

T&E COMMITTEE #2
January 21, 2016

Worksession

MEMORANDUM

January 19, 2016

TO: Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee

FROM:  Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **Worksession #3:** Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan: Glen Hills Area

Council Staff Recommendations:

- Approve the Text Amendment Recommended by the County Executive with the following adjustment:
 - Add clarifying language in the Glen Hills Text Amendment describing the public health problem area designation process and how it will apply in the Glen Hills study area. (draft text attached on ©91)
- Add a number of definitions to Chapter One and/or the Glossary of the County's Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan. (NOTE: these changes can be done administratively by DEP) regarding: how septic systems are assessed and failures documented by the County; and how public health problem areas are established generally.
- Consider a number of sewer policy issues raised in the Committee's Glen Hills text amendment discussion in the context of the Council's review and update in 2016 of the County's Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan later this year.

Meeting Participants Include:

- Fred Boyd, Master Plan Supervisor, Area 3, Montgomery County Planning Department
- Lisa Feldt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Dave Lake, Manager, Water and Wastewater Policy Group, DEP
- Alan Soukup, Water and Wastewater Policy Group, DEP
- Gene von Gunten, Manager, Well and Septic Section, Department of Permitting Services (DPS)

Schedule

On March 30, 2015, the County Executive transmitted a memorandum summarizing the results of the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study,¹ as well as his recommendations for Glen Hills sewer service

¹ The Glen Hills Sanitary Study (both Phase I and Phase II) is available for download on the DEP webpage at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/water/glen-hills.html>.

policies going forward (see ©32-39). This sanitary study was recommended in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

Based on the recommendations transmitted, Council Staff confirmed with the T&E Committee and PHED Committee chairs that the Council's review of this issue would occur via the Council's Water and Sewer Plan amendment review process. Council Staff asked Executive Staff to draft and forward a Water and Sewer Plan text amendment to the Council. This text amendment was transmitted to the Council on June 2, 2015 (see ©24-31) and introduced by the Council on July 21, 2015. A public hearing was held on September 17, 2015.

At the T&E Committee's first meeting on October 26,² the Committee received a briefing from DEP staff regarding the Glen Hills Sanitary Study and the County Executive's recommended text amendment. The Committee also heard from DPS staff regarding the County and State's general septic system policies and septic issues in Glen Hills.

At the second Committee meeting on November 16, the Committee heard from the Planning Board Chair and Planning Department staff regarding the Planning Board's recommendations. Council Staff described the range of possible options for the Committee's consideration (see summary chart on ©80), including options submitted by Chen & McCabe, L.L.P. on behalf of the Greater Glen Hills Citizens Coalition and the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, and a proposed text amendment submitted by Miles & Stockbridge on behalf of some other property owners in the Glen Hills area. The Committee identified a number of follow-up questions and issues, which Council Staff has worked with Executive Staff and Planning Department Staff to address. These questions/issues and responses are noted later in this memorandum.

If necessary, the Committee has reserved time for a fourth worksession on January 28 to address any further issues and/or remaining questions following the January 21 meeting. A Council worksession will be scheduled once the Committee has concluded its work.

Given the length of time since the last Committee worksession, Council Staff has included background and other information previously included in the November 16 meeting packet.

Background

Glen Hills Sanitary Study Summary

Phase I of the Glen Hills Sanitary Study looked at existing conditions.

The Glen Hills study area consists of 542 properties (nine of which are located within the City of Rockville). All of the properties are zoned RE-1. The chart below summarizes how the properties are currently served by public water or wells and public sewer or septic.

² The Council Staff packet is available for download at:
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2015/151026/20151026_TE1.pdf

Properties in the Glen Hills Study Area

# with Well and Septic	183	33.8%
# with Public Water & Septic	187	34.5%
Total Properties on Septic	370	68.3%
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# with Public Sewer & Public Water	35	6.5%
# with Public Sewer & Public Well	68	12.5%
Total Properties on Sewer*	103	19.0%
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Undeveloped Properties	69	12.7%
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Total Properties	542	100.0%

*NOTE: properties approved for sewer but not yet connected are included in the sewer totals.

Phase I of the Glen Hills Sanitary Study identified the following mix of septic systems in the Study Area:

Types of Septic Systems in the Glen Hills Study Area

	Number	% of Total
Conventional Systems (Current Standards)		
Deep-Trench	185	50.0%
Shallow-Trench	16	4.3%
Sand Mounds	4	1.1%
subtotal	205	55.4%
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Innovative Systems		
Drip-Disposal	9	2.4%
subtotal	9	2.4%
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Outdated Systems		
Seepage Pits	126	34.1%
Seepage Lagoons	5	1.4%
subtotal	131	35.4%
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Unknown	25	6.8%
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Total Number of Systems	370	

Deep trench septic systems are the most common conventional system. In the Glen Hills Study Area, 185 of the 205 conventional systems (which also include shallow-trench and sand mounds) in use are deep trench. Overall, deep trench systems make up 50 percent (185 out of 370) of the septic systems in the Study Area. There are nine drip disposal systems (considered “innovative” systems) in use. The rest of the systems in Glen Hills are outdated systems made up of seepage pits (126) and seepage lagoons (5).

Since deep trench septic systems represent the County’s standard system, The Phase I Study focused on the long-term sustainability of these types of systems. The Study identified eight parameters to consider with regard to the long-term sustainability of these deep trench septic systems in the study area.

Parameters Assessing Potential Constraints for Deep Trench Septic Systems

System Age	52% of systems permitted prior to 1975
Streams and Floodplains	21% of the study area is potentially constrained (areas containing streams and floodplains)
Topography and Steep Slopes	7% of the study area is potentially constrained (12 percent slope or greater)
Depth to Groundwater	9% of the study area is potentially constrained (groundwater depth of 0 to 3 feet)
Depth to Bedrock	9% of the study area is potentially constrained (depth to bedrock of less than 5 feet)
Percolation and Permeability Rate	13% of the study area is potentially constrained (designated as moderately slow or slower)
Soils Classification	18% of the study area is potentially constrained (designated as "severe" for trench development)
System Failures and Replacement	10% of existing systems had multiple septic failures. Also includes unimproved properties which failed septic testing
Overlay Result	36% of the study area acreage is potentially constrained

The study concluded that approximately 36 percent of the study area (by acreage) is potentially constrained by at least one of the above parameters. This does not mean that deep trench septic systems in this area will imminently fail, but rather that there are long-term sustainability issues. The rest of the study area did not have these constraints, and deep trench septic systems are expected to generally work well for the long term.

From the above results, DEP identified eight review areas for future Phase II evaluation.

The Phase II study identified strategies and estimated costs for addressing these long-term issues in the review areas with either on-site solutions or public sewer, including:

- Deep trench septic system replacements,
- Other conventional septic systems (sometimes called “alternative”), which include shallow trench and sand mound systems,
- Innovative on-site systems (i.e., drip disposal systems), and
- Future sewer extensions.

The study identified 13 conceptual sewer extensions that could serve the review areas and which would serve 197 improved properties and 26 unimproved properties. For the sewer extensions, alignments in public road rights-of-way were chosen as much as possible to minimize environmental impact.

Public Hearing and Written Correspondence

A public hearing on this text amendment was held on September 17, 2015. The Council has heard from a number of Glen Hills and Potomac Highlands residents (see ©60A-60J for a list of 223 residents) who support going beyond the County Executive's recommendations and allowing sewer in the Glen Hills area to address current or potential future septic problems, to provide flexibility for property owners to do improvements to the homes (such as expanding homes and/or adding bedrooms) that are currently not possible with their septic systems, and to allow vacant properties to connect and build out within what is allowed under current zoning. Some suggested proposals that go beyond the County Executive's recommendations are attached (see ©51-63) and are discussed in more detail later in this memorandum.

The Council also heard from the West Montgomery County Citizens Association (see ©70-73) and some individuals (see ©74-79) who support the County Executive's recommendations and do not support broader sewer approvals in Glen Hills.

Countywide Water and Sewer Plan Policies

The County's Ten Year Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan (Water and Sewer Plan) includes a number of general policies regarding sewer service Countywide. Of most relevance for Glen Hills is that large lot zones (including RE-1 zoned areas such as the properties in the Glen Hills Study Area) are assumed to utilize on-site systems. Eligibility for public sewer in RE-1 areas is generally limited to: abutting mains cases; addressing failed septic systems (i.e., an existing or anticipated public health problem); and as part of the creation of area-wide public health problem areas.

Potomac Subregion Master Plan (2002) (excerpt ©19-23)

Planning Department staff provide a good summary of the 2002 Master Plan's recommendation and rationale in their memorandum for the September 24 Planning Board meeting.

A key point is that under the prior Master Plan (1980), sewer extensions to large lot zones (such as one and two acre lots) in the Potomac Subregion were considered on a case-by-case basis (under a "logical, economical, and environmental" set of criteria).

However, the 2002 Plan moved back in alignment with the County's Water and Sewer Plan general policies and the recommendation of most other master plans at the time to recommend that large lot zones generally be served by septic systems.³ Pages 21 and 22 of the 2002 Plan (see ©19-20) note the concerns with serving large lot zones with sewer, including that sewer extensions can:

"damage the environment and water resources by facilitating development to the maximum zoning density. Extensions along stream valleys can also create habitat disturbance, threatening species survival, and can adversely affect the natural hydrologic system due to wetland fragmentation. Once sewer lines are in place, their structural integrity may deteriorate over time, resulting in sewage leaks and further disturbance to the ecosystem... Typically, low zoning densities (such as RE-1 and RE-2) are used to protect the natural environment by minimizing development impacts. Low and, in some cases medium, density areas (such as R-200) are

³ According to Planning Department staff, there are 7,725 privately owned RE-1 zoned lots on 10,728 acres throughout the County. The vast majority of these are designated Category S-6 (on-site septic).

dependent on septic suitability, often resulting in actual development yields well below the maximum allowed by zoning.”

The Plan goes on to note that:

“contrary to smart growth policies, (extending sewer to large lot properties in the Potomac Subregion area) has undermined the environmental emphasis of zoning areas for low-density development, especially where septic suitability is marginal.”

For the Glen Hills area, the 2002 Plan restricted sewer connections to properties with failed septic systems, with sewer main extensions to be “evaluated on a case by case basis for logical, economical, and environmentally sensitive extensions of service.” Properties in the Glen Hills area were also restricted from connecting under the County’s abutting mains policy (making it even more difficult to get sewer than in most of the rest of the County, where the abutting mains policy applies) out of concern that this policy would lead to inappropriate expansions of the sewer envelope in this area.

The 2002 Plan also called for a study of septic failures in Glen Hills and a review of the long-term sustainability of septic service, with a goal of “minimizing the need for future sewer service extensions.” Future sewer service should be “consistent with results of the study and in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner.” Over time, DEP staff attempted to begin such a study in-house but was unable to move forward with a study within existing resources. For FY12, the Council added \$350,000 to the DEP General Fund budget for a consultant study.

Planning Board Recommendations

The Planning Board discussed the Executive’s recommended text amendment on September 24, 2015. In its memorandum (see ©42-46) to the Planning Board, Planning Department staff expressed support for the County Executive’s recommendations, noting that the recommendations are:

“consistent with both the Potomac Subregion Master Plan’s specific recommendations for evaluating sewer service in the community and the Master Plan’s broader land use goals for the preservation of low-density residential resources in Potomac. It reinforces the Plan’s environmental focus by using septic suitability as a “proxy” for managing densities and allowing environmental constraints to limit the environmental impact of residential development.”

The Planning Board heard from many of the same people the Council heard from at the public hearing, and the Planning Board had a spirited discussion about how to move forward.

Ultimately, the Planning Board (letter attached on ©40-41) supported the County Executive’s recommendations, but with modifications to provide more clear and objective standards and faster and more certain paths for properties to connect to sewer “when circumstances warrant.” While supporting the Executive’s recommendation that septic service continue to be the preferred approach for serving properties in the Glen Hills area, the Planning Board suggested a more pro-active approach to replacing septic systems, noting that:

“if a property owner with a troubled system can demonstrate that their property would not be considered suitable for a new septic system if the property were being developed for the first

time, then that homeowner should be considered eligible for sewer service on public health grounds."

This issue is discussed in more detail later.

There appears to be agreement among Executive and Planning Department staff that the Executive's proposed text amendment can be achieved without having to amend the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan (excerpt on ©19-23). However, the Planning Board has indicated that it is ready to work with the Council on a Master Plan amendment if the Council desires to consider options that would warrant an amendment.

NOTE: County Staffs have discussed other policy options that would go further than the Executive's text amendment and, in Council Staff's opinion, would require Master Plan revisions and/or Water and Sewer Plan language changes.

Countywide Issues

Within the context of the Committee's discussion of Glen Hills at its first two meetings, a number of issues have been raised which Council Staff believes could have Countywide implications.

Old Septic Systems

At the October 26 meeting, Councilmember Berliner suggested that properties with septic systems which do not meet current standards and which cannot be upgraded should be allowed to connect to public sewer (similar to the Planning Board's suggestion, see ©41). This issue was discussed in more detail on November 16. In particular, Mr. Berliner was interested in whether systems built prior to 1975 (such as the seepage pits noted earlier) should either be considered de facto failed systems or at least should be eligible for sewer approvals upon request.

DPS estimates that there are about 22,000 septic systems in the County of which about half were built before 1975. Allowing sewer connections to these properties upon request would likely mean lengthy sewer extensions (if affordable to property owners) that could affect large swaths of RE-1 and RE-2 zoned areas.

If the County were to go further and assume all of these pre-1975 systems are de facto failed systems, then logically, the County would need to follow up with all of these property owners to require them to either upgrade their systems or connect to sewer. If on-site solutions are problematic and sewer is not feasible, then holding tanks and regular pump-outs might be needed.

All of these options would be significant burdens to put on a property owner in the absence of a site-specific public health rationale. While pre-1975 systems are not designed to function to the same standards as newer systems, whether a particular system is failing or causing environmental or public health problems will vary based on site-specific circumstances. Without a review of each particular septic system, there does not appear to be justification for such a blanket policy.

Council Staff believes the merits of such a major policy change should be considered in the context of a comprehensive update to the County's Water and Sewer Plan (which is expected to be before the Council later this year) and ultimately include PHED and T&E joint discussion. The

scope of this policy change goes far beyond the scope of the Glen Hills text amendment currently before the Council.

Also, as discussed in more detail later, the County Executive's recommended text amendment would provide for consideration of the creation of public health problem areas that could address these pre-1975 systems.

Flexibility for Expansions

The Committee also discussed whether property owners seeking to improve their homes (possibly through an expansion of their building footprint or in the number of bedrooms in their home) should continue to be constrained by current septic requirements and/or should be able to connect to sewer.

As discussed at the two prior Committee meetings, DPS works within existing State and County law to provide what flexibility it can regarding home expansions on properties with septic systems. In fact, there are examples of homes in Glen Hills where property owners have been able to expand on existing septic systems or were able to expand by upgrading to a new system.

As with the discussion of old septic systems above, Council Staff is concerned with the broad implications of providing sewer to allow for home expansions. Further, DEP staff does not believe these expansion concerns in Glen Hills warrant a Countywide policy change at this time and believes it would be inappropriate to provide sewer service to address expansions in one area of the County and not others.

Ongoing County Role in Managing Well and Septic Systems

Given the potential public health and environmental impacts of failed septic systems and even working systems not properly maintained by property owners, should the County expand beyond its current role of permitting new and replacement septic systems to a more proactive approach in order to better track the condition of septic systems in the County? For instance, should periodic inspections be done (or 3rd party certifications required)?

Council Staff recommends that the County's septic policies in general should be further reviewed in the context of a comprehensive update to the Water and Sewer Plan (scheduled for transmittal to the Council in 2016). *NOTE: The Committee may want to ask the Council's Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) to review what other similar jurisdictions do and what the implications would be if the County were to enhance its efforts.*

Alternative Ways to Limit Density of Development

The Water and Sewer Plan and many master plans (including the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan) clearly state that large lot zoned properties (such as RE-1) should be served by on-site septic systems (with limited exceptions for sewer). The effect of this Countywide policy is to limit development density based on septic suitability (which can lead to development yields below what is allowed by zoning). The Committee discussed this impact on November 16 with the Planning Board Chair and whether there are better, more direct ways to achieve the desired density of development in a

given area, such as by utilizing impervious area caps.⁴ NOTE: The County has utilized several mechanisms to set impervious area caps, including: Master Plan recommendations, zoning map changes, and legislation.

If the Council wishes to reconsider various Countywide sewer and septic policies, Council Staff recommends that this should be done as part of a broader comprehensive review of the County's Water and Sewer Plan (scheduled to be transmitted by the County Executive during 2016).

Discussion of Sewer Options for Glen Hills

At the November 16 Committee meeting, Council Staff described five general approaches the Council could take in addressing sewer policy in Glen Hills. These options are summarized below (in order from least amount of policy change to most) and then discussed in more detail in following sections. A summary chart showing how each option would impact different kinds of properties in the Glen Hills Study area is attached on ©80. NOTE: On January 19, the Greater Glen Hills Coalition provided recommended clarifications to the chart to the Council (see ©92-94). Council Staff reviewed this information and made some changes to the chart.

1. **Current Policy:** Keep the current Master Plan restrictions in place with no change. Allow consideration of sewer hookups to address documented public health problems only.
2. **County Executive Recommendations:** Allow abutting mains connections and creation of public health problem areas. NOTE: The Planning Board concurs with the County Executive's recommendations, but suggests some additional flexibility regarding defining septic failures.
3. **Provide Single Hook-ups Where Needed for New Construction and Expansions (Chen & McCabe on behalf of the Greater Glen Hills Coalition/Potomac Highlands Citizens Association):** In addition to what would be allowed in the County Executive text amendment, allow single hookups to properties that cannot expand or build new construction on deep trench septic systems.
4. **Allow Unrestricted Sewer Approvals upon Request (Miles & Stockbridge):** Provide unrestricted sewer connections upon request and allow for subdivision as allowed under current zoning.
5. **Area-wide Category Change:** Properties abutting mains would be changed to S-1. All other properties in the study area would be changed to S-3.

1. Current Policy

Neither the Executive, Planning Board, nor any testimony received from the public supports keeping the current Master Plan restrictions in place. Council Staff does not feel this option requires further discussion.

⁴Allowing unrestricted sewer in the Glen Hills Study Area could allow up to 172 new units (through subdivision of all two acre and greater lots and development of vacant lots less than two acres). This could result in large increases in impervious surface in the Study Area (depending on actual property yields and the average imperviousness assumed per property). There could also be imperviousness increases from teardowns and expansions on developed lots. An impervious surface cap could provide some environmental protection but could not be set low enough to offset the impact of new development and redevelopment.

2. County Executive Recommendations

County Executive Staff provided a PowerPoint presentation (see ©1-18) at the October 26 Committee meeting. This presentation summarized the Glen Hills Sanitary Study⁵ (both Phase 1 and Phase 2) as well as the County Executive's recommendations.

The County Executive's recommendations include:

- Consistent with the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan and general Water and Sewer Plan policies for RE-1 zoned areas (such as Glen Hills), assume that on-site septic systems will continue to be the preferred approach for sewage treatment and disposal in the Glen Hills Area.
- Continue to allow the extension of sewer to address documented public health problems resulting from septic system failures.
- Allow for the extension of public sewer in the Glen Hills Study Area to address designated public health problem areas (similar to what is allowed in other areas of the County).
- Pursue with Prince George's County the development of a modified water and sewer main extension process that improves the affordability of main construction for individual property owners.
- Restore the use of the abutting mains policy in the Glen Hills Study Area.
- Maintain the Piney Branch restricted sewer service access policy for those parts of Glen Hills that are within the Piney Branch subwatershed.

The County Executive's recommendations for Glen Hills would treat Glen Hills in a similar manner to how other large lot residential zones are treated elsewhere in the County. The recommendations would not in themselves change any sewer category designations. Instead, an incremental process involving individual properties and/or the creation of public health problem areas would proceed. NOTE: Any sewer extensions approved would need to be "logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable", consistent with the current Master Plan language.

As currently allowed, properties with failing systems can work with the Department of Permitting Services to determine whether on-site solutions are feasible or if sewer is the best long-term solution. In addition, DEP and DPS could now consider creating public health problem areas⁶ to address both existing and/or anticipated septic failures in an area that could be served by a logical/environmental extension of sewer service (see ©29 for Water and Sewer Plan language regarding public health problem areas).

As noted in the Phase 2 report, there are 21 improved properties that abut existing sewer mains and could (if the Executive's text amendment is approved) immediately apply for and receive administrative approval for a single hookup.⁷ In the future, if new sewer extensions abut

⁵ Executive staff has described this study as a "planning level" study looking at long-term septic and sewer feasibility, since the study did not involve a site-by-site analysis of the 542 properties in the study area. As such, the Executive recommendations described later assume an approach where future category change approvals are based on site-specific issues.

⁶ A list of problem areas that have been created in other areas of the County is attached on ©64.

⁷ S-1/S-3 approvals restricted to single hookups only, preclude the opportunity for properties to be subdivided and have multiple lots built-out on sewer. There may still be some potential for subdivision to occur on a combination of one sewer hookup and the other properties on septic. This mixed sewer/septic type of subdivision could be precluded with additional approval language (similar to the Piney Branch Restricted Access policy abutting mains language) that notes, "Applicants

other improved or unimproved properties, then those properties would also be eligible for a single hook-up.

3. Provide Single Hook-ups Where Needed for New Construction and Expansions (Chen & McCabe, L.L.P. Text Amendment on behalf of the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association and the Greater Glen Hills Coalition, LLC) (see ©51-60)

On October 19, the Council received a proposed text amendment from the attorney representing two groups of property owners in the Glen Hills study area. The main thrust of this text amendment is that the conclusions of the Glen Hills Sanitary Study and the testimony and submissions of area residents “demonstrate the existence of failed septic systems...The evidence establishes the need for future sewer service extensions...”

The proposed text amendment includes the language proposed by the County Executive (including the language noting that on-site septic systems are the primary wastewater method), but adds new language noting that S-3 (single hook-up only) would be approved for properties “which need service, whether for new construction or renovation, that on-site conventional deep trench septic system is not feasible or adequate.” The amendment goes on to note that “sewer service is not available for new lots or new lots created by the subdivision of parcels.”

This amendment goes further than the County Executive’s text amendment by making existing unimproved lots eligible for single hookups (even in cases where a main does not abut the property). This amendment would also provide for approvals for properties that may have functioning septic systems but which cannot expand. The amendment also specifies that feasibility and adequacy of on-site systems is limited to conventional deep trench septic systems (specifically excluding alternative or innovative systems).

There are 69 undeveloped properties in the Glen Hills Study Area, all of which could potentially develop on a single-sewer hookup under this option.

Council and Executive Staff believe this option requires a Master Plan amendment. *NOTE: The Greater Glen Hill Coalition disagrees with this assessment (see ©92-94).*

4. Allow Unrestricted Sewer Approvals Upon Request (Miles & Stockbridge Text Amendment⁸ on behalf of Kevin Smart and George Simmons) (see ©61-63)

This correspondence recommends that the Council move away from the land use policy noted earlier of limiting development density in the Glen Hills area based on septic suitability. Under the proposed amendment, property owners “of both existing, recorded, buildable lots and...un-subdivided and unbuildable properties for which original subdivision applications are approved by the Planning Board” would be eligible for public sewer.

This amendment focuses on allowing public sewer for unimproved properties but would presumably mean that improved properties (with or without septic failures) would also be eligible for sewer approvals.

shall not use the provision of a single sewer hookup to support subdivision or resubdivision of these properties into more than one lot.”

⁸ NOTE: The form of the correspondence received would need to be converted to amendment text if the Committee were to choose to pursue this approach.

The 69 undeveloped properties in the Glen Hills Study Area mentioned above could develop on unrestricted sewer. Seven of these lots are greater than two acres, and could potentially subdivide on sewer. In addition, there are another 69 improved properties which are greater than two acres. These properties could potentially subdivide and redevelop under this option. Actual subdivision potential would depend on specific site conditions and constraints and on which properties met the subdivision conditions referenced above.

Council and Executive Staff believe this option requires a Master Plan amendment.

5. Area-wide Category Change

This approach would proactively treat the Glen Hills Study area as a single public health problem area and change all properties in the study area to either S-1 (for properties abutting mains) or S-3 (for properties where main extensions would be needed).

Development and redevelopment potential under this scenario would be similar to the Miles and Stockbridge option discussed above.

This approach was mentioned in the Planning Board Chair's letter to the Council (see ©41) as being advocated by Commissioner Dreyfuss. Commissioner Dreyfuss supports an immediate move to comprehensive logical sewer extensions for the entire community, based on the fact that portions of the area are already served by public sewer and based on the public testimony of residents that many systems are failing or have failed and cannot be repaired or replaced.

Under this approach, all properties with failing systems would be presumed to connect to public sewer. Properties with functioning septic systems could remain on these systems, but would be expected to connect if and when their septic system fails in the future.

DEP staff has categorized the Glen Hills Sanitary Study as a "planning level" study and not a study specifically identifying public health problem areas. As noted earlier, the Study found that 36 percent of the study area is potentially constrained by at least one of eight parameters that were used to assess long-term sustainability of deep trench septic systems. However, this is not the same as concluding that there is a widespread immediate public health problem. The Executive's recommended text amendment would allow for an incremental review and identification of public health problem areas based on actual lot by lot assessments.

Discussion

At its first meeting on October 26, the Committee expressed an interest in considering what it wanted to do regarding sewer policy in Glen Hills first, and then identifying the steps needed to accomplish the Committee's approach.

From Council Staff's perspective, a key question to ask is whether Glen Hills should be treated differently from other similarly zoned areas of the County.

Under current policies, the area has a more restrictive sewer regime than similar areas. Council Staff does not see a justification for maintaining these more restrictive policies. The County Executive's recommendations would level the playing field.

However, Council Staff also does not see the justification for providing greater exceptions for sewer service in Glen Hills (than exist in other RE-1 zoned areas) either. The Glen Hills Study (a “planning level” study as described by DEP staff) does not in itself provide justification for an “area wide” category change or overall change in sewer policy in Glen Hills. The Glen Hills Study identified long-term septic sustainability issues in about one-third of the study area and identified both on-site and potential environmentally acceptable sewer extension solutions to address these long-term issues.

The future work to be done in an incremental manner under the Executive’s text amendment would provide sewer connections for properties abutting mains, properties with documented failed systems, and properties within public health problem areas based on a property specific sanitary study that identifies actual problems on the ground.

The Committee’s discussion of Glen Hills has raised some interesting Countywide policy issues regarding sewer and septic policies. For instance, should the County continue to limit density in large lot zoned areas through septic suitability? Would more sewer availability combined with an impervious area cap, for instance, be a more flexible and equitable approach to balance density concerns and property owner interests? Should properties with old septic systems (i.e. pre-1975) that cannot be upgraded to current standards be eligible for public sewer? Council Staff believes these policy issues should be addressed via a broader discussion in the context of the Council’s comprehensive review of the Water and Sewer Plan and/or Master Plan amendments.

The Executive’s recommendations put Glen Hills on more even footing with similarly zoned areas elsewhere in the County and Council Staff feels that is an appropriate approach at this time.

Council Staff Recommendations

Council Staff is supportive of the County Executive’s recommended text amendment with the following additional suggestions:

- **Add the following language (which is included in the current Piney Branch Restricted Access Policy) to the abutting mains provision in the recommended text amendment: “Applicants shall not use the provision for a single sewer hookup to support subdivision or resubdivision of these properties into more than one lot.” This language makes clear that abutting mains hookups cannot lead to future subdivision.**
- **At the prior Committee meetings, there was much discussion about how septic systems are assessed, how septic failures are defined, and how DPS and DEP determine whether an on-site solution or public sewer is appropriate. Having this process better documented in the Water and Sewer Plan would provide more clarity to septic system owners as to how the process works. County Executive staff provided follow-up information on these points (see ©83-84). Council Staff suggests that DEP add clarifying language to the Water and Sewer Plan through a future administrative amendment.**
- **Under the Executive’s approach, a number of public health problem areas could be created in Glen Hills over time (as have been created in other parts of the County). The Water and Sewer Plan includes minimal language as to how these areas are established**

(see ©28). County Executive staff provided additional information on this process (see ©85-87). Council Staff suggests that DEP add clarifying language to the Water and Sewer Plan through a future administrative amendment.

