



**Little Hope Creek: Phase 2 Virtual Public Meeting  
February 16, 2022**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

*Facilitated by Ajonelle Poole, Charlotte Water*

*Answered by Stephen Scott, Charlotte Water; Mike Osborne, Black & Veatch; and Joshua Rogers, Park Construction*

*50 Participants; 34 questions*

Below is a summary of the Q&A session; some questions have been grouped together based on topic.

**Q1: When will Phase 2 construction start?**

A: Phase 1 is progressing toward completion now in the middle of February, so we have a short way to go. We are targeting approximately mid-March when we transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

A: Because it's wintertime our schedule is constantly changing due to weather. When we get more into the summertime the weather is a little bit better (more consistent) to provide a plan with specific dates, but I still feel confident that around mid-March we will begin construction in that area.

A: Phase 2 is long. It's approximately two and a half miles. Construction will begin on the lower portion, and we will work our way up toward the north. The further north you are, the further away the exact start date would be when you see the first signs of activity.

**Q2: Is there a projected construction schedule for Phase 3?**

A: The projected schedule right now is 18-24 months beginning likely late 2023 or early 2024. Construction schedules are subject to change.

**Q3: Has easement marking already started for Phase 2? What's the schedule for marking?**



A: Partly, yes. We will continue up the easement through the Waterbury stretch of the project over the next month or so. From Waterbury and further north, will probably be 3-4 months away. However, it could potentially be sooner but that is where we are at right now.

**Q4: Given Phase 2 is pending final easement acquisitions, is there concern the March target start could be delayed for a long period (besides for weather), or is acquiring easements not a concern?**

A: Most private property easement acquisitions are complete. That March date could certainly be pushed as we move forward. There is still work that needs to be done in terms of power pole relocations and we are working with Duke and AT&T. The public property is still pending approval and that can affect our project schedule.

**Q5: Will there be a closure at Seneca Place between Wedgewood and Valley Stream Road?**

A: Yes, there will be a temporary closure of Seneca for our work and a detour will be set up. The detour will route from Seneca to Park Road, to Tyvola, and back around. There will be signage posted for closure and detour that will be clearly marked.

**Q6: So, the traffic diversion will last to possibly 2024? Regarding Seneca to Park Road.**

A: No, the Seneca detour for Phases 1 and 2 work is projected to only be in place for up to 3 weeks, but if we run into unforeseen conditions it could be longer. Our hope is that we are crossing Seneca Place within a month to a month and a half. There will be some form of traffic control along the project corridor throughout the whole duration, as we'll be crossing and installing pipe within several streets with our work.

**Q7: How will traffic on Hartford Avenue be handled during construction?**

A: There will be rolling closures. Access for residents and property owners will be maintained.

**Q8: How is the construction zone adjusted when the pipe runs between houses and is very tight?**

A: During our design phase we were out on the ground quite a bit looking at these areas. Depending on the circumstance whether it was proximity to a house or other structure we were bound in a lot of areas by the creek and making sure that the existing sewer stays in service. So, we laid out the corridor and the construction zone as it was appropriate for the circumstances we encountered in the field.



**Q9: What will happen to the staging area for Phase 1 that resides on Seneca near Valley Stream? Can this site continue to be utilized for Phase 2 and Phase 3 thus reducing the footprint needed for the Mockingbird site?**

A: The lot on Seneca is currently being used during Phase 1 and Phase 2.

A: Phase 3 does not cross through that property. When construction is completed on Phase 1 the backyards of residents between Seneca and Wedgewood will be restored. We can't access Phase 3 directly from the Seneca lot, so we are not planning to use this area during Phase 3.

**Q10: When will the staging area for Phase 1 on Seneca be restored?**

A: Before the completion of Phase 2, but it's dependent on what other staging areas are acquired for the project.

**Q11: How do we request a pre-blast evaluation of our homes regarding rock blasting?**

A: We will be contacting property owner(s) through mail to schedule an appointment to come by the property and perform the survey. The pre-blast survey representative will look around and document the condition of the interior and/or exterior of the property. A representative will want to perform this investigation to assess the structure before blasting occurs. Once construction starts and after the blasting occurs there will be an opportunity at the homeowner's request to have a post-blast survey conducted.

**Q12: The construction equipment is very large, how is this adjusted when the pipe location runs very close to homes and between houses?**

A: The contractor has a variety of equipment to use on the project and will use the appropriate size equipment to install the pipe based on the constraints of that location.

**Q13: Can the hours of operation be started later in the morning?**

A: 7 a.m. is when construction is permitted to start. The total duration of the project is based on the ability of the contractor to put in the hours to lay the pipe. 7 a.m. can be early but if the contractor's hours are limited during the day, this increases the likelihood of extending the total project duration which impacts the neighborhood over a longer duration.

