

MANHASSET
**SET TO
DUMP THE PUMP**

Weary of the cost of pumping septic tanks, businesses eager for sewer line

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Peter Pagonis took over his father's restaurant in 1998, when the cost for pumping the building's septic tank wasn't a big deal. But now Pagonis pays \$1,103 a week to pump the tank, an expense that has risen so much that it's reducing profit and increasing his eagerness to connect to a sewer line.

Pagonis is among a group of Manhasset businesses along Plandome Road between Northern Boulevard and Webster Avenue looking to ditch septic. About 80 business and building owners said it's too expensive to maintain septic tanks and they want to connect to sewer lines managed by the Great Neck Water Pollution Control District.

Most North Hempstead businesses are connected to sewer lines, but some still have septic system plumbing. Pagonis said it costs about \$65,000 to \$70,000 a year to maintain the septic system at Louie's Manhasset Restaurant.

"That's coming out of our net [profit]," said Pagonis, who co-owns the restaurant with his brother Tommy. "Imagine if someone was taking a third of your salary away every week. That's how much money it is. Sewer is the solution. It's the only solution."

Study to wrap up in August

Leaders from the Manhasset Chamber of Commerce approached the control district about wanting sewer in late 2017, and district officials said they would look into it. The district then commissioned a \$222,000 study to determine the cost of converting Plandome Road businesses to sewer.

Woodbury-based Cameron Engineering is conducting the study, which began last October and is expected to conclude in August.



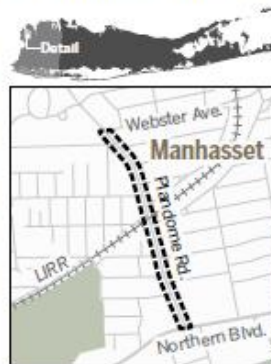
About 80 businesses along Plandome Road have said they want to connect to a proposed sewer line.

"We've got the capacity to be able to go ahead and take what's going on in Manhasset and also take anything else that's in the area," said Steve Reiter, a district commissioner.

Reiter said the district's plant can process 5.3 million gallons of wastewater a day and now services 3 million gallons daily. If connected, the added water from Plandome Road businesses would bring fewer than 100,000 extra gallons, said Christopher Murphy, the district's superintendent.

Environmental benefit

Murphy said the district would need to install a new underground sewer pipeline along Plandome Road that businesses could connect their rerouted plumbing pipes to for service. He added that the environment would benefit from the connection.



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Septic systems along Plandome Road contribute large amounts of nitrogen that eventually pollute Manhasset Bay, said Sarah Deonarine, executive director of the Manhasset

Bay Protection Committee. Eliminating septic tanks would mean "you don't have the nitrogen and you don't have the bacteria from them running into a part of the bay that's getting shallow and doesn't flush with the tide very well," she said.

Murphy said that the study has so far found that it is "physically possible" to connect Manhasset businesses to sewer. The study is now determining which of three options is the least expensive and which government agencies would grant necessary permits to do the connection work.

C.J. Coleman, who served as the Manhasset Chamber president between 2013 and 2016 when the septic issues first arose, said connecting to sewer will save businesses hundreds of dollars per month in plumbing costs.