- Since the Glen Hills Study already accomplished some of the work involved in a sanitary study (such as a review of permit records and general site constraints), Council Staff suggests that language be added to the Glen Hills Text Amendment to document the streamlined process and expected timelines for the creation of public health problem areas in the Glen Hills Area. County Executive Staff have provided some draft text for consideration (see ©91). Council Staff will work with Executive Staff to finalize this text prior to Council action. *Both Councilmember Berliner and Floreen have suggested that the public health problem area designation process for Glen Hills should be streamlined as much as possible to respond quickly to property owner requests as they arise.*

As noted earlier, Council Staff does not support expanding public sewer eligibility in the Glen Hills study area beyond what is currently assumed for similarly zoned properties elsewhere in the County (as Options 3-5 would all do). Further changes specific to Glen Hills should be considered in the context of a Master Plan amendment. Any changes in general sewer policy should be considered in a Countywide context, such as through consideration of policy changes via a comprehensive update to the County's Water and Sewer Plan.

Attachments to this memorandum include:

- Presentation Slides: Glen Hills Sanitary Study and County Executive Text Amendment (©1-18)
- Potomac Subregion Master Plan (2002) Excerpt (©19-23)
- County Executive Recommended Text Amendment Transmittal dated June 2, 2015 (©24-39)
- Planning Board Letter to the Council dated October 5, 2015 (©40-41)
- Planning Department Staff Memorandum dated September 24, 2015 (©42-46)
- Maryland Department of Planning Letter dated September 24, 2015 (©47-50)
- Letter from Chen & McCabe, LLP dated October 19, 2015 (©51-60)
- Letter from Knowles Little, President, Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, Inc. with list of property owners in support of the text amendment submitted by Chen & McCabe, LLP (©60A-60J)
- Letter from Miles and Stockbridge P.C. dated October 16, 2015 (©61-63)
- Samples of Health Problem Areas from the Water and Sewer Plan (©64)
- Glen Hills Area Septic System and Public Sewer Q&A Information Sheet (©65-69)
- West Montgomery Citizens Association Public Hearing Testimony (©70-73)
- Letter from multiple signatories dated October 14 (©74-79)
- Updated Matrix of Sewer Policy Options for Glen Hills (©80)
- Follow-up on Questions/Issues Raised at the October 26 meeting (©81-82)
- Follow-up on Questions/Issues Raised at the November 16 meeting (©83-90)
- Glen Hills Sanitary Surveys Overview (Draft Amendment Text) (©91)
- Letter (and suggested Matrix edits) from the Greater Glen Hills Coalition LLC (©92-94)

Glen Hills Area Sewer Policy Text Amendment

Montgomery County Department of
Environmental Protection
Water and Wastewater Policy Group
For the T&E Committee
October 26, 2015

Under Consideration

Sewer Service Policies for the Glen Hills Study Area

Currently before the Council is a Water and Sewer Plan text amendment, recommending revised sewer service policies for the Glen Hills area near Rockville. The County Executive has provided these recommended service policies based on the results of the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study.

Under Consideration

Sewer Service Policies for the Glen Hills Study Area

The County has conducted this study of septic and sewer service for the Glen Hills area, as recommended by the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

The master plan's intention was to allow the County Council to use the study results in considering sustainable wastewater management policies for the study area. These policies would replace an interim policy recommended by the 2002 master plan.

3

Issue History

Prior to the current 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan sewer extensions in the study area were allowed:

- On demand until the mid-1970s (prior to the County's water and sewer planning authority).
- On a case-by-case basis under sewer staging policy recommendations in the 1980 Potomac Subregion Master Plan. These recommendations allowed for the consideration of public sewer service for Sewer Stage IV areas zoned RE-1 and RE-2 on a case-by-case basis. The 1980 master plan's recommendation, resulting in sewer construction in Glen Hills, was an allowed and unique exception to general sewer service policies in the Water and Sewer Plan.

4

Issue History

Environmental studies conducted in advance of the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan raised concerns about the environmental effects of the 1980 master plan's RE-1 and RE-2 sewer service recommendations. It concluded that increased impervious area promoted by public sewer service had a detrimental effect on water quality.*

The 2002 master plan revised sewer service recommendations for RE-1 and RE-2 areas to support Water and Sewer Plan general service policies promoting the use of on-site septic systems rather than public sewer.

The 2002 master plan also recommended specific interim sewer service limitations for the study area pending the County's sanitary study.

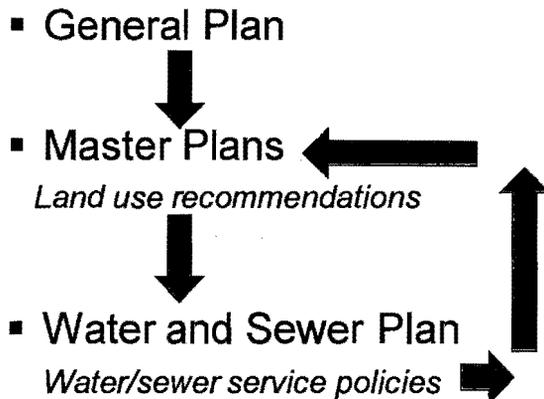
**M-NCPPC 2004 study for PIF issues RE-1 Zone research:*

•Average imperviousness = 11%

•Average acres per dwelling = 1.7

5

Planning Considerations



6

Planning Considerations

Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan establishes county-wide water/sewer service policies and designates corresponding service area categories

In the Water and Sewer Plan:

- Public sewer is generally assumed to serve moderate to high development densities of two or more units per acre (R-60, R-90, R-200 etc...) and under certain cluster options (RE-2C, RNC, etc.).
- Areas zoned for lower-density residential development (RE-1, RE-2 and other large lot and rural zones) are intended to be served by on-site systems (i.e. septic systems).

7

Glen Hills Planning Considerations

- Study area is zoned RE-1
- Minimum lot size = 40,000 sq. ft. or 0.92 ac. (Generally, minimum lot area needed for well and septic)
- Water & Sewer Plan service policies for one-acre, rural estate zoning (RE-1):
 - ***Planned to use water wells; public water can also be considered case-by-case. (Entire Glen Hills study area is approved for public water service: W-1 or W-3.)***
 - ***Planned to use septic systems. (Reflects land use policy: lot yield is determined by septic suitability)***
- Some Water & Sewer Plan policies (abutting mains) are not supported by the 2002 master plan

8

Glen Hills Study Area

542 Properties
 473 properties improved
 69 properties not improved

Northeastern edge within
 the Rockville water/sewer
 service area

Bracketed between Watts
 Branch and Piney Branch

DEP added Lakewood
 Estates, Lakewood Glen, &
 Hollinridge to the original
 Glen Hills study area.
 (Similar zoning, age, lot
 sizes, etc.)

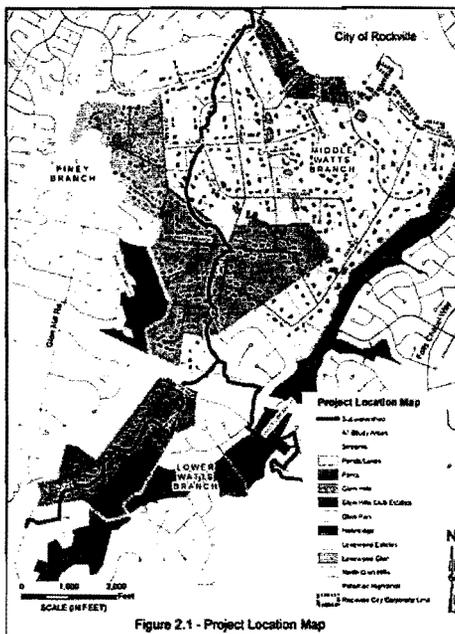


Figure 2.1 - Project Location Map

Septic Systems and Public Sewer

Septic systems:

- Owned and operated by the property owner.
- All infrastructure is on site.
- Property owner responsible for repairs and replacement.
- Serve 370 of 542 properties in the study area (68 %).

Public sewer systems:

- Owned and operated by public utility (WSSC).
- Extensive infrastructure needed.
- Utility responsible for repairs and replacement of the public portions of the system. Owner responsible for on-site portion.
- Serve 103 of 542 properties in the study area (19 %).

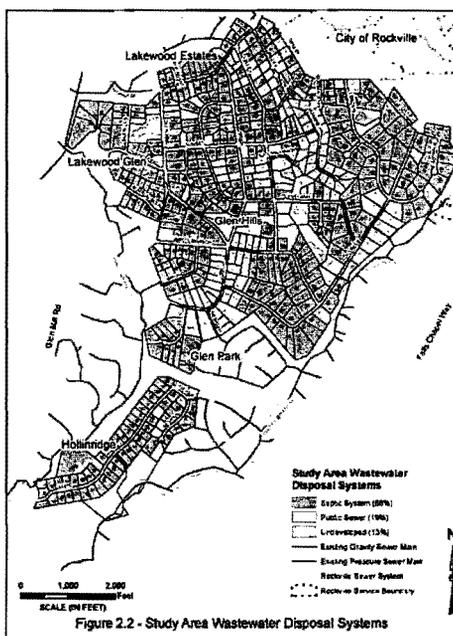


Figure 2.2 - Study Area Wastewater Disposal Systems

Septic Systems

Types of Septic Systems:

- **Conventional** (for replacement or new construction)
 - Shallow and Deep Stone Trench
 - Sand Mound
- **Alternative** (only for replacement)
 - Shallow Drip Dosing
 - Holding Tank*
- **Outdated** (designs no longer used)
 - Seepage Pits/Dry Wells
 - Seepage Lagoons

**Not a functioning septic system; only holds wastewater until pumped out*

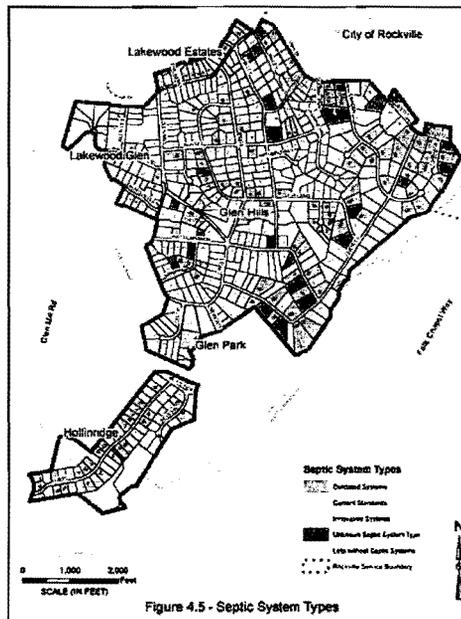
Septic Systems

370 properties using private septic systems

Septic systems in the study area by type:

No.	Type
CURRENT DESIGN SYSTEMS*	
185	Deep stone trench
16	Shallow stone trench
4	Sand mound
9	Drip disposal
214	Total
OUTDATED & UNKNOWN SYSTEMS	
126	Seepage pits
5	Seepage lagoons
25	Unknown type
156	Total

**Do not necessarily satisfy all current standards, such as reserve areas*



Septic Systems Septic Regulations

Major septic system regulation changes: 1960s to today

- 1965: County verification of private septic testing is required; successful septic percolation testing is required to record a building lot.
- 1975: Water table testing and established reserve areas are required.
- 1980: Testing for subsurface rock is required.

194 of 370 (52%) of area septic systems were installed prior to 1975.

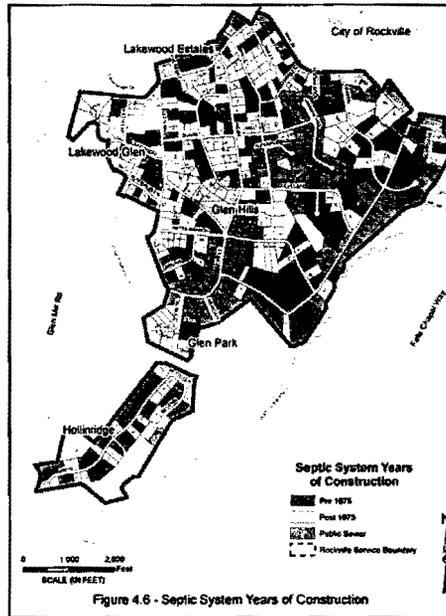


Figure 4.6 - Septic System Years of Construction

13

Septic Systems Age of Glen Hills Systems

Most Recent Date of Septic System Construction	Age of System* (Years)	Number of Lots	Percent of Total
1945 – 1965	47 – 67	139	37%
1966 – 1974	88 - 46	55	15%
Subtotal: prior to modern standards		194	52%
1975 – 1979	33 – 37	44	12%
1980 – 2002	10 – 32	92	25%
2003 – 2012	0 - 9	25	7%
Subtotal: under current standards		161	44%
No record of construction date		15	4%
Total Septic Systems		370	100%

*Referenced to 2012
From Phase 1 Report – Table 4.2

14

Septic Systems

CONVENTIONAL SYSTEMS In-Ground Trench Systems

Basic septic system elements:

- Septic tank
- Drainfield
- Soil under the drainfield

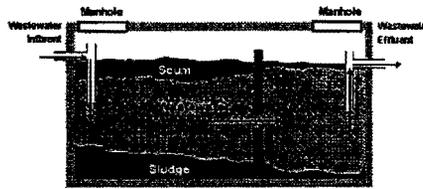
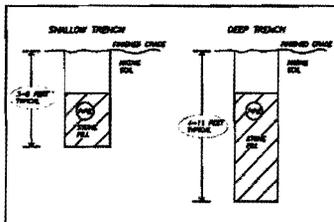
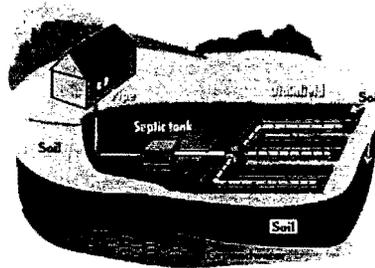
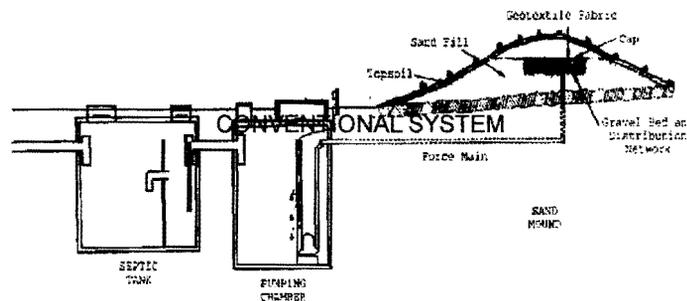


Figure 14. Illustration by Thomas H. Miller

Septic Systems

CONVENTIONAL SYSTEMS Sand Mound Septic Systems

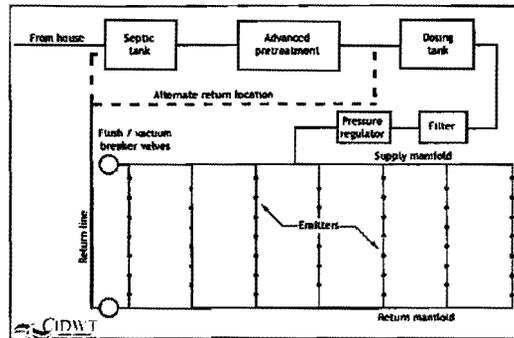


- Installed above existing ground
- Pumping system required

Septic Systems Uncovered

ALTERNATIVE (NON-CONVENTIONAL) SYSTEMS Shallow Drip Dosing System: *Replacement Only*

- Small-diameter tubing with holes disperses effluent
- Depth: 1 to 2.5 feet
- Used for replacement systems only, not for new construction

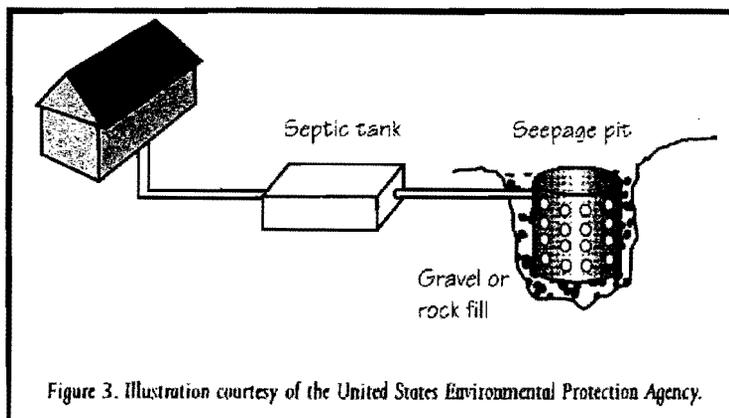


Plan view of a typical residential drip distribution system using advanced (aerobic) treatment

17

Septic Systems

Outdated Design: Typical Seepage Pit Septic System



18

Study Area Public Sewer Service

103 properties using public sewer service.

19 lots designated as S-6 abut existing sewer mains.

Three sources of public sewer service:

- WSSC: Watts Branch system
- Rockville: Watts Branch system
- WSSC: Piney Branch system

Sewers extended:

- Prior to 2002 master plan*
- For relief of failing septic systems

* Allowed service for lots abutting sewer mains



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Glen Hills Study

Planning level study, not a lot-by-lot septic system survey

Use existing data to evaluate long-term sustainability of deep stone trench septic systems in the study area

- DPS septic system permit records
- USDA soil maps
- Mont. Co. on-site systems regulations

Identify long-term solutions

- Other types of septic systems (shallow trench, sand mound, & drip dosing systems)
- Limited extension of public sewer service where needed

20

Phase 1 Findings

Reported Septic System Failures and Replacements

DPS permit records showed:

- 52 reported septic system failures*
 - 19 cases have had one replacement system
 - 8 cases have had more than one replacement system
 - 16 cases connected to public sewer service
 - 55 septic system replacements without reported cause
- 82 properties with permitted system replacements (22% of 370 properties with existing systems)*
- 33 reported component failures, not system failures (i.e. tank or pipe replacement only)

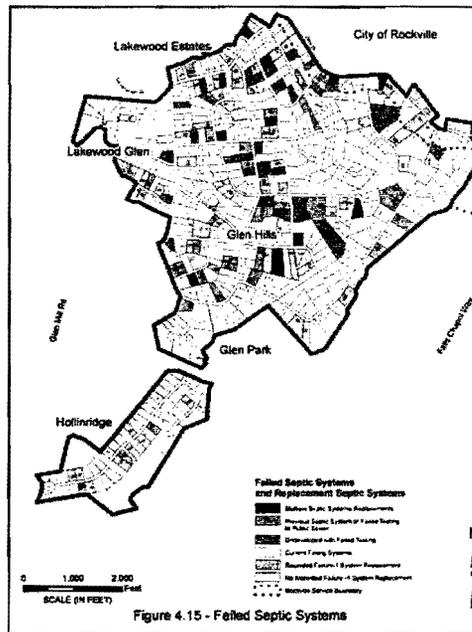
**Septic system failure removes the area of the existing failed system from use for new drainfield*

21

Phase 1 Findings

Reported Septic System Failures and Known Replacement Systems (1945 – 2012)

See previous slide for details



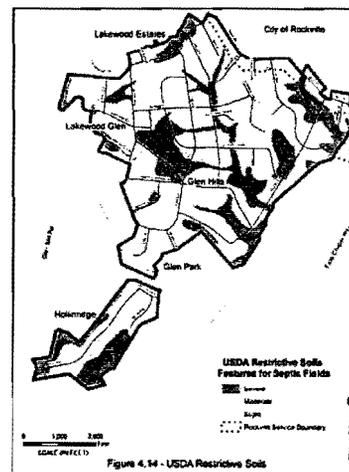
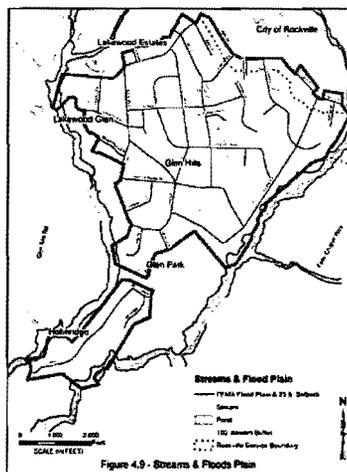
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Phase 1 Findings

- Numerous parameters have to be satisfied in order to allow for the permitting and installation of a new or replacement septic system. These parameters are determined by State and County regulations as necessary to protect human and environmental health.
- Any one parameter can prevent permit approval for a septic system.
- Factors considered contributing to septic system suitability:
 - Soil conditions (field testing) – permeability, groundwater and bedrock depth
 - Regulatory conditions – setbacks from streams, buffers, and floodplains; steep slopes; setback from domestic water wells and other septic systems
 - Lot size/other limits – lot size (RE-1 standards), areas constrained by old septic systems

23

Phase 1 Findings Constraint Map Examples



24

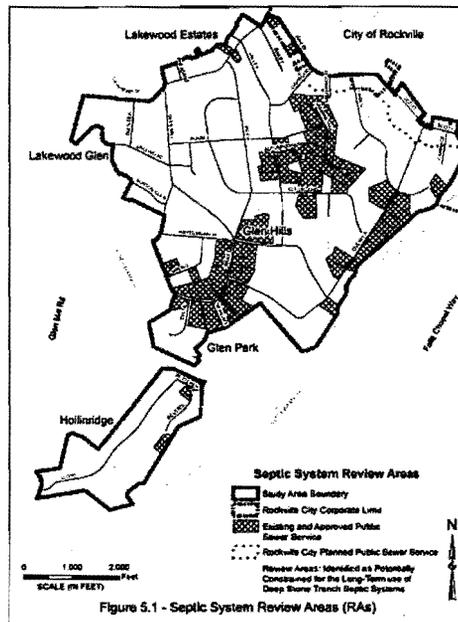
Phase 1 Findings

Individual restrictive parameters were overlaid and compiled into the Septic System Review Areas: areas where potential constraints due to one or more limiting parameters may affect the long-term use of deep stone trench septic systems.

Review Areas:

- Potential constraints in approx. one-third of the study area.
- No known potential constraints in approx. two-thirds of the study area

The entire study area is not considered as a public health problem area.



25

Phase 2 Findings

If replacement of an existing, failing septic system cannot be accomplished with a new deep stone trench system, options are ...

- Use of public sewer service if directly available
- Use of another type of septic system:
 - Shallow stone trench (shallow tile) system*
 - Sand mound system*
 - Shallow drip dosing system*
- Use of limited extension of public sewer service, if needed

* All three types of these septic systems are currently in use within the study area.

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Phase 2 Findings

If construction of a new house or expansion of an existing house cannot be accomplished with a deep stone trench septic system, options are ...

- Use public sewer service if directly available
- Use another type* of septic system:
 - Shallow stone trench (shallow tile) system**
 - Sand mound system**

* Shallow drip dosing systems cannot be used for these purposes under State regulations

** Both types of septic systems are currently in use within the study area.

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Phase 2 Findings

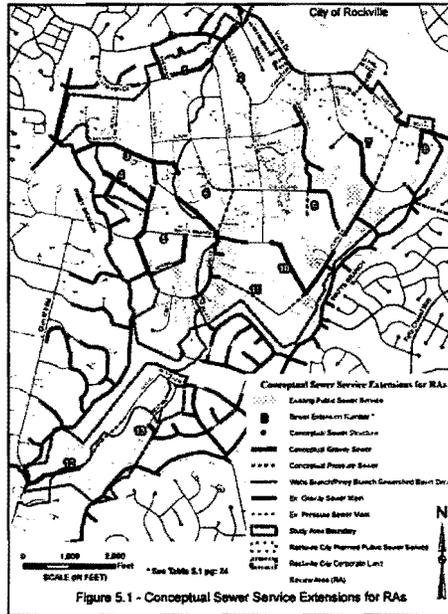
- Existing sewerage systems: 19 lots designated as S-6 currently abut existing sewer mains.
- Sewerage system extensions, if needed: Conceptual designs to illustrate how new mains could be extended in an environmentally acceptable manner, if needed, for Phase 2. Designs focused on extending new mains to the Review Areas identified in Phase 1. Criteria:
 - Extensions for areas with existing septic systems. None were designed to only serve vacant properties.
 - Extensions were located along existing public road rights-of-way, avoiding as much as possible environmentally sensitive stream valleys.
 - Extensions maximize the use of gravity service where possible. However, some areas required pumping systems and pressure sewers in order to avoid stream valleys.
 - Extensions avoid the need for easements across private properties.
 - Extensions were not considered that would only serve Review Areas within Rockville's sewer service envelope

28

Phase 2 Findings

Contractor designed 13 separate conceptual sewer extension systems to show how service might be extended to serve Review Areas, if needed.

- 6 extension systems from Piney Branch sewerage system
- 7 extension systems from Watts Branch sewerage system

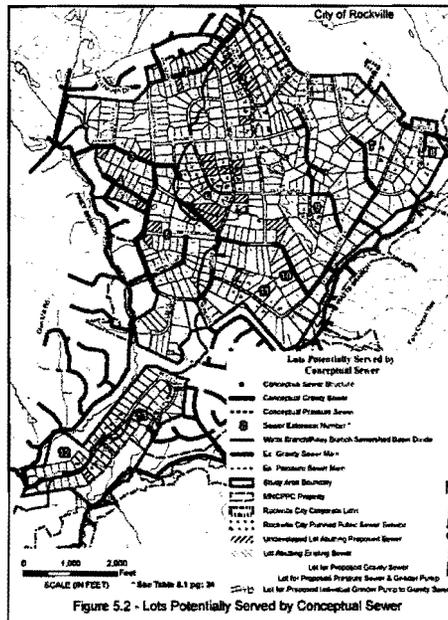


29

Phase 2 Findings

• All new main extensions would be initiated by applicants requesting public sewer service. Neither WSSC nor Montgomery County program new local water and sewer main construction.

- Extensions are paid for by applicants and, in some cases, abutting property owners. Neither WSSC nor Montgomery County pay for new local water and sewer mains.



30

Phase 2 Findings: Public Sewer Costs & Policies WSSC's Two Service Extension Programs

WSSC-Built

- Used for service to single, existing properties and relief of health problems
- Designed and constructed by WSSC
- Financing provided through WSSC
- Before mid-1990s used for virtually all extension projects; major project assessments subsidized smaller projects
- No new WSSC-built projects initiated for 10 years; costs are too expensive for individual property owners

System Extension Permit (SEP)

- Used by all developers for new subdivisions. Can be used for service to single properties and relief of health problems
- Designed and constructed by the applicant, then dedicated to WSSC
- Financing arranged for by the applicant, not WSSC
- Created in mid-1990s to reduce WSSC bonded indebtedness
- Now used for virtually all new main extensions

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Phase 2 Findings: Public Sewer Costs & Policies WSSC's Two Service Extension Programs

WSSC-Built

- Extensions costs paid to WSSC in two parts:
 - Annual front-foot benefit (FFBC) assessment on all abutting properties*
 - Deficit charge paid by the applicant (can be deferred)

**WSSC delays FFBC payments for S-6 properties and until S-1 properties with functioning on-site systems connect to WSSC service*
- FFBC rates have not kept pace with WSSC extension costs, resulting in overwhelming deficit costs for applicants sewer.
(continues at right)

SEP

- Extension costs paid for by developer/applicant usually through a financing company; served property owners pay that company an annual assessment
- Intervening properties typically not offered new service; however, they only pay connections costs for later service, no extension costs

WSSC-Built (continued)

Current sewer FFBC rate = \$7.18/ft/yr.
 100 ft. frontage x \$7.18/ft/yr x 20 yrs = \$14,360
 Compare to :

- 100 ft. sewer main @ \$500/ft = \$50,000
- 100 ft. sewer main @\$1,000/ft = \$100,000

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Sewer Policy Issues

Existing service policy from the 2002 master plan:

- Wastewater disposal is via on-site septic systems
- New public sewer service is allowed only for cases involving failed septic systems

Glen Hills Sanitary Study Goals:

- Develop the measures necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service
- Provide solutions to allow septic system service for new construction and additions to existing homes
- Address limited sewer extensions, if needed, in an environmentally acceptable manner
- Address use of the “abutting mains” policy

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Sewer Policy Issues

Recommendations consistent with Water & Sewer Plan policies and master plan recommendations.

