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Reclamation Plant Falls Behind Schedule

By [Shawn Daley](#)

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Editor

Tick, tick, tick ...

With each passing minute the approval of the controversial Regional Water Reclamation Facility keeps falling further behind schedule.

And as each day passes the cost of the facility continues to rise and the problems associated with its delay continue to mount.

Apex Public Works Director Tim Donnelly presented town leaders with a project update Friday during the town council retreat at town hall.

Apex and Cary planned to build the sewage plant in the middle of the New Hill community. That decision has proven costly.

New Hill residents formed an effective opposition to the project and have successfully delayed its construction. The project is currently two years behind schedule.

Donnelly categorized the opposition as a "not in my backyard" issue.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently working on the Environmental Impact Statement and probably won't reach completion until October.

"It's moving along but it's a slow process," said Donnelly.

A new twist in the project is the possibility that Harris Lake could become a discharge point for the sewage plant.

Discharging in the lake would cut costs associated with pipelines but might push the project even further behind schedule. The town would be required to obtain a new Inter-basin Transfer Certificate, which is a lengthy process.

"This makes me nervous for our timeline," said Donnelly.

If everything goes according to plan, said Donnelly, the plant could become operational by April of 2013.

But that is a very tentative date since the issue of building the facility in New Hill could end up being settled in court.

"You could always have someone sue," said Donnelly.

Donnelly said the delay in the project has already had a negative impact on the town.

Apex will not be able to comply with the requirements of its current Inter-basin Transfer Certificate. The town is currently trying to resolve the matter with the Division of Water Resources and the Environmental Management Commission.

The lack of a new sewage plant could begin to hinder the town's growth. Apex currently has 300,000 gallons per day of available sewer capacity. But as town leaders show no signs of slowing growth that available capacity won't last very long.

The delay is also costing the town money. Apex's share in building the facility was originally \$60 million but has ballooned to \$75 million.