



February 18, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief *GK*  
Area 2 Division

**FROM:** Steve Findley, Environmental Planner Coordinator (301.495.4727) *SF*  
Area 2 Division

**SUBJECT:** Septage Discharge Facility

---

**PURPOSE**

To provide the Board with background information and an opportunity to comment on the proposed WSSC Septage Discharge Facility. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) will be returning to the Planning Board to seek Mandatory Referral approval for this project later in the year.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

No formal Planning Board action is requested. The Board may use this opportunity to provide input to WSSC to ensure that the Mandatory Referral, when submitted, addresses areas of concern to the Board.

**WSSC SEPTAGE DISCHARGE FACILITY**

Among the facilities and infrastructure provided by WSSC are facilities to receive septage (wastewater) discharges from mobile sources such as septic tank pumping trucks, buses and recreational vehicles. These Septage Discharge Facilities provide access to a sewer main so that septage can be discharged directly into sewers that carry the wastewater to a wastewater treatment plant. The proposed Septage Discharge Facility will also provide a facility for the receipt and disposal of used fats, oils and grease (FOG) from Food Service Establishments.

Of the four existing WSSC Septage Discharge Facilities currently operating, only one is in Montgomery County. This facility is located in the City of Gaithersburg at the abandoned Muddy Branch Wastewater Pump Station at Muddy Branch Road and Conservation Drive.

The current Septage Discharge Facility is in close proximity to an existing apartment complex, and apartment residents have complained about odors when trucks are discharging septage, especially during warm weather. In addition, there are safety concerns associated with trucks entering and leaving the site. Traffic along this section of Muddy Branch Road can be heavy and fast-moving; trucks and recreational vehicles must slow to make a very sharp right turn to enter the site, creating a potential traffic hazard. There are also hazards associated with vehicles pulling out into traffic from this site. An evaluation has determined that the current site is not suited to continued use as a Septage Discharge Facility. Site constraints prohibit the kinds of improvements that would be necessary to allow continued use of this facility.

WSSC has engaged in a site selection process to determine an appropriate location for a new Septage Discharge Facility in Montgomery County. Based on selection criteria established as part of this process, WSSC has determined that the site of the abandoned Rock Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant off Gude Drive is the best location for the new Septage Discharge Facility (see attached aerial photo). This site lies just south of the closed Gude Landfill in an industrial area near Rockville (I-1 and I-2 zoning). Surrounding land uses include automobile painting and body shops, a tire wholesaler, a tile manufacturer, a self-storage facility, and a scrap yard. Although no housing units are adjacent to the site, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless operates a shelter about 1200 feet northwest of the property on land owned by Montgomery County.

Plans for the new facility propose that grease waste processing would occur at the site of the existing solids handling building on the northern portion of the property.

WSSC is working on the design for the new facility. Among the issues to be addressed are traffic, odor control, and community impacts. When plans are completed, they will bring this project to the Planning Board for Mandatory Referral approval.

SF:ha: M:\AREA 2\Findley, Steve\WSSC Septage Discharge Facility Staff Report 03032011.doc

Attachment: Aerial Photo

