

Strategic Plan: 2024 - 2044
Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority (SLSA)
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Approved by the Board of Directors

July 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
SLSA’s Strategic Planning Process.....	3
Overview of SLSA Today.....	4
Strategic Issues Facing the Industry and SLSA in 2024.....	5-6
SLSA’s Mission and Core Values.....	7
SLSA’s Competitive Advantages.....	8
Vision for SLSA Over the Next 20 Years	8
3-Year Action Items.....	9
Executing the Strategic Plan.....	10
Attachments:	
1. SLSA Service Index Map	
2. SLSA Capacity at City WWTP vs. EDUs Used graph	
3. SLSA Organizational Chart	

SLSA's Strategic Planning Process

The Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority (SLSA) has a history of over 50 years providing wastewater services and today serves customers in three municipalities. Much has changed over the years as these municipalities have grown in population, new regulations for operating have become more stringent, and the cost of operating and providing these services has steadily increased.

Recognizing the many changes, as well as both the opportunities and challenges SLSA will continue to see in the future, in 2023 the Board of Directors agreed it was time to develop a strategic plan to guide the board going forward. The board recognized that a strategic plan should ideally project forward over the next two decades through 2044 since the infrastructure and capital investments that will be needed require long-range planning including financial investments.

The board appointed a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) comprised of two board members, James Witman and Devin Groff, with SLSA's solicitor also in attendance. After requesting a proposal, the board hired Bruce Nilson, a Certified Management Consultant based in Central PA, to facilitate the process. Bruce has more than 30 years consulting experience facilitating strategic planning with both for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

A series of six-monthly strategic planning sessions were held with the SPC from December 2023 through May 2024. The SPC kept the Board informed of its progress at the monthly board meetings and invited board input on the topics being discussed. As facilitator, Bruce Nilson provided the SPC members with relevant articles and background information on strategy to provide a framework for the planning process and an agenda with discussion topics before each session.

During the strategic planning sessions, the SPC reviewed data related to SLSA and the several municipalities currently being served. Data included municipal comprehensive plans and industry peer data where available. Some of the topics addressed by the SPC included: SLSA's overall purpose and brand, current financial health and debt levels, system capacity, infrastructure, projected regional growth, industry trends, regulations, key partnerships with the City of Lancaster and CDM Smith, the engineering-consulting firm that manages SLSA on a day-to-day basis, as well as other key vendors and partnerships.

The strategic plan includes SLSA's mission statement, core values, and a description of SLSA's current situation and the strategic issues facing the industry today. The plan also describes SLSA's vision and direction for the next 20 years and several specific short term action items to facilitate achievement of the vision. Now that the strategic plan has been approved, the Board of Directors will designate certain board members as well as individuals representing SLSA's strategic partners to ensure that the strategic action items are being executed and to keep the board informed of their progress and results.

Overview of SLSA Today

The Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority was incorporated in 1970 to provide wastewater collection and conveyance service to suburban Lancaster areas. SLSA provides this service to portions of West Lampeter Township, Pequea Township, and Lancaster Township.

The Authority owns and maintains 14 pumping stations and 95 miles of pipe (See SLSA Service Index Map, Attachment 1). SLSA owns no wastewater treatment facilities. Currently all wastewater is conveyed to the City of Lancaster Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant (City AWWTP). Wastewater from Strasburg Borough and portions of East Lampeter Township and the City of Lancaster is also transported through SLSA facilities for treatment at the City AWWTP.

SLSA's treatment capacity allocation at the City AWWTP is 4.03 MGD (million gallons per day.) SLSA serves approximately 6,000 customers, with an average wastewater flow of approximately 1.80 MGD. SLSA currently has sufficient reserve capacity at the AWWTP to accommodate projected growth in SLSA's service area for the next 20 years and beyond (see SLSA's Capacity at City's WWTP vs. EDUs Used, Attachment 2).

SLSA has a five-member board consisting of: two representatives from West Lampeter Township, one representative from Lancaster Township, one representative from Pequea Township, and one representative from the City of Lancaster.

The Authority has no employees but instead contracts for engineering, legal, maintenance, billing, and financial services. The Authority's engineering consultant provides technical guidance on sewer projects, monitoring of sewer system condition, preparation and management of the Authority's budget, and day-to-day administration of Authority operations and finances. The Authority's solicitor provides guidance in all legal matters and prepares all legal documents required for the Authority's operation (see SLSA Organizational Chart, Attachment 3).

