

Q: I HAVE HEARD ABOUT THIS PROJECT FOR YEARS, WHY THE SUDDEN RUSH?

A: The EPA began investigations back in 1995, due to complaints registered by residents in the area. More recently, the EPA has taken test samples to determine the level of unsanitary conditions in the area. Consequently, in October 2008, the EPA issued draft Findings & Orders to the County. "Findings & Orders" is a legal action that forces the County to proceed with construction.

During this same time frame, the County has studied alternatives to replace septic systems or install a centralized sewer system. A project was never started because the County believed the cost would be too great of a financial burden for the residents of Raymond and Peoria.

In light of the legal action taken by the EPA in 2008, the County has spent the past 8 months designing a system that will comply with the EPA mandate. The County has also spent the past 8 months negotiating with the EPA, trying to delay the project until funding becomes available. To date, the EPA has not agreed to this request. The County plans to finish the design, but will make a final determination about construction after the announcement of grant availability is made this fall. If the County chooses not to proceed with construction in 2010 (due to funding) the EPA has advised they will take further legal action, including potential fines.

Q: WHEN WILL CONSTRUCTION BEGIN?

A: Construction could begin as early as 2010, pending funding. Award of grant funds is generally done in Oct-Nov of each year. Once the County is advised if they will (or will not be) awarded the grants, they will have to decide how quickly to proceed.

If the County is not awarded all of the grants they have applied for, they may decide to delay construction until financing is available. However, the EPA's current position states that sewers and a treatment plant must be built, and operational within three years. If the County delays the project due to funding, the EPA has advised they will take further legal action, including potential fines.

Q: WILL CONSTRUCTION TEAR UP MY YARD OR ANY OF THE STREETS?

A: For the most part, the main line sewers will be installed inside the road right-of-way.

- In some places it will be installed in an open-cut trench. Road ditches and road pavement will be repaired when the trenches are closed.
- In some cases, the sewer can be directionally drilled, eliminating the need to open-cut. Drilling will be used as much as possible, when it is physically and economically feasible.
- In an effort to keep monthly sewer bills as low as possible, the most economical construction method will be used.

- Construction of private laterals (connections to the main line sewers) will be performed by individual owners and will tear up some of the yard. Restoration of the yard can be performed by the contractor installing the private lateral.

Q: HOW DO I TIE IN TO THE SEWER?

A: Each home/business will be required to have a private sanitary lateral installed from their house/business, to the sewer main. The work must be performed by a sewer tapper, registered to work in Union County. The County must be present to inspect the lateral as it is installed, to ensure that it meets plumbing and sewer district codes.

Q: DO I HAVE TO TIE IN TO THE SEWER?

A: Properties outlined in yellow on the display boards have been identified by the Union County Health Department or State of Ohio EPA as properties that will be required to tie in. Also, State law requires any structure within 200' of the sewer to tie in.

Q: I LIVE NEARBY AND WOULD LIKE TO TIE IN TO THE SEWER – CAN I?

A: If your home is not shown on the project map, then most likely it is not cost effective to run a sewer main to your home. Please provide an address and we can look in to this issue for you.

Q: I LIVE ON RAYMOND ROAD BETWEEN RAYMOND & PEORIA – DO I OR CAN I TIE IN?

A: The sewer that will run between the two villages is a force main, under pressure, and can not be tied in to.

Q: I RENT – WILL MY LANDLORD BE INSTALLING THE LATERAL OR WILL I HAVE TO DO THAT?

A: The legal owner of the home is required to install the private lateral.

Q: I RENT – WILL THE SEWER BILL COME TO ME OR THE LANDLORD?

A: The sewer bill will be sent to the property address, unless other arrangements are made. Tenants and landlords must coordinate who will pay the bill. The ultimate responsibility (if a bill goes unpaid) goes to the property owner, and ultimately the property taxes.

Q: WHAT DO I DO WITH MY OLD SEPTIC?

A: Plumbing from the house must be rerouted to the private lateral, and the septic system must then be abandoned, with tanks crushed (if applicable).

Q: I HAVE A NEW SEPTIC SYSTEM, DO I STILL HAVE TO TIE IN TO THE SEWER?

