

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

December 15, 2015

City Requests Updated Schedule for Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility Construction Effort

PORTSMOUTH, NH – To construct the largest single public project in the City’s history, the City of Portsmouth has formally requested of the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) a four year construction schedule to complete the necessary upgrades of the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. The City filed with the EPA on December 10, 2015, and has released today on its website, its Statement of Position to demonstrate its need for an appropriate schedule.

“We need to do this right, and right means a construction schedule that is achievable, allows for necessary coordination, and does not impose an undue burden or risk on residents or visitors,” stated Peter Rice, Portsmouth’s Director of Public Works. “This is a large and complex project, on a small site, accessed by a narrow bridge after travelling through the congested downtown and South End; it can’t be rushed,” he said.

City Engineer Terry Desmarais explained further, “we have to keep the current wastewater treatment facility fully operational during the entire course of construction. This will be no small feat given the need for chemical deliveries, ongoing maintenance of the older equipment and the daily requirements to adjust chemical dosing and conduct sampling. Errors in coordination between treatment operations and construction activities could result in serious problems; we don’t want that to happen.”

City Manager John P. Bohenko added, “Because of the project’s location on Peirce Island with its many adjacent recreational and cultural offerings, maintaining the safety of residents and visitors is critically important.”

Under the current Consent Decree to upgrade the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility, the scheduled date of completion is May 2017. That schedule was set when the City envisioned constructing a 4.3 million gallon per day (mgd) secondary only treatment facility. The City's current design calls for a larger, 6.1 mgd secondary treatment facility with the added ability to remove nitrogen. The City has requested of the EPA the extra time necessary to construct this larger, more versatile facility. The design will be complete by the end of the year and, if the project can start by July 2016, the upgraded facility should be fully operational by September 2020.

The City of Portsmouth has made available at www.portsmouthwastewater.com/resources.html its Statement of Position that was filed with the EPA on December 10, 2015. The EPA is scheduled to respond by January 25, 2015.

For more information contact: Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Attorney, 603-610-7240