The Authority meets once a month, and meetings are open to the public. The Authority's engineering representative and solicitor attend all board meetings.

Strategic Issues Facing SLSA and the Industry in 2024

Privatization of Municipal Authorities

Across the Pennsylvania Commonwealth, municipal water and wastewater authorities are seeing increased competition from the private sector. Despite offering large initial financial benefits to the seller, the long-term results of privatization are high rates and unreliable service for the customers.

SLSA's Board of Directors does not support privatization of municipal authorities. Rather than selling to a private organization, some municipal authorities in poor financial condition have agreed to sell to or merge with other municipal authorities like SLSA. SLSA encourages these options that keep wastewater systems under public ownership, thereby keeping services local and rates low for the benefit of the community at large.

SLSA has been approached by other municipal authorities with offers to purchase SLSA or with requests to have SLSA purchase an authority. SLSA's Board of Directors recognizes that any decision to sell SLSA or have SLSA purchase another authority would need to be in the best interest of its customers and require approval from all the municipal partners of SLSA.

Relationships with Customers, Municipal Partners, and Regulators

SLSA builds positive relationships by providing information and updates to all customers, municipal partners, and regulatory bodies on all topics related to the Authority. Arming these groups with this information maintains a cohesive path forward and allows for change when needed. SLSA complies with stringent local, state, and federal regulations in the operation and maintenance of its wastewater conveyance system and at the City AWWTP. These actions, along with other infrastructure improvements, help keep current rates low, and rate increases as minimal as possible while providing reliable wastewater service.

Infrastructure

Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority has been serving the area for over 50 years starting in 1970. The Authority has approximately 95 miles of sewer lines, 14 pump stations and other sewer infrastructure. From 2009 to 2016, the Authority undertook a multiphase program to line over 30 miles of its oldest gravity sewer mains (consisting primarily of asbestos cement and terra cotta pipe) with cured in place plastic pipe (CIPP) lining. SLSA continues to maintain and make improvements to its pump stations as equipment shows signs of wear. This requires continuous inspection and evaluation.

Change

Change is a part of everyday life. It can be difficult and must be factored into strategic planning. Change occurs in the growth of SLSA's service area, the constituents living in the service area, and the environmental regulations SLSA is required to comply with.

Treatment Capacity at AWWTP

In 1996, SLSA purchased 2.0 MGD capacity at the City AWWTP. SLSA currently utilizes approximately 50% of this capacity on a hydraulic basis and 63% on a nutrient limited basis. All the capacity is split between the municipal partners. SLSA continues to evaluate the remaining capacity annually with a 10–20-year outlook for growth, working closely with the County and municipal growth plans.

System Maintenance Challenges

SLSA is closely monitoring and dealing with increasing accumulation of grease and debris, such as so-called flushable wipes, in pump station wet wells. Grinder pump failures and the detrimental effects on SLSA's s have also increased in recent years. SLSA is reviewing and updating its policies on these subjects to reduce the expenses they cause in system operation and maintenance. New equipment and management technology will be used where appropriate to maintain or improve system reliability.

SLSA's Mission and Core Values

Mission Statement

Provide reliable wastewater service at reasonable rates to the customers in the communities SLSA serves while protecting the environment and public health.

Core Values:

1. **Health and Safety:**
Operate and maintain SLSA's systems to provide for the health and safety of the public and the environment.
2. **Customer Focused:**
Provide timely information about wastewater services to SLSA's customers and respond quickly to customer inquiries.
3. **Fiscally Responsible:**
Responsibly and transparently manage spending and debt to provide reasonable customer rates.
4. **Proactive:**
Proactively identify and implement capital improvements to SLSA's wastewater collection and conveyance system to provide reliable collection and conveyance service.

SLSA's Competitive Advantages

Every organization needs to have at least one and preferably several competitive advantages to remain strong in the face of inevitable changes in the industry and competitive marketplace. The Board recognizes the following three competitive advantages and the need to protect and continue to invest in building these to remain competitive over the long term.

Financial

The Authority maintains stable finances, with relatively low debt, and borrows only as needed to fund necessary capital projects.

Experience

The Authority has a team of experienced technical, legal, and maintenance and operation professionals to ensure excellent management of the Authority's assets.