County Executive’s Service Policy Recommendations:

- Continue to use **on-site septic systems** as the primary means of wastewater disposal, consistent with RE-1 Zoning
- Continue to allow public sewer service for relief of **failed septic systems that cannot use a replacement system.**
- Allow DEP and DPS to consider and recommend to the Council **public health problem areas.** All properties within a designated area are moved to from S-6 to S-3 and can apply for public sewer service. Public health problem areas will not be limited to only the Phase 1 Review Areas.

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Sewer Policy Issues

County Executive's Service Policy Recommendations (continued):

- Allow the use of the **"abutting mains" policy** to provide for single sewer connections to qualifying properties. This has the potential to allow for sewer service to currently vacant lots.
- Maintain the provisions of the **Piney Branch Restricted Sewer Service Policy** for those parts of the study area within the Piney Branch subwatershed.

Potomac Subregion Master Plan (2002)

Excerpt

- **Acquire the Miller & Smith (Pepco) property (258 acres) as conservation park land.**
- **Acquire by dedication significant portions of the Tipton tributary properties in the lower Greenbriar Branch as conservation park land. These properties include the Tipton, Piney Grove, Weihe, and Semmes properties. Priorities include the Greenbriar Branch mainstem riparian areas along with the forested area west of the gas line easement.**
- **Acquire by dedication portions of the Hanson Farm along the border of Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park, including the northern corner where a trail connection is desirable and where the mainstem is close to the property line.**
- **Protect the riparian area along the Turkey Foot tributary of Muddy Branch through acquisition, dedication or conservation easement.**
- **Acquire forested property (parcel 170) adjacent to Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park land at the end of Cervantes Avenue and with access from Esworthy Road.**
- **Acquire property south of Esworthy Road (parcel 121), surrounded by the Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park.**
- **Acquire the surplus school site located inside the bend on Brickyard Road to protect scarce forested land in this densely developed area.**
- **Designate the 97-acre Callithea Farm (Figure 3) bordering Blockhouse Point and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park as park land that will include a publicly owned horse farm.**
- **Explore designation of part of Gokturk Woods, on Berryville Road in Seneca Village, as a neighborhood conservation area.**

Sewer Service Policies

A critical policy related to water quality is the provision of community sewer service. Providing community sewer service to relieve failed septic systems minimizes groundwater contamination. However, the provision of community sewer service can damage the environment and water resources by facilitating development to the maximum zoning density. Extensions along stream valleys can also create habitat disturbance, threatening species survival, and can adversely affect the natural hydrologic system due to wetland fragmentation. Once sewer lines are in place, their structural integrity may deteriorate over time, resulting in sewage leaks and further disturbance to the ecosystem. This is particularly troublesome where eroding or shifting stream channels expose sewer mains and manholes, leaving them more susceptible to damage.

In general, the County's water and sewer policies allow the provision of sewer service only to those areas zoned for moderate to dense development (i.e., greater than or equal to one unit per 20,000

square feet). However, at the recommendation of the 1980 Master Plan, sewer service has been provided to some areas zoned for one- and two-acre lots, creating both a policy dilemma and, in some cases, environmental damage. Typically, low zoning densities (such as RE-1 and RE-2) are used to protect the natural environment by minimizing development impacts. Low and, in some cases medium, density areas (such as R-200) are dependent on septic suitability, often resulting in actual development yields well below the maximum allowed by zoning. Extending sewer lines into these areas has the potential to allow development density at or near the zoned maximum, to disrupt the environment and to provide rationale for further extensions and greater density. One of the greatest challenges facing the Potomac Subregion and this Master Plan has been to develop compatible land use and sewer service recommendations which protect the Subregion's environmental quality. The section addressing sewerage systems provides detailed recommendations regarding these sewer service issues.

Community sewer service in the Subregion is provided through trunk lines which parallel most of the major tributaries. These trunk mains drain to the Potomac Interceptor, a large sewer line that parallels the Potomac River and conveys sewage to the Blue Plains Treatment Plant in the District of Columbia.

The County's policies on the provision of community sewer service are governed by the *Water and Sewer Plan*, the County's *General Plan*, master plans, the State's Smart Growth policies, and other policy documents. Master plans recommend where sewer service is to be provided, generally in areas of dense development, consistent with *Water and Sewer Plan* policies. The *1980 Potomac Subregion Master Plan* is one of the County's few master plans recommending sewer service for zones such as RE-1 and RE-2, an exception to the general policies for sewer extension. The County Council has asked that as part of the Potomac master plan update, the Planning Board study the effects of sewer service in these areas on land use, infrastructure, the environment, and budget.

Low-Density Areas

In part, the 1980 Potomac Master Plan's intent was to use community sewer service to take maximum advantage of the allowed density in lower-density zones such RE-1 and RE-2 where it was appropriate. Much of the undeveloped area zoned RE-1 and RE-2 was placed in master plan sewer stage IV where the provision of community sewer service was evaluated case-by-case on the basis of logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable service. Twenty years later, a comprehensive evaluation indicates that providing community sewer service to areas zoned for one-and two-acre development, and contrary to smart growth policies, has undermined the environmental emphasis of zoning areas for low-density development, especially where septic suitability is marginal. With increasing demand for homes and recent development and redevelopment trends, especially where sewer service is provided, this exception to the general sewer service policy is no longer effective. Much of the remaining undeveloped RE-1 and RE-2 land is beset by environmental constraints limiting development potential without sewer.

Under the prior master plan, the Subregion has experienced substantial provision of community sewer service to lower-density areas. Because of this, and because the County considered the approvals for much of this service on a case-by-case basis, the current Potomac community sewer

envelope is irregular, established by demand rather than by plan. Voids within the envelope and irregular boundaries along its perimeter abound. Although this Master Plan generally recommends against the continued provision of community sewer service to low-density (RE-1 and RE-2) areas, it does support limited approvals for community sewer service for the low-density areas within the envelope and along its currently-established edge. The focus of this limited service and expansion should be on properties which already abut existing or proposed mains and on properties which can be served by sewer extensions within public rights-of-way. Main extensions that would disrupt streams and their undisturbed buffer areas should be avoided. Any approvals granted along the currently-established edge should not be cited as justification for expanding the sewer service envelope beyond the limits recommended in this Plan.

Sewer Service Recommendations

- **Provide community sewer service in the Subregion generally in conformance with *Water and Sewer Plan* service policies. This will generally exclude areas zoned for low-density development (RE-1, RE-2, and RC) not already approved for service from further extension of community service.**
- **Allow for the limited provision of community sewer service for areas zoned RE-1 and RE-2 within and at the periphery of the proposed sewer service envelope. (See Foldout Map D.) Exclude from this peripheral service policy properties adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Palatine subdivision and the lower Greenbriar Branch properties, and all properties within the Piney Branch Subwatershed, the Darnestown Triangle, and the Glen Hills Area (until completion of the study described on page 24, which will evaluate whether this exclusion should continue in the future). Emphasize the construction of sewer extensions, if needed, along roads rather than through stream valleys.**
- **Help to protect water quality in the Stoney Creek subwatershed of Watts Branch by requiring that sewer main extensions to serve the few properties approved for community service be located along River and Stoney Creek Roads, rather than along the stream valley.**
- **Deny the provision of community sewer service to the areas zoned R-200 near the intersection of River and Seneca Roads.**

Glen Hills Area

The Glen Hills area consists of several established subdivisions with lots generally at least one acre in size. Most of the lots were established in the 1950's and 60's using septic systems. At that time, septic standards did not include septic buffers, water table testing, multiple depth testing, and the consideration of fractured rock. The Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) has raised concerns about the periodic septic failures which occur in the neighborhood because subsurface conditions often do not allow for replacement systems which satisfy current septic regulations. This Plan supports a study of the septic failures in Glen Hills to develop the measures necessary to ensure

the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovations, and to address the need for limited sewer extensions if needed. This study, conducted in conjunction with the citizens of this area and the appropriate public agencies, shall include the following elements:

- Delineation and possible reasons for known septic failures.
- Groundwater testing if needed.
- Preparation of a logical and systematic plan for providing community sewer service if needed.
- Emphasis on extension of sewer mains within public right-of-way rather than within stream valleys.
- An evaluation and recommendation of the abutting mains policy for this area.
- Exclusion of properties that are environmentally sensitive and cannot be developed in conformance with established environmental guidelines.

This Plan recommends restricting further sewer extensions in Glen Hills to those needed to relieve documented public health problems resulting from failed septic systems. New sewer main extensions needed to relieve public health problems will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for logical, economical, and environmentally sensitive extensions of service, with an emphasis on locating main extensions along public right-of-way, rather than stream valleys. Because of the concern that the sewer envelope will expand inappropriately, the abutting mains policy should be deferred subject to the results of the Glen Hills study.

Glen Hills Recommendation

- **Conduct a study described above of the Glen Hills area. Based on the results of that study develop a policy outlining the measures needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovations, minimizing the need for future sewer service extensions. Under this policy the sole basis for providing new sewer service would be well-documented septic failures where extension could be provided consistent with results of the study and in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner. Until a policy is developed, restrict further sewer service extensions in Glen Hills to properties with documented public health problems resulting from septic system failures.**

Piney Branch Subwatershed

The Piney Branch subwatershed presents a specific sewer service issue. Shallow bedrock and poor percolation rates severely limit development potential in the Piney Branch, Sandy Branch, and Greenbriar Branch basins unless sewer service is provided. However, these areas tend to have fragile or rare plant and animal communities as well as good water quality. The Piney Branch Trunk Sewer was constructed to serve development generated by TDRs in the upper subwatershed in North Potomac. Concerned over the potential environmental damage that could result from increased development density due to the availability of community sewer service along the rest of Piney Branch, the Council adopted a restricted sewer access policy for the subwatershed. This restricted

sewer service policy supercedes both the *Water and Sewer Plan's* countywide sewer service policies and the master plan's general sewer service recommendations. Introduced into the *Water and Sewer Plan* in 1991, the policy establishes specific conditions that properties within the Piney Branch subwatershed must satisfy for the provision of community sewer service.

This Plan supports the restricted sewer access policy, but with three modifications. Two of these modifications will allow the County to consider the provision of community sewer service to all properties in the upper part of the watershed which were intended as part of the 1980 Master Plan sewer service area, designated as master plan sewer stages I and II. The current policy unintentionally prevents some of these properties from receiving service, even in cases where sewer mains abut the sites. The modifications will also allow single home sewer hookups within the Piney Branch watershed for existing lots that abut and predate an existing sewer main.

The third modification would allow public sewer service, with a pressure system, for four parcels at the southeast quadrant of Boswell Lane and Piney Meetinghouse Road in the west Piney subwatershed. (See Land Use and Zoning Plan - PMH Joint Venture, Fling, and Casey Properties.)

Piney Branch Subwatershed Recommendations

- **Confirm the existing restricted access sewer policy in the *Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan* for the subwatershed with three exceptions:**
 - **Amend Piney Branch Restricted Access Policy to allow single home sewer hookups in the Piney Branch subwatershed for existing lots that abut and predate an existing sewer main. This exception is for single houses only and shall not be used to allow for multiple sewer hookups for subdivision/resubdivision of existing properties.**
 - **Former Stage I and II Properties – Provide sewer to former sewer Stage I and II properties that were not TDR receiving areas and therefore not generally eligible for community sewer service. These properties are now enclaves in the existing sewer envelope among the moderate- and high-density development in northern Piney Branch.**
 - **Provide public sewer service in the RE-2C Zone for a cluster development at the southeast quadrant of Boswell Lane and Piney Meetinghouse Road. (See Land Use and Zoning Plan - PMH Joint Venture, Fling, and Casey Properties.)**

Darnestown Triangle

The Darnestown Triangle area is formed by Darnestown Road (MD 28), Turkey Foot Road, and Jones Lane. Although zoned R-200, the 1980 Master Plan recommended that it remain served by septic systems rather than by community sewerage systems. The recommendation was intended to yield a variety of lot sizes based on suitability for septic systems. This Plan reconfirms the recommendations in the 1980 Plan to retain R- 200 zoning without community sewer. (See Land Use section.)



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

June 2, 2015

TO: George Leventhal, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive 

SUBJECT: Transmittal of a Water and Sewer Plan Text Amendment for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

This transmittal provides the County Council with a proposed Water and Sewer Plan amendment that converts my sewer service recommendations for the Glen Hills Study Area into a format for inclusion with other service policies in the Plan text.

On March 30, 2015, I provided the County Council with a memo summarizing the results of the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study. That memo also provided my recommendations for sewer service policies for the Glen Hills Study Area. These recommendations were developed in order to begin the Council's consideration of sewer service policies for the study area, as called for in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

Keith Levchenko of the Council's staff subsequently advised my staff that the Council preferred to address the Glen Hills area sewer service policy issues in the context of a Water and Sewer Plan text amendment. Using the recommendations from my previous memo, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) prepared the attached text amendment package for the Council's consideration.

For convenience, a copy of my March 30, 2015, memo is included with this package. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study reports are available for review and download at DEP's Glen Hills webpage: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/glenhills.

George Leventhal, President
June 2, 2015
Page 2

Staff from DEP will be available to discuss the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study and the proposed text amendment at work sessions with the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee and with the full Council.

IL:as

Attachment

c: Virginia Kearney, Acting Director, Water Management Administration,
Maryland Department of the Environment
David Craig, Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Jerry Johnson, General Manager, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
Lisa Feldt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection
Diane Schwartz Jones, Director, Department of Permitting Services

**COMPREHENSIVE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE SYSTEMS PLAN AMENDMENTS
County Executive's June 2015 Transmittal**

Chapter 1 Text Amendment Related to the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

Page 1

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT CPTA 15-CH1-01T

Chapter 1, Table 1-T3: Special Master Plan Water and Sewer Service Recommendations

Glen Hills Study Area Sewer Service Policies

County Executive's Recommendation: Approve the recommended text amendment to establish sewer service policies for the Glen Hills Study Area.

Executive Staff Report

On March 30, 2015, the County Executive transmitted recommendations to the County Council for sewer service policies for the Glen Hills Study Area. (See the transmittal memo at pgs. 7 - 14.) The service recommendations were based on the results of the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study, which was undertaken by the Department of Environmental Protection as recommended in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

The following text amendment takes the Executive's sewer service policy recommendations from the March 30, 2015, memo and converts them into the format of policy language for the Water and Sewer Plan text. It amends existing language addressing the Glen Hills Neighborhoods found in Chapter 1, Section II.E.1., Table 1-T3: Special Master Plan Water and Sewer Service Recommendations.

Introductory language for the text amendment begins below. Table 1-T3 is shown on page 2; only that part of the table addressing the Glen Hills area is included in the amendment. Water and Sewer Plan Chapter 1 service policies referenced in the following amendment are found on pages 3 - 5. A reference map of the study area is provided on page 6.

CPTA 15-CH1-01T

Amendment Key: Underscored Text: Recommended Addition [Bracketed Text]: Recommended Deletion

CHAPTER 1: Objective and Policies

II. POLICIES FOR THE PROVISION OF WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICE

E. Special Policies for Water and Sewer Service - In addition to the preceding general service policies, the County Council has adopted specific policies for the provision of community water and/or sewer service which create exceptions to the general service policies. The Council has also adopted service recommendations in local area master plans which create exceptions to the general service policies.

1. Master Plan Recommended Exceptions -- The preceding sections discussing general water and sewer service policies noted that local area master plans may recommend exceptions to those general service policies. In order to implement specific development and land use strategies, a master plan may recommend policies for community water and/or sewer service which can be either less restrictive or more restrictive than this Plan's general service policies. When a master plan makes such a recommendation, it must also include an appropriate justification for the recommended departure from the general policies. DEP staff coordinate closely with M-NCPPC staff with regard to the water and sewer service recommendations developed in local area master plans.

These exceptional recommendations are, of necessity, scattered throughout the County's various local area master plans. The following table is intended to consolidate and summarize these recommendations into convenient format and to make them part of this Plan. For additional information concerning these issues, please refer to the master plans cited below.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE SYSTEMS PLAN AMENDMENTS
 County Executive's June 2015 Transmittal

Chapter 1 Text Amendment Related to the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

Table 1-T3: Special Master Plan Water and Sewer Service Recommendations	
General Area Affected	Master Plan Service Recommendation & Comments
Potomac Subregion Master Plan (2002)	
Glen Hills Study Area [Neighborhoods (as defined in the 2002 master plan.)]	<p>The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended new community sewer service be limited only to documented public health problems pending the completion of an area-wide sanitary survey by DPS and DEP.</p> <p>With the master plan-requested study completed in 2014, the following service policies apply to the Glen Hills Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Individual, on-site septic systems are the primary wastewater disposal method consistent with the area's standard-type development under the RE-1 Zone.</u> • <u>Community sewer service can be considered only under the following conditions for:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Properties in need of relief from public health problems resulting from documented septic system failures (Sections II.B.5.b. and II.E.2.).</u> ○ <u>Properties included within a specifically designated public health problem area (Sections II.B.5.a. and II.E.2.).</u> ○ <u>Properties that abut existing or planned sewer mains and that satisfy the requirements of the "abutting mains" policy (Section II.E.3.a.)</u> ○ <u>Properties within the study area and within the Piney Branch subwatershed that satisfy the requirements for community sewer service under the Piney Branch restricted sewer service policy (Section II.E.12.b.).</u> <p>[The master plan recommends that only documented public health problems shall be justification for the approval of sewer service area category changes within this area, pending the completion of an area-wide sanitary survey by DPS and DEP.]</p>

End of CPTA 15-CH1-01T

Excerpts from Chapter 1 Referenced in the Preceding Text Amendment

II. POLICIES FOR THE PROVISION OF WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICE

The water and sewer service policies addressed in this section of the Plan provide the basis for establishing what areas of the county will receive community versus individual systems service. The Plan uses water and sewer service area categories both to designate areas eligible for either community or private service and to provide a staging element for the provision of community service. These policies provide guidance not only in evaluating individual and general service area change amendments, but also in the preparation of development and water/sewer service recommendations in the County's land use master plans.

The County Council relies primarily on these service policies in evaluating and acting on Water and Sewer Plan amendments. However, the scope of the Council's responsibilities goes far beyond this Plan and includes issues such as the county-wide economic growth, public health and safety, transportation infrastructure, and public education. The Council has the authority and responsibility to consider such issues where they may affect its actions with respect to this Plan. Given this, the Council may reach conclusions regarding this Plan or its amendments which do not necessarily follow the policies provided in the following sections; in such cases, the Council will provide an explanation of the issues involved and rationale for actions that may vary from these standard policies.

B. Water and Sewer Service Development Policies by Service Area Designation – The following policies govern the provision of water and sewer service under each of the County's service area categories:

5. Categories W-5 and W-6, and S-5 and S-6 – Individual water supply or sewerage systems, not of an interim nature, shall be permitted to be installed in any portion of the County designated as categories W-5 or W-6 and S-5 or S-6, consistent with COMAR 26.03.01, 26.03.05, and 26.04.02 - .04, and County Executive Regulations 28-93AM, "On-Site Water Systems and On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems in Montgomery County". Individual systems may be installed within these areas on an indefinite basis without firm obligation to connect to a community system, when and if it becomes available.

Within areas designated as categories W-5 and S-5, the construction of dry community systems shall *not* be required for subdivisions or individual properties which develop using individual on-site systems. DEP may recommend water and/or sewer map amendments to designate subdivisions developing on individual systems as categories W-6 and/or S-6.

Section II.B.5.a.

a. Area-Wide Public Health Hazards – Under conditions that a defined area of the county has an **existing or anticipated health hazard**, DPS, in coordination with DEP, may recommend the construction of a community system for water or sewerage service. Any such community system shall be operated by a public agency and be approved by the County Council as a formal amendment to the plan. The issues and alternatives relative to such a recommendation for properties in categories will be reviewed by DEP as a proposed category change request, initiated by the County.

Section II.B.5.b.

b. Individual Public Health Hazards -- Under conditions of an **existing or anticipated health hazard**, as certified in writing by DPS, DEP may require connections of individual structures to a community system if available, and may require service extensions when deemed desirable. DEP will coordinate a category change for the site, usually through the administrative delegation process, although WSSC need not await approval of such an amendment prior to providing community service.

E. Special Policies for Water and Sewer Service - In addition to the preceding general service policies, the County Council has adopted specific policies for the provision of community water and/or sewer

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE SYSTEMS PLAN AMENDMENTS
County Executive's June 2015 Transmittal

Chapter 1 Text Amendment Related to the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

service which create exceptions to the general service policies. The Council has also adopted service recommendations in local area master plans which create exceptions to the general service policies.

Section II.E.2.

2. Community Service to Relieve Public Health Problems -- Community water and/or sewer service may be extended to existing structures to alleviate or eliminate existing or anticipated public health problems, upon certification of such by the Director of the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) or his or her designee. DEP, in coordination with WSSC, shall evaluate whether the provision of community service is reasonable. If appropriate, DEP will direct WSSC to expedite the provision of community water and/or sewer service either by a connection to existing mains or by the extension of new mains in order to relieve the public health problem. Under these circumstances, community service will be provided regardless of the existing service area category, and WSSC need not wait for a service area change approval in order to plan, design, or implement the service. DEP may act to approve related service area changes through the administrative delegation process, Section V.F.2.a.: Public Health Problems. In such cases, community service will generally be limited to a single water and/or sewer hookup for existing properties. The provision of community service under this policy shall not be used as justification for the connection of intervening or nearby lots or parcels if they would not otherwise be entitled to connect to community systems. In addition, DEP will coordinate with DPS to identify, as necessary, larger-scale, chronic public health problem areas and to recommend solutions for those problems in this plan. A decision to extend community service will depend on the number of properties affected, the feasibility of service, and the viability of alternative relief methods.

3. Community Service for Properties Abutting Existing Mains -- Under specific and limited circumstances, community water and or sewer service may be provided to properties which abut an existing or approved water and/or sewer main. The provision of community service requires that the property, or a structure on the property must have been established prior to the extension of the abutting main. A residence, business, or institution (church, school, etc.) qualifies as an existing structure; a barn, garage, or other type of outbuilding does not qualify. The provisions of this policy do not include community service for private institutional facilities (PIFs), which must be addressed through the PIF policy (see Section II.E.4.).

Community service must be technically feasible from the abutting main. Major water and sewer transmission mains and sewer force mains cannot support individual service connections and hookups, and therefore do not qualify abutting properties for community service under this policy.

This policy may be used in cases where a property is not otherwise eligible for such service under the general policies of this Plan. Under this policy, the provision of community service is allowed under the following circumstances:

Section II.E.3.a.

a. Single Hookups Only -- A single water and/or sewer hookup only is allowed for an individual property or for a structure which abuts an existing or approved water and/or sewer main. The subject property or structure must predate the abutting main. A change in the property configuration due to the dedication of land for a public use such as a road right-of-way or park land shall not invalidate this allowed single hookup. Neither shall an exchange of land between adjacent, qualifying properties invalidate this allowed hookup, provided the overall number of qualifying lots and therefore allowed hookups remains the same. DEP may grant approval for this single hookup under the administrative delegation policies included in this chapter (Section V.F.2.b.: Properties Abutting Existing Mains).

DEP may direct WSSC to provide an allowed single, residential water and/or sewer hookup upon 1) staff confirmation that the property qualifies for service under this policy, and 2) DEP's receipt a category change request for the property. Only in such cases may DEP approve service from an abutting main in advance of granting the actual service area category approval. Commercial and institutional uses must first receive the required service area change.

12. Special and Restricted Community Service Areas -- In addition to the preceding policies, the County may also designate specific areas for or restrict specific areas from community water and/or sewer service in order to achieve specific development goals, to promote environmental protection, or to address other special concerns. These areas are shown in Figure 1-F3 and are listed below:

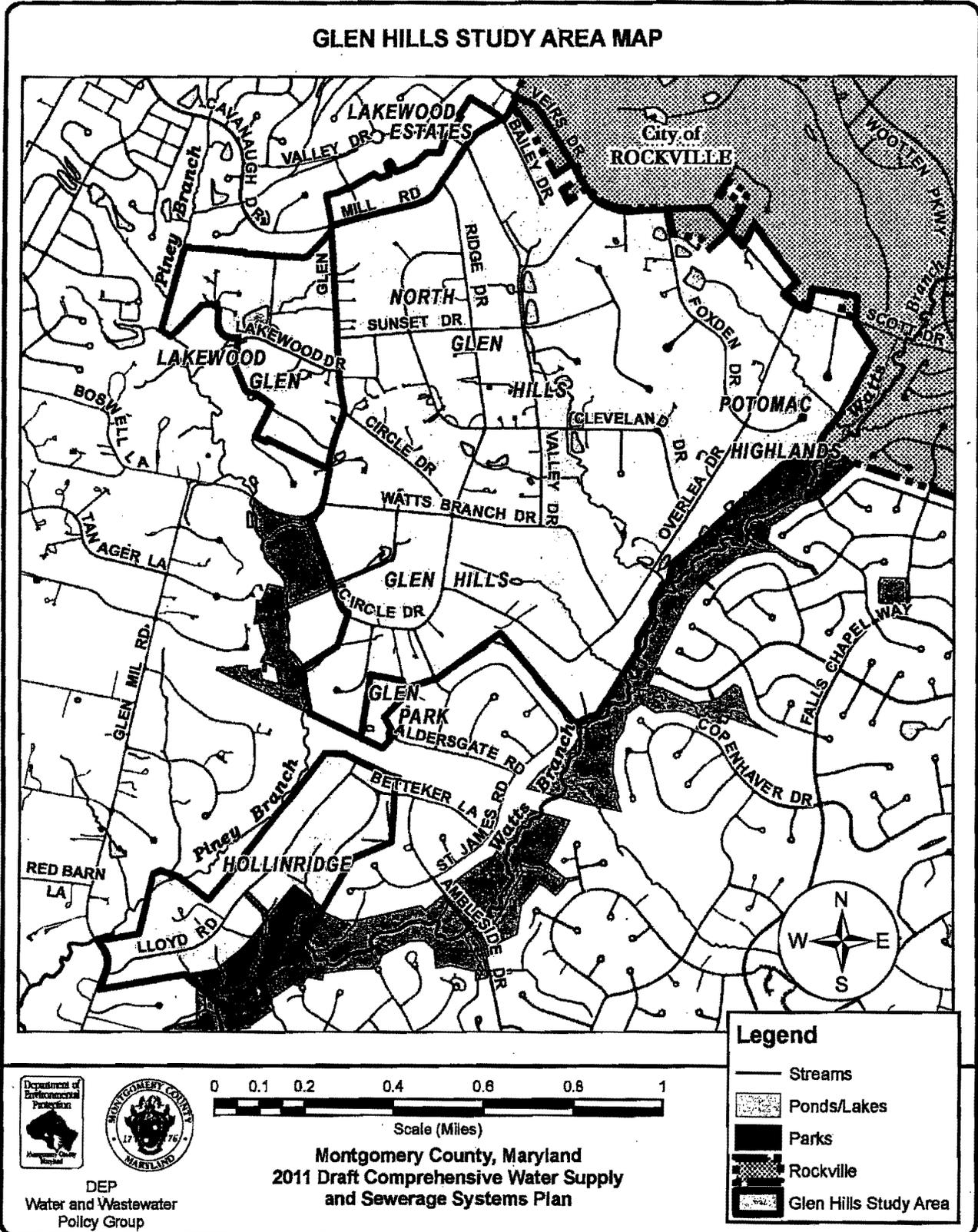
Section II.E.12.b.

b. Piney Branch Restricted Sewer Service Area -- In 1991, the County Council established a policy to restrict the availability of community sewer service in the Piney Branch Watershed, which is designated as one of the county's Special Protection Area watersheds. Through the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access Policy, the Council sought to limit the growth of public sewer-dependent development within and near this environmentally-sensitive watershed, particularly within the areas of the watershed zoned for one- and two-acre development. The Council subsequently amended the policy in March 1997 under CR 13-830 and again in October 2002 under CR 14-1481. By these actions, the Council has specifically designated the Piney Branch Trunk Sewer and its tributary mains as **Limited Access** mains (see Section III.A.2.).

