Lisa Eggleston, Chair of the Route 20 Sewer Assessment Technical Advisory Committee.

[SLIDE OF TAC MEMBERSHIP and W&S]

Good evening. The Sewer Assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was appointed by the Selectmen in 1999, and charged with investigating the potential for installation of a sewer system on Route 20.) Comprised of representatives of various town departments with technical expertise in engineering, hydrogeology and water systems, we have conducted this effort with the help of our Community Development Director, Jody Kablack, and the Town's consultants, Weston & Sampson Engineers, several of whom are here tonight to help answer questions. As the TAC chair, I am here before you tonight to update you on the status of our work, and to request your consideration for funding the next phase of the project; the design and permitting of the system. Before I go into more detail on that, however, let me briefly summarize how we got to this point.

Sudbury has been discussing wastewater treatment and disposal options for the Route 20 business corridor for over 40 years. Whereas on-site septic systems generally work for the residential areas of town, it has long been clear that it is not a sustainable strategy for our commercial sector, both environmentally and economically. This is due to a combination of factors, not the least of which is that the Route 20 area is plagued with low permeability soils and a high groundwater table, resulting in limited capacity for disposal, frequent system failures and costly upgrades. [SLIDE OF ONSITE CONSTRAINTS]

The proximity of one of Sudbury's major water supply wells to the Route 20 commercial area also poses a concern over possible contamination of the Town's drinking water supply, as much of the area sits above the Raymond Road Aquifer. The wellfield just south of Route 20 supplies nearly 70 percent of the Town's water.

Recent revisions to Title V septic requirements, as well as increasingly more stringent regulations governing protection of groundwater supplies, have compounded the already difficult task of wastewater disposal in the Route 20 area.

Finding an alternative to onsite septic systems for Route 20 was one of the primary objectives identified in Sudbury's 1999 Master Plan as a means of long term protection of our water supply, and the creation of a sustainable economic development strategy to relieve our reliance on residential property taxes.

In 1999, the ATM voted to fund a Needs Assessment for the Route 20 Business district, the first step in the State's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning process. [1st SLIDE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT]

Using a matrix analysis, every commercial property along Route 20 and the Union Ave/Station Road area was evaluated to assess the adequacy of existing wastewater disposal systems to meet existing and projected demand.

[NA MATRIX SLIDE]The conclusion of the analysis was that significant need for an alternative to onsite septic systems did exist, particularly in the central portion of the study area, where 27 properties were deemed critical - either in categorical failure or imminent danger of being so, and another 29 properties were deemed priority in terms of wastewater needs. In terms of flow, this is more than two-thirds of the systems evaluated. It was further concluded that meeting these needs would be best accomplished through a decentralized treatment system (sewering this area) with localized treatment and groundwater discharge at a location to be determined in the vicinity of the service area.

The findings of the Needs Assessment were presented in several public forums during 2000 and 2001 and reviewed with representatives of DEP. With the allocation of $90K at the 2001 ATM (this amount supplementing $61K donated by the business community and the Sudbury Foundation), the Town voted to advance the project to the next step in the process; the evaluation and identification of potential disposal locations and the preparation of a Project Evaluation Report (PER) for submittal to the state permitting agencies.

Since that time, the TAC has been focused on locating a site that could accept the needed volume of treated wastewater while maintaining watershed health and minimizing ecological impacts. [SITE SCREENING SLIDE] The site screening process began by looking at parcels in the immediate Route 20 vicinity but, as these efforts proved unsuccessful, the search was systematically expanded, eventually including all large parcels within roughly three miles of Route 20. The DPW property on Old Lancaster Road, and Haskell Field on Fairbank Road were among those tested but rejected due to soil conditions and/or insufficient infiltration capacity, as were several privately own parcels. Many more were screened out before even getting to the testing phase. The option of a potential shared disposal system with Raytheon Corporation was also investigated and eliminated and, at some point in the process, we also looked at the possibility of discharging the wastewater through Framingham to the MWRA system or pumping it west to the Marlborough Easterly treatment plant. Both of these options have significant drawbacks.

Ultimately, subsurface borings conducted at the Curtis Middle School in August 2009 indicated soil conditions well suited for the development of a large-scale subsurface disposal system beneath the playing fields in front of the school.[CURTIS TESTING SLIDE] Subsequent load-scale testing, conducted by WSE this past winter under DEP oversight confirmed the suitability of the site to accommodate even more than the needed capacity.

Having finally cleared the hurdle of identifying a viable site for wastewater disposal, preparation of the PER is now underway and expected to be completed this spring. As part of this process, this conceptual layout of the proposed wastewater system was developed. [SLIDE OF SERVICE AREA]

The assumed service area would extend from Massasoit Ave to Lafayette Road on Route 20 and include Station Road and portions of Union Ave up to Codjer Lane. Currently the properties in the proposed service area discharge approximately 187,000 gpd, and our consultants have determined that an initial design flow of 270,000 gpd could be accommodated. The system would include a combination of gravity and pressure sewers laid under the roads within the service area, pump stations to move the effluent properly, and a treatment facility located at the Town owned "Bushey" property at 641 Boston Post Road. The treated wastewater would then be pumped up Horse Pond Road to the groundwater recharge system at Curtis.