Infrastructure

The Authority has a well maintained and operating wastewater collection and conveyance system and takes a proactive approach to system maintenance, operation, repair, and replacement.

Vision for SLSA Over the Next 20 Years

The following statements describe the challenges SLSA expects to encounter over the next two decades and the condition of the Authority in 2044.

1. Over the next 20 years, SLSA will take ownership of - and will have to operate and maintain - additional pumping stations and underground infrastructure, as new developments are built out within the townships' urban growth boundary areas.
2. After all township urban growth areas are built out in, say, 20 years, SLSA will still have treatment capacity available at the City's treatment plant.
3. Over the next 20 years, SLSA will repair, upgrade, or replace system equipment, ranging from individual pumping station equipment to entire pumping stations and piping.
4. Over the next 20 years, SLSA will expend funds on its own systems or those of the City of Lancaster Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant to meet new or updated wastewater collection, conveying, and treatment regulations.
5. Over the next 20 years, SLSA will strive to minimize its debt, while still providing reliable customer wastewater service. SLSA will remain fiscally responsible when considering any additional debt.

6. In 20 years, SLSA will still be – and will continue to be – a local, publicly-controlled authority focused on the communities it serves. The Authority will only consider acquiring, partnering with, or selling to another authority if it keeps SLSA financially stable and able to continue providing customers with reliable, affordable, and safe wastewater service.
7. If SLSA’s reserve capacity at the City WWTP is used at a faster rate than projected over the next 20 years, SLSA will evaluate its hydraulic and nutrient loading at the City WWTP to determine if SLSA’s EDU basis (350 gpd per EDU) for sewage planning should be adjusted.

3-Year Strategic Action Items

The following strategic action items have been identified to be accomplished over the next three years consistent with SLSA’s mission and core values, 20-year vision, and assessment of SLSA’s greatest current needs. The action items have been numbered for reference purposes only.

By End of 2024

1. Obtain a detailed schedule of the City’s capital projects and the schedule of project payments over the next 20 years. Determine if and when SLSA’s rates must be increased to pay for the projects.
2. Complete the 20-year estimation of SLSA’s sewer system maintenance, repair, and replacement costs. Then prepare a financial plan showing the schedule and costs of making improvements to the system and how this may affect sewer rates.
3. Develop and begin implementing a formalized asset management program to enhance the current proactive maintenance and improvement of SLSA’s system in accordance with SLSA’s first Core Value. The asset management program would also be used as a primary driver for SLSA’s capital improvement planning and budgeting.

By End of 2025

4. Confirm the number of EDUs the townships project to connect over the next 20 years and compare it to SLSA’s EDU capacity. Determine if the townships want SLSA to extend sewer service to any homes or businesses without public sewer service.
5. Determine if and when SLSA should hire a manager and support staff to oversee SLSA’s engineering, maintenance, operating, and financial activities, what key support activities SLSA will still want to outsource to other firm(s) and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
6. Contract with a professional marketing firm to evaluate SLSA’s current brand and provide recommendations to the Board regarding SLSA’s name, brand, website, etc. since some SLSA customers, as well as other residents in and around SLSA’s service area, are not familiar with SLSA’s operations and ability to provide wastewater collection services in and around the

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area. Some people also confuse SLSA with other municipal authorities. Developing an SLSA brand could help make people more aware of SLSA's organization and its ability to provide customers with safe and economical wastewater collection.

7. Develop guidelines, including a decision-making process, for SLSA to identify and evaluate opportunities to: expand SLSA's service area through acquisition of other wastewater systems; join other public wastewater systems; or be acquired by another public wastewater system.