**Q14: Where are power poles being moved?**



A: Generally, the existing power poles that conflict with our work follow the creek and are in backyards offset from the creek bank. The new poles will largely remain as close as practical to their current locations, with relatively minor adjustments for those at risk of falling in the creek or those directly over our existing pipe.

**Q15: What measures will be in place to protect from an oil spill on the construction site/storage area?**

A: Any fuel tanks used are double containment tanks. If there is a flooding event forecasted we will ensure that all our equipment is on high ground, including fuel tanks.

**Q16: If we have a property located at the most northern part of the Phase 2 construction, is it safe to say that the total construction timeline will be 24 months? Or is this timeline longer now? I only ask as you mentioned that construction of Phase 2 will start at Seneca Place and go north 2.5 miles.**

A: As noted previously, the contractor started at Tyvola and is restoring as they go. The contractor generally does not push too much further ahead of the work that's before them. Josh's plan is to clear a section, install the pipe and then move further north.

A: Yes, generally the further your property from the starting area of construction, the longer duration until the activity is seen. Our work on Phase 2 will progress from the south to the north. There are some unique situations with Duke Energy and AT&T related to pole relocations that may occur out of sequence due to scheduling considerations. This work will result in easement clearing and site preparation in advance of our construction to accommodate their work, however, typically pipeline installation follows closely behind site prep work.

**Q17: What is being done to recycle the hardwoods versus chipping 70-year-old trees?**

A: Most of the existing trees in the easement have been or will be mulched for environmental purposes which protects the water quality of the creek. This mulch provides ground cover for easements so when our work is progressing we don't have exposed soil creating erosion control concerns for the work and surrounding areas. Likewise, some of the larger trees, like those more suitable for another use, will be used for lumber. Our clearing contractor will take those trees to a sawmill to be used for any purpose they deem necessary. We have had some conversations with Mecklenburg County in which they may also be able to utilize some of this timber.



**Q18: Are there plans to replace any trees, bushes, etc., that will be cleared along either side of the easement?**

A: We should only be clearing within the easement. We are not planning to replace any plantings within the easement beyond seed and straw as ground cover to stabilize the area. For replacement plantings within easements by private property owners, we have a list of landscaping guidelines available on our website. Generally, it includes noninvasive species and trees and grasses with shallow roots systems only.

<https://charlottenc.gov/Water/Documents/LandscapingGuidelines.pdf>

**Q19: Who should the community get in contact with to help provide recommendations and requests for restoration efforts?**

A: If it's private property let me know. My contact information (Stephen Scott) is on the website as well as the prior screen. If the question is about public property, that would be contacts at Mecklenburg County/Stormwater.

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**Q20: For clarity, construction on the field (Mockingbird staging area) is not lasting three years but the mess and sight impact does. That is what will impact the home values.**

A: Yes. Active construction (clearing/pipe installation) on the site will not last three years, however, we are also planning on using the area for temporary staging of pipe and manholes during that time. I cannot speak directly to home values because there are many factors that may affect them. All residents of this neighborhood know how desirable this community is to live in, however, this is a capacity-limited basin. What that means is no approvals can be granted for any future development around or within this basin until capacity can be addressed. This project directly addresses capacity. We want to see the area continue to grow. We want new businesses and residents to come and see it thrive. That can't take place with aging infrastructure including a sewer that is 60 years old. These creeks are an asset to the community, however, if they are next to a sewer line and that sewer repetitively overflows that is detrimental to the quality of the creek and character of the neighborhood. That will impact home values. This construction is temporary. The staging is temporary. And the long-term goals of this project are for the greater community and the future. We know three years is a long time, but I assure you it's temporary.



**Q21: How are they protecting the bus stops on Mockingbird?**

A: The bus stop, I believe, is at Terrance. Which is outside of the proposed fenced staging area on Mockingbird.

**Q22: Have you thought about the parking lots at the top of Mockingbird Lane? They have been empty for years (pre-COVID as well). Or what about at the Wastewater plant down Park Road?**

A: On a project of this nature for duration aspects we need the material where the construction is happening. The wastewater plant on Park Road is quite a distance away from active construction. Moving equipment and heavy materials on Park Road and Tyvola Road is just going to increase safety concerns and possibly extend construction duration.

A: One of the big things that we kept in mind here once the material is in an on-site staging area is that we can control the movement of that material with our contractors and crews. If we stage material in other locations off-site then bringing it to the work area will generate more traffic in the neighborhood and surrounding areas. Keeping the material off-site results in the need for an outside hauling company to transport material to the project. When pipe material can be staged along the pipeline corridor we've got all the material we need where the work is being performed.

A: Finding an adequate site for staging for this project is tough. It's a very developed area. The available property is limited. For Phase 2 and 3 we had 12 sites on our list we evaluated and 11 were eliminated. What came out on top was the Mockingbird site. We are not staging materials in a business parking lot or at a school. We are trying to limit our storage of materials in the easements in the backyards of private residents.

