

Dracut Sewer Department

To whom it may concern

Date: June 2, 2025

Subject: Sewer Capacity Concerns – Murphy’s Farm Development & Wheeler Street Pump Station

Regarding the Murphy’s Farm development, the Dracut Sewer Department has raised concerns related to the Wheeler Street pump station. While the site is within reach of existing municipal sewer infrastructure and meets general capacity standards, there are significant concerns about overall system capacity and the potential impact on the Wheeler Street pump station.

1. Existing Pump Station Capacity Limitations

The Wheeler Street pump station currently processes approximately **19,000 gallons per day (GPD)**. The Murphy’s Farm development is projected to generate an additional **59,000 GPD**, bringing the total flow through the station to nearly **78,000 GPD** — over three times its current load.

This volume exceeds what the station was originally designed to accommodate and could result in:

- Increased pump cycling and operational stress
 - Mechanical wear, reduced equipment life, and emergency failures
 - Higher maintenance and repair costs
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2. Environmental and Regulatory Risks

Pump station failure or overflow poses the risk of:

- **Sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs)**
- Environmental contamination
- Violations of **MassDEP, EPA, and other regulatory requirements**

Such events may trigger fines, enforcement actions, and reputational harm to the Town.

3. Developer Cost Commitment

The **developer has agreed to cover all costs associated with any required upgrades** to the Wheeler Street pump station caused by the added demand from this development. This includes:

- New or larger-capacity pumps
 - Upgraded force mains or piping infrastructure
 - Electrical controls and alarm systems
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4. Potential On-Site Pump Station

Due to proximity to conservation land, there is a possibility the planned gravity sewer system will need to be altered. This may require the construction of a **new on-site pump station** at Murphy's Farm, which would **pump directly into the Wheeler Street station**, further increasing its load.

In that event, **additional upgrades** — potentially including higher-capacity equipment at both the new and existing stations — may be necessary. The **developer has agreed to fully fund these upgrades as well**.

5. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Dracut Sewer Department is **currently working with our contracted pump station operator, Watermark Environmental**, to evaluate the Wheeler Street station and determine what specific upgrades will be required to support the proposed development.

We will continue to coordinate with the Planning Board, Town Engineer, and the developer's design team to ensure that all system improvements meet Town standards, maintain regulatory compliance, and protect long-term system reliability.

For further information, please contact our office at (978) 957-0371 or sewerdept@dracutma.gov

Sincerely,
Joseph Cloutier
Superintendent
Dracut Sewer Department