

# The Daily Item

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BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | October 1, 2021

## Lynn Water & Sewer Gets To Work On King's Beach



Ducks and seagulls take flight as a couple walks along King's Beach in Swampscott. (Spenser Hasak)

YNN — The Lynn Water & Sewer Commission (LWSC) will be working with the engineering firm, Environmental Partners (EP), to assist in developing and implementing a plan to reduce the number of beach closures and improve water quality at King's Beach.

Executive Director Daniel O'Neill said LWSC is committed to investigating the bad water quality at the beach and working with EP to address major infrastructure improvements to the city's sewage and storm drain system.

The work with EP, which is one of LWSC's consultants, will develop and implement an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Plan that addresses a number of topics, including the quality assurance and control procedures for the water-sampling program.

This project will also include a summary of LWSC's work in implementing the IDDE Plan, a storm-drain map of the area that includes junction nodes and structures used for sampling the water, and a plan to examine the existing storm-drain mapping.

The results of the sampling data and other information related to past IDDE efforts will show any illicit connections to the storm-drain system that are released into the beach and need to be addressed.

Some of these actions will include regular sampling for any illicit connections in the system, while indicating the progress of the work and further establishing priorities for ensuing phases of work.

This project will also include a description of LWSC's resource commitment to implementing the updated IDDE Plan, including allotment of staff time and resources, and an annual budget to do so.

O'Neill said LWSC does its own testing of the water every year and hasn't found any issues with the system, noting the water quality from the beach could be from waste or trash that is dropped into catch basins around the city that then comes out of the pipes at the beach.

"The water that ends up on King's Beach extends from the Highlands to Western Avenue, to the Swampscott line, and then to the beach," O'Neill said. "There's 950 acres, so if someone is up in the Highlands walking their dog and drops its waste in the catch basin ... there's a chance that might end up on the beach."

All of the city's sewage waste goes directly to the LWSC plant on Circle Avenue, where about 25 million gallons are treated each day, so O'Neill said the raw sewage does not end up at the beach.

Besides the rare event of an overflow from heavy rain that occurs an average of twice per year — which O'Neill noted used to happen about 20 times per year before the combined sewer overflow (CSO) program began in the 1980s — the LWSC system does not spew sewage onto the beach.

This decrease in overflows is due to the more than \$100 million LWSC has put into extensive sewer separation since the 1990s, which included around 20 miles of the new stormwater/sanitary system that was approved by the state and federal regulations (MassDEP and EPA).

Other contributions to the exceeded bacteria standards at the beach, O'Neill said, can be from urban runoff from streets, lawns, driveways, parking lots and roofs; from domestic pets and wildlife; and from beachgoers.

"Possible solutions can include more street sweeping, doggy-waste bags, stenciling of (the 735) catch basins, or more public education," O'Neill said.

Some alternatives O'Neill suggested to be considered include a new outfall piping system, a new chlorination/dechlorination system, and a sewer-rehabilitation project.

O'Neill sent these alternatives, along with information and data on the system, to the state delegation in a letter to request funding for these improvements.

The LWSC is meeting with EP next week to discuss logistics and costs and will begin the project testing and examining the system shortly after.