt an ordinance. Ordinances are adopted by a municipality's legislative body, which in Charlotte is the Selectboard. The Selectboard would consider the ordinance at a warned meeting open to the public. If the Selectboard votes to approve the ordinance it would go into effect 21 days after the date of approval.

How much capacity is available in the wastewater system?

The existing municipal system, built in 2001, is located on the Burns property and serves the Town Offices, Senior Center, Library and Fire and Rescue station. Extensive discussion during earlier phases of the Wastewater Committee's work established the amounts of capacity that should be reserved for future expansion of those facilities. The existing and future reserve are shown below.

User	Existing (GPD)	Future Increase (GPD)	Total (GPD)
TO/L/F&R	865	260	1125
Senior Center	2000	600	2600
Infiltration	237	0	237
Total			3962

TO, L, and F&R = Town Offices, Library and Fire and Rescue
GPD = gallons per day

The following common categories of uses show examples of the wastewater allocation necessary for each:

Use	GPD Allocation
3-bedroom house	420
4-bedroom house	490
50 seat restaurant/bar	1350
12 unit senior housing	1260
4 employee business	52

The existing municipal system has a permitted capacity of 4999 GPD. That capacity can be increased to 6499 GPD by submitting an application to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. An application has been submitted and is under technical review. No expansion or modification of the existing wastewater system is necessary.

The unused capacity of the wastewater system, including current and future GPD needs is **1037** GPD (4999-3962=1037). With the increased permitted level of capacity, the available amount would be **2537** GPD (6499-3962=2537).

What is the future capacity potential?

There is the potential to expand the capacity of the system through a State Indirect Discharge Permit. There is suitable area adjacent to the existing Burns property wastewater disposal system for expansion of the system under those State rules. Based on conservative siting standards set forth in the Indirect Discharge rules, the estimated maximum capacity of the system is 15,000 GPD. After subtracting the existing and projected needs of the currently connected municipal facilities this would yield an unallocated reserve capacity of 10,088 GPD.

The Town also controls a number of “satellite” wastewater disposal sites, both on other portions of the former Burns property and outside of the core Village area. The estimated capacity of those areas is 14,370 GPD. These areas would be available for any use allowed by zoning on properties in close proximity to the disposal areas.

Why would the Town want to allow non-municipal use of the wastewater capacity and system?

Access to a municipal wastewater system is potentially an important part of developing properties in the West Village where lots are smaller and on-site options may be limited. For many years Charlotte, through its Town Plan and land use regulations, has had a goal of the Village as a compact mix of residential (including elderly and/or affordable), municipal and commercial uses. Opinion surveys and town votes on the land use regulations and the Town Plan have confirmed Charlotters' support of this goal. The ability to use the municipal wastewater system is one way to mitigate the limitations of on-site wastewater disposal and make the Town Plan goals a reality.

The current status of solely municipal use of the wastewater system means that all of the costs of construction, expansion, repair or replacement are borne by the taxpayers of Charlotte. Allowing non-municipal connections and use of the system will spread the cost to other users and will generate income from the underutilized asset of excess sewage disposal capacity.

Who is eligible to apply for a wastewater allocation?

Properties located within the Primary and Secondary Service Areas, as shown on the attached map and described below, are eligible to apply for a wastewater allocation. Applicants for a municipal wastewater allocation must first demonstrate that there are no on-site wastewater disposal options for their property. The ordinance makes provision for applicants with extenuating circumstances to request reconsideration of this requirement.

- **Primary Service Area** – This area would follow the current limits of the West Village Commercial Zoning District. This would enable properties located within this zoning district to petition the Selectboard for permission to tie into the wastewater disposal system located on the Burns property in accordance with the standards set forth in the proposed Charlotte Sewer Use Ordinance.
- **Secondary Service Area** – This area generally follows along the remaining portions of Greenbush Road located within the West Village Residential Zoning District. These properties are permitted to petition the Selectboard for the use of those remote wastewater disposal system sites for properties with failed systems, for adaptive re-use of existing homes into duplex structures, and for home occupations allowed within that zoning district. The recommended service areas are depicted on the map on the following page.

What are the priorities for distributing capacity?

There is limited capacity in the town-controlled wastewater system as now constructed or as expanded in the future. Establishing priorities for distribution is a part of the proposed ordinances. The priorities have been chosen for their consistency with the Town Plan goals for the future of Charlotte.

Additional capacity needs of the existing connected municipal facilities - the Town Offices, Senior Center, Library and Fire and Rescue station - are the first priority. Second priority is given to commercial uses within the sewer service area and third priority is for senior and/or affordable housing within the service area.

Who pays for use and extensions to the wastewater system?

Users of the municipal wastewater system would pay for both the expansion of the system to serve their property as well as an operations fee based on allocated capacity.