The proposed treatment plant location is a 1.6 acre parcel that the town acquired in conjunction with the purchase of the Tippling Rock conservation land several years ago.[WWTP AERIAL SLIDE] Except for a small parking area for the trailhead it is currently vacant. It is also relatively isolated from developed residential areas and centrally located within the proposed service area, making it particularly well suited for this purpose. The treatment processes and associated equipment would be fully enclosed within a building designed to blend in to the neighborhood. The facility would include an odor control system, so no odors are anticipated to be noticeable from outside the building. The facility would accommodate the existing trail head parking and not interfere with the existing use of the property for conservation access. This is a streetscape view of what it might look like. [SLIDE OF TREATMENT PLANT]

As far as the groundwater recharge system, it would be very similar to the septic leach fields we all have in our own yards, or that Curtis currently has below the adjacent field, except that this one would be bigger and, rather than discharging untreated septage, the discharge would be highly treated and disinfected. The field would need to be disturbed during system installation, but would then be fully restored. [SLIDE OF CURTIS]

So now we get to the question on everyone' mind – how much is this going to cost me, and what benefits will I see as a taxpayer?

Going forward, the project is broken down into 2 distinct phases - the design and permitting phase, and the construction phase. [SLIDE w/ SCHEDULE] The first is the subject of this Article; it would entail detailed design of the collection, treatment and disposal systems, as well as obtaining a DEP groundwater discharge permit and environmental review through the Mass. Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process. This phase would take approximately 18 months to complete and is estimated to cost approximately $1 million.

[RESIDENTIAL COST SLIDE] As proposed, the cost of this phase would be apportioned between all taxpayers in Sudbury – residential and commercial and would be borrowed over a 5-year period, resulting in a total cost of $175 to the average residential taxpayer with a home assessed at $628,000 and $300 to the average commercial taxpayer with a business assessed at $810,000. So for the average residential property owner, your taxes would increase approximately $35 each year for 5 years, then drop back down to their original level.

[COMMERCIAL COST SLIDE] With Sudbury's current split tax rate, a larger proportion of this article is being paid for by the commercial taxpayers. However, the entire burden is not being placed on the commercial sector, as all Sudbury residents will benefit once a sewer is installed and the groundwater supply is secured and protected. Also, not all of the commercial property owners in Sudbury would be served by the proposed sewer, yet they all pay taxes. This first phase is viewed as an investment in Sudbury's future, as the planned improvements will also create the opportunity for Sudbury's commercial sector to generate more revenue, thereby decreasing the residential tax burden.

We anticipate the design and permitting phase to be completed in early 2013, and would expect to request construction funding at either the 2013 or 2014 ATM. Construction of the system is currently estimated to cost approximately $14 million, however we will have a much better handle on the cost once the design is complete. The process is expected to take approximately 2 years. A final decision has not been made on how the construction cost would be apportioned between taxpayers, but it is anticipated that the majority of the cost would be recovered through the assessment of betterment fees on the properties which are in the service area, since those properties would be improved or "bettered" by construction of the sewer. [BETTERMENT SLIDE] A betterment is a onetime tax that can be paid in one lump sum or financed by the Town over a maximum period of 20 years. The amount of the betterment is typically calculated based on a property's usage of the wastewater treatment plant, in other words apportioned based on wastewater flow. The town could vote to use a combination of fees and taxation to pay for the project, since the vitality of the commercial district and the tax revenue it brings in is a general benefit to all residents; this will need to be decided after significant public discussion. We are confident that an equitable arrangement can be approved which does not overburden any one property owner or sector. Ongoing operational costs of the treatment facilities would be paid completely by the users of the system.

Prior to funding the construction phase, there will be ample time for the legal and political aspects of the project to be thoroughly studied, discussed and brought before the voters. These include identifying the organizational authority for the sewer district, determining when properties in the service area will need to tie into the system, establishing fee structures, and implementing any zoning changes needed to control growth in the area.

In the 10 years it's taken us to identify a feasible disposal site and come up with a conceptual plan, the need for sewers has only increased. According to BOH records at least ten commercial septic systems in the proposed service area failed within just the last three years. All entailed significant cost to replace the systems, with no ability to expand. Other properties are just getting by, pumping their systems on a monthly basis, and still others will need to be replaced in the near future. This hurts the bottom line of businesses and reduces property values. Property owners along the corridor are severely limited in their ability to attract new tenants, particularly food services, and existing tenants have no opportunity to expand. Restaurants like Bertuccis and Panera who've expressed interest in locating in Sudbury have had to be turned away due to the lack of sewer, as have dentists, doctors, hair salons, bakeries, dog groomers and the like. Several hair salons have recently had to move out of town. With Wayland and Marlborough both having sewers, Sudbury's commercial corridor is at a competitive disadvantage because of its wastewater treatment challenges.

[LETTER OF SUPPORT SLIDE] You have seen the Letter to the Editor from the Sudbury Crossing and Sudbury Farms plaza owners requesting your support of this project. Additionally, a joint letter from all the plaza owners – Sudbury Crossing, Sudbury Farms, Rugged Bear, and Shaw's Plaza as well as the Chamber of Commerce – was delivered to the Selectmen last week, indicating broad support and a willingness to shoulder a significant portion of the construction costs. We have met with representatives at Raytheon, who are also supportive. The Finance Committee supports the article, as does the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Sudbury Water District, and the Sudbury School Committee.

Even with an affirmative vote tonight, we are still at least 3 to 4 years away from having a system in operation. Please, let us not delay any further.

Thank you.