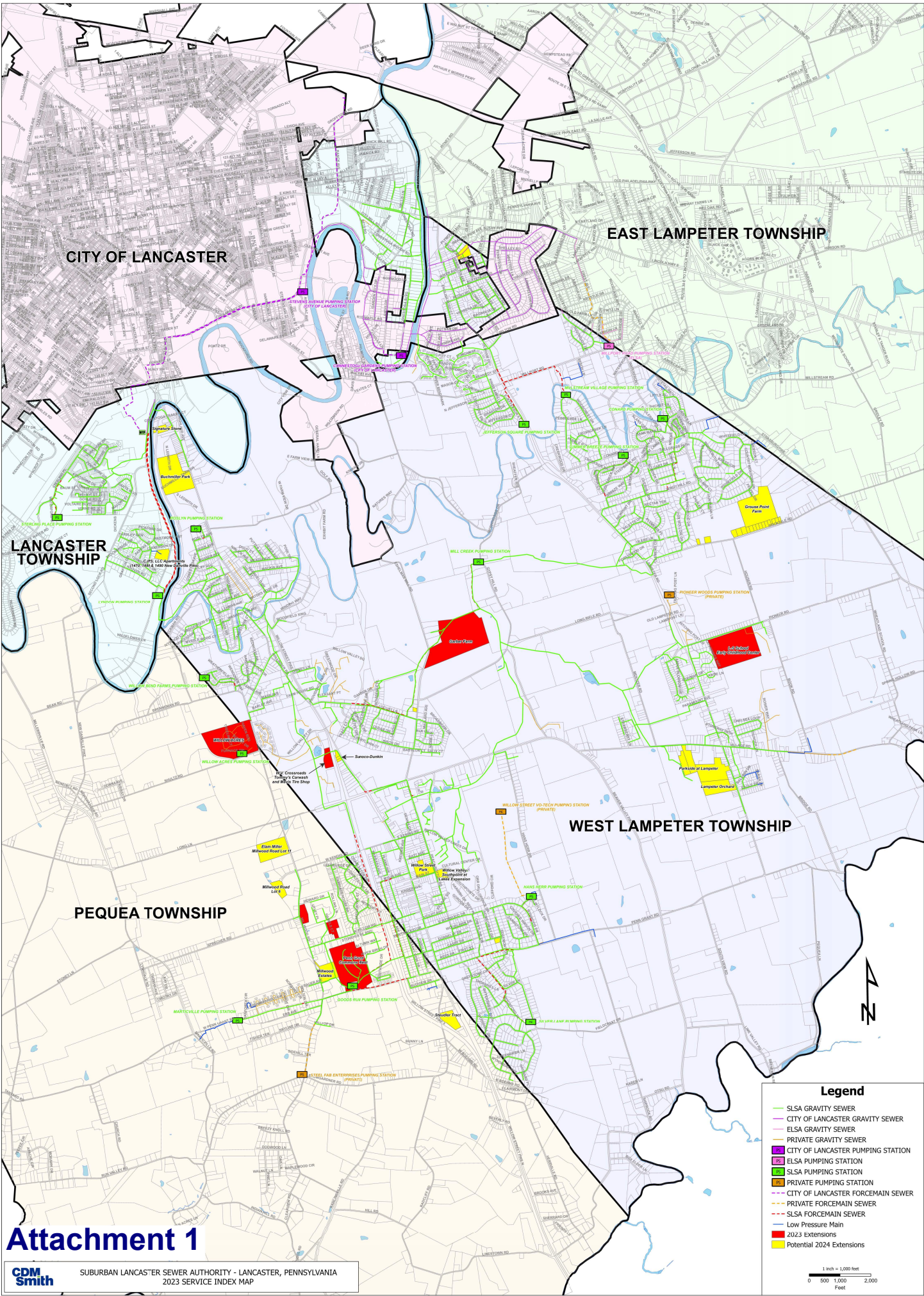
Executing the Strategic Plan

SLSA's Board of Directors will designate members of the board and individuals representing other key partners to oversee implementation of the strategic action items identified in the strategic plan. These individuals will be considered the lead person responsible for creating a timeline for starting and managing each item consistent with any deadlines for completion. The lead person will also outline any steps or sub-steps needed to complete the action item and identify the resource requirements and budget, as well as involvement of others (e.g., board members, strategic partners, contractors, etc.). The lead person will also be responsible for keeping the board informed on progress or any changes to the action items.

Since SLSA does not currently have any employees, it is expected that board members will serve as lead persons oversee the action items and may appoint CDM Smith to oversee a goal or contract with other third-party consultants and service providers depending on the expertise required. The board will track progress toward completion of the action items and approve any revisions needed.

A strategic plan should be a living document with the intention of successfully completing and achieving all the strategic goals in the plan but also with the understanding that a specific goal may later need to be revised or abandoned if it is determined that it is no longer feasible or in the best interests of SLSA. The goals in a strategic plan might also change over time as expected or unexpected changes in the external environment occur (e.g., economy, new regulation, technology or opportunity to partner with another municipality in some way) and the board agrees they need to modify the strategic plan by adding a new goal that may supersede or displace other goals in the plan.

