

PUBLIC NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF COASTAL AND LAND USE PLANNING

Proposed Amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County Water Quality Management Plan

Public Notice

Take notice that pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., the Statewide Water Quality Management (WQM) Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15, and P.L. 2011, c. 203, the Department of Environmental Protection (Department) is proposing an amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM Plan. This amendment proposes a Future Wastewater Service Area (FWSA) map for that portion of Middlesex County within the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM planning area. This proposal is only for the FWSA map for that portion of Middlesex County within the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM planning area.

The proposed amendment that is the subject of this notice was submitted on behalf of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Middlesex County as the responsible wastewater management planning agency. The proposed amendment was submitted to the Department pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 203, enacted on January 17, 2012, which permits the wastewater management planning agency to prepare and submit to the Department at least that portion of a wastewater management plan (WMP) designating sewer service area (SSA) which complies with the Department's regulatory criteria. The adopted map, titled "Future Wastewater Service Areas, Middlesex County New Jersey," supersedes all wastewater service area mapping for Middlesex County currently contained in the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM Plan, which have been included as part of an adopted WMP.

The proposed FWSA map identifies areas to be served by sewage treatment facilities/sewer systems as well as areas to be served by septic systems with design flows of equal to or less than 2,000 gallons per day. The proposed map modifies the previously approved SSA to exclude environmentally sensitive areas that are not currently connected to sewer systems. Additionally, the map removes areas from SSA based on local planning objectives, and also includes areas previously excluded from SSA based on local planning objectives. These amendments only modify the wastewater service area mapping portions of the above referenced WQM plan.

Pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 203, the Department, in consultation with the applicable wastewater management planning agency, may approve the inclusion of land within a SSA notwithstanding that existing treatment works may not currently have the assured capacity to treat wastewater from such land without infrastructure improvements or permit modifications. Therefore, amendments to update a SSA may be approved if such actions are compliant with the applicable sections of the WQM Planning rules (N.J.A.C. 7:15) regardless of whether capacity has been fully assessed. Additional issues which may need to be addressed for any new or expanded wastewater treatment facility proposal include, but are not limited to, compliance with stormwater regulations, antidegradation, effluent limitations, water quality analysis, and exact locations and designs of future treatment works. Additionally, sewer service to any particular project is subject to contractual allocations between municipalities, authorities and/or private parties, and is not guaranteed by this amendment. Finally, P.L. 2011, c. 203, expires on January 17, 2014, and the Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., and implementing regulations require that full county-wide WMP updates be completed pursuant to the requirements set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:15.

The Department and Middlesex County have held numerous meetings with the public, municipal officials, and affected agencies over the past four years. Further, in accordance with Administrative Order No. 2010-03 (AO #2010-3) signed by Commissioner Martin, a public meeting was held on July 21, 2010, to allow public review and comment on the then-current draft of Middlesex County SSA. As a result, the Department and the County have received continuous input from residents, municipal officials, and other affected agencies regarding mapping corrections and other issues.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24, environmentally sensitive areas have been assessed to determine what areas must be excluded from the adopted SSA. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24, environmentally sensitive areas are defined as contiguous areas of 25 acres or larger consisting of habitat for threatened and endangered wildlife species as identified on the Landscape Project Maps of Habitat for Endangered, Threatened or Other Priority Species, Natural Heritage Priority Sites, Category One special water resource protection areas, and wetlands, alone or in combination.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)1, to determine areas designated as threatened or endangered wildlife species habitat, the Department utilized the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Landscape Project Maps of Habitat for Endangered, Threatened or Other Priority Species, version 2.1. Areas identified by the Landscape Project as being suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species are not included in the proposed SSA except as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(e) through (h).

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)2, areas mapped as Natural Heritage Priority Sites are not included in the proposed SSA, except as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(e) through (h).

