

# CONSTRUCTION TO COMMENCE ON NEWLY NAMED HTC PLANT

## Phoenixville Unveils New Facility Brand and Timeline

**PHOENIXVILLE, PA—January 6, 2022—**The Borough of Phoenixville recently revealed its plan to install the first hydrothermal carbonization system at a municipal wastewater treatment plant in all of North America.

The new technology is faster, safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly than the current process of anaerobic digestion and also has the potential to yield beneficial bioproducts, including biocoal, construction sand, synthetic gas and improved fertilizers. Hydrothermal carbonization, or HTC, has the power to offset the carbon use of every driver residing in Phoenixville.

Every community treats wastewater in some fashion, but Phoenixville will be the first municipality to install a state-of-the-art resource recovery system. Phoenixville will partner with **SoMax BioEnergy** ([www.somaxhtc.com](http://www.somaxhtc.com)), in Spring City, Pennsylvania, to modernize the Borough's current wastewater treatment facilities.

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While the benefits of HTC are plain, *hydrothermal carbonization* is a mouthful. The average citizen might be able to break the words down to ascertain something about the process, but the Borough felt that the distinction of being first with such a revolutionary technology deserved a special designation.

To that end, the Borough elected to brand the project—the facility plus the technology—with one simple, memorable name and image.

**The wastewater treatment plant is the largest user of energy and soon will have the ability, not only to create enough energy to power itself, but to create energy for the community or to return to the grid.**

**PXVNEO** was selected from a group of contenders presented by a naming and branding consultant to best reflect the marriage of modern technology with a beneficial outcome, answering the community's most enduring—albeit, least attractive—need. The punchy abbreviations come together to characterize a unique and powerful solution to a chronic problem that most residents don't even think about.

The wastewater treatment plant is Phoenixville's largest user of energy and soon will have the ability to create enough energy not only to power itself but to power the community or return the energy to the grid. In April 2019, during the HTC feasibility and design stages, Borough council agreed that a system like that—the very first of its kind in the country—deserved special recognition.

“We believe that this plant could be a model for municipalities all around the country,” said Jon Ewald, president of Phoenixville Borough Council. “There is the potential for what we're doing here today to have far-reaching positive implications, and we need to be sure the Borough, who assumed the risk, is credited as much as the technology is.”

Anaerobic digestion is the de facto standard in the United States although HTC plants have been successful in Europe and Asia since 2016. **PXVNEO** will be the first HTC system used at a municipal wastewater treatment plant on the entire North American continent, and that has yielded support at the regional and state levels to help fund the project. Equipment has started to arrive this month, and construction on the new system will begin in February.

Like a lot of the public utilities and privately held businesses in the Borough, **PXVNEO** will feature a phoenix in its logo but with a modern interpretation - a modular representation of the mythical bird that has the power to be reborn.

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The **PXVNEO** brand features shades of blue, symbolizing clean water and gives a nod to the Borough's adopted streetscape color.

The brand has the potential to be scaled, in modular fashion, to other utilities within the Borough or to even be repurposed for other municipalities who turn to Phoenixville and SoMax for guidance on improving their own wastewater treatment systems. The possibility of regional schools utilizing **PXVNEO** as a STEM component also exists, and the exciting brand makes promotion and communication of a complex process simpler and easier.

One could say that the entire way we think about wastewater is being reengineered, and we're all hopeful **PXVNEO** will be replicated by other forward-thinking communities willing to make the investment in the future.

**For more information and to follow the progress of PXVNEO please visit, [www.phoenixville.org/pvxneo](http://www.phoenixville.org/pvxneo).**

### PXVNEO TIMELINE

- 2017: Phoenixville Borough commits to 100% clean energy (operations and vehicles) by 2035
- 2019: SoMax HTC proposal adopted
- 2021 Q2: Plant structure upgrades - new slab and roof
- 2021 Q3: Equipment Purchasing
- 2021 Q4: Equipment Arrival
- 2022 Q1: Installation and construction / HTC process commissioning
- 2022 Q2: Full time transition from anaerobic digestion to HTC
- 2022 Q3: Apply for extended use from DEP
- 2023: Increase HTC capacity and  
Explore waste material procurement, potentially  
from other municipalities
- 2024: Carbon-neutral electricity generation