A: Yes. Although, if you have all of the following:

- a new septic system less than five years old
- evidence of a valid system permit issued by the Union County Board of Health
- ample land available to repair or replace the system (greater than 2 acres)
- evidence of suitable soils

you may be able to discuss your situation with the Union County Health Department and Union County Commissioners to see if your system could be endorsed to be excluded from the project. However, the final determination lies with the State of Ohio EPA.

Q: MY OLD SEPTIC SYSTEM WAS IN THE BACK YARD, AND THE NEW SEWER IS IN THE FRONT YARD – HOW WILL I TIE IN?

A: If it is necessary to rework the outlet of the plumbing inside the house, the homeowner may do this work if they are qualified. Otherwise, the homeowner will need to use a registered plumber to reroute the plumbing (if necessary). In some cases, even though the plumbing outlet may be on the opposite side of the house, there may be sufficient grade to run the private lateral from the sewer main to the house without redoing any interior plumbing.

Q: WILL THERE BE A TAP FEE?

A: Depending on the overall project cost, there may need to be a tap fee. The current financing scenario assumes there will be a tap fee, although, it is undetermined if a tap fee is fully necessary at this time. A final decision will be made once construction costs are finalized, and depending on the results of the grant requests.

If there is a tap fee, the purpose will be to help reduce the debt associated with construction. This helps reduce the monthly sewer bill. The County is pursuing a grant program with the State of Ohio that may be able to assist low-to-moderate income homeowners with the cost of a tap fee. If assistance is available, residents will be contacted and encouraged to apply for funds.

Q: IF THERE IS A TAP FEE, AND I CANNOT AFFORD THE LUMP SUM PAYMENT, CAN I MAKE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS?

A: If it is determined that a tap fee is necessary to help finance the project, customers will generally be expected to pay the tap fee at the time the lateral is installed. If a homeowner can show evidence that they cannot afford the one-time payment, they can discuss the situation with the Union County Engineer and Union County Commissioners. Depending on the situation, the County may be able to: establish a monthly fee to help spread out the cost of the tap fee or create a bi-annual assessment that would be incorporated in to the property taxes.

Q: HOW MUCH WILL THE SEWER BILL BE?

A: The current financing scenario estimates the sewer bill will be in the range of \$50-55 per month (see board). This presumes the County is able to secure all of the grant and loan programs through the State and Federal Government, that are currently applicable to this project.

Q: HOW DID YOU PICK THE LOCATION OF THE NEW WWTF SITE?

A: The design engineer analyzed 6 sites in and around Raymond and Peoria that were large enough to construct a WWTF. Most of the sites posed engineering challenges such as: floodplain issues, being too far from the Mill Creek, not enough usable acreage, or increased cost of construction due to elevation changes, etc.

The site selected has a direct outlet to Mill Creek, enough usable space outside of the floodplain, and allows more of the sanitary sewer system to drain by the force of gravity. Most of the other sites considered sat "higher" and thus would require more of the sewers to be force mains with pump stations. Pump stations drive the cost of construction up, and also require much more long-term maintenance and utility bills. These higher costs translate in to higher bills for the customers. The new site allows the project to be constructed with the least amount of pump stations, and lower operating and maintenance costs.

Q: WHY BUILD A NEW PLANT – CAN WE JUST PUMP THE SEWAGE TO MARYSVILLE?

A: The County analyzed this option and it was not considered economically feasible. Adding together the cost to construct new sewers, the cost to operate and maintain the sewers, and the current Marysville flat sewer rate for non-residents would have put the sewer bill in the \$100 (per month) range.

Q: WILL THE NEW PLANT BE NOISY? WILL IT SMELL BAD?

A: Fortunately, wastewater technology has come a long way over the past 30 to 40 years – which is the age of most of the sewer plants you see elsewhere in Union County. The only blower (motor) will be housed inside a block building to deaden the noise.

This facility has specifically been designed NOT to have anerobic sludge storage or sludge drying beds, which are the main sources of odors at treatment plants. The sludge produced by this facility will be hauled away to a landfill or another treatment facility, like Marysville. Another common source of odors is at pump station locations. The pump stations for this project will have Bioxide chemical feeds which create a chemical reaction to eliminate the sulfurous fumes, thus eliminating most odors.