This restricted access policy was recently reexamined in the context of interrelated land use, zoning, and sewer service recommendations in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan; the following conditions reflect the policy changes recommended by the new master plan. In order to be eligible for community sewer service, properties within the Piney Branch watershed must satisfy at least one of the following conditions, i. through vi.:

- i. Properties designated as Sewer Stages I or II in the 1980 Potomac Subregion Master Plan;
- ii. Properties which the Piney Branch Trunk Sewer Right-of-Way either traverses or abuts, including properties adjacent to, and commonly owned with, these abutted or traversed properties as of December 3, 1991;
- iii. Properties with approval or conditional approval for sewer categories S-1 or S-3 as of December 3, 1991;
- iv. Properties with documented public health problems resulting from failed septic systems where the provision of public sewer service is logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable; or
- v. Properties which abut sewer mains and which satisfy the policy requirements for Section II.E.3.a.: Community Service for Properties Abutting Existing Mains -- Single Hookups Only. Applicants shall not use the provision of a single sewer hookup to support subdivision or resubdivision of these properties into more than one lot. (This condition does not restrict sewer service provided to properties satisfying condition ii., preceding.)
- vi. The properties zoned RE-2C located in the southeast corner of the intersection of Boswell Lane and Piney Meetinghouse Road which develop using the cluster method.

All other properties within the Piney Branch watershed are restricted from community sewer service, whether from the Piney Branch sewerage system or from other adjacent sewerage systems.





OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

March 30, 2015

TO: George Leventhal, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive 

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Reports and Recommendations on the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

As directed by the County Council, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has conducted a study of sanitary service in the Glen Hills Area southwest of Rockville based on recommendations provided in the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan. The purpose of this transmittal is twofold:

- To provide the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports that present the background, methodology, and findings of this study.
- To provide recommendations concerning appropriate sewer service policies for the study area.

DEP conducted this study with the assistance of a local engineering firm, A. Morton Thomas and Associates, following the Council's allocation of funding for the consultant's work starting in FY 2012. Public participation in the study process included three public meetings: one at the start of the study process and then one each at the conclusion of the two study phases. DEP also formed a citizens advisory committee (CAC) consisting of twelve study area residents and property owners. The CAC met seven times during the study process to discuss study issues in more detail than the public meeting forums allowed. DEP maintained a Glen Hills Study webpage on the County's website to post public and CAC meeting notices, provide study updates, and present draft and final versions of the study reports. DEP also used a property owner survey at the start of the study process to gain a general understanding of the public's awareness of septic system use and maintenance.

The Department of Permitting Services (DPS), Well and Septic Section, had previously identified the Glen Hills area as a neighborhood where the replacement of existing, failed septic systems can be problematic. The study area has many vacant lots that at present

cannot be developed due to soil and regulatory limitations for septic systems. These limitations may also restrict a homeowner's ability to improve or replace existing houses. In response to these concerns, the 2002 master plan recommended that the County:

“Conduct a study described above of the Glen Hills area. Based on the results of that study develop a policy outlining the measures needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovations, minimizing the need for future sewer extensions. Under this policy the sole basis for providing new sewer service would be well-documented septic failures where extension could be provided consistent with the results of the study and in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner. Until a policy is developed, restrict further sewer service extensions in Glen Hills to properties with documented public health problems resulting from septic system failures.”

Although not explicitly stated in the master plan, DEP also recognized at the start of this study the need to support the existing housing stock through the replacement of existing septic systems that have failed or will require replacement in the future.

Phase 1

The Phase 1 report presents information on the collection of data concerning existing conditions in the study area, including soil conditions, septic systems type and age, septic testing results, and distribution of existing public sewerage systems. The purpose of this phase was to determine, as best possible from existing information, whether parts of the study area could experience potential difficulties with long-term septic system use and, if needed, replacement of existing septic systems using standard deep stone-trench septic systems. Phase 1 revealed the following among its findings:

- Approximately one-third of the study area is subject to soil conditions and regulatory requirements that may result in difficulties with the long-term use of deep stone-trench septic systems. Those parts of the study area so affected are referred to as “review areas” (RAs). Given the planning-level nature of the study, the determination of a review area does not infer that all land within the RAs is not suited for deep trench septic systems. Conversely, not all land outside the RAs is guaranteed as suited for deep trench septic systems.
- Approximately one-half of the 370 existing, operating septic systems in the study area were permitted and constructed before the advent of modern testing standards, which includes establishing reserve septic field areas as a backup for the initial system. When one of these septic systems fails, there is no established septic drainfield area guaranteed as a viable replacement. A new drainfield area must be established by on-site testing.

Phase 2

Following completion of the Phase 1 work and development of the draft Phase 1 report, DEP developed a scope of work for the Phase 2 portion of the study. The Phase 2 report presents alternatives for providing and maintaining wastewater disposal service for the review areas (RAs) identified in the Phase 1 report.

The underlying assumption in the second phase of the study was that the use of deep stone trench systems within the RAs may not satisfy today's septic regulations. The permitting and construction of this type of septic system could be difficult predominantly due to poor soil conditions including slow percolation rates, shallow depth to ground water, and shallow depth to bedrock. The alternatives to the use of this type of septic system were as follows:

- **Use of other types of permitted septic systems: shallow stone-trench systems, sand mound systems, or drip-disposal systems.** Each of these on-site systems has applications for specific soil constraints, although even taken together they do not necessarily provide solutions for all situations. The use of a specific type of on-site septic system for the replacement or expansion of an existing septic system will require proper soil testing and evaluations to determine that system's suitability for a particular property. Given these testing requirements, the development of alternative solutions for specific sites was not attempted.
- **Provision of public sewer service.** The Phase 2 report showed that only a few of the identified review areas had access to existing sewer mains. For those review areas without available sewer mains, the study contractor designed 13 conceptual sewer extension alignments to show possibilities for providing public sewer service, if needed. Both gravity and low-pressure sewer mains were used in this design work. Low-pressure mains were primarily used where the study criteria from the 2002 master plan directed sewer extensions away from streams, stream buffers, and easements across private properties, and instead towards public road alignments. Note that of the 13 conceptual sewer extension alignments shown in the Phase 2 report none are proposed for approval or construction at this time.

Planning-level cost estimates developed for each of the preceding Phase 2 alternatives showed that, in most cases, the use of an on-site septic system for new or replacement wastewater service, where feasible, provided a less expensive service option than the extension of new mains for public sewer service for property owners. Costs for sewer service connections to an available, existing sewer main were much closer to the range of septic system costs, depending on the type of septic system required for service.

Policy Issues and Recommendations for Septic System Sustainability

The feasibility of permitting a new septic system for any particular piece of property is dependent on the characteristics of the soils and geology of that property. These characteristics (permeability, water table depth, depth to rock, etc.) do not change substantially over time. Soil testing standards for septic systems for the County have become both more encompassing and restrictive over time. This serves to improve the longevity of septic system use and to help mitigate environmental impacts resulting from septic system use in vulnerable areas. (See the Phase 1 report, Section 3.5 and Table 3.1.) Other regulatory standards (drainage and drinking water well setbacks, best available technology requirements, etc.), have also been strengthened to help protect human and environmental health. The DPS permitting process recognizes that a septic system approved and built for a new home—including the initial system and planned replacement fields—is intended to serve that property for an indefinite time. These standards exist to ensure that new development dependent on septic systems does not occur on properties that cannot support septic system use for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation:

- **Consistent with the policy focus of the 2002 master plan, where public sewer service is not currently available in the Glen Hills area, it is typically in the interest of a property owner to explore on-site septic system options, as needed, when needing to replace an existing system or install a system for new development.**

Policy Issues and Recommendations for the Extension of Public Sewer Service

Based on Water and Sewer Plan general service policies, and supported by the 2002 master plan's service recommendations, areas designated for standard-type development under the RE-1 Zone—such as this study area—are not intended for widespread public sewer service. However, the master plan also recognized that the relief of some septic problems within the study area could require the provision of public sewer service. The master plan advocated a sewer service policy that would allow new sewer service only for cases of documented septic system failures. This refers to cases where new sewer construction would be required, as the master plan goes on to specify that sewer extensions would need to be planned and provided in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner. Other than to relieve public health problems, there are few Water and Sewer Plan special sewer service policy justifications (public facilities, private institutional facilities, etc.) that would have an application for the extension of new sewer mains within the study area.

Typically, the County's designation of a public health problem results from an on-site system failure applying to a single property. However, Water and Sewer Plan policies also direct the County to identify public health problem areas, where appropriate; groupings of properties where existing and anticipated on-site systems problems apply to more than just one property, usually in a relatively small geographic area. The Council's designation of a public health problem area by an amendment to the Water and Sewer Plan usually applies to an area

where public service is not yet provided and often not approved, but needs to become a priority to support public and environmental health. Where the Plan establishes such an area, all properties within it are eligible to pursue the extension of public service, regardless of whether or not an existing failure has occurred. This allows for some public service extension within the health problem area in advance of an immediate failure. The study does not propose the designation of any part of the study area as a public health problem area at this time.

The cost of extending new water and sewer mains currently remains beyond the financial reach of most individual property owners, including those situations where new service is needed to relieve a public health problem resulting from a septic system failure. Under WSSC's current system expansion permit (SEP) process, virtually all new main construction is paid in total by the applicant seeking service, typically a developer constructing a new subdivision. This has drained funding resources away from the older front-foot benefit financed (or "WSSC-built") process, wherein WSSC finances and constructs new mains, to the point where the older process is no longer functional. Staff from Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and from WSSC are working to develop a modified financing system that would again make construction of new main extensions for individual property owners feasible. In cases where the County determines that new public service is needed to relieve health problems, manageable financing is of great importance.

Recommendations:

- **Adopt, but also expand on the policy recommendation from the 2002 master plan; that documented health problems resulting from septic system failures are the only justification for the construction of new sewer main extensions within the study area. Public sewer mains can also be constructed to serve public health problem areas--throughout the study area—that are explicitly designated by the County Council in the Water and Sewer Plan. Two Water and Sewer Plan policies address this situation: the "public health problems" and "properties affected by public improvements" policies (Chapter 1, Sect. II.E.2. & II.E.7., respectively.**
- **Pursue with WSSC and Prince George's County the development of a modified water and sewer main extension process that improves the affordability of main construction for individual property owners.**

One other special service policy that relates to the use of public sewer in place of on-site septic systems is the "on-site system regulation changes" policy (CWSP Chapter 1, Sect. II.E.10.). The policy provides for consideration of public sewer service where changes in testing regulations now render a property previously established and permitted for an on-site system unsuited for septic system use. The substantial majority of lots in the study area were not established on the basis of successful septic system testing. Before 1965, septic testing was not required in order to record a building lot. As a result, this requirement for the application of this

service policy cannot be satisfied. This policy is not proposed to justify sewer main construction to provide new sewer service for unimproved lots within the study area.

Policy Issues and Recommendations for the Abutting Mains Sewer Service Policy

The 2002 master plan specifically recommends that the Glen Hills study include, “An evaluation and recommendation of the abutting mains policy for this area.” The “abutting mains” service policy (CWSP Chapter 1, Sect. II.E.3.) involves the provision of public service from existing or approved public mains. To qualify for consideration, a property or a building on the property had to exist at the time the abutting main was or will be installed. This policy typically limits public service to a single sewer hookup for each existing property abutted by a main. While the policy allows for limited public service from an abutting main, new main construction is not the policy’s function.

Where public service mains are already provided, or where they are approved, Water and Sewer Plan service policies support limited use of those mains by abutting property owners. In the past, this policy helped to support new main construction, where front-foot benefit charges helped to finance that construction. As noted previously, escalating costs associated the “WSSC-built” process have made its use by individual property owners largely infeasible, including cases where needed a new main is needed to relieve a public health problem. The potential for the participation of abutting property owners in a modified WSSC extension financing system needs to be maintained through the use of the abutting mains policy. Owners of qualifying properties that abut or will abut sewer mains in the study area should have an option to use public sewer service if they choose. Although the cost for connecting to public sewer service can be greater than for replacing a septic system, public service provides a permanent means of wastewater disposal, as opposed to septic systems which will require periodic replacement.

Starting in 2002, County Council actions on sewer category change requests suspended use of the abutting mains policy (CWSP Chapter 1, Section II.E.2.) within the Glen Hills area, as recommended in the 2002 master plan. Currently, 21 properties designated as sewer category S-6, and as such ineligible for public sewer service, abut existing sewer mains within the study area; all are improved with existing single-family homes. Of these, one category change request case filed since 2002 would have benefitted from the ability to use the abutting mains policy.

Recommendation:

- **Restore the use of the abutting mains policy for public sewer service within the Glen Hills study area. Note that no property owner is compelled to connect to public sewer service as long as their property remains in category S-6 and their existing septic system continues to function.**

Information included in the Phase 2 report (Table 5.1, pg. 24) provides details about the number of properties that could be served by each of the 13 sewer main extensions conceptually designed for the purposes of this study to serve the Review Areas. In the unlikely event that all 13 sewer extensions were to be built in their entirety, they could abut and serve as many as 223 properties: 197 already improved with single-family homes using septic systems and 26 unimproved. (The total study area currently includes 370 improved properties using septic systems and 69 unimproved properties.)

Policy Issues and Recommendations for the Piney Branch Subwatershed

The western and northwestern parts of the study area fall within the Piney Branch subwatershed of Watts Branch. (See the Phase 1 report, Figure 2.1, pg. 7.) Starting in late 1991, during planning for the Piney Branch Trunk Sewer, the County decided to implement a restricted sewer service access policy for the subwatershed that sought to limit environmental impacts from sewer-dependent development in the lower, less-densely zoned parts of the subwatershed. This includes some of the properties within this study area. The 2002 master plan does not recommend any changes to the application of the restricted sewer service access policy within the study area. This restricted sewer access policy remains in effect for those parts of the study area included in the subwatershed.

Recommendation:

- **Maintain the Piney Branch restricted sewer service access policy for those parts of the Glen Hills study area that fall within the limits of the Piney Branch subwatershed.**

Additional Master Plan Study Recommendations

The 2002 master plan also recommended that the study include elements such as the delineation and causes of known septic system failures, and the identification and exclusion of environmentally sensitive properties with no development potential. Each of these recommendations and brief discussions about how they were addressed as part of the Glen Hills study are included in the Phase 2 report; see Sect. 6, pg. 31.

Copies of the Executive Summaries from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports are attached with this transmittal. The full reports are available for review and download at DEP's Glen Hills webpage: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/glenhills.

Staff from DEP will be available to discuss the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study at work sessions with the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee and with the full Council.

IL:as

Attachments

George Leventhal, Council President
March 30, 2015
Page 8

cc: Jay Sakai, Director, Water Management Administration, Maryland Department of the Environment
David Craig, Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Jerry Johnson, General Manager, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
Lisa Feldt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection
Diane Schwartz Jones, Director, Department of Permitting Services



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

October 5, 2015

The Honorable George Leventhal, President
Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Leventhal:

At its regular meeting of September 24, 2015, the Planning Board discussed a proposed Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study. The Amendment, proposed by the County Executive, revises the county's Special Policies for the Provision of Water and Sewerage Service, establishing a policy for wastewater disposal in the Glen Hills neighborhood of Potomac.

The Board considered a Planning Staff report recommending approval of the Executive's proposal, heard extensive testimony from Glen Hills residents, including an alternative policy proposal, and discussed the issue with staff and with representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection. Following the discussion and its deliberations, the Board voted 4-1 to endorse modifying the Executive's proposed text amendment to provide a clear and objective standard for evaluating proposed sewer extensions in the area. Chair Anderson, and Commissioners Fani-Gonzalez, Presley and Wells-Harley voted to support the Executive's proposal with this modification; Commissioner Dreyfuss dissented and argued for an immediate sewer category change for the area. The staff report is attached for the Council's use.

In considering the issues presented by the public testimony, the Planning Board faced two important tasks: respecting the Master Plan's development and environmental policies for Glen Hills and providing clearly needed relief for neighborhood residents whose individual systems have failed or are likely to fail in the near future. A majority of the Board concluded that the Executive's proposal should be amended to provide a faster, more certain path to public sewer service when circumstances warrant. The Board believes that the Executive's proposal to establish both a process for considering when new sewer connections should be allowed and a mechanism to pay for them is sound. The Board, however, is persuaded that homeowners whose septic systems are failing should not be required to bear the burden of proving that a grave threat to the public health is imminent in order to qualify for sewer service. If a property owner with a troubled system can demonstrate that their property would not be considered suitable for a new septic system if the property were being developed for the first time, then that homeowner should be considered eligible for sewer service on public

The Honorable George Leventhal
October 5, 2015
Page Two

health grounds. If, on the other hand, a new septic system using currently accepted technologies and design methods is feasible, then septic treatment should continue to be used. The majority believes that this criterion will make it easier for larger areas of the neighborhood to seek relief under the proposed policy by removing ambiguity concerning what evidence or analysis is required to establish eligibility for sewer service based on public health considerations. It will also preserve Glen Hills as a low-density housing resource that generally relies on individual septic systems, as envisioned by the Master Plan.

Should the Council determine that an amendment to the Potomac Subregion Master Plan is needed to address the Glen Hills issue, the Board majority would support such a request.

Commissioner Dreyfuss felt that recent extensions of public service to parts of Glen Hills, combined with public testimony of neighborhood residents to the effect that many systems are failing or have failed and cannot be repaired or replaced, demonstrated a substantial public health problem and that, as a result, relief in the form of logical sewer main extensions for the entire community was warranted now. Mr. Dreyfuss therefore voted to designate the entire Glen Hills area as sewer category S-3, so that planning for public service could begin and be available immediately as existing individual systems fail. Mr. Dreyfuss believes that such a designation would be in accordance with the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to evaluate the Executive's proposed text amendment as part of the Council's review of the matter. Planning staff will be available at the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment committee worksession on October 26.

Sincerely,



Casey Anderson
Chair

Proposed Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

fvb

Frederick Vernon Boyd, Master Plan Supervisor, Area 3, fred.boyd@montgomeryplanning.org, 301 495 4654

EAW

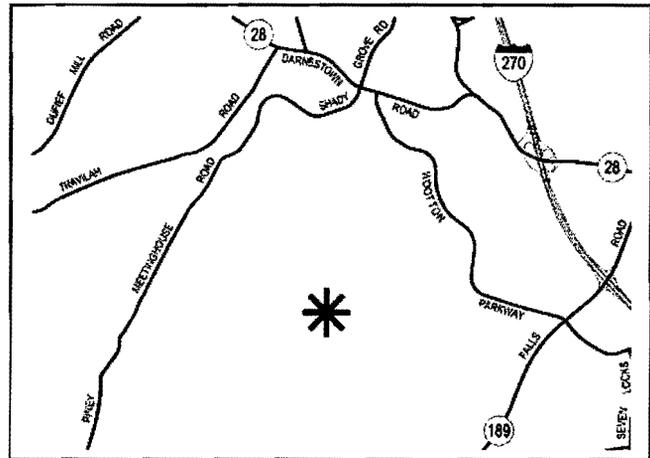
Richard Weaver, Acting Chief, Area 3, richard.weaver@montgomeryplanning.org, 301 495 4544

Date Completed: 9/17/15

Description

Proposed Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

The County Executive has proposed a text amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan, following a Department of Environmental Protection study of sanitary conditions in the Glen Hills neighborhood. The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended the study to allow formulation of a wastewater disposal policy for the community, which largely developed using septic systems and has experienced scattered septic system failures.



Summary

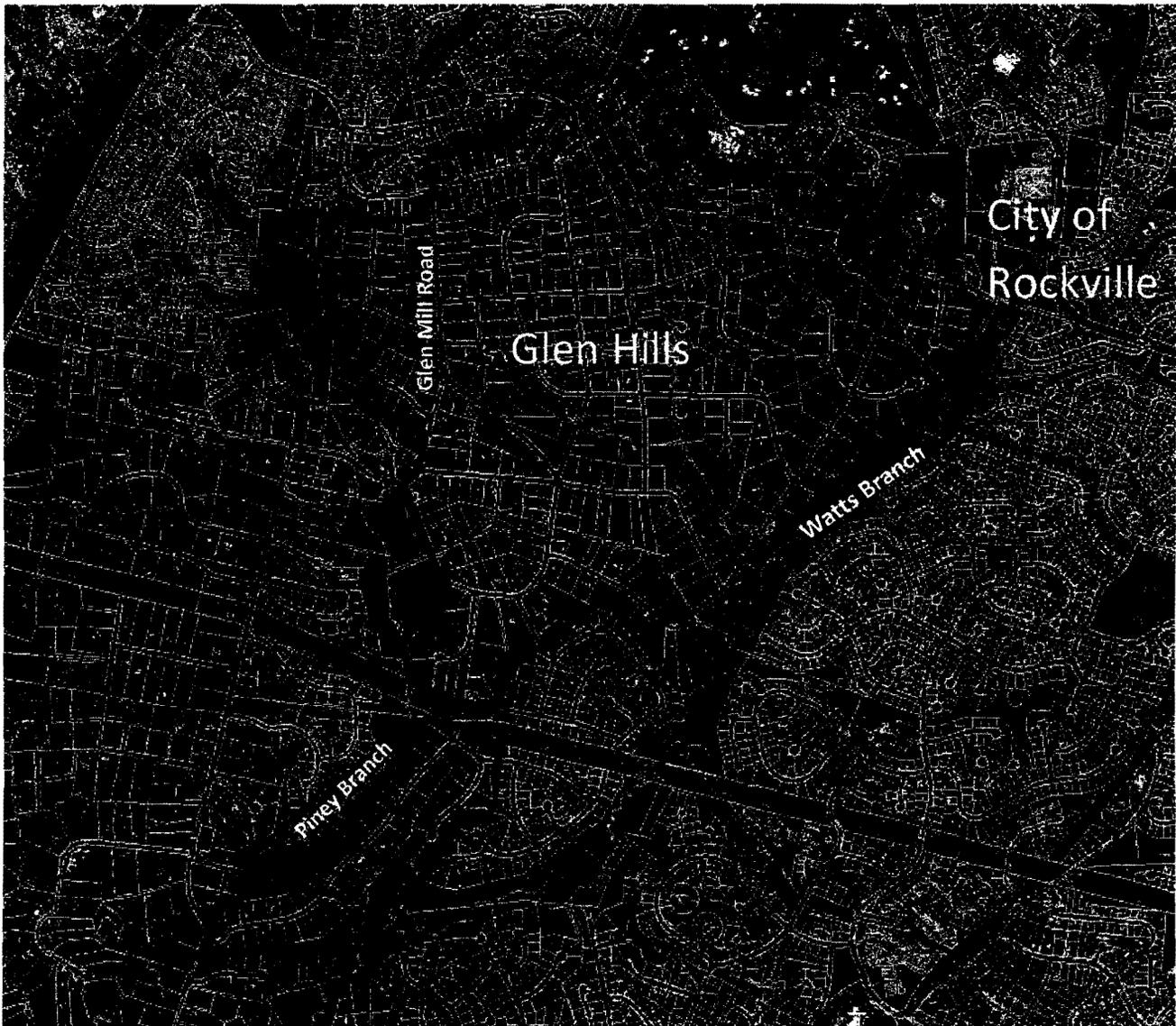
The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended a sanitary study for the Glen Hills neighborhood to allow formulation of a wastewater disposal policy for the community, which largely developed using septic systems and has experienced scattered septic system failures. The Master Plan recommended a sewer extension policy that would limit public sewer service to properties that could demonstrate septic system failures and where sewer service could be extended in an environmentally acceptable manner. The Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") completed the study in 2013, and the Executive recommended earlier this year that the new wastewater treatment policy establish on-site septic disposal systems as the primary disposal method for Glen Hills. The Executive's proposal also establishes specific conditions for consideration of public sewer service in Glen Hills. The conditions would allow extension of public service when individual property owners can demonstrate septic system failures; when larger areas with public health problems are formally designated; when properties abutting existing or planned sewer mains meet existing policy standards; and for properties with septic failures that are located in the Piney Branch restricted service area.

The County Council held a public hearing on the proposed amendment on September 17. The Council has agreed to hold the public record open to receive the Planning Board's recommendation. The Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee will discuss the proposed amendment on October 5.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the text amendment

BACKGROUND

The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan, in its own words, “is based on environmental principles.” (p 33) The Plan reinforces this concept organizationally by locating the Environmental Resources Plan as the first substantive chapter of the Plan. The Plan recognizes the importance of sewer service policies to the environment by including detailed policy recommendations in the Environmental Resources Plan. The Glen Hills area, an enclave adjacent to the City of Rockville, is one of three areas for which the Plan makes specific policy recommendations.



In Glen Hills, these recommendations center on wastewater treatment. The neighborhood developed with septic systems rather than public sewer service. During the 1950s and 1960s, when much of the community developed, standards for septic systems were significantly less strict than they are now, and,

by the time the 2002 Master Plan development process began, some properties in the neighborhood had suffered septic system failures. In response, the Plan supported “a study of the septic system failures in Glen Hills to develop the measures necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovations, and to address the need for limited sewer extensions if needed.” (p. 23-4)

The Master Plan (p 24) specified six elements to be included in the study:

- “Delineation and possible reasons for known septic failures.
- Groundwater testing if needed.
- Preparation of a logical and systematic plan for providing community sewer service if needed.
- Emphasis on extension of sewer mains within public right-of-way rather than within stream valleys.
- An evaluation and recommendation of the abutting mains policy for this area.
- Exclusion of properties that are environmentally sensitive and cannot be developed in conformance with established environmental guidelines.”

The Master Plan stated that the study should form the basis of “a policy outlining the measures needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovation, minimizing the need for future sewer extension.” It went on to state that, under the policy, “the sole basis for providing new sewer service would be well-documented septic failures where extension could be provided consistent with the results of the study and in a logical, economical and environmentally sensitive manner.” (p 24)

The Department of Environmental Protection hired a consulting firm to do the study, which had two phases. The firm, AMT Consulting Engineers, completed the study in 2013. AMT stated in its final Phase 1 report that “the purpose of this study is to gather and assess data to determine the future reliability and sustainability of septic systems within the study area...” (p. 5). AMT collected and analyzed well and septic permit data and GIS information. The firm confirmed the neighborhood’s topography and natural feature locations in the field. Community outreach included public meetings and surveys, as well as the creation of a citizens’ advisory committee made up of local residents with varying levels of experience with septic and public sewer systems in the neighborhood.

Phase I of the study used eight parameters, ranging from the age of a property’s septic system and the rate at which water percolated through its system to the area’s soils classifications and topography. AMT used this information to create maps that it asserted would show areas that were unsustainable for septic systems under any of the eight parameters. The study identified nine failing septic systems in Glen Hills. The study nonetheless concluded that about a third of the study area—36 percent—was unsuitable for septic wastewater disposal under at least one of the eight parameters. It also concluded that half of the operating septic systems in Glen Hills were without reserve drainfields for use when an initial drainfield failed. For these reasons, the Phase I report recommended Phase II to evaluate alternatives for wastewater disposal in the community.

Phase II assumed that satisfying current septic design regulations with a traditional method of septic disposal—deep stone trench systems—could prove problematic. So the study evaluated other types of disposal systems, including shallow stone trench systems, sand mounds and drip disposal systems. The study did not attempt to apply these prospective technologies to specific properties. The study also evaluated 13 conceptual alignments for public sewer throughout Glen Hills. The consultant developed

broad cost estimates for both innovative septic systems and public sewer service, and concluded that septic disposal would cost less than extension of sewer lines.

The study generated considerable controversy. Some residents, in the wake of the study, have advocated for a comprehensive solution to wastewater disposal in Glen Hills, arguing that, while reported septic system failures are few in number, a larger group of property owners have systems that are under considerable stress, leading to problems with odors and difficulties associated with marketing their homes. Opponents of the study coalesced into an informal committee, which was led by Glen Hills residents who had been on the citizens' advisory committee. The group sharply criticized the study's methodology, particularly its reliance on modeling in place of assembling and analyzing information on the actual condition of existing septic systems. The group noted that the Master Plan had recommended both analysis of known septic failures and groundwater testing if needed and asserted that the AMT study had provided neither. The group considered the identification of broad areas as "unsustainable" for septic disposal systems particularly inappropriate, and an illegitimate basis for the Phase II evaluation of conceptual sewer extensions.

