PA Sewage Facilities Act – Act 537

- Enacted in 1966 to correct existing problems and prevent future problems
- All municipalities must develop and implement a plan
- DEP reviews and approves the plans
- Plans should be modified as new developments are proposed or when needs change
Act 537 Plan - Information to Include
› Population figures and projections
› Drinking water supplies
› Waterways, soil types and geologic features
› Sanitary survey results
› Location, type and status of existing sewage facilities
› Local Zoning
› Estimates of future sewage disposal needs
› Identification of potential problem solving alternatives
› Cost estimates for alternatives
› Selection of appropriate alternative

Act 537 Planning Process
Municipal decision to update Plan
- Establish Plan Scope
- Pre-planning meeting with DEP
- Prepare task activity report
- Develop draft Act 537 Plan

Municipal/County review
- Public Advertisement
- 30 Day comment period
- Respond to comments
- Finalize Plan/Municipal Resolution Adoption
- DEP Review and Approval
Plan Changes

- “Official Plan Revisions”
  - Result from new land development proposals
  - Completed using planning modules specific to the project
- “Update Revisions”
  - Broad changes to the plan made by the municipality

Typical Issues that bring out the Public

- Total Project Cost and Individual Costs
  - Project Funding Alternative
  - Initial Connection Fees
  - Rates for Service
- Routing/Location of Facilities
  - Treatment Facility
  - Easements
  - NIMBY
- Environmental Impact Concerns
  - Discharge Location
  - Crossing through HQ/EV watershed
  - Odor/Noise during construction and during operation

Typical Issues that bring out the Public

- OLDS (On-Lot Disposal System) Management
  - Pumping and Maintenance Costs
  - Fines and Penalties
- Management Structure
  - Township or Borough
  - Municipal Authority
  - Joint Municipal Authority

Aurel Arndt
Lehigh County Authority
aurelarndt@lehighcountyauthority.org

Laura Eberly, PE
SSM Group, Inc.
laura.eberly@ssmgroup.com

Darryl Jenkins
SSM Group, Inc.
darryl.jenkins@ssmgroup.com
Enhanced Public Education and Outreach

○ Minimizing and Addressing Concerns
  ● When Should the Public Be Involved?
    ● Consider Scale and Complexity of Project
  ● Involve the Participation of Those Impacted Together in the Planning Process
    ● DEP
    ● Municipal Officials
    ● Homeowners
    ● Landowners
    ● Other Stakeholders

Enhanced Public Education and Outreach

○ The Process
  
  Publicly Advertise the Plan
  Issue Responses to Comments
  Conduct Public Meetings With Municipal Officials and Stakeholders
  Conduct Additional Meetings as Necessary
  Finalize the Plan and Submit it to DEP

Enhanced Public Education

○ Benefits of Joint Involvement
  ● Everyone Impacted Has a Better Understanding of the Project
  ● Ensures Minimal Misunderstandings and Subsequent Issues
  ● Allows for the Inclusion of All Concerns
  ● Reduction In Project Time and Cost
    ● Fewer Revisions and Changes
A Tale of Two Plans

Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Act 537 Plan
Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan

A Tale of Two Plans
Northern Lehigh Study Area

Preferred Alternative, 2007
A Tale of Two Plans
Northern Lehigh Study Area Preferred Alternative, 2009

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan
  - Service Area
  - Future Wastewater Treatment Capacity
  - Started as Joint Effort
  - Memorandum of Understanding
  - City Concession Interferes

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan
- Allentown Sewer Service Area Map

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan

A Tale of Two Plans

- Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan
A Tale of Two Plans
Allentown – Lehigh County Authority Joint Act 537 Plan