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)3, areas identified as special water resource protection areas along Category One waters and their tributaries are not included in the proposed SSA, except as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(e) through (h). Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8-5.5(h), a 300-foot buffer is applied to both sides of a stream measured from the top of bank of an intermittent or perennial stream, or centerline if the bank is not defined, and from the defined edge of a lake, pond or reservoir at bank-full flow or level. Category One waters, their tributaries, and all Highlands waters, are afforded a 300-foot buffer. In addition, as required under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.20(b)3, the proposed FWSA map text indicates that development in riparian zones, or designated river areas, may be subject to special regulation under Federal or State statutes or rules. Riparian zones or buffers are established along all surface waters, based on the surface water body's classification designated at N.J.A.C. 7:9B, under the following regulations: the Flood Hazard Area Control Act rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13), the Stormwater

Management rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8), and the WQM Planning rules (N.J.A.C. 7:15). Most development within these riparian zones is regulated by these programs.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(b)4, areas mapped as wetlands pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:9A-1 and 13:9B-25 are not included in the proposed SSA, except as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(e) through (h).

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(c), certain coastal planning areas, not applicable here, must also be excluded from SSA. Specifically, there are no Coastal Fringe Planning Areas, Coastal Rural Planning Areas, or Coastal Environmentally Sensitive Areas in the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM planning area.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(d)1, areas with Federal 201 grant limitations that prohibit the extension of sewers are excluded from the proposed SSA either where local mapped information exists delineating these areas, or through a narrative description where mapping does not exist, except as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(f)1. Where a narrative approach has been used, it is noted as text on the proposed FWSA map. Pre-existing grant conditions and requirements (from Federal and State grants or loans for sewerage facilities), which provide for restriction of sewer service to environmentally sensitive areas, are unaffected by adoption of these amendments and compliance is required.

In addition to the environmentally sensitive areas with Federal 201 grant limitations that prohibit the extension of sewers identified under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(d)1, there are other special restricted areas, not applicable here, which must also be excluded from SSA pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(d)2 through 4. Specifically, there are no beaches, coastal high hazard areas, or dunes in the in the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM planning area.

As provided under N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24(e) through (h), limited environmentally sensitive areas have been included in SSAs. Where applicable, Department Permits or Jurisdictional Determinations have been utilized to determine the extent of the SSA on individual lots.

This preliminary notice represents the Department's determination that the County's proposed SSA is in compliance with the regulatory criteria for identifying SSA pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-5.24 and 5.25. In accordance with P.L. 2011, c. 203, the Department will accept site specific amendment and revision applications for those areas covered by this proposed amendment. Information regarding application for these amendments and revisions can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/wqmp/applications.html>.

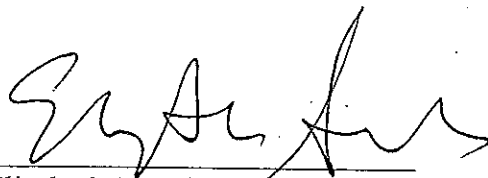
Approval of this amendment would not eliminate the need for any permits, approvals, or certifications required by any Federal, State, County, or municipal review agency with jurisdiction over any project/activity. Approval of this amendment does not provide any implied approval for any other aspects of any project or needed permits and approvals.

This notice is being given to inform the public that a plan amendment has been proposed for the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM Plan. All information related to the WQM Plan, and the proposed amendment is located at the Department, Division of Coastal and Land Use Planning, 401 East State Street, P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 401-07C, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. The Department's file is available for inspection between 8:30 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. An appointment to inspect the documents may be arranged by calling the Division of Coastal and Land Use Planning at (609) 984-6888.

A public hearing to discuss the proposed changes in sewer service area designation for Middlesex County, has been scheduled for June 5, 2013, in the Freeholders' Public Meeting Room, 1st Floor, of the new Middlesex County Administration Building located at John F. Kennedy Square, 75 Bayard Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey from 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. or close of testimony, whichever comes first.

Interested persons may submit written comments on the proposed amendment to WQM Program Docket, Division of Coastal and Land Use Planning, at the Department of Environmental Protection, P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 401-04H, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, with a copy sent to Ms. Mirah Becker, P.P., Supervising Planner, Middlesex County Planning Department, at 40 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. All comments must be

submitted within 15 days following the public hearing. All comments submitted prior to the close of the comment period shall be considered by the Department in reviewing the amendment request.



Elizabeth Semple, Manager
Division of Coastal and Land Use Planning
Department of Environmental Protection

3/27/13

Date