

Sewage and water lines planned in St George’s

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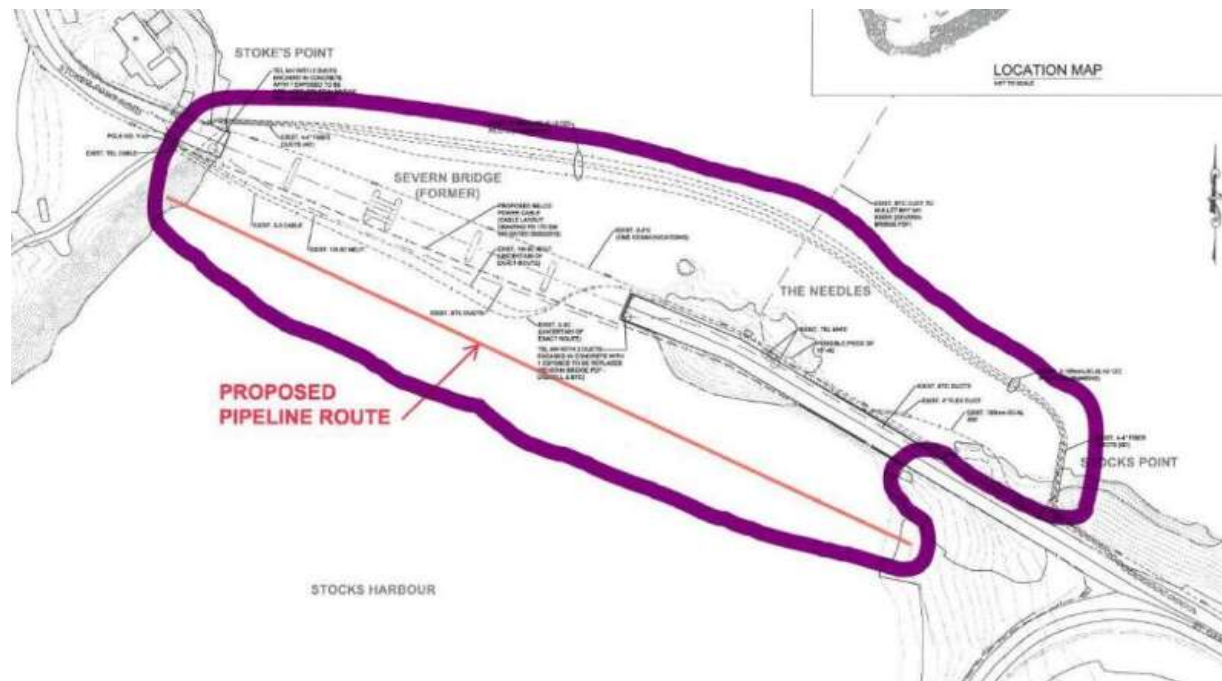
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Underwater piping: the Bermuda Land Development Company has applied to install a sewer main, a drinking water main, a reclaimed water main and a spare main between Stokes Point, St George's Island, to The Needles island and on to St David's Island

A plan to install new sewage and water mains to link St George's and St David's as part of a waste disposal improvement scheme has been submitted to the Department of Planning.

Documents delivered to planners this month by the Bermuda Land Development Company said the project would include the installation of a sewer main, a drinking water main, a reclaimed water main and a spare main.

The pipes would run from St George's Island to St David's Island at Stokes Point, the site of the former Severn Bridge.

Planners were told the pipe network would be covered and ballasted with precast concrete and connected to valve vaults — which would be created as part of a separate tendering process.

Connor Burns, the director of project leader On-site Engineering, asked the Development Applications Board to give the project high priority as it was hoped to put out tenders for other parts of the project soon.

Mr Burns said the project was of “national importance” for several reasons, including the St Regis hotel project in St George's.

He added the hotel project included a guarantee from the BLDC and the Government for adequate sewer and water systems.

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Mr Burns explained: “This is the primary critical path that involves the connection of [St Regis] hotel across to a new Wastewater Treatment Plant on the East End of the Southside property, via new trenched pipelines.

“Completing this by January 2021 is crucial for the opening of the hotel, for tourism and for Bermuda's economy.”

Mr Burns said the project was also important for the water supply to Southside in St David's.

He said: “It is in a progressing state of disrepair with a projected inability to supply the potable needs of hundreds of customers this coming summer without major upgrades.”

Mr Burns added that jobs created over the construction phase would help restore the island's economy.

He said: “The accompanying Stokes Point Water Crossing submission is the largest hurdle on the critical path for success.

“We have already been informed that, while a marine study has been completed, the Marine Resources Board has not been formed and may not be in a position to provide timely recommendations to the Department of Planning for approval.”

Mr Burns asked planners not to wait for the views of the MRB, but to allow interested parties to “work with the contractor on mitigation measures”.

He also requested an “indication” of what decision the DAB would take soon because the tender process would have started and it could affect the schedule.

An e-mail from a Senior Marine Conservation Officer, included in the application, said the members of the Marine Resources Board were only gazetted in February and it had been unable to meet because of illness and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The conservation officer told the DAB: “I cannot provide you with a definite answer about whether or not this project will be supported by the MRB and the minister.

“But as it will result in the removal of the Tobacco Bay sewage outfall, I think it is unlikely that there will be any objection to it even though marine trenching can be very disruptive to the communities living in and on the seabed.”

The Marine Ecology Survey included in the application identified several protected coral outcrops in the area and warned that work could produce “significant sediment plumes”, which could harm sea life.

The survey added: “Deployment of silt screens may help, however, if these were deployed over too long a section, they would likely cause significant loading due to the currents.

“Silt screens may work well if used in short sections, however, in the absence of information regarding the proposed construction methodology, the environmental implications of the work cannot be assessed.”

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