



To: Members of Dublin City Council
From: Dana L. McDaniel, City Manager
Date: June 22, 2021
Initiated By: Paul A. Hammersmith, PE, Director of Engineering/City Engineer
C. Aaron Stanford, PE, Deputy Director of Engineering - Utilities
Re: Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Utility Extensions to Existing Developed Property Policy Review and Update

Background

Dublin City Council desires to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the Dublin community. On December 7, 2015, City Council adopted a Policy regarding public water and sanitary sewer utility extensions to areas that do not currently have access to these public services. The Policy outlines a process by which the City will identify, prioritize, program and implement the design and construction of public utility service extensions.

The process to extend public water and sanitary sewer utility services to an Extension Area may be initiated either by the City or by the property owners within an Extension Area as follows:

1. City's Five-Year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Planned Extensions
2. Petition for Extension by Property Owners

City Staff developed a conceptual implementation plan to design and construct public water and sanitary sewer utility extensions. The first sanitary sewer extension project resulting from the Policy was constructed in 2017/2018 in Areas 11A and 11B (Bellaire Avenue, Bellaire Court and Limerick Lane area).

In 2019, two public meetings were held with interested residents near the Area 4A (Phase 2) and Areas 10C and 10D projects.

Area 4A (Phase 2)

On March 19, 2019, staff met with residents in Area 4A (Phase 2) which includes the west side of Riverside Drive between Emerald Parkway and Hard Road and the River Knolls subdivision comprised of Orchard Crest Court and River Knolls Place. There were nine (9) residents in attendance (representing 6 of the 17 addresses which received the meeting invite). The overall opinion of the attendees involved in the discussion at the meeting is they are generally opposed to the project and most indicated they were not planning to connect to either of the utility services. Following the meeting, staff received six comment sheets with the following opinions: one in favor of the project; three opposed to the project; one neutral; and one unanswered. Several attendees at the meeting did not submit a comment sheet.

Areas 10C and 10D

On April 2, 2019, staff met also with residents in Areas 10C and 10D which are located along the east side of Dublin Road between Locust Hill Lane and Hertford Lane. There were eleven (11) residents in

attendance (representing 8 of the 18 addresses which received the meeting invite). The overall opinion of the attendees involved in the discussion at the meeting is they are generally opposed to the project and are not planning to connect to either of the utility services. Following the meeting, staff received five comment sheets with the following opinions: three in favor of the project (one who has no interest in connecting); one opposed to the project; and one neutral. Several attendees at the meeting did not submit a comment sheet.

Summary

Residents in both areas had two main concerns with the projects. The first concern was the potential construction cost to a home owner in order to connect to the utilities. The second concern was regarding Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) requiring connection to the public sanitary sewer system if their current household sewage treatment system (HSTS) becomes inoperable.

The design of both Area 4A, Phase 2 and Areas 10C and 10D is essentially complete but the construction is presently on hold. Initially, these projects were on hold pending the outcome of the Rate Study, which is now complete. However, these projects have not advanced due to minimal interest by adjacent residents to connecting to the proposed utility lines. Without property owners committing to connect, the City of Columbus will not approve the installation of a "dead end" water main. Having no users on a "dead end" water main creates a serious concern over water quality since the water in the main will not turn over, but rather simply sits in the main. Similarly, the construction of a sanitary sewer and lift station (Areas 4A, Phase 2 and 10D) is not feasible without users connecting to the system and providing sewage discharge into it. The installation of mechanical pumps, which would never operate without flow, is also not prudent. Without utility service users, providing water and sanitary sewer services to properties located in these areas does not make practical sense.

As indicated in the fifth annual report to City Council on the Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Utility Extensions to Existing Developed Property Policy (August 25, 2020) and as discussed during the 2020-2024 CIP update process, Staff plans to bring forward a revised implementation plan (likely 20 to 25-years) for Council consideration. Any proposed revisions to the plan would consider the results and outcomes from the completed water and sanitary sewer Rate Study. Staff will review the initial conceptual 15-year implementation plan and reprioritize the extensions to create the revised implementation plan taking the criteria set forth in Section VI of the Policy into consideration.

Developing the timing and prioritization order for the Unserved Areas program has been complex. Resident interest in connecting to the utility extensions resulting from these proposed projects has been relatively low. This has caused issues from a practical operations standpoint and has made the extensions difficult to prioritize.

Recommendation

Staff recommends City Council refer the timing of construction and prioritization of the sanitary sewer and water extensions to these and other unserved areas to the Public Services Committee for review and discussion about any potential revisions to the adopted Utility Extension Policy.