After reviewing the study and meeting with local residents, the County Executive made four recommendations:

- To maintain consistency with sewer service policies articulated in the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, and because public sewer service is not generally available in Glen Hills, property owners should first consider septic disposal systems for new development or replacing existing systems;
- Documented health problems caused by septic system failures should remain the only justification for constructing new sewer extensions; if larger areas suffer such failures, existing Water and Sewer Plan policies are available to address such situations;
 - WSSC, Montgomery and Prince George's counties should develop a main extension process that improves affordability for property owners;
- Allow use of the existing Water and Sewer Plan policy for abutting mains in Glen Hills;
- Maintain the existing Piney Branch restricted sewer service access policy for the portions of the Glen Hills study area within that watershed.

ANALYSIS

The text amendment to the Water and Sewer Plan now under review reflects the Executive's recommendations. It clearly indicates that individual, on-site septic systems are and should continue to be the primary means of wastewater disposal in Glen Hills. It strictly limits consideration of community sewer service to four conditions:

- Relief for individual properties with health problems resulting from documented septic system failures;
- Properties in a specifically designated public health problem area;
- Properties that abut existing or planned sewer mains and satisfy the policy requirements in the "abutting mains" policy;
- Properties located in both the study area and the Piney Branch watershed that meet requirements of the Piney Branch restricted sewer access policy.

The proposed text amendment precisely conforms to the policy recommendations of the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan. The Master Plan proposes a policy under which “the sole basis for providing new sewer service would be well-documented septic failures where extension could be provided consistent with results of the study and in a logical, economical and environmentally acceptable manner.” (p 24) The text amendment offers four conditions that will enable resolution of future septic system failures by allowing extensions of public sewer service: when septic failures can be documented; when public health problem areas are designated; when properties can meet abutting mains requirements (which requires the property or building on the property to have existed *before* the sewer line was extended to the area); and when the requirements of the Piney Branch restricted service policy can be met. (The Subregion Master Plan recommended modifications to the existing service policy that were included in the Water and Sewer Plan.)

More broadly, the proposed text amendment reinforces the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan’s long-standing land use vision for Glen Hills—as a low density residential community whose development using septic systems would contribute to protecting natural resources. Earlier master plans sought to use the provision of sewer service to help set appropriate densities in parts of the Subregion. The 1980 Potomac Master Plan set four stages for providing public sewer service; it placed Glen Hills in stage 4, which would be evaluated only after higher priority areas (generally, unserved areas in the R-200 Zone that could take advantage of existing road capacity and would, at the time, provide moderately priced dwelling units) received service.

By 2002, the Master Plan stated, “a comprehensive evaluation indicates that providing community sewer service to areas zoned for one- and two-acre development, and contrary to smart growth policies, has undermined the environmental emphasis of zoning areas for low-density development, especially where septic suitability is marginal.” (p 22) The Plan therefore generally recommended against public sewer service for low-density areas in the RE-1 and RE-2 zones, except for properties at or very near the edge of previously approved areas.

It should be noted that under the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012, whose goal was to limit the impact of large subdivisions using septic systems on sensitive environmental resources, most of the Glen Hills neighborhood was designated a Septic Tier III area. Tier III areas are generally large-lot residential communities that are not planned for sewerage service. This designation reflects the policy recommendations of the 2002 Master Plan. Glen Hills’ Tier III designation is included in the official map displaying septic tiers for Montgomery County. The Council may amend official tiers only through amendments to the General Plan or by amendments to the Subdivision Regulations.

CONCLUSION

The Executive’s proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan is consistent with both the Potomac Subregion Master Plan’s specific recommendations for evaluating sewer service in the community and with the Master Plan’s broader land use goals for the preservation of low-density residential resources in Potomac. It reinforces the Plan’s environmental focus by using septic suitability as a “proxy” for managing densities and allowing environmental constraints to limit the environmental impact of residential development. Planning staff recommends that the Planning Board support the proposed amendment, and transmit comments to the County Council for Council consideration.



Maryland Department of Planning

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

David R. Craig, Secretary
Wendi W. Peters, Deputy Secretary

September 24, 2015

Mrs. Janice Outen
Maryland Department of the Environment
Water Management Administration
1800 Washington Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Subject: Montgomery County Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan
Draft Text Amendment for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

Dear Mrs. Outen:

Thank you for providing the Maryland Department of Planning with a copy of the draft text Amendment for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study. We reviewed this draft update pursuant to the Code of Maryland regulations 26.03.01.03 and as required by the Environmental Article Section 9-507 (b) (2) and offer the following comments for your consideration.

Summary of Amendment

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) engaged in a study of the sustainability of septic systems in the Glen Hills area. The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended this study in order to evaluate long-term sustainable wastewater disposal policies for these neighborhoods.

The majority of existing homes in the study area use wells and septic systems for their water supply and wastewater disposal. These houses were built mostly in the 1950s to 1970s, before the advent of current well and septic system testing and permitting requirements. Historically, some of these systems have failed due to original system design or site limitations. In some cases the septic systems were replaced with more modern designs or sewer service was extended to address these failures.

Phase 1 of this study determined the present status of septic systems in Glen Hills and evaluated the potential sustainability of the existing septic systems in the study area. Phase 2 of the study examined in more detail those parts of the Phase 1 study area with conditions that could limit the long-term use of the existing septic systems and limit the replacement of these systems in the future. Phase 2 also evaluated options for using conventional or innovative septic system

technologies or public sewer service to ensure the sustainability of the neighborhood's wastewater disposal needs.

As recommended by the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan, the goal of the Glen Hills Study was to provide information upon which the County Council could base appropriate policies for wastewater disposal service within the study area. With the completion of the study reports, the County Executive provided these reports to the County Council along with recommendations for service policies.

The County Executive has recommended:

- That the use of on-site septic systems continues to be the primary wastewater disposal method within the study area, consistent with master plan recommendations and Water and Sewer Plan service policies.
- That the provision of public sewer service continues to be used to relieve cases involving documented septic system failures, as needed.
- That the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS) coordinate to evaluate and recommend—only as needed—the establishment of health problem areas within Glen Hills. These are areas where future septic system repair or replacement limitations may require the eventual use of public sewer service. The inclusion of such an area in the County's Water and Sewer Plan will require the approval of the County Council.
- That the use of the Water and Sewer Plan's "abutting mains" service policy be restored within the study area. This policy allows for only a single sewer connection for an existing property abutting an existing or approved sewer main. The policy is designed so as not to promote the subdivision or resubdivision of existing properties using public sewer service.
- That the provisions of the Piney Branch restricted sewer service access policy remain unchanged for those parts of the study area located within the Piney Branch subwatershed of Watts Branch.

The text amendment translates the County Executive's sewer service policy recommendations into the format of policy language for the Water and Sewer Plan. It amends existing language addressing the Glen Hills Neighborhoods found in Chapter 1, Section II.E.1. and Table 1-T3: Special Master Plan Water and Sewer (only that part of the table addressing the Glen Hills area).

The following language is added to Chapter 1 Table 1-T3:

With the master plan-requested study completed in 2014, the following service policies apply to the Glen Hills Study Area:

Individual, on-site septic systems are the primary wastewater disposal method consistent with the area's standard-type development under the RE-1 Zone.

Community sewer service can be considered only under the following conditions for:

Properties in need of relief from public health problems resulting from documented septic system failures (Sections II.B.5.b. and II.E.2.).

Properties included within a specifically designated public health problem area (Sections II.B.5.a. and II.E.2.).

Properties that abut existing or planned sewer mains and that satisfy the requirements of the "abutting mains" policy (Section II.E.3.a.)

Properties within the study area and within the Piney Branch subwatershed that satisfy the requirements for community sewer service under the Piney Branch restricted sewer service policy (Section II.E.12.b.).

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

This amendment is consistent with the recommendation of the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan. The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended this study in order to evaluate long-term sustainable wastewater disposal policies for these neighborhoods. The amendment provides a long-term sustainable wastewater disposal policy for the Glen Hills neighborhoods.

Priority Funding Area Review

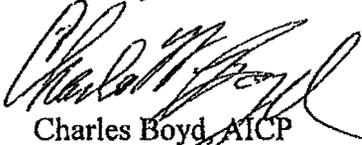
Pursuant to Finance and Procurement Article 5-7B-02 local jurisdictions are eligible to receive State financial assistance if the project is located in a Priority Funding Area (PFA). We note that this area is not planned for sewer service in the County Comprehensive Plan and therefore the county did not intend for the area to be a PFA.

Growth Tier Map Review

The Glen Hills area is designated Tier III on the Montgomery County Growth Tier Map. Since the amendment does not propose any sewer designation changes no growth tier map amendments are needed at this time.

If you have any questions concerning these comments please call La Verne Gray at 410-767-4574.

Sincerely,



Charles Boyd, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning Services

cc: Jason Dubow, MDP
Steve Allan, MDP

PH 9/17/15
W/S PLAN-GLEN
HILLS

KL
CC

CHEN & McCABE, L.L.P.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

200A MONROE STREET
SUITE 300

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

(301) 279-9500
FAX: (301) 294-5195
WWW.CWTML.NET

WILLIAM JAMES CHEN, JR.*
wjc@cwtml.net
EXTENSION 222

JOHN F. McCABE, JR.*
jfm@cwtml.net
EXTENSION 225

*ALSO ADMITTED IN THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

October 19, 2015

County Council for Montgomery County
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

HAND DELIVERY

RECEIVED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

2015 OCT 19 PM 3:44

Re: Text Amendment to the Ten-Year Water Supply and
Sewerage Systems Plan: Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

Dear President Leventhal and Councilmembers:

This letter is transmitted on behalf of the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, Inc., and the Greater Glen Hills Coalition, LLC, to follow-up my letter to the Council of September 17, 2015, which was submitted in conjunction with the public hearing conducted by the T&E Committee on that date on the proposed text amendment to the Comprehensive Ten Year Water and Sewer Plan Text Amendment for the Glen Hills Area of Montgomery County. Since that public hearing the Planning Board has considered the text amendment and submitted its recommendation to the Council pursuant to a letter dated October 5, 2015. I attach a copy at **Tab 6**.¹ You will see that the Planning Board has recommended that the proposed text amendment submitted by the County Executive be "amended to provide a faster, more certain path to public sewer service when circumstances warrant", and that "homeowners whose septic systems are failing should not be required to bear the burden of proving that a grave threat to the public health is imminent in order to qualify for sewer service."

I also attach an email exchange that I had with Gene Von Gunten who is the manager of the Well and Septic Section of the Department of Permitting Services at **Tab 7**. This email exchange occurred on September 17, 2015, and clarifies that if a septic system's operation has the types of difficulties which are identified in the County's COMCOR No. 27A.00.01.12 (**Tab 3** to my September 17, 2015, letter), that situation constitutes a "health

¹ Like this letter, my letter of September 17, 2015, had attachments identified as **Tabs 1** through **5**. To avoid confusion with the attachments provided by both letters, the attachments to this letter will be identified by consecutive **Tabs 6** through **9**.

CHEN & MCCABE, L.L.P.

hazard.” This is a significant acknowledgment and should be considered in conjunction with Mr. Von Gunten’s other email which is **Tab 4** to my letter to you of September 17, 2015, in which he notes that those conditions also constitute a “failed or failing septic system.”

I also attach a supplemental statement from James T. Noonan of Straughan Environmental which addresses the beneficial implications of sewer service over individual septic systems. **Tab 8**. Please take a moment to read and consider Mr. Noonan’s discussion relative to the environmental benefits as determined by the State of Maryland resulting from sewer service as opposed to septic systems.

Finally, in light of the recommendation of the Planning Board and other feedback that has been received since the T&E Committee’s public hearing of September 17, 2015, my clients have revised their previously requested text amendment (**Tab 5** to my September 17, 2015, letter), and a copy of that revised proposed text amendment is attached as **Tab 9**. The new revised proposed text amendment also attempts to meld with the proposed text amendment submitted by the County Executive. In that regard, language retained from the Executive’s proposed text amendment is in black ink while new language proposed by my clients is in red ink. The preamble is, admittedly, longer than that contained in the Executive’s text, but that is because it tracks the history of the septic system problems in the Glen Hills Area starting with (a) the recommendation in the 2002 Potomac Sub-region Master Plan that sewer service be minimized, (b) the plan’s recommended study of the septic system problems which establish the undeniable existence of failed and failing septic systems, (c) the significance of COMCOR No. 27A.00.01.12 which establishes that under County regulation the existing conditions constitute “failed or failing” septic systems which also constitute “health hazards” as noted by the emails with Mr. Von Gunten, (d) the master plan’s recommendation for “providing new sewer service [upon] well documented septic failures”, (e) the undeniable evidence of the existence of those conditions based upon the study’s findings and the testimony of the residents of the Glen Hills Area, and (f) the recommendation of the Planning Board. My clients’ proposed text amendment includes the policy of the County Executive that the Glen Hills area should remain a low density residential area served with septic systems by including the Executive’s policy (in black ink):

- Individual, on-site septic systems are the primary wastewater disposal method consistent with the area’s standard-type development under the RE-1 Zone.

See, **Tab 9**, p. 2.

Further, my clients proposed policies also adopt the Executive’s four policies for circumstances under which sewer service would be provided. **Tab 9**, p.2. In addition to the

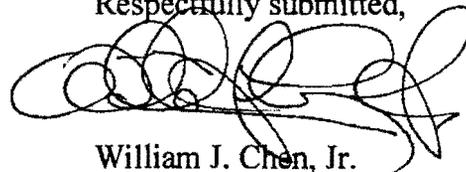
CHEN & McCABE, L.L.P.

Executive's policies, my clients' proposed text amendment provides additional policies that are more realistic and responsive to the problems of the residents of the Glen Hills Area by allowing residents with the aforementioned septic problems to apply for sewer service with the assurance that they will be able to proceed through the County's regulatory scheme on a clear, faster, and more certain path. Indeed, one provision authorizes a determination or certification of a failed or failing septic system by an installer or inspector of such systems, who must be designated by the Department of Permitting Services. In addition, the policies proposed by my clients make it very clear that only one sewer connection will be permitted per property, and that connections will not be available for resubdivision of properties or the subdivision of parcels. Thus, there is no development or increased density. Furthermore, the cost for providing the sewer service must be borne by the resident, but no resident is forced to apply, or pay, for sewer service.

In short, my clients proposed text amendment is structured such that anyone reviewing the text amendment, such as MDE or a court, will clearly see the logic and rationale of the County Council, particularly that it recognizes and follows the provisions of the Potomac Master Plan, and that it has reached its decision to approve the text amendment in accordance with the language contained in the master plan. The bottom line is that my clients' proposed text amendment is compliant with the master plan, and is a reasonable response to the undisputed septic system problems that exist in the Glen Hills Area.

The Council's consideration of these matters is sincerely appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



William J. Chen, Jr.

Attachments.

WJC:mml

- cc: George Leventhal, Councilmember
- Nancy Floreen, Councilmember
- Roger Berliner, Councilmember
- Marc Elrich, Councilmember
- Tom Hucker, Councilmember
- Sidney Katz, Councilmember
- Nancy Navarro, Councilmember
- Craig Rice, Councilmember
- Hans Riemer, Councilmember
- Keith Levchenko, Council staff

N:\Bill Chen\GLEN HILLS\COUNTY COUNCIL LTR 10-19-15.wpd



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

October 5, 2015

The Honorable George Leventhal, President
Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Leventhal:

At its regular meeting of September 24, 2015, the Planning Board discussed a proposed Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan for the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study. The Amendment, proposed by the County Executive, revises the county's Special Policies for the Provision of Water and Sewerage Service, establishing a policy for wastewater disposal in the Glen Hills neighborhood of Potomac.

The Board considered a Planning Staff report recommending approval of the Executive's proposal, heard extensive testimony from Glen Hills residents, including an alternative policy proposal, and discussed the issue with staff and with representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection. Following the discussion and its deliberations, the Board voted 4-1 to endorse modifying the Executive's proposed text amendment to provide a clear and objective standard for evaluating proposed sewer extensions in the area. Chair Anderson, and Commissioners Fani-Gonzalez, Presley and Wells-Harley voted to support the Executive's proposal with this modification; Commissioner Dreyfuss dissented and argued for an immediate sewer category change for the area. The staff report is attached for the Council's use.

In considering the issues presented by the public testimony, the Planning Board faced two important tasks: respecting the Master Plan's development and environmental policies for Glen Hills and providing clearly needed relief for neighborhood residents whose individual systems have failed or are likely to fail in the near future. A majority of the Board concluded that the Executive's proposal should be amended to provide a faster, more certain path to public sewer service when circumstances warrant. The Board believes that the Executive's proposal to establish both a process for considering when new sewer connections should be allowed and a mechanism to pay for them is sound. The Board, however, is persuaded that homeowners whose septic systems are failing should not be required to bear the burden of proving that a grave threat to the public health is imminent in order to qualify for sewer service. If a property owner with a troubled system can demonstrate that their property would not be considered suitable for a new septic system if the property were being developed for the first time, then that homeowner should be considered eligible for sewer service on public

The Honorable George Leventhal
October 5, 2015
Page Two

health grounds. If, on the other hand, a new septic system using currently accepted technologies and design methods is feasible, then septic treatment should continue to be used. The majority believes that this criterion will make it easier for larger areas of the neighborhood to seek relief under the proposed policy by removing ambiguity concerning what evidence or analysis is required to establish eligibility for sewer service based on public health considerations. It will also preserve Glen Hills as a low-density housing resource that generally relies on individual septic systems, as envisioned by the Master Plan.

Should the Council determine that an amendment to the Potomac Subregion Master Plan is needed to address the Glen Hills issue, the Board majority would support such a request.

Commissioner Dreyfuss felt that recent extensions of public service to parts of Glen Hills, combined with public testimony of neighborhood residents to the effect that many systems are failing or have failed and cannot be repaired or replaced, demonstrated a substantial public health problem and that, as a result, relief in the form of logical sewer main extensions for the entire community was warranted now. Mr. Dreyfuss therefore voted to designate the entire Glen Hills area as sewer category S-3, so that planning for public service could begin and be available immediately as existing individual systems fail. Mr. Dreyfuss believes that such a designation would be in accordance with the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to evaluate the Executive's proposed text amendment as part of the Council's review of the matter. Planning staff will be available at the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment committee worksession on October 26.

Sincerely,



Casey Anderson
Chair

Bil Chen

From: Bil Chen [wjc@cwtm.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 4:21 PM
To: 'von Gunten, Gene'
Subject: RE: Health hazards
Thank you. Bil.

From: von Gunten, Gene [mailto:Gene.vonGunten@montgomerycountymd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 4:15 PM
To: Bil Chen
Subject: Re: Health hazards

Yes

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 17, 2015, at 4:12 PM, Bil Chen <wjc@cwtm.net> wrote:

Gene: May I share that information with the County Council? Bil.

From: von Gunten, Gene [mailto:Gene.vonGunten@montgomerycountymd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 4:09 PM
To: Bil Chen
Subject: Re: Health hazards

Perhaps not, but failing to the surface, backing up, or contaminating the ground water- they are all HH

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 17, 2015, at 4:03 PM, Bil Chen <wjc@cwtm.net> wrote:

Beats me. If the septic system is that bad, failing or failed, I would assume that it is a health hazard. Is that terminology, "health hazard", defined anywhere? Bil.

From: von Gunten, Gene [mailto:Gene.vonGunten@montgomerycountymd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 3:48 PM
To: Bil Chen
Subject: RE: Health hazards

Who said it would not?

From: Bil Chen [mailto:wjc@cwtm.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 3:47 PM
To: von Gunten, Gene <Gene.vonGunten@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Health hazards

Gene: If an individual septic system is exhibiting the conditions enumerated in COMCOR 27A.00.01.12, why wouldn't the septic system or property be certified as a health hazard? Bil Chen.



STRAUGHAN
ENVIRONMENTAL

October 16, 2015

County Council for Montgomery County
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**Re: Text Amendment to the Ten-Year Water Supply and Sewerage
Systems Plan: Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study**

Dear President Leventhal and Councilmembers:

Last month I submitted testimony in support of the text amendment, sponsored by the Greater Glen Hills Coalition and the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, which would revise the Sewer Service classification for the Glen Hills Community to S-3, Planned Service. In that letter there were several statements regarding the environmental impact of continued use of on-site septic systems. It is my understanding that you have received comment from several sources that, as I am given to understand, claim that septic systems are environmentally safe alternative to community, publicly-owned and operated, sewerage systems. Since I have worked in this field for many years, I have been requested by the Greater Glen Hills Coalition to address this point.

The impacts of septic systems on water quality are well documented. In 2010 the State of Maryland completed the "Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed." On page ES-9 of that document a comparison is made of the impacts of septic system use to sewerage service is made. That document states that nitrogen loads from "new development on well and septic is almost 5 times higher than new loads from sewered areas." On a per household basis septic systems add 18.46 pounds of Nitrogen per year to the waters of the Chesapeake Bay compared to 3.87 pounds per year from a household on public sewer. This is no small difference. Septic systems are one of the major contributing sectors of nitrogen, a key pollutant in the Bay. The State has adopted, as a key strategy for reducing these pollutant loads, connecting septic system communities to Wastewater Treatment Plants with advanced nutrient removal technologies whenever possible.

You have heard from other testimony references to the Septic Tier legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2012. That is yet another effort by the State of Maryland to "reduce the last unchecked major source of nitrogen pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and other waterways." Again, the purpose of this State legislation was to limit the spread of new subdivisions on septic systems. It was not designed or intended to limit the provision of sewer service. The preamble of the legislation states that "Without action to reduce the nitrogen loads from new development served by on-site sewage disposal

systems, the Phase II WIP will force other sources, such as wastewater treatment plants, urban stormwater, and various agricultural sources to reduce their loads even further, constraining economic growth and placing additional burdens on the agricultural community and other sources.”

As I pointed out in my letter of September 17, the State has established a program, with the possibility of financial assistance to connect areas with septic systems to community systems with enhanced nutrient reductions. The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund has a number of criteria, that are entirely consistent with the text amendment proposed by the Greater Glen Hills Coalition and the Potomac Highlands Citizen Association, which qualify an area for State funding. Those criteria include:

- Consistency with the Water and Sewer Plan (the area needs to be in a planned service area category (S-3)),
- MDE will require addition information such as public health issues; potential future in-fill development; mitigation measures proposed to limit growth; net nitrogen reduction after accounting for maximum future in-fill development to determine if a PFA exception is warranted and provide an opportunity for public comments.

In light of all of these factors, I again strongly urge this Committee to support and adopt the text amendment as submitted by the Greater Glen Hills Coalition and the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association.

Respectfully Submitted,

James T. Noonan, AICP

Table 1-T3: Special Master Plan Water and Sewer Service Recommendations

General Area Affected	Master Plan Service Recommendation & Comments
Potomac Subregion Master Plan (2002)	
Glen Hills Study Area [Neighborhoods (as defined in the 2002 master plan.)]	<p><u>The 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommended new community sewer service be limited only to documented public health problems pending the completion of an area-wide sanitary survey by DPS and DEP. The master plan also provided for “a study of the septic failures in Glen Hills to develop measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of septic service for new home construction and existing home renovations, and to address the need for limited sewer extensions if needed.” The master plan study was completed in 2014, and made several key findings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>• Approximately 52% of the study area lots were estimated to be permitted prior to 1975 and potentially constrained by lack of adequate reserve area (page 46, §5.1.)</u> <u>• MCDPS record information included documented failures, replacement to septic systems, and records of failed septic field testing. A history of previous septic field failures is an indication of future failures and multiple failures and replacements eliminate useable lot area for future septic field replacements (page 47, §5.8.)</u> <p><u>COMCOR 27A.00.01.12, states “Any sewage disposal system, with its contents accessible to flies, animals, or surface drainage or endangering a water supply or health in any other way...is considered a sewage disposal <i>nuisance</i>” which requires the owner or occupant of the premise to make application to connect to public sewer.</u></p> <p><u>With completion of the study the County Executive has proposed a Water and Sewer Plan Text Amendment for the Glen Hills Area, and the T&E Committee conducted a public hearing on the text amendment. In addition, the Planning Board’s recommendation has noted that there was “clearly needed relief for neighborhood residents whose individual systems have failed or are likely to fail in the near future”, and that the “Executive’s proposal should be amended to provide a faster more certain path to public sewer service when circumstances warrant.”</u></p> <p><u>The descriptions and findings of the study together with the testimony and submissions of area residents demonstrate the existence of failed septic systems and indications of future failures as contemplated by the master plan. The evidence establishes the need for future sewer service extensions, and that the following policies minimize such extensions in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner. Accordingly, the following service policies apply to the Glen Hills Area:</u></p>

- Individual, on-site septic systems are the primary wastewater disposal method consistent with the area's standard-type development under the RE-1 Zone.
- S-3 community sewer service shall be provided under the following special conditions and restrictions (II.A.2.):
 - Properties in need of relief from public health problems resulting from documented septic system failures
 - Properties included within a specifically designated public health problem area
 - Properties that abut existing or planned sewer mains and that satisfy the requirements of the "abutting mains" policy
 - Properties within the study area and within the Piney Branch subwatershed that satisfy the requirements for community sewer service under the Piney Branch restricted sewer service policy
 - Properties which need service, whether for new construction or renovation, that on-site conventional deep trench septic system is not feasible or adequate.
- Sewer service is not available for new lots or new lots created by the subdivision of parcels. Service is available as provided for herein for properties that are, or can be, eligible for one building permit for a single-family detached dwelling.
- Documentation of septic systems that are failing or have failed may be supplied by a professional septic system inspector or installer designated by DPS or a public health officer.
- Under these policies properties are allowed a single sewer hookup only.

[The master plan recommends that only documented public health problems shall be justification for the approval of sewer service area category changes within this area, pending the completion of an area-wide sanitary survey by DPS and DEP.]

Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, Inc.
November 12, 2015

County Council for Montgomery County
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Text Amendment to the Ten-Year Water Supply and
Sewerage Systems Plan: Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study

Dear President Leventhal, T & E Committee and Councilmembers:

This letter is transmitted on behalf of the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, Inc. (PHCA) and the Greater Glen Hills Coalition, LLC (GGHC). It summarizes support information previously submitted by these organizations at hearings before the Maryland National Park and Planning Board, and the County Council's T & E Committee. Specifically, this letter seeks to remedy apparently discriminatory impressions created by Council staff inclusion only of the support by West Montgomery Citizens Association (WMCA) in the review packet distributed on October 26, 2015.

Request for Amendment of Staff Packet of October 26, 2015

We see the omission of support from Potomac Highlands and Glen Hills residents as both unfair and misleading. Failure to include our supporters in this packet implies that the WMCA viewpoint is representative of our community's preferences. The attached list of supporters demonstrate that a strong grassroots movement calls for improved services to our neighborhoods. The PHCA and GGHC and the many hundreds of voters that we represent request that this letter be provided as an attachment to the Memorandum of October 26, 2015 prepared for the T&E Committee by Mr. Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst.

Evidence of Broad Community Support

The proposed Text Amendment for changes in the Water and Sewer Plan was submitted October 19, 2015 by our attorney, William J. Chen. It is designed to meet requirements of the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan and it removes obstacles to resolving sanitary disposal problems we are currently facing. Creation of the GGHC text amendment was supported by 223 property owners who signed Letters of Support as listed in Attachment A. Many of these individuals also made significant financial contributions to this effort. Previously we provided complete copies of these signed and witnessed statements as attachments to testimonies.

Please ensure that our strong base of support is understood during the T&E Committee work session scheduled for November 16, 2015.

Thank you,



Knowles Little, President,
Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, Inc.