The SPC recommends that the Board of Directors agree to set aside at least two times during the year when the strategic plan will be featured on the monthly board meeting agenda so that everyone can be updated on the status of progress toward the strategic goals and discuss any changes that may be needed. It is also recommended that the board refresh any continuing action items and add any new action items consistent with the mission, core values and direction of SLSA for the next fiscal year which may also have budget implications.



CITY OF LANCASTER

EAST LAMPETER TOWNSHIP

LANCASTER TOWNSHIP

WEST LAMPETER TOWNSHIP

PEQUEA TOWNSHIP

Attachment 1



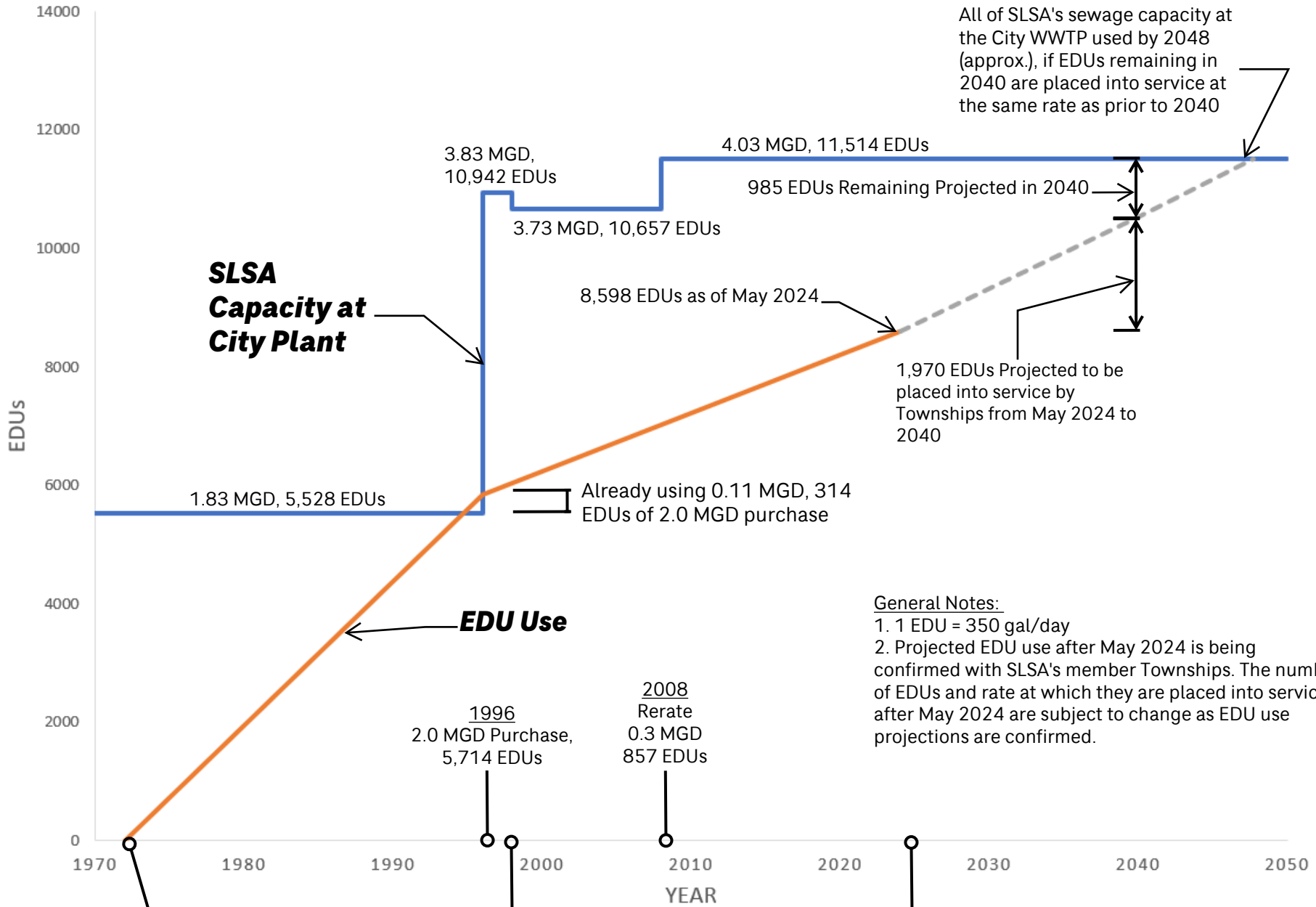
SUBURBAN LANCASTER SEWER AUTHORITY - LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA
2023 SERVICE INDEX MAP

