

Serious Questions, Straight Answers

1- Why should I be concerned about Pike Industries' proposed expansion of the Spring Street Quarry and addition of a permanent rock crushing operation and asphalt plant?

The proposed expansion may be the source of air and water pollution, create noise and will increase traffic. Aggregate quarries use heavy equipment and perform regular blasts as standard operating practice, emitting dust and noise. Asphalt plants, which mix asphalt cement (a product of oil refining) and crushed rock, create dust, smoke, odors and noise. The proposed industrial site, which is in excess of 69 acres, is located on Spring Street, in the Five Star Industrial Park, currently the home of more than 30 established businesses employing 1,800+ people. With the proposed expansion of the quarry operation only 1.5 miles from downtown Main Street in Westbrook, there are hundreds of homes located within a two-mile radius of the proposed project. When the quarry is eventually finished, it will leave a permanent scar on the land that resembles a strip mine in the Five Star Industrial Park.

2- What types of pollution do asphalt plants and aggregate quarries produce?

Asphalt plants have been known to produce toxic air pollutants. The quarry operations can generate large amounts of dust, created by the mining and crushing of the rocks. In addition, diesel truck emissions are considered a significant source of air pollution.

3- How can this affect my family's health?

The main health hazard from natural aggregates is airborne dust. Increased levels of dust are generated by mechanical treatment, and inhalation of respirable dust over a prolonged period can be harmful to health. People with chronic bronchial conditions can be adversely impacted by inhaling fine particulates.

4- What are the requirements regarding emissions?

The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) role is to review and permit air emissions. Even if the asphalt plant meets the current standards for allowable pollutants, people living in the vicinity will be exposed to air emissions. The DEP standards will be based on the principle of "acceptable risk" and theoretical modeling, which is revised as new data emerges about safe levels of exposure. Air quality standards generally become stricter over time. While one level of emissions may be deemed safe today, the same level may be deemed a health risk in the future. The permit will also assume perfect compliance at the state, town and operational/mechanical level.

For more information on this issue, view the EPA document "[Hot Mix Asphalt Plants Emission Assessment Report.](#)"

Of additional concern are "fugitive emissions," which is the release of Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) as the asphalt is moved and stored. This source of emissions is neither regulated nor monitored.

5- Will the asphalt plant smell?

The bituminous asphalt plant can have an unpleasant, noxious odor depending on the mix in the current batch. Overheating of bitumen causes emissions of odorous hydrocarbons to the air, while oil-fired burners used to heat aggregate and bitumen have the potential to cause pollution of air, soil and water if not properly maintained.

(Please turn over ...)

CITY OFFICIALS

Mayor Bruce Chuluda
Home: 775-1728
Office: 854-9105
bchuluda@westbrook.me.us

City Council
Ward 1: Brendan Rielly
775-7271
brielly@jibgh.com

Ward 2: Drew Gattine
854-3025
agattine@hwtc.com

Ward 3: Lyle Cramer
854-5115
landjcramer@mindspring.com

Ward 4: Dotty Aube
854-2632
daube1@maine.rr.com

Ward 5: Suzanne Joyce
856-7201
sjoyce1@maine.rr.com

At Large: John O'Hara
854-9309
arahojkmj@aol.com

At Large: Michael Foley
807-2115
mfoley@westbrook.me.us

Town Planner Molly Just
854-0638
mjust@westbrook.me.us

MEDIA

American Journal
Brendan Moran, Editor
Mail: P.O. Box 840
Westbrook, ME 04098
bmoran@keepmecurrent.com
Fax: 854-0018

Portland Press Herald
John Porter, Editorial Page Editor
Mail: Letters to the Editor
P.O. Box 1460
Portland, ME 04104-5009
Online Form:
www.pressherald.com
Fax: 828-8154

Serious Questions, Straight Answers (continued)

6- I heard that the asphalt burner will be going 24 hours a day. Is this true?