**Q23: Height of fencing around the staging area? Screening on the fencing?**

A: Likely using a 6–8-foot fencing with screening but will depend on the guidance provided by the property owner (Mecklenburg County) as a condition of use for this area.

**Q24: So no compromise for the duration of storing materials has been made since the last meeting? At the in-person meeting, it was estimated that the pipe installation will take two months so why three years?**

A: Yes, there was a compromise made for this area. We greatly reduced the area that is impacted for that long. Use of the last few parcels at the corner of Mockingbird and Barkley was



reduced to two months. We shortened the duration of the middle parcels to 18 months and shifted the impacted area over. We still have to build this project and Phase 3 construction is also on these parcels, joining Phase 2 at 1121 Mockingbird. We have to accommodate construction here for Phase 3, as well as Phase 2. We do believe what we've presented is a compromise.

**Q25: Have you considered the flooding on the field? There was a significant flood there within the last 15 months.**

A: We do not believe there is a risk of materials and equipment flooding and floating away. If there is that risk, we can stabilize the material and secure it, so it doesn't leave the site.

**Q26: Can larger trees be planted versus small ones on the field.**

A: The planting discretion is up to Mecklenburg County, the property owner. They will set the requirements for replanting and using 1.5-to-2-inch caliper trees is typical. If larger trees are requested we can work to accommodate.

**Q27: How will impact to home values decrease be handled?**

A: We cannot speak to whether this project does or doesn't affect home values. I think that the value of private property has so many factors that construction in the neighborhood may or may not be a factor.

**Q28: How will people safely go up and down Mockingbird Lane with the large trucks accessing the staging area?**

A: Mockingbird is a public street. We ask people to remain vigilant of their surroundings and exercise caution when walking on the street. We know there is no sidewalk on Mockingbird currently, which is why we proposed the grass strip in the curve of Mockingbird to better accommodate pedestrian traffic currently using the street. Please be aware of your surroundings.

**Q29: Who is the contact at Mecklenburg County that will be approving this plan?**

A: As far as easement and use of the property along Mockingbird the ultimate approval lies with the County Manager but will go through several steps to get there. These former single-family home sites were acquired by Mecklenburg County Stormwater and use of this, and any other County property is reviewed through the Asset Management Department.



*Storm Water Services is still acquiring properties and fully intends to engage the Madison Park Neighborhood following the completion of the Little Hope Sewer Project to enhance the Mockingbird and the other floodplain buyouts within the neighborhood for community use and environmental benefit.*

**Q30: What other sites are available to use for Phase 2 and 3 staging?**

A: We are still working to determine additional sites that are available. We are submitting this to Mecklenburg County for permission to use this site. We currently do not have permission from anyone else to use this site or another site for Phase 2 and 3 staging.

**Q31: There is still a huge staging area on the field for three years – not much of a compromise here. This update especially does not help those of us who live uphill on Mockingbird and will have to deal with daily traffic congestion on an already overcrowded street (where we have young children). How is this permissible within a neighborhood? Our neighborhood is zoned for a construction storage site. Why can't the equipment be parked where it currently sits?**

A: Regarding traffic on Mockingbird, we have to build the sewer where it is. The sewer is along the creek and our existing sewer and proposed plan are along the creek. We have to access the site and the site is accessible through Mockingbird – a public street. We have to drive on the street. As far as this being a compromise, for construction staging, it has to go somewhere. This site is ideal for our work as described previously due to its size, location, and lower impacts when compared to other options that were evaluated. As far as using the area where our pipes currently sit along Seneca, the Seneca lot is very limited on space and also has a significant slope. That area is running out of room right now and it's only a single parcel. We are planning on using that area for Phases 1 and 2. That was our agreement with Mecklenburg County that we made about a year ago so that area will be used for a portion of Phase 2. We still need additional area along the Phase 2 corridor so that is where these Mockingbird parcels come into consideration. There is not enough room for what we have there at Seneca.

**Q32: Is there an answer on how it is permissible for the proposed Mockingbird staging area to be a construction zone for three years?**

A: We get permission from the property owner. The property owner here is Mecklenburg County and they would be the ones granting permission to the City of Charlotte and Charlotte Water to perform this work.

**Q32: What will the Mockingbird staging area be after completion in three years? Will it be developed into anything? Resold? Etc.?**

A: We will restore the area to pre-construction conditions which includes grading the area and adding seed and straw. Specifically, on these parcels, we are working with the county on a tree



replanting plan for the areas outside of our sewer easement. Those details are not yet finalized, as the future plans for the site are subject to change. A number of trees to replant will accompany our use of this property, however, where those trees will go may vary.

**Q34: Is there a plan B in case the Mockingbird staging area is not approved by the county? Are there any other alternatives?**

A: We are continuing to look for additional space along Phase 3. The proposed use here will not be adequate for the entirety of Phase 3, so, we still need more area for Phase 3 and likely other areas for Phase 2 on the northern end. Those alternatives are still being evaluated but as it relates to the Mockingbird area this is our alternative.

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