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Huntington Town OKs county study of expanding sewers ^[1]

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The Huntington Town Board approved the next step in allowing Suffolk County to fund and conduct a feasibility and design study of extending the Southwest Sewer District into Huntington Station, an effort that officials said could boost revitalization projects.

Suffolk County legislators in December approved \$1.25 million from the Start Up New York/Suffolk County program to study installing sewers from the Huntington Long Island Rail Road station to the Walt Whitman Shops, about 2 miles south.

The grant will be used to fund the county study to identify the location of the sewer extension, the infrastructure involved and the cost.

“This approves and accepts that we are a part of the study,” Town Supervisor Frank Petrone said of the board’s action. “It will be conducted by the county. This is their area of study.” Board members voted 5-0 to approve the agreement in August.

The 2017 Suffolk County capital budget set aside \$20 million for the construction of the sewers in subsequent years. Petrone said he hopes that by moving ahead with a study, the money set aside last year will be appropriated in the 2018 county budget.

Suffolk Legis. William Spencer (D-Centerport), who has been initiating the sewer efforts, said he also hopes to see the project started as soon as possible. He said while the town and county were working out paperwork and specific language for the study, the project was moving forward with the county issuing a request for proposals for a consultant to conduct the study. Spencer said the county received five responses in late August and a winner could be selected by the end of October.

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“This project is something that I view as a priority because it goes to infrastructure, revitalization, helping to build for our young people,” Spencer said. “It’s going to take a really strong collaborative effort to move it through the necessary processes.”

Officials have identified the lack of sewer availability as an impediment to economic growth in the area south of the Long Island Rail Road tracks.

Supporters of the sewerage plan include Plainview-based Renaissance Downtowns, the master developer leading a multimillion-dollar revitalization in Huntington Station north of the train station, where sewer hookups are already available. Ryan Porter, vice president of planning and development for Renaissance Downtowns, said efforts to develop unsewered areas “speaks volumes to the need for this critical infrastructure to allow for the implementation of a truly comprehensive revitalization.”

Petrone said adding sewers will help lift the local economy, provide housing opportunities and revitalize the Huntington Station area.

“Sewers are essential to the continued redevelopment of a Huntington Station; you cannot continue commercial development without it,” Petrone said. “It’s a strip that is a downtown basically.”

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