Q: I KNOW OF A HOUSE THAT HAS A PROBLEMATIC SEPTIC SYSTEM, OR NO SYSTEM, BUT THEY ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT – WHY NOT?

A: Please provide an address and we will look in to the situation.

Q: WHAT GRANT(S) IS THE COUNTY PURSUING?

A: OWPCLF ARRA (Federal "Stimulus" Funds) – unsuccessful
CDBG Water & Sewer Grant for Tap Fees – application under review by State
CDBG Water & Sewer Grant – application under review by State
OPWC Issue 2 Grant – application to be submitted July 2009
CDBG Formula Funds – received \$85,000
USDA Rural Development – application to be submitted July 2009

Q: WHEN WILL YOU HEAR ABOUT WHETHER WE RECEIVED GRANTS?

A: Fall 2009

Q: HOW MUCH ARE THE GRANTS WORTH?

A: The County is applying for the maximum amount available, approximately \$2.5 Million. These grants could cover approximately 55% of the construction cost – see details on the funding display board. The balance of the cost will be included in the monthly sewer bill.

Q: I REMEMBER BEING CONTACTED LAST FALL DURING THE INCOME SURVEY – WHY IS THIS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE PROJECT SINCE THEN?

A: The County has spent the last 8 months working on design, pursuing grant funds, and negotiating with EPA to delay the project. Prior to this time, there was not enough information available to make a public meeting worthwhile.

The County Engineer has been giving occasional, brief updates to the County Commissioners during their publicly advertised meetings. Generally the press is in attendance at these meetings and publishes articles, when they believe the story is of interest. There have been three articles in the Marysville Journal-Tribune since last October, and five articles in the This Week News – Marysville Edition, circulated with The Columbus Dispatch.

Q: WHY WASN'T THIS MEETING PUBLICIZED BETTER?

A: An advertisement for the Open House ran in the Marysville Journal-Tribune the week of July 9 and the week of July 16. Flyers were also posted in the Library in Raymond, the Liberty Twp. Hall, Raymond Post Office, Moser's IGA, the public park shelter house in Peoria. There was also a July 11 article in the This Week News – Marysville Edition, distributed by The Columbus Dispatch. The notice is also posted on the County Engineer's website, the Liberty Twp. Trustees website, and the County Commissioners website.

Q: WILL THERE BE MORE OPEN HOUSES OR MEETINGS?

A: Yes, although they have not been scheduled at this time, since an actual construction date has not been set. Information will also be distributed once construction begins.

Q: WILL MY BASEMENT BE SERVICED?

A: The new gravity sewer system is designed to replace existing septic tank systems. If basements were serviced by the septic tank system, they will most likely be serviced by the new gravity sewer system. In some situations, it was not cost effective to construct the main line sewer deep enough to service a basement. In this case, a small grinder pump inside the home can be used to pump into the system.

Q: WHO WILL MAINTAIN THE SEWER SYSTEM?

A: The system from the connection point at the main line sewer to the wastewater treatment plant will be owned and maintained by the County. The County Sanitary Engineer (County Engineer) will perform maintenance of the system. Maintenance of the line from the residents' house/business to the main sewer connection will be the responsibility of the homeowner/business owner.

Q: WHAT KIND OF THINGS CAN BE PUT IN TO THE SEWER?

A: Sewer Use Regulations prohibit items like flammable liquids and toxic chemicals, among others. You should also use common sense. If you would not want it in your own plumbing and septic system, it should not be put into the sewer system, either.

Q: ARE GARBAGE DISPOSALS ALLOWED?

A: Yes. Garbage disposals are allowed. However, good judgment dictates that any dry waste should not be ground into small pieces and diluted with fresh water and washed down a sink.

Q: CAN A SUMP PUMP OR DOWNSPOUT BE CONNECTED TO THE SYSTEM?

A: No. All existing sources of clean water, such as foundation drains, sump pumps, or downspouts, ARE PROHIBITED. The sources must be rerouted or removed from the system at the homeowner's expense.

MORE INFORMATION

If you think of questions after the Open House,
feel free to call the County Engineer's Office at (937) 645-3018