60A

**Attachment (1) LIST OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE SIGNED LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR THE
POTOMAC HIGHLANDS AND GREATER GLEN COALITION TEXT AMENDMENT**

Distribution copies:

**George Leventhal, Council Chairman
Roger Berliner, T & E Chairman, Councilmember
Nancy Floreen, T & E Committee, Councilmember
Tom Hucker, T & E Committee, Councilmember
Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst**

Via Email:

**Marc Elrich, Councilmember
Sidney Katz, Councilmember
Nancy Navarro, Councilmember
Craig Rice, Councilmember
Hans Riemer, Councilmember**

**ATTACHMENT A
LIST OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE SIGNED LETTERS OF
SUPPORT FOR THE POTOMAC HIGHLANDS AND GREATER GLEN
COALITION TEXT AMENDMENT**

Jung Lee	13505	Bailey Drive
Doranal Basappa	10105	Bevern Lane
Dennis Capolongo	10124	Bevern Lane
James Cain	10108	Burton Glen Drive
Christopher Penny	10129	Burton Glen Drive
Steven Krasnow	12604	Celtic Court
Daniel Woronow	12609	Celtic Court
Todd Bardwell	12610	Circle Drive
Peter Copplestone	12805	Circle Drive
Shiva Bhuvanendran	12912	Circle Drive
Diane Epstein	12928	Circle Drive
Rita Kovach	12932	Circle Drive
Scott Mcgraw	12933	Circle Drive
Enci Fang	13309	Cleveland Drive
Richard Norton	13509	Cleveland Drive
Sam Wax	13513	Cleveland Drive
Stephen Klomparens	13520	Cleveland Drive
Joe Wu	13039	Glen Mill Road
Elaine Buschor	13520	Glen Mill Road
Shirley Carestia	13529	Glen Mill Road
Charlotte Siegel	13532	Glen Mill Road
Lorenzo Marcolin	13533	Glen Mill Road
Lisi Biciocchi	13421	Glen Lea Way
Ali Mojiammo	13305	Glen Mill Road
Elizabeth Keller	13606	Glen Mill Road
Jon Cohen	10115	Lakewood Dr
Yajing Chen	10116	Lakewood Dr

Beth Sherman	10120	Lakewood Dr
Linda Hannam	10211	Lakewood Dr
Grace Wu	10231	Lakewood Dr
Astrid Hricak	10303	Lloyd Road
Reza Sadjadpour	10310	Lloyd Road
Sheila Barnes	10417	Lloyd Road
Maria Elena Stopher	9701	Overlea Drive
JT Hatpiels Smith	9708	Overlea Drive
Dina Torok	9720	Overlea Drive
Ennan Guan	13120	Ridge Drive
Carole Mcwilliams	13216	Ridge Drive
Richard Vilardo	13217	Ridge Drive
Carrie Van Bergen	13400	Ridge Drive
Vic Pisani	13401	Ridge Drive
Sam Shi	13408	Ridge Drive
Craig Goodman	12801	Spring Drive
Patrick Marinaro	12812	Spring Drive
John Casper	9800	Sunset Drive
Jill Siegel	13400	Valley Drive
Andrew Barbash	13404	Valley Drive
David Crandall	9607	Watts Branch Drive
Changlong Li	9611	Watts Branch Drive
Doris Froelich	9816	Watts Branch Drive
Mike Masri	9824	Watts Branch Drive
Leon (Liyng) Sun	13509	Bailey Drive
Peter Shaw	13510	Bailey Drive
Norman Dreyfus	10110	Betteker Lane

David Scull	10125	Bevern Lane
Jack Zhao	2	Bratton Court
Paul Stein	10004	Bratton Drive
Fernand Lavallee	10100	Burton Glen Dr
Fernand Lavallee	10101	Burton Glen Dr
Li Cai	10105	Burton Glen Dr
Patrick Francis	10109	Burton Glen Dr
Lynn Stander	10112	Burton Glen Dr
Bruce Hering	10113	Burton Glen Dr
Barry Treadway	10116	Burton Glen Dr
Pradeep Rau	10117	Burton Glen Dr
Hamid Musavi	10121	Burton Glen Dr
Kris Kumar	13201	Carriage Court
Michael Sinay	13205	Carriage Court
Bill Reinhold	13209	Carriage Court
Diwarkar Pandey	13213	Carriage Court
George Simmons	0	Circle Drive
Ahmad Jamshidi	12500	Circle Drive
Kevin Smart	12915	Circle Drive
Duke Mercer	12923	Circle Drive
Sherryl Marshall	12924	Circle Drive
Kevin Smart	12925	Circle Drive
Ted Smart	0	Cleveland Drive
George Simmons	0	Cleveland Drive
Howard Gartenhaus	12901	Cleveland Drive
Daniel Kracov	13000	Cleveland Drive
John Croker	13007	Cleveland Drive
Ted Smart	13200	Cleveland Drive
Dave Danielson	13404	Cleveland Drive
Albert Shvilly	13408	Cleveland Drive

Ken Armstrong	13412	Cleveland Drive
Carol Meyer	13413	Cleveland Drive
Carol Meyer	13421	Cleveland Drive
Susan Mondelo	13424	Cleveland Drive
Abdul Sheikh	13429	Cleveland Drive
Dhyan Mishra	13505	Cleveland Drive
Don Kanen	13516	Cleveland Drive
Anand Verma	13524	Cleveland Drive
Ginger Ankerbrand	13528	Cleveland Drive
Jatinder Sehmi	13532	Cleveland Drive
Josh Cook	2	Foxden Court
Arthur Eisenhower	3	Foxden Court
Doug Obert	5	Foxden Court
Simin Roshan	6	Foxden Court
Jason Gottschalk	0	Foxden Drive
Robert Henley	13000	Foxden Drive
Tracy Willis	13001	Foxden Drive
Bob Blitz	13004	Foxden Drive
Daniel Geringer	13005	Foxden Drive
Ken Pfaehler	13009	Foxden Drive
YI YUN & ALICIA J	13100	Foxden Drive
Honorato Nicodemus	13110	Foxden Drive
Jonathan Maizel	13120	Foxden Drive
WANG GUANG YANG	13200	Foxden Drive
Paul Mckian	13201	Foxden Drive
Barry Barga	13204	Foxden Drive
Michake Friedman	13211	Foxden Drive
Michael Huke	13221	Foxden Drive
Leslie Greenberg	13300	Foxden Drive
Michael Huke	13301	Foxden Drive

Peter Pasho	13310	Foxden Drive
Michael Huke	13311	Foxden Drive
Thomas Clancy	13320	Foxden Drive
Peg Mancuso	13111	Glen Mill Road
Pat Brick	13208	Glen Mill Road
Nasser Kamazani	13304	Glen Mill Road
TOSHIMICHI SHINOHARA	13317	Glen Mill Road
Mildred Scheer	13409	Glen Mill Road
Howard Huie	13412	Glen Mill Road
Mildred Scheer	13413	Glen Mill Road
Ken Mendelson	13500	Glen Mill Road
Ken Leung	13501	Glen Mill Road
David Griffiths	13504	Glen Mill Road
Greg Metzger	13505	Glen Mill Road
P. Reddy	13508	Glen Mill Road
Susan Marth	13509	Glen Mill Road
Inese Beitins	13513	Glen Mill Road
Anand Verma	13517	Glen Mill Road
James Chung	13525	Glen Mill Road
Renu Mahalingam	13528	Glen Mill Road
Yang Liren	13611	Glen Mill Road
Richard Reichard	13701	Glen Mill Road
Andrew Prandoni	0	Glen Lea Way
Dennis Eisen	13408	Glen Lea Way
Barbara Mahjoubi	13412	Glen Lea Way
Andrew Prandoni	13417	Glen Lea Way
Joan A. Beach	13420	Glen Lea Way
Mike Tofigh	0	Glen Mill Road
Jill Asman	10100	Lakewood Dr
Todd Scopic	10101	Lakewood Dr

Leith Wain	10112	Lakewood Dr
Nicholas Lore	10124	Lakewood Dr
Nicholas Lore	10200	Lakewood Dr
William Hider	10241	Lakewood Dr
David Cosson	10217	Lloyd Road
Steve Niles	10311	Lloyd Road
Thomas Gallagher	10412	Lloyd Road
Darrell Hollis	13320	Oakwood Drive
Shelia C. Hanz	13321	Oakwood Drive
Stella Gibbs	13326	Oakwood Drive
Yujin Wang	0	Overlea Drive
Elizabeth Richardson	9200	Overlea Drive
Ann Wang	9201	Overlea Drive
Michael Gordon	9206	Overlea Drive
Brandon Beach	9211	Overlea Drive
Ivan Gorman	9212	Overlea Drive
Peter Doherty	9215	Overlea Drive
Dave Thomas	9219	Overlea Drive
Warron Kibbe	9306	Overlea Drive
David Gershberg	9307	Overlea Drive
Kunyi Wu	9312	Overlea Drive
Michael Bell	9313	Overlea Drive
Tom Vickers	9319	Overlea Drive
Anne Christensen	9323	Overlea Drive
Jeffrey Kurland	9401	Overlea Drive
Stephen Levee	9411	Overlea Drive
Pauline Fratantoni	9412	Overlea Drive
Ian Beiser	9418	Overlea Drive
Bill Kisse	9419	Overlea Drive

Karine Garnier	9424	Overlea Drive
Maryam Mamdouhi	9425	Overlea Drive
Laura Henmueller	9501	Overlea Drive
Neil Feldman	9507	Overlea Drive
John Yakaitis	9513	Overlea Drive
Shengting Pana	9517	Overlea Drive
Lawrence Ng	9600	Overlea Drive
Dan McClure	9601	Overlea Drive
JT Charles	9613	Overlea Drive
William Waigner	9617	Overlea Drive
Rosemary Drake	9618	Overlea Drive
Carolyn Willis	13113	Ridge Drive
Darrell Hollis	13119	Ridge Drive
Keh-Ming Lu	13208	Ridge Drive
William Bedresford	13212	Ridge Drive
Rick Singer	13309	Ridge Drive
Debbie Swanstrom	13313	Ridge Drive
Mike Cleveland	13535	Ridge Drive
Steve Clark	9101	Scott Drive
Bill Stansbury	9105	Scott Drive
Mary Chretien	9108	Scott Drive
Knowles Little	9109	Scott Drive
Peter Yao	9204	Scott Drive
Max Shevitz	9208	Scott Drive
Gary Bosco	9213	Scott Drive
Jud Robertson	9216	Scott Drive
Ruby Long	13305	Southwood Dr
Dwayne Chen	12808	Spring Drive
John Burkinshaw	9609	Sunset Drive
Fiona Lau	9708	Sunset Drive

Allen Neyman	9900	Sunset Drive
Gloria Huang Chang	9901	Sunset Drive
TOSHIMICHI SHINOHARA	9909	Sunset Drive
Charlie Murphy	0	Valley Drive
Stelios Kirimlis	13000	Valley Drive
Feng Wei	13001	Valley Drive
Christine Gerbstadt	13100	Valley Drive
Ted Smart	13101	Valley Drive
Parvis Mizrahi	13405	Valley Drive
Malcolm Patterson	13408	Valley Drive
Khosrow Akmal	13413	Valley Drive
Thomas day	13417	Valley Drive
George Simmons	0	Viers Drive
Jason Gottschalk	9604	Viers Drive
Jason Gottschalk	0	Viers Drive
Kil Kim	9505	Watts Branch Drive
Brian Coven	9508	Watts Branch Drive
Betsy Butterfield	9606	Watts Branch Drive
Udo Schuermann	9700	Watts Branch Drive
Buddy Henley	9724	Watts Branch Drive
Garner Duvall	9813	Watts Branch Drive



Stephen J. Orens
301-517-4828
sorens@milesstockbridge.com

October 16, 2015

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL
VIA REGULAR MAIL

The Honorable Nancy M. Floreen
Vice President
Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Glen Hills Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Water Supply
and Sewerage Systems Plan

Dear Vice President Floreen:

Kevin Smart, George Simmons and I appreciate having had the opportunity to explain the unique circumstances of their respective properties on Circle Drive in Glen Hills. Our draft proposal to amend the Water & Sewer Plan to enable an orderly transition of Glen Hills from reliance on septic fields to public sewer is enclosed.

We appreciate your interest in seeking a long term equitable solution to the septic failure history of Glen Hills and look forward to working with you, the T&E Committee and Council as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,


Stephen J. Orens

Encl.

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cc: The Honorable Roger Berliner, Chair, Transportation and Environment Committee
The Honorable Craig Rice
The Honorable Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
The Honorable Sidney Katz
Gwen Wright, Planning Director, M-NCPPC Planning Department
Keith Levchenko, Council Staff
Jeffrey Zyontz, Esquire, Legislative Counsel
Alan Soukup, Department of Environmental Protection
Dr. Steven Goldstein
Ms. Tedi Osias
Ms. Lisa Mandel-Trupp
Brian Jones
William J. Chen. Jr. Attorney for Glen Hills Coalition
Kevin Smart
George Simmons

**Draft Glen Hills Amendment to the text of the 2003 – 2012 Montgomery County
Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan.**

The Glen Hills area of Potomac is classified in the RE-1 zone for the development of detached single family homes on lots having a minimum lot size of one-acre. The RE-1 zoning implements the land use and zoning recommended by the 2002 Approved and Adopted Potomac Subregion Master Plan (the 2002 Master Plan). All of Glen Hills is now served by public water while only portions of the area are served by public sewer, extended, for the most part, prior to the adoption of the 2002 Master Plan. The 2002 Master Plan includes a recommendation to exclude the RE-1 zoned areas in Glen Hills from sewer service except for properties at which well-documented septic failures have been identified. However, the Approved 2003 – 2012 Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan (the “Water & Sewer Plan”) includes a policy directive that needs to be addressed in this Water & Sewer Plan amendment.

The County Council included a clear policy directive in the Approved 2003 – 2012 Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan with regard to extending sewer service through the appropriate implementation of the abutting mains policy. The Council addressed its policy directive in the following “Water and Sewer Plan Recommendation”

The Council recommends that M-NCPPC and County agency staff pursue appropriate land use restrictions, such as imperviousness limits, in the zoning ordinance and/or subdivision regulations, rather than use wastewater flow or other restrictions in the abutting mains policy as a means of controlling land use.

Glen Hills has a long history of septic system failures. The now completed Glen Hills Study required by the 2002 Master Plan confirms that history of septic field failures and provides convincing evidence that unidentified septic system failures exist and that future failure and multiple failures are highly probable.

This amendment is intended to implement the County Council’s policy directive in the 2002 Master Plan’s recommendation favoring “appropriate land use restrictions in the zoning ordinance and/or subdivision regulations, rather than use wastewater flow or other restrictions as a means of controlling land use.” The implementation of this policy needs to be equitable and appropriate in order to assure uniformity and to protect the environment without the reliance on wastewater flow restrictions that inhibit achieving the land use and zoning objectives of the 2002 Master Plan.

Accordingly, this amendment to the text of the Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan proposes Sewer Service Category S-3 for the Glen Hills area as a means of implementing the Master Plan’s land use and zoning recommendations and to achieve the orderly reduction on the reliance on septic systems for wastewater disposal for both existing recorded, buildable lots and for presently un-subdivided and unbuildable properties for which original subdivision applications are approved by the Planning Board. This text amendment to the Water & Sewer Plan does not, however, contemplate the provision of sewer service for new lots created through the resubdivision of previously subdivided record lots.

Samples of Health Problem Areas from the Water and Sewer Plan

Area Name	Well	W-Envl.	Septic	S-Envl.	Zone	No. of Props.	When	Status	Notes
Clarksburg Historic District, Clarksburg	n/a	n/a	septic	in	CRT-0.5, R-200	~ 40		Studied, Pending	Much of this area is within Ten Mile Cr. Watershed; will need pumping systems for sewer service.
Clarksburg Road (Kings Manor), Clarksburg	well	out	n/a	n/a	AR (RDT)	~ 15	2007	Studied, Partially Resolved	Survey area was substnationally larger; 30 properties included in survey. Water main installed in 2003 to serve active well failures; serves most properties.
Fountain View Subdivision, Clarksburg	n/a	n/a	septic	in	AR (RDT)	~ 165		Pending	Large subdivision built to R-R (R-200) Zone standard. Constructed using public water service and septic systems with dry sewers. Dry sewers built early to mid-1970s.
Hyattstown	well	out	septic	out	R-200, Rural, AR (RDT)	~ 60		Studied, Resolved	Hyattstown WWTP and sewer system installed c. 1998. Well contamination casued by failed septic systems. Decided to fix septic problem.
Lakewood Estates, Rockville	n/a	n/a	septic	in	R-200, RE-1	~ 30	2006	Studied, Resolved	Existing septic subdivision having replacement issues due in part to soils and half-acre lot sizes. Some sewer built 1991 - 1994 for adjacent subdivision. Other sewers built 1998 - 2007.
Sam Rice Manor, Ashton	n/a	n/a	septic	out	RC	~ 50	(1973)	Resolved	Sewer service provided via new WWPS, c. 1980.
The Corral Dr. (9700 Block), Potomac	n/a	n/a	septic	out	RE-2	~ 15	2002	Studied, Partially Resolved	Gravity and low-pressure sewers service most lots; built 2004.
Town of Laytonsville	well	in	septic	out				Partially Resolved	Groundwater contamination and small lots constrained by well locations. Solution: public water service. Water system completed 2014. Owners have been slow to hook up.
Tune Avenue Area, North Damascus	n/a	n/a	septic	out (see notes)	R-200, RE-1	~ 45	2004	Studied, Pending	The 1985 master plan did not include this area in the planned sewer envelope. Following creation of the health probeom area, the 2006 master plan made this area and others part of the sewer envelope.

The Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection, in cooperation with the Dept. of Permitting Services and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, has prepared the following information to respond to residents' questions about septic systems and public sewer service in the Glen Hills study area. (9/10/15)

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Q: Can a house with an existing septic system be enlarged or replaced using that same system?

A: This depends on the existing septic system permit and on the nature of the proposed house addition or replacement. Whether or not a house with an existing septic system can be enlarged or replaced using the existing septic system is determined by the Dept. of Permitting Services, Well and Septic Section, on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What should a property owner do to maintain an existing septic system?

A: Proper maintenance of a septic system includes pumping out the septic tank every two to five years. The pump-out frequency depends on the intensity of use -- typically the number of persons in the house using the system. More use creates the need for more frequent pumping. Users should also be aware of what should not go into the septic system. These include: any paper products (other than toilet paper approved for septic systems), personal hygiene products, food scraps and coffee grounds, and commercial septic system chemical additives or enzymes.*

** These products are advertised to reduce the need for septic tank pumping. However, they act to keep more waste solids in suspension, rather than settling to the bottom of the tank. This allows more solids to flow out of the tank, leading to premature clogging and failure of the drainfield.*

Q: How does a property owner with a septic system know when that system is starting to fail?

A: The first sign may be a sewage odor outside near the septic tank or the drainfield or inside the house. Sink drains or toilets may also run slowly. Sewage either coming to the surface of the yard or backing up into the house are clear signs of a septic system failure. Property owners with these conditions need to contact the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS), Well and Septic Section. DPS will determine whether correcting a failed septic system requires replacement of the septic system or if it can be addressed by a pump-out or a relatively simple repair, such as fixing a break or clearing a blockage in a pipe.

Q: What are the different types of septic systems available for Montgomery County residents and how are they used?

A: Three types of septic systems—referred to as “conventional” systems—are suitable for new construction (new buildings, replacement buildings, or substantial additions to existing buildings):

- Deep stone-trench septic systems
- Shallow stone-trench (or shallow tile) septic systems
- Sand mound septic systems

Alternative/innovative septic systems (such as shallow field dosing systems) are allowed as replacement systems for existing houses only. They are used only in cases where a conventional system replacement will not work.

Q: What are the “BAT” systems the State now requires?

A: The State requires the use of best available technology (BAT) for nutrient removal for all new and replacement septic systems. This technology is expected to reduce pollutant flow to groundwater and surface waters, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, and to extend the useful life of a septic system beyond that for a system lacking a BAT installation. BAT systems require electricity for operation of the aeration system installed in the septic tank. The state also requires owners of

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BAT systems to have a minimum five-year maintenance contract with a licensed contractor. Grants of up to \$15,000 from the State’s Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) are available to help owners install BAT systems.

Q: *What factors does the County consider in permitting a suitable location for a septic system?*

A: Finding a suitable site on a property for a new septic system under County and State regulations requires an approved:

- Water table test to determine the depth to the water table and subsurface rock.
- Percolation test to determine the soil percolation rate.
- Site layout plan to ensure:
 - Adequate area for the placement of the initial system and reserve drain fields -- typically at least 10,000 square feet.
 - Required minimum setbacks (separation) from features such as structures; property lines; wetlands, streams, stream buffers, and flood plains; trees; wells and other septic systems; and steep slopes

Specific requirements can vary depending on the type of septic system proposed. Testing results may also result in the need to use a specific type of septic system. For example, a water table test showing shallow ground water could indicate the need to use a sand mound system instead of a deep trench system.

Regulations require a 100-foot well separation between all wells and septic systems. The availability and use of public water service can therefore allow for more flexibility in the siting of a septic on a property.

Q: How much does it cost to install a new septic system?

A: The following information was developed for the Phase 2 report from the Glen Hills Study:

“The costs listed in Table 4.2 are for new construction, but excludes the cost of BAT technology, except in the case of drip systems. The cost of engineering design, permit application fees, and testing has also been excluded. BAT technology can add \$6,000 to \$8,000 or more to the cost of a system.”

Table 4.2 – Range of Costs for Replacement of On-Site Disposal Systems

Septic System Type	Estimated Cost of installed system - 3 or 5 Bedroom House	
	3 Bedrooms	5Bedrooms
Deep Stone Trench ^A	\$10,000	\$17,500
Shallow Stone Trench ^A	\$11,500	\$20,500
Sand Mound ^B	\$20,000	\$30,000
Drip Disposal ^C	\$37,000	\$48,000
^A Deep trench and shallow trench costs also include excavation, trenching, fill, piping, and seeding. Costs taken from RMS Means (2012). ^B Sand mound system costs provided by MCDPS (April 2011). ^C Drip disposal system costs provided by MCDPS and discussions with manufacturer. The cost of Best Available Technology (BAT) tank is included; required for replacement drip disposal systems only		

As noted previously, grants of up to \$15,000 from the State’s Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) are available to help owners install of best available technology (BAT) nutrient reduction systems.



PUBLIC SEWER SERVICE

Q: What environmental concerns exist about using public sewer service?

A: Construction of new sewer mains can result in short-term disturbance along main alignments, typically along streets. However, run-off from construction areas has to be controlled and disturbance within construction areas has to be mitigated as soon as possible. Some longer-term tree loss may also occur. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) will work with affected property owners to minimize the effects of construction on existing trees.

Sewerage systems may leak due to pipe breaks that tend to occur in trunk sewers located along stream valleys. Stream channel and bank erosion can expose formerly buried pipes and manholes leaving them vulnerable to breaks. The County has also experienced sewage discharge leaks due to the failure of central wastewater pumping stations and breaks in their associated force mains. Pumping station operations are monitored at all times. Where force mains are sited in remote locations, leaks are sometimes more difficult to discover. Sewer system leaks from local service mains (typically from manholes along public streets) more often result from pipe blockages due to tree roots, debris, and/or fats/grease. These leaks are usually noticed and resolved quickly by clearing the blockage.

WSSC operates under a consent agreement with EPA to repair and rehabilitate existing sewer mains to reduce sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), and to quickly respond to SSOs when they occur.

Q: Who should someone noticing a sewer leak contact to report it?

A: Call the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's 24-hour emergency center at either 301-206-4002 or EmergencyCallCenter@wsscwater.com.

Q: If there is a back up in the sewer system, who is responsible for clearing it?

A: Once built, sewer mains in the street and service connections between the main and the customer's property line are the responsibility of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. The service hookup between the property line and the house is the customer's responsibility.

Q: Where are gravity sewers and pressure sewers used and why?

A: The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) prefers to use gravity sewerage systems wherever possible. However, WSSC will allow the use of low-pressure sewerage systems, which require an on-site pump (grinder pump) for each house served, where needed to avoid 1) construction of new gravity mains through environmentally sensitive areas, and/or 2) construction of extraordinarily long main extensions. Gravity systems, as the name implies, operate using the force of gravity to pull sewage flows down through the mains to a treatment plant. This makes them cheaper to operate than pressure systems, which require owners to use electricity to run the pumps.

Q: How much does it cost to connect a house to an existing sewer main?

A: The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commissions (WSSC) charges approximately \$11,000 for installing a new sewer service connection. The connection runs between WSSC's sewer main, usually along the street, and the property line. This charge can be deferred over a 20-year payback period.

WSSC also assesses a Systems Development Charge (SDC) for new customers. The SDC serves to support the cost of major new facilities and of expansion of existing major facilities required to accommodate new customers throughout WSSC's service area. WSSC's SDC rates currently range from approximately \$3,100 for a house with one or two toilets to \$7,100 for a house with five toilets. These rates are based on new water and sewer service and would be less if an owner is connecting the property only to sewer service. There are also a variety of

application, permit, and inspection fees WSSC charges as part of this process, although ranging from \$35 to \$550 they are not as nearly significant as the connection and system development charges.

On site work is the other major cost component for connecting to an existing main. A WSSC-registered plumber will need to construct the sewer house hookup that will run from WSSC's service connection at the property line to the house. Abandonment of the existing septic system is also needed. On site costs can vary substantially depending on factors such as subsurface conditions, location of the existing septic tank and distance of the house from the property line.

Total project costs for a connection to an existing sewer main are estimated to range from \$23,000 to \$31,000.

WSSC's website at www.wsscwater.com provides a detailed explanation of the various requirements, fees and processes. On the homepage, go to the menu bar at the top, select "Business and Construction" and scroll down and select "Development and Construction Services." From this page select "Permit Services," which will provide detailed, step-by step connection processes along with the fees, forms, flow charts and various informational items.

Q: How much does it cost to build new sewer mains?

A: Applicants for new sewer main extensions should expect extension costs to start at \$400 to \$500 per linear foot of main. Owing to economies of project scale, shorter extensions (those less than 500 feet) will tend to cost more per foot. Other factors can also raise extension costs such as cutting existing pavement, constructing through rock or at excessive depth, and using the WSSC-built extension program. Extension costs as high as \$1,000 per linear foot of main are possible. Under the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's (WSSC's) system extension permit (SEP) program, commonly used for new main installation, applicants have to finance main design, permitting and construction. In order to address cost magnitude and equity problems with the existing extension program, the County is pursuing the feasibility of an alternative financing system with WSSC and Prince George's County.

Q: *Is there enough capacity in existing sewer mains to serve the Glen Hills neighborhood?*

A: WSSC requires a minimum diameter of 8 inches for its gravity sewers. Sewers of this size will have more than sufficient capacity to handle local flows from residential public sewer users in an area such as Glen Hills. Small-diameter, low-pressure sewers are designed based on expected flows into the main and can have limitations of the number of connections allowed.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS OR PUBLIC SEWER SERVICE

Q: *If there is available sanitary sewer capacity why do sewer service categories not allow homes using septic systems to connect to public service?*

A: In the case of the Glen Hills area, sewer service policy, rather than sewer main capacity, controls which properties are allowed to connect to public sewer service. The neighborhood is zoned as RE-1, or one house per 40,000 square feet of land. An acre equals 43,560 square feet. Zoned as such, the Glen Hills area is not generally intended for public sewer service by long-standing, Council-adopted Water and Sewer Plan policies. Most properties are therefore intended to use on-site septic systems and are designated as sewer category S-6. In general, the County's land use policies for areas zoned for lower-density development expect that actual density of residential development will depend on the suitability of the land for septic systems. The 2002 master plan supports this general policy through its sewer service recommendations. Master plan service recommendations existing before 2002 were different in this regard and did allow for some sewer service extensions to support new development within the study area.

Q: *Why is public sewer service approved for and available to some but not all properties in the study area?*

A: Several different sewerage system policies have applied to the study area over time, resulting in a patchwork pattern of public sewer service approvals.

Currently, the service recommendations from the 2002 Potomac Subarea Master Plan prevail. The only justification for providing new public sewer service in the Glen Hills area is to relieve a documented public health problem resulting from a septic system failure. Providing sewer service to relieve failed septic systems has long been a reason that sewer mains were built in the study area.

Water and Sewer Plan service policies generally intend that areas such as Glen Hills, zoned for lower-density development (see above), will use individual septic systems. However, before the adoption of the current master plan in 2002, prior master plan recommendations allowed the County to consider public sewer service to areas zoned for lower-density development on a case-by-case basis. This resulted in some sewer main extensions in the study area such as those built in the early 1990s along Jasmine Hill Terr. and Autumn Oaks La. Before that, some sewer mains were extended into the neighborhood in the late 1960s following construction of the trunk sewer main along Watts Branch. This occurred before the State delegated water and sewer service planning authority to the County government in the early 1970s.