Legend

- SLSA GRAVITY SEWER
- CITY OF LANCASTER GRAVITY SEWER
- ELSA GRAVITY SEWER
- PRIVATE GRAVITY SEWER
- CITY OF LANCASTER PUMPING STATION
- ELSA PUMPING STATION
- SLSA PUMPING STATION
- PRIVATE PUMPING STATION
- CITY OF LANCASTER FORCEMAIN SEWER
- PRIVATE FORCEMAIN SEWER
- SLSA FORCEMAIN SEWER
- Low Pressure Main
- 2023 Extensions
- Potential 2024 Extensions

1 inch = 1,000 feet
0 500 1,000 2,000
Feet

SLSA Capacity at City WWTP vs. EDUs Used



All of SLSA's sewage capacity at the City WWTP used by 2048 (approx.), if EDUs remaining in 2040 are placed into service at the same rate as prior to 2040

SLSA Capacity at City Plant

3.83 MGD, 10,942 EDUs

4.03 MGD, 11,514 EDUs

3.73 MGD, 10,657 EDUs

985 EDUs Remaining Projected in 2040

8,598 EDUs as of May 2024

1,970 EDUs Projected to be placed into service by Townships from May 2024 to 2040

1.83 MGD, 5,528 EDUs

Already using 0.11 MGD, 314 EDUs of 2.0 MGD purchase

EDU Use

1996
2.0 MGD Purchase, 5,714 EDUs

2008
Rerate 0.3 MGD 857 EDUs

1998
Strasburg Borough purchase of additional 0.1 MGD (286 EDUs) from SLSA

General Notes:

- 1. 1 EDU = 350 gal/day
- 2. Projected EDU use after May 2024 is being confirmed with SLSA's member Townships. The number of EDUs and rate at which they are placed into service after May 2024 are subject to change as EDU use projections are confirmed.

Assume sewer system installed ~2 year after SLSA incorporation and money borrowed in 1970.

May 2024
8,598 EDUs in service

Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority Board

James K. Witman
Chairman
Representative of
West Lampeter Township

Eric Lucas
Vice Chairman
Representative of
Pequea Township

Randal E. Moyer
Secretary
Representative of
West Lampeter Township

Devin C. Groff
Treasurer
Representative of
Lancaster Township

Stephen A. Campbell
Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
Representative of
City of Lancaster

Engineering Consultant/Authority Administration



Thomas C. Donahue, PE
Senior Project Manager

Adam N. Smith, PE
Senior Engineer

Support Staff:
Staff Engineers
Field Inspectors
GIS Specialists
IT Specialists

Project Specific Engineers



Eric C. Neast
Project Manager
Corey W. Myers
Environmental Scientist

Legal Council



APPEL, YOST & ZEE LLP

Susan P. Peipher
Esquire
P. Dawne Scheick
Paralegal

Bond Council



ATTORNEYS AT LAW

William C. McCarty
Esquire

Maintenance Contractor



CITY OF LANCASTER

Matthew Lehr
Wastewater Maintenance
Supervisor

Allison Zechman
Wastewater Operations
Supervisor

**Maintenance and
Collections Staff:**
Operators
Electricians
Mechanics

Billing Contractor



Kevin Hostetter
Finance Director

Winnie Brooks
Billing/Admin

Electronic Payment Processor



Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust

Auditor



Jennifer L. CruverKibi, CPA
Partner

Olivia Kumher
Senior Auditor

Staff Auditors

Trustee



Stuart Juppenlatz
Senior VP

David M. Paxson
Operations Manager

Frances A. Haldeman
VP

Other Consultants and Services

Financial Advisors:

- PFM Asset Management
- Raymond James

Insurance Agent:

- Murray Insurance/Assured Partners

Website Services:

- One2One, Inc.

Strategic Planning:

- Bruce Nilson Associates, Inc.
- Keystone Alliance Consulting