

We need to make decisions that protect our watershed.

CILU's primary concern has been and remains the examination of any decision that would impact Holmdel's land use, and the quality and quantity of our water supply. Our mission has been to monitor and publicize trends and decisions that could profoundly alter the landscape and the watershed by overdevelopment.

On Tuesday, August 24, 2010, Monmouth County will hold a public hearing on proposed additions and deletions to the County's sewer service map, several which do not align with Holmdel's current 2002 Wastewater Management Plan or 2004 Master Plan. The hearing will take place from 5:30-8:30pm at the Manalapan County Library Headquarters. The County and NJDEP will accept written comments for 30 days following the hearing, before the County submits its final Wastewater Management Plan to the NJDEP.

Consider this message a call to action. Plan to attend this hearing and write letters. Holmdel sewer service mapping has long been a contentious issue. Unfortunately, NJDEP recognizes only Monmouth County's sewer service map, not Holmdel's locally-approved Plans (endorsed by CILU). In 2005, Monmouth County ignored Holmdel Township efforts to bring the County Plan into alignment with our own.

Holmdel's current Plans reflect the view that sewer infrastructure belongs in the more densely populated and developed areas of town. The draft Monmouth County Plan, if enacted, has the potential to alter Holmdel's landscape for years to come.

The Final Draft County Plan, adopted in April 2010, does include some of Holmdel's amendments requested in 2005, and requested again by our citizens at a hearing earlier this year. The County needs to hear that we strongly endorse sewer service boundary reductions to the footprints of existing structures at the following three locations, and make certain they remain as such in the plan that will be submitted to NJDEP for approval:

- Garden State Art Center site including the Vietnam Memorial .
- Bell Labs (Alcatel-Lucent 475 acre Crawford Corner Road site)
- Bell Labs Crawford Hill site on Holmdel Road.

But the proposed plan also includes additional sewer service areas that run contra to Holmdel's plan that protect our environment and watershed and reduce the risk of over-development. Concerned Holmdel citizens need to voice their opposition to the following areas still proposed for sewer service on the draft Monmouth County map:

- THE WESTERN 1/3 OF HOLMDEL PARK. This area, deep in Environmentally Sensitive State Planning Area 5 (PA-5), has never before been considered for sewer service.
- THE EASTERN AREA (containing Country Woods). Approximately 329 homes currently use septic systems with no indications of public health or safety concerns in this steeply-sloped area. The Mahoras Brook, which joins the Waackaack near Allocco Park to flow to the Raritan Bay, finds its headwaters here. It lays entirely within both PA-5 and State-designated Critical Water Supply areas, and also meets regulatory criteria for protection from “measurable changes” as Category 1 waters. Two years ago NJDEP removed downstream areas from sewer service due to their environmental sensitivity.

Septic systems gain importance in recharging aquifers on steeply-sloped land, as a considerable portion of rainwater is unavailable for infiltration due to runoff. The installation of sewers in this area would, at great public expense, cause the needless disturbance of woodlands, wetlands and streams, while significantly reducing water available to the aquifer.

- THE WESTERN AREA (Centered around Beers Street, extending from areas on Line Road to Holmdel/Keyport Road). On this site, located in PA-5 and PA-3 areas, approximately 250 homes and a 48-acre farm safely use septic systems. Although this unique section of Holmdel is situated on the Northern Slope, groundwater flows to the south, discharging to tributaries that feed the Swimming River Reservoir and maintains the base flow of DEP Category 1 streams.

Extending sewer service to this area would deprive the Reservoir of a significant contribution, and in turn reduce potable water supplies to Holmdel and other municipalities. Sewer availability could open the door to high-density housing on undeveloped, environmentally-sensitive land in this area.

CILU needs your help at this critical time. Register your concerns about protecting our watershed and open space by attending the August 24 meeting and writing letters during the 30-day window of opportunity.

Monmouth County’s water supply is limited, as evidenced by July’s mandatory water restrictions even following unprecedented winter storms. Instead of processing wastewater and discharging it to the Atlantic Ocean, Monmouth County and NJDEP should be focusing on returning this water safely to the natural watershed. Properly maintained household septic systems and on site localized filtering systems for larger institutions, or parks, fulfill this function.

“If you build it, they will come.” This applies not only to roads and baseball fields in Iowa, but also to sewers. Monmouth County and NJDEP are putting the cart before the horse. Instead of considering additions to sewer service areas, the focus should be a study of the “natural carrying capacity” of the land. To learn more about the importance of sewer service mapping, go to www.holmdel-cilu.org and read our newsletter on “WATER”, and “Holmdel’s Waste Water Management Plan”. You can also find a timeline on this contentious issue on our website.

For more information on conserving potable water supplies, CILU invites members to read National Geographic’s special Water issue at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/04/table-of-contents>.