

Lewisboro

Lakes' sewer, septic proposal takes shape

By JEFF MORRIS

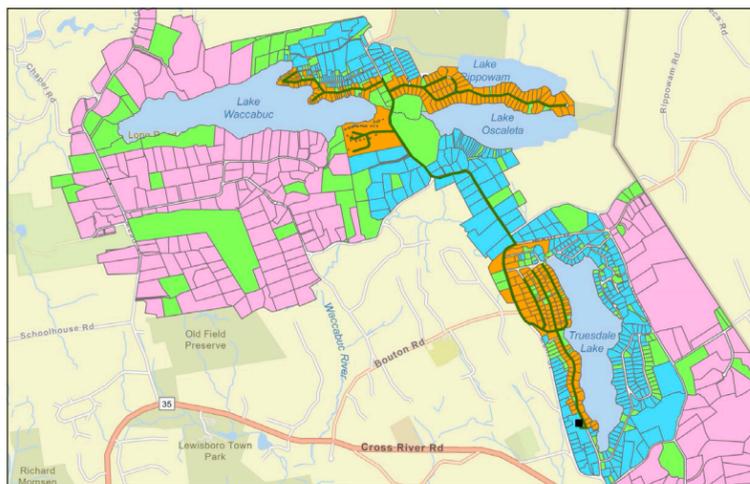
Lewisboro's Lakes Committee, Supervisor Tony Gonçalves, and state Assemblymember Chris Burdick are now in possession of a final report from engineering firm Woodard & Curran dealing with wastewater treatment for the lake communities. The details are also now available on the town website.

Under the proposal, in the initial stage of the project, a sewer line would be built connecting 304 properties around lakes Waccabuc, Truesdale, Oscaleta and Rippowam with a wastewater treatment plant located at the Town Recycling Center in South Salem. Residents in the Lake Kitchawan community would be included in a separate town septic district in the future.

"There are many Lewisboro residents who may be impacted by this project but don't know anything about it," Susan Enos, chair of the Lewisboro Lakes Coalition, told The Record-Review. She is hoping that information about the project will spread in the impacted communities, and that residents will take the opportunity to visit the new Lewisboro Lakes page, under the "Community" section of the town website at lewisborogov.com to learn details. The heading "Cleaning Up Our Lakes: Septics and Sewers" can be found at the bottom of the page with links to a complete description of the proposal and the related studies that have taken place to date.

The Woodard & Curran report comes after three studies, performed in 2021 and funded by grants from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, assessed the negative impacts of septic systems and identify potential solutions. The studies confirmed what decades of lake sampling data and previous research had long suggested: septic pollution is a primary contributor to the lakes' phosphorus load, and phosphorus is the primary agent accelerating the lakes' eutrophication — the process by which lakes age and die.

In a summary memo, Ken Kohlbrenner of Woodard & Curran said the areas selected for Sewer Phase 1 around Lake Waccabuc, Lake Rippowam, Lake Oscaleta and Truesdale Lake have high parcel densities, indicating that a sewer system would be more cost-effective and have the greatest positive impact on the lakes. This would include the formation of the Lewisboro Sewer District



COURTESY OF WOODARD & CURRAN MAP

In this map of the proposed Lewisboro Lakes Sewer and Septic Plan, properties included in Sewer Phase 1 are shown in orange; those proposed for a future sewer district are in blue; and those in a potential Septic Maintenance District are in pink. Green properties are vacant. The planned low pressure sewer pipe is the dark green line, and the black square shows the location of the planned wastewater treatment plant at the Recycling Center on Main Street, South Salem.

which would be administered by the Town of Lewisboro. The sewer district would be responsible for administering the project and for all maintenance of the sewer system and sewer services on individual properties.

Mr. Kohlbrenner said a total of 304 developed parcels around the four lakes were selected to connect to the proposed treatment plant based on the existing septic limitations. By providing sewers to these parcels, he said, the nutrient loading on the lakes would decrease. There would be a total projected flow of 61,965 gallons per day.

As part of the proposal, low-pressure sewer pipes will be installed in these lake communities to convey wastewater to a new wastewater treatment plant at the town recycling center on Main Street. Each property will have a low-pressure lateral and grinder pump to pump wastewater into the sewer main. The individual grinder pumps will be furnished, installed, owned and maintained by the sewer district.

The memo stated that additional lakefront parcels and parcels along the proposed sewer main will connect to the plant as part of a future phase. Mr. Kohlbrenner notes that based on potential funding sources identified, "it is not feasible to provide sewer to these properties at this time, but eliminating these additional septic systems in the future would continue to reduce nutrient loading to the lakes."

Some of the properties sur-

rounding Lake Waccabuc and Truesdale Lake may be suitable for advanced septic systems, according to Mr. Kohlbrenner; generally, these properties are larger and further from the lakes, which makes them more suitable for septic systems. "It is recommended that a Septic Maintenance District be formed in the future to enforce maintenance of the advanced septic systems," he added.

A map of the proposed Lewisboro Lakes Sewer and Septic Plan shows properties that may be part of a future sewer district, as well as those that could become part of the Septic Maintenance District.

Mr. Kohlbrenner noted that failing septic systems are impacting the water quality of the lakes, and therefore it is important to determine a cost-effective solution to the ongoing concerns around wastewater treatment in these areas.

The estimated cost of the initial plan is \$40 million. To cover these capital costs, the town is applying for two grants from New York state and is pursuing funds from Westchester County and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Homeowners in the proposed sewer district would have to approve a taxing district to cover ongoing operations and maintenance costs.

According to Mr. Kohlbrenner, the \$40 million total is based on estimates for the collection system and treatment plant, with an additional 20% allocated for engineering, legal and administrative costs.

In addition, the total includes a 30% contingency, which he says "is consistent with the level of detail available at this point."

Lake Kitchawan

As has been noted previously, Lake Kitchawan is not included in this plan because it is approximately 4 ½ miles away from the Main Street location, which makes it unaffordable for those parcels to connect. "There are limited parcels available to build a [wastewater treatment plant] near Lake Kitchawan, so a septic replacement program is proposed for this community," said the report. "This will replace conventional septic systems at each property with a more advanced treatment and disposal system." Multiple treatment and disposal options are being considered at this point, and further discussions are required with the Westchester County Department of Health to determine the best approach, the report said.

It is estimated that "enhanced treatment units" will have a cost of \$6.25 million. This capital cost is expected to come from allocated NYC DEP funds, and also will necessitate the creation of a tax district to cover ongoing costs.

"Once an advanced treatment and disposal method is identified, this project will require the Town of Lewisboro to establish a septic system replacement program," said the report. The program would encompass the formation of the Lake Kitchawan Septic District, which would be administered by the Town of Lewisboro and will be responsible for enforcing maintenance of the advanced septic systems. The project "will focus on 187 properties east of Lake Kitchawan since previous studies identified this area as having the most significant impact on Lake Kitchawan's water quality," the report noted. "This area consists of small parcels with slopes greater than 15% which direct flow toward the lake, therefore providing reasoning to prioritize these properties for septic replacement."

Ms. Enos said the Lewisboro Lakes Coalition, representing all seven town lakes, has formed a community outreach group to update residents on continued progress. Information will be available through individual lake associations, on lake association websites, and in other publications. The group will work closely with the town supervisor to produce and coordinate communications, she added.