Also before the adoption of the 2002 master plan, properties that abutted an existing or approved sewer main and existed when the main was built were allowed a single service connection to that main.

Q: *Why did some properties along Scott Dr. and Veirs Dr. receive public sewer service?*

A: These properties are located within Rockville's public water and sewer service area as designated by the State. The approval and provision of sewer service to these properties required annexation into the city. Until annexation occurs, other properties also in the city's service area need to use on-site septic systems.

Q: *In terms of a property owner's responsibilities, what is the major difference between having public sewer service versus an on-site septic system?*

A: Customers using public sewer service pay an authorized utility to have their sewage collected and treated at a central treatment facility. The utility and its operation of the collection system and treatment plant are regulated by federal, state, and local governments. Homeowners using a septic system are essentially their own wastewater utility, responsible for the management, maintenance and replacement of their septic systems.

Maryland has enacted environmental regulations aimed at significantly reducing pollutant discharges from wastewater plants. These efforts are supported by revenue from the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) paid by property owners using public sewer service. The State is working to control the use of septic systems throughout the state and is seeking to improve the nutrient reduction performance of new and replacement septic systems (BAT as explained above). MDE has said that houses using septic systems generate more nitrogen that flows into groundwater and streams, and ultimately to the Chesapeake Bay, than do houses connected to public sewer systems. The State allocates up to \$15,000 of BRF revenue per house to assist owners with costs for BAT upgrades for existing septic systems. This allocation comes from BRF fees paid by property owners using septic systems,

Annual BRF charges are the same for residential users of public sewerage systems and for residential users of septic systems.

WEST MONTGOMERY COUNTY CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 59335 • Potomac, Maryland 20854

Founded 1947

Testimony of Susanne Lee

President, West Montgomery County Citizens Association

Glen Hills Resident and Member of the Glen Hills Sewer Study Citizens Advisory Committee

in support of

Glen Hills Area Proposed Text Amendment CPTA 15-CH1-01T to the

Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan

Public Hearing before the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee

of the Montgomery County Council

September 17, 2015

The West Montgomery County Citizens Association (WMCCA) strongly supports and urges adoption by the Montgomery County Council of the Glen Hills Study Area Text Amendment CPTA 15-CH1-01T to the Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan and Water Plan as proposed by Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett.

The proposed amendment confirms that the Glen Hills area is to remain one of individual on-site septic systems, provides relief to individual homeowners for true public health problems, allows for limited hook ups to abutting mains, and affirms the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access Policy. Summarized below are the major reasons WMCCA believes the amendment should be adopted and one caveat regarding the abutting mains proposal.

The amendment and its components:

1. Reflect and ensure consistency with the requirements of the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, the Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan, the Piney Branch Watershed Special Protection Area, the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access Policy, and the Maryland Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012.
 - Potomac Subregion Master Plan (Master Plan)
Glen Hills is an RE-1 zone (minimum lot size 1 acre) located within the Potomac Subregion and thus subject to the requirements of the Master Plan. Under the Master Plan, community sewer service generally is excluded in low density zones (RE-1, RE-2, and RC). Master Plan at p. 23. With regard to Glen Hills in particular, the Master Plan states that “[t]his plan recommends restricting further sewer extensions in Glen Hills to those needed to relieve documented health problems resulting from failed septic systems.” Master Plan at p.24. The Master Plan further states that a study is to be conducted of Glen Hills and a policy developed: “Under this policy the sole basis for providing new sewer service would be well-documented septic failures where extension could be provided consistent with results of the study and in a logical, economical, and environmentally acceptable manner. *Id.*”

Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan states that “[a]reas zoned for lower density residential development (RE-1, RE-2, etc.) are...intended to be served by individual systems.” Section II.D.2

Piney Branch Watershed Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access Policy

Approximately one third of the Glen Hills area is within the Piney Branch Watershed SPA, an area of “unusually high water quality”, “fragile ecosystems” and “susceptibility to development pressures.” Master Plan at pp. 16-17. As a result, that portion of Glen Hills is subject to the requirements of the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access Policy as set forth in the Master Plan at 24-25 and the Montgomery County Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan at Section II.E.12.b.

Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012

Pursuant to the Act, on September 18, 2012, the Montgomery County Council, on the recommendation and with the approval of the Maryland Department of Planning, designated the Glen Hills area as Tier III – Large Lot Development and “Rural Villages” on septic systems.

2. Maintain and help preserve and protect Glen Hills’ unique environmental features and services. Glen Hills is a low density large lot zone crisscrossed with wetlands, ponds, and stream valleys. The scientific studies conducted for the Potomac Subregion Master plan documented its status as a “Green Wedge” serving as a critical recharge area for the Piney Branch and Watts Branch streams given the extensive development in their headwaters.
3. Reflect the actual, on the ground conditions, in Glen Hills. There are currently no documented, unresolved septic failures, no evidence of contamination of any kind from septic systems, and as the County has further determined, no public health problem areas.
4. Are reasonable, logical, practical, and sustainable to the extent they:
 - Provide relief to homeowners in the unlikely event that a septic system fails and cannot be repaired or replaced on site;
 - Allow for limited hook ups for those who abut an existing main;
 - Ensure that if there are ever public health problems, the Montgomery County Council can step in and approve community service for the homeowners in affected areas; and,
 - Confirm that Glen Hills properties in the Piney Branch watershed will continue to be subject to the Piney Branch Sewer Limited Access Policy, as are other properties in the watershed.
5. Remove the “dark cloud” of uncertainty over homeowners and their property values created by erroneous, unfounded accusations that the Glen Hills area and specific individual properties are failing or will fail on septic systems.
6. Allay Glen Hills residents’ fears that they will forced to accept sewer extensions and their enormous costs when they neither want nor need them.
7. Confirm and ensure property owners’ expectations, grounded in the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, that Glen Hills, successfully developed utilizing on site systems, will continue as such.

WMCCA’s only caveat is that additional restrictions should be placed on the abutting mains policy to ensure that its adoption in Glen Hills does not undermine the environmental goals of low density zoning by allowing the inappropriate, incremental expansion of sewers throughout the area, including to

environmentally sensitive areas. Master Plan at 23-24. As a result, we recommend that the abutting mains policy should be limited to the 21 properties currently identified by County Executive Leggett as abutting existing mains, all of which are improved with single family homes. The policy should further exclude development in environmentally sensitive areas of those properties and development that does not conform to established environmental standards. Master Plan at 24. It should also clarify that no one can be forced to hook up just because they own one of the 21 properties that abut a main.

Although not addressed in the proposed amendment, WMCCA also supports the efforts of Montgomery County and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to develop a financing system to assist residents with the costs of sewer line construction if it is determined that a true public health emergency exists as a result of a septic system that has failed and cannot be repaired or replaced.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our comments. Attached to my testimony for the use of the Council and inclusion in the administrative record are a series of documents submitted by individual citizens and WMCCA during the course of the conduct of the Glen Hills Study. If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-956-4535 or at susannelee1@hotmail.com.

Susanne Lee

President, West Montgomery County Citizens Association

Glen Hills Resident and Glen Hills Sewer Study Citizens Advisory Committee Member

12900 Circle Drive

Rockville, MD 20850

Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
5th Floor, 100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Attn: Councilmember Roger Berliner, Chair
Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy,
and Environment Committee

October 14, 2015

Dear Councilmembers:

Thank you for your continued work and attention to the Water and Sewer Plan Text Amendment proposed by County Executive Isiah Leggett for the Glen Hills Area (CPTA 15-CH1-01T). As you know, the amendment engendered animated public discussion at the T & E Committee hearing as well as at the Planning Board hearing on September 24th. At the conclusion of testimony, the Planning Board voted to recommend County Council approval of the amendment.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that exaggeration and misinformation continue to cloud the debate that is necessary, particularly as the T&E Committee works to finalize its own recommendations to the Council. In that spirit, we write in further support of the proposed Amendment and to clarify five key points.

1) The alternative text amendment proposed by William Chen is based upon unsubstantiated claims and would unfairly punish homeowners with septic systems.

By letter dated September 17, 2015 to the Montgomery County Council, Attorney William Chen proposed a text amendment to change the entire Glen Hills Area from Sewer Category S-6 to S-3 based on an unfounded allegation that properties in the Glen Hills Area were “sewage disposal nuisances” in violation of COMCOR 27A.00.01.12. However, there is absolutely **no** evidence that **any** of the 542 properties in the Glen Hills Area is a “sewage disposal nuisance.” In particular, there is **no** documentation that any sewage disposal system in the Glen Hills Area has its contents “accessible to flies, animals, or surface drainage or [is] endangering a water supply or health in any way.”

The Chen amendment supports construction of astronomically expensive sewer infrastructure resulting in potentially enormous costs to homeowners. In contrast to Glen Hills property owners’ current rights under S-6 to replace their septic system, under Chen’s proposed S-3 category change, property owners are prohibited from replacing existing septic systems and are required to hook up to sewer service. The only way to remain on septic and avoid these enormous costs is to obtain a replacement interim permit septic system. This can occur only if the homeowner applies for and obtains exception approval from the Department of Environmental Protection, a step not required under S-6. DEP exception approval is required to allow the Department of Permitting Services to investigate a replacement septic system, including the possibility of requiring new on-site testing.

The Chen Text Amendment would result in increased overall density and construction in environmentally sensitive areas in violation of the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, the County Sewer Systems Plan and Policy, the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access policy, and the Maryland Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act. Supporters of the Chen Amendment unabashedly state that they desire public sewer so they can enlarge their existing houses, tear them down and build larger ones, or flip them and sell them at an increased value. Others wish to add separate accessory dwelling units, or build even more ambitiously, including new road construction to vacant undevelopable lots or portions of lots and construction on lots located in wetlands, stream valleys and flood plains. These activities represent the antithesis of the goals of Master Plan and County and State provisions governing RE-1 low density zones

Finally, we stress that any proposal to change to S-3 requires a new administrative process, including actual notice to all property owners and the opportunity to comment.

2) Emotional testimony related to septic system failures was exaggerated and in some cases false.

Contrary to allegations made at the T&E and Planning Board hearings, there are **no** current documented septic system failures in the Glen Hills area. Also, importantly, there has never been **any** evidence **ever** of groundwater contamination. The County has determined there are **no** public health problem areas. *There is no verifiable documentation or scientific evidence that demonstrates otherwise.*

Emotional testimony sensationalizing the potential for children to be playing on soggy lawns with feces and smells from neighboring yards is attention getting. However, no evidence was presented at the T&E hearing that this is actually happening anywhere in Glen Hills. Instead, anecdotal evidence presented at the hearing cited houses with past septic issues, many that occurred 20 plus years ago. However, these were all resolved and many of the houses have been sold and resold, all in compliance with the requirements for a functioning septic system. An examination of home sales in Glen Hills demonstrates that in this sought after area there has been no loss of real estate value due to septic issues.

The example most frequently cited by proponents of S-3 is a property at 12805 Spring Drive. However, as public records show, this home was sold in 2014, and upon sale, the septic tank and field were deemed functioning. The previous owner of this property noticed a smell in 2010, and upon inspection what was found to be wrong was a faulty pipe connection due to a botched plumbing job. *Once corrected, the problem was solved. In contrast to exaggerated testimony, this was never a septic "failure".*

The other property cited by S-3 proponents as a "failed septic" is 9517 Overlea Drive. However, it was actually listed and sold in 2012. Required by sale, inspection found that the septic tank had not been pumped since 1993, almost 20 years prior. This lack of maintenance resulted in clogged baffles and a compromised field. The issues were **not** due to any intrinsic defect or deficiency in the system. A new BAT tank was installed and the field was repositioned with a drip innovative system, which is now working properly. Proper maintenance would have avoided these repairs to an inappropriately maintained system.

As these episodes demonstrate, we suggest greater effort aimed at educating residents with regard to proper septic operation and maintenance would be helpful. This could be done with inexpensive fliers, notifications to new home owners, and on relevant county web sites. Such modest effort would alleviate anxiety related to the above, and save all involved huge added time and expense. Our own ad hoc efforts at education cannot replace more systematic (and official) recommendations and advice from County government.

3) The enormous cost of sewerage Glen Hills was not addressed at the hearings.

Sewerage Glen Hills would be astronomically costly, and is illogical. It would require the environmentally destructive extension of unnecessary public infrastructure into a neighborhood with a hilly terrain and extensive stream valleys and flood plains. Many millions of dollars would be required not only for trenching, but for a very high number of pumping stations due to the hilly terrain.

Glen Hills is an area of large 1-3 acre lots that would require extremely long extensions. It is so ill suited for sewerage that the County's own study consultants were forced to propose 13 separate new sewer lines - 5 to the Piney Branch and 8 to the Watts Branch. Yet, even these would provide service to only 50% of the homes currently on septic (197 out of 406). The cost to homeowners for these long extensions and hook ups would be as much as \$100,000 or more per household – in sum millions and millions of dollars to be paid by homeowners to sewer just half the homes, *with the vast majority of these homes not even desiring or needing a hook up !*

4) Adverse environmental impacts of sewer vs. septic

During the T & E Committee Hearing, Councilmember Berliner requested information regarding the environmental impacts of septic v. sewer. The Potomac Subregion Master Plan (p.21) addresses this issue directly:

“Providing community sewer service to relieve failed septic systems minimizes groundwater contamination. However, the provision of community sewer service can damage the environment and water resources by facilitating development to the maximum zoning density. Extensions along stream valleys can also create habitat disturbance, threatening species survival, and can adversely affect the natural hydrologic system due to wetland fragmentation. Once sewer lines are in place, their structural integrity may deteriorate over time, resulting in sewage leaks and further disturbance to the ecosystem. This is particularly troublesome where eroding or shifting stream channels expose sewer mains and manholes, leaving them more susceptible to damage.”

In addition, septic systems allow the groundwater to be recharged on site to the same aquifer and watershed resulting in immediate replenishment of the local water table.

This analysis is particularly relevant with regard to Glen Hills, an environmentally sensitive large lot, low density RE-1 zone crisscrossed with ponds, wetlands, seeps, ephemeral streams, steep stream valleys and flood plains. It has these features because it contains headwater tributaries of both the Watts Branch and Piney Branch streams. Extending sewers to such an area will not only increase overall density, but sewers tend to change the hydrology and alter the function and the very existence of such features, further undermining their critical role as

“recharge” areas. According to County Officials, there has never been any evidence of groundwater contamination caused by septic systems in Glen Hills and; therefore, nothing to be relieved by sewerage. In contrast, the adverse impacts of sewers are legion: WSSC recorded 160 sewage spills from sewer lines in 2014, including more than 13,000 gallons spilled into streams in January 2014 alone.

USEPA has determined that decentralized wastewater systems such as septic systems can “protect public health, preserve valuable water resources, and maintain economic vitality in a community” and that “adequately managed decentralized wastewater systems are a cost-effective and long-term option for meeting public health and water quality goals, particularly in less densely populated areas. (see <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/septic/index.cfm>). The advantages of septic over sewer are further described at these websites:

<http://www.ses-company.com/resource-center/advantages-of-septic-systems-over-public-sewer-systems.html>

<http://lewisfarmsandliquidwaste.com/information/advantages-of-having-a-septic-system/>

<http://www.septicssystem.com/septic-vs-sewer.html>

5) The Montgomery County Planning Board’s Proposed Amendment Modification Should Be Rejected.

On September 24, 2015, the Planning Board proposed a modification of the amendment that would expand sewer service beyond documented septic system failures and public health problem areas to include the following situation:

“If a property owner with a troubled system can demonstrate that their property would not be considered suitable for a new septic system if the property were being developed for the first time, then that homeowner should be considered eligible for sewer service on public health grounds. If on the other hand, a new septic system using currently accepted technologies and design methods is feasible, then septic treatment should continue to be used.”

The modification should be rejected for the following reasons:

1. It establishes a new triggering standard “troubled system” that is so broad as to be meaningless and unenforceable as it could include any septic issues from minor or major repairs to the need for ordinary, straightforward replacements. It ignores the fact that even when there may be rare problems, systems can be easily repaired or, if necessary, replaced. Septic technology is constantly improving and there are a very, very small and increasingly dwindling number of situations in which a system fails and cannot be replaced on site thus requiring a hook up.
2. The use of the phrase “considered suitable for a new septic system” establishes new, ambiguous standards as does this new interpretation of what constitutes “public health grounds.”
3. Given that septic requirements for new house construction are different from existing houses, this change could potentially impact and extend sewer to very large numbers

of existing properties throughout the County that have functioning systems so long as they can claim some type of "trouble".

4. It rewards "bad behavior" leading to "trouble" as has occurred in the past in Glen Hills when builders ran over and purposefully destroyed septic systems and when others failed to maintain them in order to trigger failures that would result in approval for sewer.
5. It fails to acknowledge and clarify the differences between what systems can be approved now for existing houses, e.g. innovative technologies vs. new houses, and in particular whether those innovative technologies are considered "currently accepted technologies and design methods." Constantly improving septic technology methods that were considered innovative a few years ago are now considered standard technologies.
6. The proposed modification conflicts with and would require revisions to not just the Potomac Subregion Master Plan, but also the County Sewer Systems Plan and Policy, the Piney Branch Sewer Restricted Access policy, and the Maryland Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Sewage Plan.

Again, we thank you for your work, and your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Roepe, Ph. D.

Glen Hills Resident for 18 years

Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology

Co-Director, Center for Infectious Disease, Georgetown University

9600 Watts Branch Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Ginny Barnes

Environmental Chair

West Montgomery County Citizens Association (WMCCA)

Susanne Lee

Glen Hills Homeowner for 37 years

President, WMCCA and Glen Hills Study Citizens Advisory Committee Member

12900 Circle Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Alison Mrohs

Glen Hills Resident for 17 years

Board Member, WMCCA and Glen Hills Study Citizens Advisory Committee Member

12900 Valley Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Ray Mrohs

Glen Hills Resident for 17 years

12900 Valley Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

John Moulton, D.Phil.
Glen Hills Resident for 27 years
Glen Hills Study Citizens Advisory Committee Member
13409 Valley Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Ken Bawer
Glen Hills Resident for 17 years
IT Specialist
Board Member, Maryland Native Plant Society and Watts Branch Watershed Alliance
8 Cleveland Court, Rockville, MD 20850

Mary T. Zack
Glen Hills Resident for 39 years
Realtor, Long and Foster Realty, Inc.
12712 Circle Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Sarah W. Hamilton
Glen Hills Resident for 18 years
President, Marketing Ink Consulting
9600 Watts Branch Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Alex R. Folk
Glen Hills Resident for 17 years
Executive Officer, government sector
9601 Watts Branch Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Jeremy K. Raines, Ph.D., P.E.
Glen Hills Resident for 37 years
Raines Engineering
13420 Cleveland Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Betsy Folk
Executive Officer, non profit sector
Glen Hills Resident for 17 years
9601 Watts Branch Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

cc: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

Glen Hills Study Area Sewer Policy Options (Updated 1/19/2016)

	1 Current Policy	2 CE Text Amendment	3 Chen Text Amendment	4 Miles & Stockbridge	5 Area-wide Category Change
	Sewer hookups only allowed to address documented septic failures.	Remove abutting mains restriction. Allow creation of public health problem areas	Same as CE but also allow a single-hookup for new construction and expansions if needed.	Approve sewer upon request. Allow for subdivision, consistent with zoning.	Change the study area to S-3
Types of Properties					
A	Deny	Deny, except where the property is included in a public health problem area or if the property abuts a sewer main. Single hookup only.	Approve a single-hookup only for properties which fail testing for conventional septic systems.	Approve (with no restrictions). Allow for subdivision, consistent with zoning.	All properties would be moved into Category S-1 (for those abutting sewer mains) or S-3 (where sewer extensions are needed). Properties on functioning septic systems would be allowed to remain on these systems. Future septic failures would be addressed by connection to public sewer if sewer is abutting or nearby.
B					
C		Undeveloped properties less than 2 acres (Total Number = 62)			
D		Improved properties greater than 2 acres (Total Number = 69)			
	Improved properties abutting sewer mains; (Current Number = 21)	Approve a single hookup only.	Same as CE		
E	Properties with documented Septic Failures	Approve a single-hookup only. Sewer extensions need to be logical, economical, and environmentally sensitive	Same as Current Policy	Same as Current Policy	
F	Deny	Can be considered for a single hookup if included within a public health problem area.	Approve a single-hookup only, for properties which fail testing for conventional septic systems. Sewer extension must be done in an environmentally sound manner.		
G				Properties with septic systems that do not meet current standards (pre 1975) (Total Number = 194)	
H		Improved Properties which cannot expand due to septic limitations	Deny, except in cases where the property is included in a public health problem area or if the property abuts a sewer main. Single hookup only.	Assumed to continue to be served by septic	
	Improved Properties with no documented septic problems.				
Policy Issues					
Impact on RE-1 Properties in Glen Hills	Stricter than General Water and Sewer Plan Policies	Similar to General Water and Sewer Plan Policies	More expansive than General Water and Sewer Plan Policies		
Consistency with the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan?		Yes	No. The Master Plan includes general policies which recommend septic for low-density areas in general. The Master Plan also has specific language for Glen Hills supporting septic as well.		
Follow-up needed In Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan?		Yes. Further define septic failures and public health problem areas	Yes. If additional sewer policy flexibility is desired for the Glen Hills Study area, Council Staff recommends that this issue be considered in the context of a comprehensive review of sewer policy to large lot zones.		

Responses to Questions Raised by the T&E Committee at the October 26 Glen Hills Sewer Text Amendment Worksession

1. **Imperviousness Limits:** Both Ms. Floreen and Mr. Berliner expressed some interest in **constraining development density in Glen Hills via imperviousness limits rather than through sewer restrictions.** *Council and Planning Department staff will be available to discuss this issue at the November 16 T&E Committee worksession.*

2. **Ms. Floreen asked DEP/CE for their opinion (notwithstanding the Master Plan recommendations for Potomac and Glen Hills in particular) on how best to move forward in Glen Hills.** *Adopt and implement the CE's recommendations. Make appropriate changes elsewhere in the CWSP text to address broader conditions of health problem areas, septic failures, etc. This is the best way to move forward in Glen Hills since the only study done to date is exclusively for the Glen Hills communities. This proposal is consistent with the 2002 master plan and is supported by existing Water and Sewer Plan policies. Accordingly, the Water and Sewer Plan text amendment proposed by the CE is the most feasible way to begin the process of addressing septic problems in Glen Hills, including the approval of public sewer service, and to allow the highest priority areas to be addressed first.*

Other "out of the box" concepts for Glen Hills that could only be addressed through a master plan amendment (e.g.; a comprehensive category change to promote sewer service) have issues that would likely cause State agencies to nullify such a Council action. In addition such an action would set a precedent for other areas in the County that have not been evaluated. These more aggressive proposals may cause regulatory and planning concerns which would result in halting all proposed changes and not accomplish their intended result. While the CE's proposal will not meet the immediate expectations of some of the alternate proposals, it will allow a process for allowing sewer service to be extended where needed.

3. **Should outdated septic systems (i.e. seepage pits and lagoons) be considered prima facie failures?** *DEP: This may require an authority that DPS does not have now. Just approving sewer service for all suspect septic systems only on this basis doesn't address the means of providing sewer. Sewer extensions to properties with outdated septic systems should be allowed if the extension can be determined to be logical, economical and environmentally acceptable. The policy before the Council at this time is for Glen Hills and a broader policy at this time would be premature.*

DPS: Yes, unless the permit records indicate those systems were installed under soil conditions that would indicate a suitable soil buffer was established, the presumption should be that they are not providing the protection for the environment that new septic systems are required to provide. These "archaic" systems have greatly outlived any typical lifespan associated with on-site sewage disposal, which poses the danger that they are simply discharging sewage into coarse or rocky soils without adequate treatment.

4. **Mr. Berliner asked for a range of prices for various new or replacement septic systems compared to sewer connections and/or sewer extensions.** *See the updated table (from the Phase 2 Report) on page 5 for estimated septic system costs, ranging*

from \$10,000 to \$48,000 depending on the types and size of system needed. (These values are for purchase and installation and do not include annual maintenance and operations costs.) The Phase 2 Report noted sewer connection and on-site costs ranging from \$23,000 to \$31,300 for properties with existing access to a sewer main.

Once an extension is involved, under current financing systems, public sewer service becomes the far more costly service option. Main extension costs (\$400 to \$800 per linear foot for gravity sewers) must be added to the connection and on-site costs cited above.

It is important to recognize that many septic replacements, especially those that require a "BAT", can rival or exceed the cost of a sewer connection. The upgraded (BAT) system also includes an annual electric consumption of as much as \$250; and the need for semi-annual inspections by a qualified BAT inspector. In almost every case, the homeowner would be better served by a sewer connection providing one is available without excessive costs for a sewer extension.

5. Mr. Berliner raised the issue about the property owner and the County's responsibilities regarding addressing septic failures with a concern that there are many unknown failures.

This comment is not about just a CWSP policy change, it's about programmatic change. Other jurisdictions have programs such as this that could serve as a guide; although not all are seen as successful (resource, financing issues). Mont. County is not currently set up to plan or finance such a program. This would likely require regulatory changes in (at least) the County code. Pursuit of this topic is beyond the scope we can consider at this time, it is a very worthy topic for the Council to address, but not as part of the Glen Hills policy issue.

6. For the areas identified in Glen Hills as constrained (i.e. 36% of the total study area acreage) Mr. Berliner and Ms. Floreen asked that DEP remove the acreage already served by sewer to determine the percentage of constrained non-public sewer area compared to total non-public sewer area.

When the properties served by public sewer (category S-1) are removed from consideration, the Review Area coverage increases slightly from 36 percent (entire study area) to 38 percent.

	Total Acreage	Review Area Acreage	Review Area Percentage
Total Study Area	867	312	36%
Served Props. (S-1)	143	34	24%
Unserved Props. (not S-1)	724	278	38%

7. Mr. Berliner asked if a residential PACE type program would work in the context of financing public sewer extensions.

DEP is willing to consider/review any financing system and encourages Council discussion on this topic, but this is not a system that can be reviewed in the context of the Glen Hills sewer policy discussions now before the Council.

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1. In the November 16 worksession memo, Council Staff recommended that several items be better defined in the Water and Sewer Plan. Based on the November 16 meeting discussion, T&E members want to better understand these issues prior to making any recommendations on Glen Hills. These include:
 - a. (DPS) the process by which septic systems are currently assessed and categorized by DPS (i.e. failed, failing, troubled, etc.). How is a “documented failed septic system” defined?

DPS Response (1.a):

The “typical” definition of a failing septic system is one that overflows onto the surface or drains so slowly that it backs up into the residence. However, it is recognized that septic systems are intended to **treat** the sewage and allow the treated effluent to return to the aquifer in a fashion that does not degrade the quality of the water or interfere with off-site user’s drinking water wells. Many septic systems that were installed prior to 1975 were constructed in a fashion that does not provide for adequate treatment. In some cases it may be necessary to conduct soil tests to determine the quality of the soil and its ability to treat the wastewater.

- b. (DEP) how does DPS and DEP determine whether an on-site solution or public sewer is the appropriate solution? Under what circumstances are alternative on-site systems the best option and under what circumstances is sewer the better option?

DEP Response (1.b):

When DPS Well & Septic determines that the discharge component (drainfield, seepage pit, etc.) of an individual septic system is failing:

- Sewer Service Available - One of the first issues considered is whether or not public sewer service is available to the property.¹ If sewer service is available (often but not always sewer category 1), then DPS staff will contact DEP to request expedited connection of the property to public sewer service. Even if sewer service is not directly available to the property, a sewer main in very close proximity may be capable of providing public sewer service if WSSC can authorize the use of a non-abutting sewer connection. (See the map illustration on pg. 7.)

¹ “Available sewer service” occurs where the only public infrastructure needed for service is a sewer house connection, that part of the pipe that runs from WSSC’s sewer main (typically found along the street) to the property line. Unless WSSC allows a non-abutting service connection, connections are installed perpendicular to the sewer main alignment.