Asphalt plants typically operate around the clock, seven days a week during the April to November paving season in order to supply hot asphalt mix to contractors doing night and weekend paving. Most of our State roads are paved at night to minimize the disruption to daily traffic.

7- What kind of sound is likely to be coming from the quarry?

An asphalt quarry, by its very nature, is noisy. The mining of rock, crushing of rock and loading of asphalt into diesel trucks are loud processes. Although steps can be made to reduce noise, the heavy machinery, drilling and blasting utilized to mine the aggregate, the rock crusher, the asphalt plant itself and the trucks will create a great deal of noise, which will carry into the area where this proposed quarry is to be located. Additionally, the vibrations caused by blasting, rock crushing and a steady stream of diesel trucks will be felt by workers in nearby businesses and area residences.

8- Will this increase traffic?

Truck traffic, particularly on County Road and Spring Street, will increase due to the constant flow of heavy loaded dump trucks to and from the proposed asphalt plant. It is expected that this operation will result in more than one hundred trucks per day to this part of the city. Heavy trucks weighing 30 tons each, entering Spring Street from the Pike property, will considerably slow traffic on Spring Street and cause wear and tear to the newly constructed County Road and Spring Street intersection.

9- How can this type of development be allowed in a business park?

The original quarry on this site was permitted in the 1970s, when it was owned by Blue Rock. Pike Industries acquired this quarry and parcel of land when it purchased Blue Rock in 2005. The Five Star Industrial Park was developed in the early 1970s, and the quarry was included in the park. Over the past 30 years activity within the quarry has been very limited. However, over the past several years, the Five Star Industrial Park has continued to grow and attract a diverse mix of new businesses such as Artel, Boulous Electric, Cintas, IDEXX Laboratories, Kitchen Concepts, Remstar International, and Sigco.

10- What is Westbrook's vision for its future and for the Five Star Industrial Park?

One of the goals stated in the 2007 Strategic Economic Plan, specifically about future land use and quality of life, is:

"The City, once known as a paper manufacturing giant, is moving into its future as an environmentally friendly, economically sound, and progressively active community looking towards continued excellence."

The City's Comprehensive Plan states, *"Develop and implement strategies and recommendations for targeted economic and business development sectors. In particular and based on the City's economic assets the City will develop strategies for the following target sectors: Bioscience/biotech; Precision manufacturing; Information Technology; Finance and Business Services, office, service economy; Arts and Cultural Economy; Energy and Environmental Related Industry."*

Their plan also states, *"Maintain an atmosphere that attracts business to locate and expand in the City of Westbrook by continuing to implement a comprehensive plan through a proactive zoning ordinance."*

Rezoning the Five Star Industrial Park to support light manufacturing is in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan.

11- Is this quarry important to Westbrook for jobs and tax revenue?

The quarry and asphalt plant operation is anticipated to employ 30 people year round, with seasonal jobs expected to be in the area of 100 additional positions. The majority of the taxes are likely to be based on equipment tax, a tax that Maine is currently looking to greatly reduce. In addition, any increase may be offset by such considerations as the negative impact the asphalt plant and quarry could have on property values as well as the wear on the local roads from the heavy truck traffic.

12- Does the site for the proposed expanded quarry and asphalt plant contain wetlands?

Yes, there is an area of wetlands on the proposed project site that will be disturbed and/or destroyed. Wetlands are beneficial because they help prevent flooding by slowing down and absorbing water which might otherwise end up on our properties, or in our basements. These marshes, swamps or bogs gradually release stored water to rivers and streams to maintain flow throughout the summer, and recharge ground water aquifers so our wells do not go dry. Altering of wetlands results in destruction of critical habitat for animals, insects and birds. Though the Natural Resource Protection Act permits a certain amount (up to 4,350 sq. ft.) of wetland disturbance, it is the cumulative effect of wetland alteration that is most harmful to the environmental landscape.