



TOWN OF MONTAGUE

TURNERS FALLS – MAIN DRAIN REHABILITATION & SIPHON CLEANING PROJECT DEBT EXCLUSION

A YES Vote Would: Allow the Town to rehabilitate and clean the Main Drain in September

A NO Vote Would: Take no action. It will increase the possibility of a catastrophic failure with significantly greater cost.

Project Overview

The Main Drain conveys stormwater from the streets and avenues in Turners Falls to the Connecticut River. The largest size of the Main Drain is located beneath Avenue A, and takes a sharp turn at the Food City Plaza, and continues beneath the power and spur canals exiting at the river. It was constructed in the late 1800's of double wall brick and masonry – egg shaped, 32" x 48" in size. In 1914, a double barrel siphon in the Main Drain was constructed to allow the extension of the power canal as it is today. The Siphon which is a large dip in the Drain beneath the canal has not been cleaned of sand for many years and is consequently nearly full. A plugged siphon could cause flooding and backups. Engineers have inspected the Drain. The bottom of the Drain has worn considerably into the inner layer of brick and somewhat into the outer layer. Furthermore, the portion of the Drain beneath the spur canal is leaking and in poor structural condition. The Board of Selectmen authorized the preparation of the project design, and the project has been bid. Bids were received in early June.

Why are we considering the rehabilitation and cleaning of the Main Drain?

Since the Main Drain and Siphon are vital in conveying stormwater and melting snow to the river, rehabilitation and cleaning will maintain that function for many years to come. Furthermore, acting now will prevent a catastrophic failure, which would shut down the canal and power plants. Reconstructing a failed Main Drain would be significantly more expensive than the rehabilitation. The canal will be drained during the week of September 19 thru the 24th, which will allow the critical portion of the work to be performed in a safe manner.

What will it cost?

The project is estimated by the Town's engineer to cost approximately \$1,000,000. Since the Siphon cleaning is the responsibility of the power company, **the Town will be reimbursed approximately 40%.**

What is the voter approval process?

The May 7th Annual Town Meeting unanimously approved the project and granted approval to borrow the money for the project and the June 27th town-wide vote will seek approval for the Debt Exclusion, which would allow the Town to increase the Tax Levy to pay the Annual Debt Service for the project.

What will be the impact to me as a taxpayer?

The Tax Levy will be split between the sewer user fee at 10% and the remaining 90% wouldn't occur until the Tax Bills for FY 2019. The estimated impact on the average residential tax bill is approximately \$16.65 annually for a 20 year period. (Based on a median house value of \$200,100) The user fee shall increase 15 cents per thousand gallons used.