



2021 Online Open House Questions & Answers

1. Are there any plans to increase the footprint of the plant, or is there that possibility in the future? Or is all buildable land at the site already in use?

Yes, the plant is planned to expand as our community grows. The plant has been expanded approximately once every 10 years. We are currently working on the fifth phase of expansion as the facility approaches 50 years of life. While this current expansion project will not increase the overall footprint of the plant, other, future expansions may expand the footprint to utilize the full site over time. That trend is anticipated to continue until the plant is about twice the capacity it is today.

2. I'm curious about any plans to make biosolids safe for citizens to use in residential gardening.

We do have plans to upgrade our biosolids systems to produce what is called "Class A" material that we would be allowed to provide to the public. The costs are significant to add another processing step required for the Class A material, about \$14 million. That effort is planned to occur about 10-15 years into the future unless funding can be made available sooner. Another advantage of producing Class A biosolids material is that it will further dry the material, which in turn means a reduction in the truck traffic in and out of the facility.

3. My backyard faces McCann Road, and we see/hear trucks heading towards the Treatment Plant daily. What are they hauling?

Trucks are accessing the facility on a nearly daily basis for a variety of reasons. One of the main activities is hauling biosolids material out of the facility. "Biosolids" is the name for the final soil amendment/fertilizer product the plant creates from the waste we receive. Trucks also deliver basic supplies to the plant such as an organic polymer (chemical) used in solids processing and diesel fuel for backup generators. Materials are also hauled out of the plant such as one dumpster per week of solid waste. During periods of construction activity, construction related truck traffic occurs and can be noticeable during peak construction periods.

4. We are most concerned about the increased truck traffic, noise and odors that may be generated by the upcoming construction. We live directly on the truck route that the construction vehicles are planned to utilize throughout the 2-3 years that this construction is expected to take. This is a huge concern as noise pollution (from trucks) and odor pollution are already issues that we have experienced with the water treatment plant.

Your concerns are understandable, and we appreciate you sharing your thoughts. We know that having the facility at the end of NW McCann Road creates a difficult situation for the neighbors as all truck traffic must pass through a residential area to get to the facility. Being a good neighbor is important to us, and therefore we adhere to certain practices, such as:

- Limiting truck traffic to certain hours of the day,
- Requiring trucks to follow speed limits,
- Following county ordinances, such as noise.

We also provide a web-based platform where neighbors can quickly provide feedback to our construction team. We want to be forthright with our neighbors that the construction projects are coming but also let you know that we will manage the situation to the best of our abilities and stay in communication with you throughout the process. Reach us online at <https://www.discoverycwa.org/projects/construction/>

Additional Alliance Online Questions via “Contact Us”

1. Can you define biosolids please? I just read your updates. For educational purposes more info would be great. Thank you.

“Biosolids” is the name for the final by-product we produce at the plant created from the waste we receive. The process to produce biosolids involves removing the waste from the wastewater stream which produces a wet organic material. That organic material is further treated at the facility to meet federal standards for a final product that is called “biosolids” and water is removed to make it easy to handle. The biosolids are then applied in agricultural applications as a soil amendment and fertilizer. This process is managed by the Alliance under permits issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

2. I'm confused. If the treated outbound water is safe, why do we have to diffuse it into the river? Why not just dump it in, or even better, pump it back down into the aquifer?

All of these options are used by different wastewater programs depending on the local situation and how the state and federal regulations apply for those facilities. At the Ridgefield Treatment Plant, the treated wastewater (effluent) is released directly into Lake River at the end of a pipe, without a diffuser. At the Ilani facility near La Center (owned by the Cowlitz Tribe, not an Alliance facility), the treated effluent is discharged back into the ground. The Salmon Creek Treatment Plant uses a diffuser to fully blend the effluent into the river. In this case there are times of the year where it makes sense to blend the treated effluent and the river water to benefit the environment. For example, in the winter, the river is cooler, and the treated effluent is warmer (as it originates from homes and businesses). The water is blended to maintain stable temperatures in the river, which provides the most stable condition for fish and other aquatic wildlife.