- Septic Reserve Areas Established - If public sewer service is not available, then the next issue to consider is whether or not septic reserve areas were established under the existing septic system permit. If reserve areas exist, then the property owner works with DPS to permit the construction of a new drainfield in the established reserve area. (If the property is within the planned public sewer envelope, the extension of a sewer main may be considered instead use of a reserve area; see below).
- Other On-Site Solutions (applies to properties in sewer categories 4, 5, or 6) – Septic systems permitted and installed prior to 1975 will generally not have established septic reserve areas. In such cases where sewer service is not available, DPS staff investigate the feasibility of an on-site replacement septic system. In some rare cases, existing testing data are sufficient to allow the permitting of a new drainfield area. However, some additional septic testing (water table and/or percolation testing) is usually required to permit a new area of a property for a replacement system where defined reserve areas do not exist. New water table testing is allowed only in the late winter to early spring of each year.

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- As the least expensive type of septic system, a deep stone trench is typically pursued first.²
- If a deep stone trench is not feasible, a shallow stone trench or sand mound system is typically the next option to pursue.² Some additional soil testing may be required for these options.

² *These conventional replacement systems can allow for future expansion or replacement of a house provided that soil testing results support the needed septic system capacity and allows for needed reserve areas.*

- If a conventional septic system cannot be used, then DPS may investigate the use of a shallow drip disposal septic system. This type of alternative system is used only for the replacement of existing septic systems and cannot be used to support expansions or replacements of existing houses. This is the most expensive type of septic system to purchase and install. (See the table below.)
- Sewer Service Extension – For properties designated as sewer categories 3 through 6, if no conventional or innovative on-site septic system solution is possible, the next option to consider is an extension of public sewer service. New main extensions need to be technically and financially feasible. Once DPS reports the septic problem to DEP, DEP can then direct WSSC to expedite the extension of public sewer service. However, under even the best circumstances, new main extensions can take 6 to 12 months to authorize, design, permit and install. (DEP then follows up with an administrative category change to sewer category 1.)

Under the current sewer extension funding mechanism, even the cost for the most expensive replacement septic system, a shallow drip disposal system, is typically less than that for even a relatively short (100-foot) sewer system extension.

- Last Option – If sewer service cannot be provided and if an on-site replacement septic system cannot be permitted, then DPS may allow the installation of a septic holding tank. Wastewater from the house is stored in the tank; no treatment is provided. A waste hauler is called to pump out the tank when it is close to full, typically every two to four weeks, depending on usage. The cost to pump out a 1,500-gallon tank is approximately \$200. Based on this cost and frequency of service, a property owner would pay between \$2,600 and \$5,200 for holding tank pump outs each year.

Note that septic system failures can occur in rural areas located outside the existing/planned public sewer envelope. (See the map on page 9.) Where these properties are at any significant distance from existing public sewerage systems, there is no reasonable expectation for the extension of new public sewer service. The only options available to properties in these locations are on-site solutions.

Phase 2 Report
Table 4.2 – Range of Costs for Replacement of On-Site Disposal Systems
(DEP Updated 12/22/15)

Septic System Type	Estimated Cost of Installed Septic System (3 or 5 Bedroom House)			
	3 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms w/ BAT	5 Bedrooms	5 Bedrooms w/ BAT
Deep Stone Trench ^A	\$10,000	\$22,000	\$17,500	\$29,500
Shallow Stone Trench ^A	\$11,500	\$23,500	\$20,500	\$32,500
Sand Mound ^B	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$30,000	\$42,000
Drip Disposal ^C	---	\$37,000	---	\$48,000
Sewer Infrastructure	Estimated Cost of Providing Public Sewer			
Service via abutting main: WSSC sewer connection and on-site work	\$23,000 to \$31,300			
Service requiring a new sewer main extension	\$500 to \$1,000 per linear foot of main			
^A Deep trench and shallow trench costs also include excavation, trenching, fill, piping, and seeding. Costs taken from RMS Means (2012).				
^B Sand mound system costs provided by MCDPS (April 2011).				
^C Drip disposal system costs provided by MCDPS and discussions with manufacturer. The cost of Best Available Technology (BAT) tank is included; required for replacement drip disposal systems only				

c. **(DEP) Public Health Problem Areas:** The Water and Sewer Plan includes minimal language as to how these areas are established. Under current practice what specific criteria does DEP use to recommend the establishment of a public health problem area? Would this process be the same in Glen Hills or would the results of the Glen Hills Study- provide more unique circumstances for the establishment of public health problem areas in Glen Hills?

DEP Response (1.c):

Initiating a Survey - Public health problem area³ surveys (sanitary surveys) usually start in one of two ways:

- 1) As a request from DPS to consider an area with known problems or
- 2) As a request from a property owner or a group of owners with concerns about their wells and/or septic systems.

³ The County's Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan (CWSP) has long identified designated areas where the continued use of wells and/or septic system has become problematic (determined to be not sustainable) as "public health problem areas". Testimony before the Council and discussions with the T&E Committee concerning Glen Hills has pointed towards the need to find an alternate description for this designation (e.g., Public Water/Sewer Priority Area). This would help to avoid -negative connotations of the present terminology.

Property owners will approach the County (DEP, DPS, regional centers) often because of unsuccessful testing for replacement systems, or because of service being installed for new development nearby. DEP expects that similar processes would occur in the Glen Hills area, although with the information generated from the Glen Hills Study DEP has a better idea about where sanitary surveys might be useful for the community.

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Survey Process - The Sanitary Surveys proceed as follows: DPS reviews septic permit records and surveys property owners about their septic systems. DEP uses these results to qualitatively categorize each property as having a low, moderate, or severe limitation for septic service.⁴

⁴ *Examples of low, moderate, and severe limitations criteria:*

- *Low: properties having septic systems that meet all current standards, especially with regard to established septic reserve areas.*
- *Moderate: properties with potential limitations for long-term septic system use (insufficient area, poor soils, unsuccessful septic testing), old systems (pre-1975), and outdated septic technologies.*
- *Severe: properties with documented septic system failures, especially those lacking an on-site solution.*

As a threshold, DEP usually looks for at least half the properties in the survey area having moderate or severe limitations for on-site system use. In some cases, a smaller or better-focused survey area than originally considered will address priority areas. A DEP staff report along with a recommendation is provided to the County Executive (CE) who then forwards them to the County Council. If the Council approves a health problem designation, DEP then makes appropriate revisions to the Plan's category maps and text.

A sanitary survey typically takes several months to complete, from the time a survey area is identified through to DEP's recommendation for the area. This depends, in large part, on the number of properties involved. Most survey areas consist of relatively small neighborhoods, one to three residential blocks. Surveys conducted for properties within the Glen Hills study area will likely benefit from the research already done for the study, allowing DEP and DPS to streamline the survey process.

The Council considers recommendations for potential public health problem areas typically along with a regular annual or semi-annual category change packet. Another option to help streamline the process for approving areas for public sewer service for all areas studied would be to transmit recommendations to the Council when they are completed, outside of the category change schedule.

Outcomes From a Health Problem Area Designation - All properties within an approved health problem area become eligible for public service, regardless of whether or not an on-site system problem currently exists at that location.⁵ However, WSSC's financing mechanisms for extending new public service mains often limit the feasibility of these extensions ever being designed or built.

⁵ *An owner whose property is located within a public health problem area is not required to connect the property to public service if it becomes available. No front-foot benefit assessments (FFBA) are charged to owners who choose not to connect to public service. However, once public service is available, DEP and DPS will generally not allow the installation of a new/replacement on-site system once the existing system fails or needs to be replaced. Connection to public service will be required at that time.*

The designation as a Public Health Problem Area serves to prioritize that area for public service once requested. The designation also notifies WSSC that water and/or sewer extensions are eligible for WSSC's health hazard subsidy.⁶

⁶ *At one time, the health hazard subsidy had the potential to provide a significant benefit for main extension financing, in some cases eliminating extension deficit costs. Subsequent changes to the subsidy program have largely nullified that benefit. Accordingly, all new main extension projects initiated in at least the last ten years—including those for the relief of public health problems—have been handled through the applicant-financed program. Costs for main extensions financed through the front-foot-benefit assessments program have risen to a point where such projects are not practical for an individual property owner.*

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2. Both the Planning Board and Committee members have discussed whether properties in Glen Hills with existing septic systems which may not be failing under current definitions but do not meet current standards (pre 1975 for instance) and which cannot be upgraded to meet current standards should be eligible to connect to sewer. At the November 16 meeting, DEP indicated that these old systems could be addressed in the context of the establishment of public health problem areas in Glen Hills without assuming that all pre 1975 septic systems are presumed to be "failed" systems. DPS staff has indicated that there are about 22,000 septic systems with a guess that about half of those systems are pre-1975 systems.

DEP Response (2):

In considering a potential public health problem area, one factor of particular concern to DEP and DPS is the age and type of existing septic systems. The presence of older septic systems, those installed prior to 1975, is a key criterion in the sanitary survey process in establishing areas having a need for public sewer service. These septic systems lack approved reserve areas and use outdated technology (such as seepage pits). DEP and DPS would have concerns if these systems with outdated technologies were deemed to be "failed systems". Such a designation would require action for an evaluation and possible replacement of (including the construction of sewer extensions if necessary) for all pre-1975 systems in the County...which is not feasible.

- a. **(DEP)** How many RE1 and RE2 properties countywide are currently on septic systems?
- b. **(DEP)** Of the RE1 and RE2 properties on septic, how many have public sewer nearby (any ideas on how to define "nearby")?
- c. **(Planning Board Staff/DEP)** How many of these properties RE1 and RE2 properties with sewer nearby have subdivision potential (i.e. greater than 2 acres in RE1, greater than 4 acres in RE2) if public sewer were made available to them?
- d. **(DEP)** How would DEP limit sewer approvals for pre 1975 systems only in Glen Hills? Why couldn't other areas of the County with similar systems also seek to become public health problem areas based on the same rationale?

DEP Response (2.a-d):

Answers to the questions above would require a concerted effort (study) by DEP and DPS, where resources do not presently exist to develop this information in a comprehensive manner. DEP also feels this information is not needed at this time since policies adopted for the Glen Hills Area do not need to be so broadly addressed that they would encompass all RE1 and RE2 properties in the County. The Public Health Problem Area designation process adopted in the Water and Sewerage Plan allows DEP and DPS to focus on areas of the county with the highest priority for evaluation of on-site systems and possible sewer extensions. DEP and DPS have the ability to evaluate an area or community with septic system concerns and address solutions for that area or community based on the specific Sanitary Survey results. Other areas of the County can be reviewed as needed.

3. The Committee has also discussed whether property owners seeking to improve their homes (possibly through an expansion of their building footprint or in the number of bedrooms) should be constrained by current septic requirements and/or should be able to connect to sewer. The answers to Question #2 above will help us better understand the potential countywide implications of loosening sewer eligibility for expansions.

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DEP Response (3):

DEP's experience indicates that the limitations of existing on-site septic systems do occasionally result in constraints affecting the expansion or replacement of homes. The circumstances are site specific. Property owners may have to replace an outdated system if they wish to expand an existing house unless public sewer service is directly available and can be approved. DPS will evaluate the property for a replacement conventional septic system⁶ that will satisfy the owner's needs. Solutions provided by current on-site systems technologies can minimize the number of properties constrained from an expansion.

⁶ Conventional on-site system technologies include deep trench, shallow trench, and sand mound septic systems. Shallow drip septic systems are limited only to the replacement of failed systems.

In the course of a DPS sanitary survey, permit records may reveal a property that cannot accommodate a replacement septic system for the purpose of the expansion or replacement of an existing house. This would be flagged in the survey results as property with a potential sewer service need. However, DEP would not support sewer extensions to homes outside the planned public sewer envelope for the sole purpose of addressing this occasional problem. Mechanisms under current Water and Sewer Plan policies exist for property owners to have their properties evaluated for sewer extensions if needed. A specific policy for this issue is not needed, since it is not a common occurrence.

4. (Council Staff/Planning Board Staff/DEP) What are the land use implications of the Chen text amendment and the Miles & Stockbridge proposal?

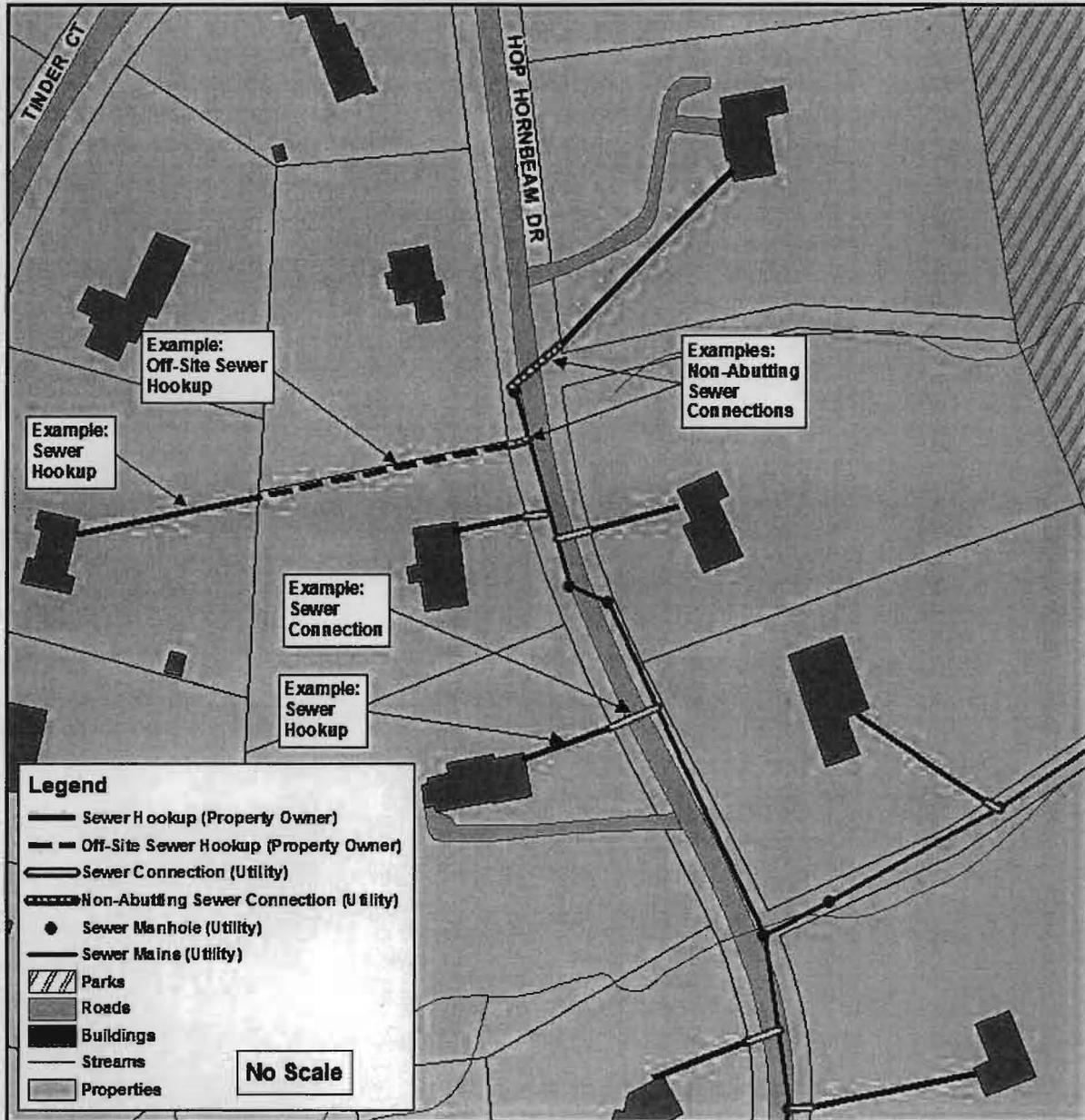
DEP Response (4):

Land use changes of the kind evaluated in these tables would result from the adoption of sewer service policies for Glen Hills that are inconsistent with the County's general service policies. DEP does not support either of the Miles and Stockbridge or Chen proposals.

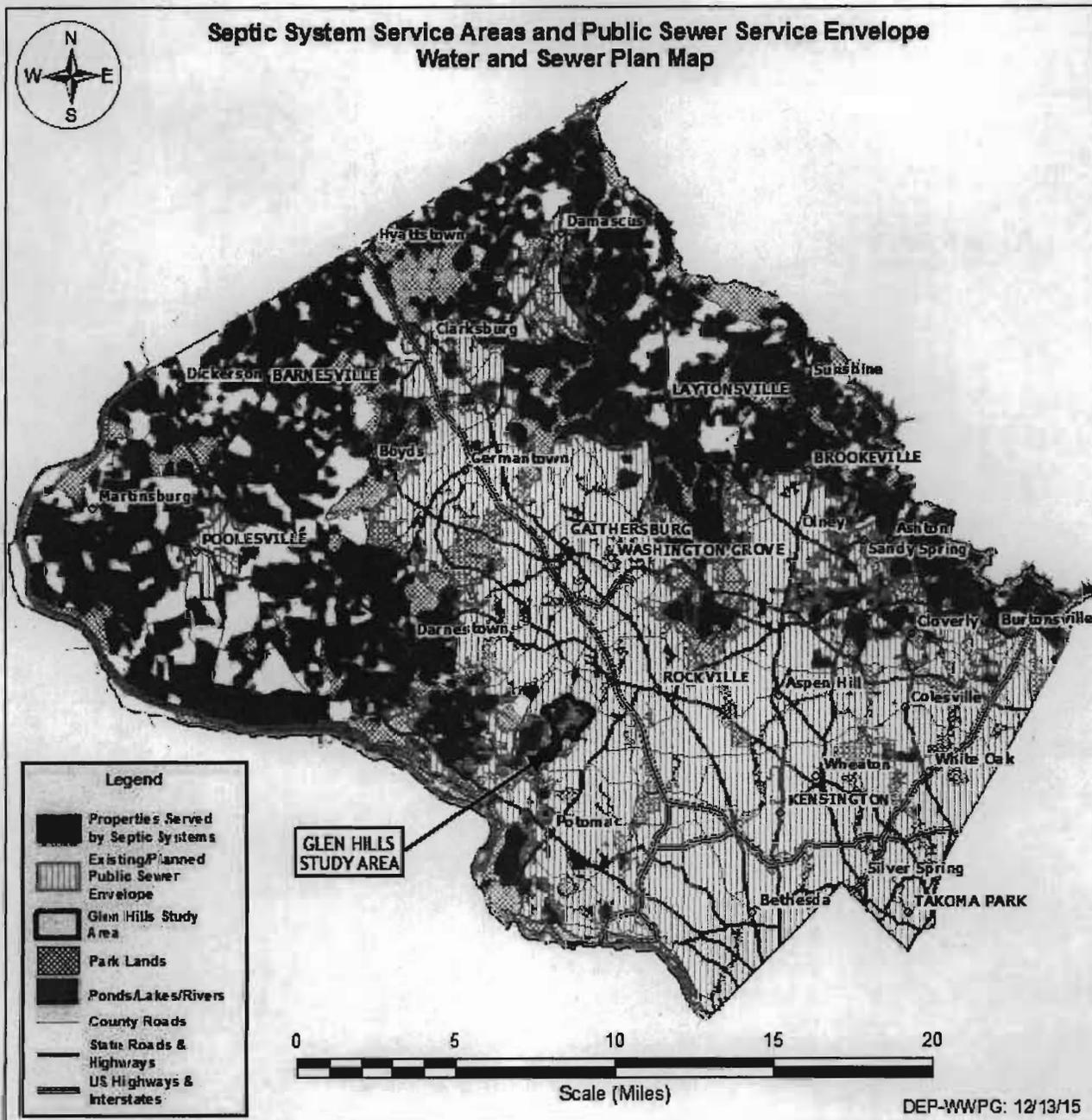
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Figure from Draft CWSP Chapter 1 Showing Sewer Connections and Hookups

Figure 1-FX: Sample House Connections and Hookups



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Glen Hills Sanitary Surveys Overview

A property owner or a group of owners that have septic system concerns notifies DEP of their interest in having a sanitary survey conducted. Valid concerns for studying a potential health problem area include, but are not limited to¹:

- A failed septic system that cannot be addressed by DPS using a conventional replacement system (deep trench, shallow trench, or sand mound).
- An existing septic system permitted before 1975 and/or installed using septic technology no longer allowed under State and County regulations (seepage pit, dry well, etc.).
- A known limitation affecting future septic system use, as verified by DPS. For example, properties where DPS has acknowledged that either only one or no future replacement systems are feasible.

¹ *Unimproved properties, individually, having no septic system suitability do not have sufficient justification to initiate a sanitary survey. However, septic suitability conditions affecting unimproved properties may be considered if they are included in a survey area.*

The following criteria apply to the prioritization of Glen Hills area sanitary surveys by DEP:

- Higher priority: Properties within or adjacent to established Review Areas (RA) from the Glen Hills Study reports, and other properties with documented septic problems.
- Lower priority: Properties outside the RAs, except as noted above.

Because the 2014 Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study has already generated substantial background information on existing conditions in these neighborhoods, only a brief review of DPS permit records, soil conditions, and regulatory constraints will be needed. This will help to put Glen Hills area sanitary surveys on a faster track than could be accomplished in other areas of the county that lack this existing background information. DEP estimates that sanitary surveys for "higher priority" areas of Glen Hills will take approximately 90 days.

DEP, working with DPS and study applicants, will establish the extent of the sanitary survey area.

With an established survey area, DPS will conduct property surveys and WSSC will consider main extension needs. DEP will consider the survey results and prepare a recommendation for the County Executive's consideration. A review by the Executive is typically accomplished within two (2) weeks, once he receives DEP's recommendations. The Executive's recommendations will then be transmitted to the County Council. The goal for "higher priority" areas is to complete this process, from an established study area to the CE's transmittal, within three (3) months. (Lower priority area surveys may take longer to complete.)

An action to designate a health problem area and approve sewer category S-3 is an amendment to the County's CWSP. Council consideration and action on a Plan amendment typically takes between 2-1/2 and 3 months. Accordingly, this process is expected to take six (6) months from establishing a study area to a final action by the County Council.

Owners of properties approved for public sewer service (sewer category S-3) under this process can then apply to WSSC to start the sewer design and construction process. Any owner whose property is included in the Council's designated health problem area may apply to WSSC for public sewer service.

ADS:ads/

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January 18, 2016

County Council for Montgomery County
Stella B. Warner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 5th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Attn: Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee
Councilmember Roger Berliner, Chair
Council President Nancy Floreen
Councilmember Tom Hucker

Re: Glen Hills Area Text Amendment to The Ten-Year Water and Sewer Plan
November 16, 2015 Work Session #2

Dear T&E Councilmembers,

Happy New Year!

On behalf of the Greater Glen Hills Coalition and the Potomac Highlands Citizens Association, which represents over 220 property owners in the Glen Hills Study Area, we thank you for the time and effort you and staff have spent to date on the Glen Hills Sanitary Study Area. However, we take great exception to how the Glen Hills Study Area Policy Options were represented in the table on the 3rd to last page (circled 80) of Mr. Levchenko's November 11, 2015 Memorandum to the Committee.

Our group's proposed text option, submitted by our counsel, Mr. Chen, was not accurately represented. The way it was characterized was incorrect and thus very misleading to the Committee as well as any others who may read it. Attached is a corrected alternative version of the Policy Option table that makes it clear that our proposed text is the best policy option. Our proposed text avoids the endless study contemplated by the County Executive's recommendations and provides a clear path to property owners for immediate relief. It supports the environment, limits growth, makes the cost of sewer service extensions more predictable and lastly, allows property owners to work together to solve real problems.

Our proposed text does not violate, the Area Master Plan or the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan. It is disingenuous to say otherwise. Like the County Executive's proposed text, our proposed text maintains septic systems as the primary sanitary waste disposal service for the area. In addition, The Glen Hills Area is clearly a special case because of the history of documented septic problems and the required study in the 2002 Potomac Sub-Region Plan. In fact, there is no other similar area or study in any other Master Plan in the entire County that we or Counsel are aware of. Further, the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan has a myriad of "Special Master Plan Water and Sewer Service Recommendations (pg. 1-19 & 1-20) AND "Special and Restricted Community Service Areas" (a. to g., pg. 1-26 thru 1-30). The Glen Hills Area should surely join the ranks of these "special" areas.

Continuing septic problems, mostly unabated, and the increase in our scientific knowledge over the last 16 years demand an appropriate policy change. Our proposed text is the appropriate policy, it is limited and it meets all the conditions in the Master Plan for which the Glen Hills Area Sanitary Study was conceived. We challenge staff to explain in detail why they believe our proposed text is contrary to the Master plan and hope, particularly after Glen Hills Area residents have spent much of their own time and money on an issue that should have been resolved by the County over a decade ago, that our own Counsel, Mr. Chen, would be able to defend the contrary position before the Committee.

We look forward to hearing your further discussion at this Thursday's Committee work session and hope you find the attached alternative version of Policy Options table helpful. We urge you to support our proposed text.

Sincerely,



Ted N. Smart, Treasurer
Greater Glen Hills Coalition LLC
13200 Cleveland Drive

cc: George Leventhal, Councilmember
Marc Elrich, Councilmember
Sidney Katz, Councilmember
Nancy Navarro, Councilmember
Hans Reimer, Councilmember
Craig Rice, Councilmember
Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst
Bil Chen
Knowles Little
Dennis Eisen
file

Glen Hills Study Area Sewer Policy Options

	1 Current Policy	2 CE Text Amendment	3 CE Text Amendment	4 CE Text Amendment	5 Area-wide Category Change
Types of Properties	Severely restrict only allow into 3075 or document septic failures	Remove abutting area restriction. Allow creation of public health problem areas	Same as CE but also allow single hookup for new construction and expansions if needed.	Approve with no restrictions for new construction without septic system extensions	Change the study area to S-1
A Undeveloped properties greater than 2 acres (Total Number = 7)	Deny	Deny, except where the property is included in a public health problem area or if the property abuts a sewer main. Single hookup only.	<u>Same as CE but add</u> Approve a single-hookup only. <u>after failed</u> <u>test for</u> <u>conventional</u> <u>& sand mound</u> <u>septic test</u>	Approve (with no restrictions). Allow for subdivision consistent with zoning.	All properties would be moved into Category S-1 (for those abutting sewer mains or S-3 (where sewer extensions are needed). Properties on functioning septic systems would be allowed to remain on these systems. Future septic failures would be addressed by connection to public sewer if sewer is abutting or nearby.
B Undeveloped properties less than 2 acres (Total Number = 62)					
C Improved properties greater than 2 acres (Total Number = 69)					
D Improved properties abutting sewer mains; (Current Number = 21)					
E Properties with documented Septic Failures	Approve a single-hookup only. Sewer extensions need to be logical, economical, and environmentally sensitive	Same as Current Policy	Same as Current Policy	Approve (with no restrictions). Allow for subdivision consistent with zoning.	All properties would be moved into Category S-1 (for those abutting sewer mains or S-3 (where sewer extensions are needed). Properties on functioning septic systems would be allowed to remain on these systems. Future septic failures would be addressed by connection to public sewer if sewer is abutting or nearby.
F Properties with septic systems that do not meet current standards (pre 1975) (Total Number = 194)	Deny	Can be considered for a single hookup if included within a public health problem area.	<u>Same as CE but add after failed</u> <u>test for conventional</u> <u>& sand mound</u> <u>septic test</u> Approve a single-hookup only, if sewer extension can be done in an environmentally sound manner <u>at applicant expense</u>		
G Improved Properties which cannot expand due to septic limitations		Deny, except in cases where the property is included in a public health problem area or if the property abuts a sewer main. Single hookup only.			
H Improved Properties with no documented septic problems.					
Policy Issues					
Impact on RE-1 Properties in Glen Hills	Stricter than General Water and Sewer Plan Policies	Similar to General Water and Sewer Plan Policies	<u>Similar to General Water & Sewer Plan Policies</u> <u>but more expansive than General Water and Sewer Plan Policies</u> <u>after applicant expense & septic testing</u>		
Consistency with the 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan?		Yes	<u>Yes</u> <u>No: The Master Plan includes general policies which recommend septic for low density areas in general. The Master Plan also has specific language for Glen Hills supporting septic as well. <u>& limited sewer extensions to relieve septic failures as proposed</u></u>		
Follow-up needed in Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan?		Yes. Further define septic failures and public health problem areas	<u>No</u> <u>Yes: If additional sewer policy flexibility is desired for the Glen Hills Study area, Council Staff recommends that this issue be considered in the future in context of a comprehensive review of sewer policy to large lot zones.</u>		

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