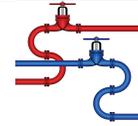


Gallatin Gateway Water & Sewer District

Serving Gallatin Gateway since 2009

Sewer Connections



Winter 2016

Protecting public health by providing affordable, regulatory-compliant wastewater services to the Gallatin Gateway community

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Board of Directors Votes to Adopt New Preferred Treatment Alternative

As we shared with you in our last newsletter, GGWSD directed its engineers to complete a review of its 2010 Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) in light of current conditions, and issue an amendment either affirming the preferred treatment alternative identified in 2010 (construction of a public wastewater plant) or identifying a new preferred alternative. This was prompted primarily by the May 2015 election, in which the people of the Four Corners County Water and Sewer District (FCCWSD) voted overwhelmingly to approve a bond issuance to purchase the assets of its private water and wastewater services provider, Utility Solutions. Connecting to Four Corners was one of the options considered in the District's 2010 PER, but suffered in the evaluation process because of inability to successfully negotiate with the private entity for affordable rates and other terms, and the community's perceived financial risk associated with connecting to a private utility.

The 2015 PER amendment contains an analysis/comparison of two treatment alternatives deemed feasible and appropriate for the community at this time: connecting to Four Corners or building an ICEAS SBR mechanical treatment plant on the District's Cottonwood Road site. In preliminary discussions with the FCCWSD Board, they expressed a desire to enter into an inter-local agreement to treat Gallatin Gateway's wastewater in exchange for a bulk rate, once its purchase of Utility Solutions is complete in late December. The collection system and lift station previously identified in the 2010 PER have not changed and would remain the same for either treatment alternative, although the engineers did update the cost estimate, following a 2 year delay in the project due to impacts of litigation challenging the District's discharge permit.

The District and its engineers shared the findings of the PER amendment and solicited public comment at a public meeting held on September 30, 2015, at the Gallatin Gateway Community Center. Based on the estimated capital costs, estimated operation and maintenance costs, public input, District Board input, and scoring of the alternatives, the District's engineers recommended that the preferred alternative be connection to Four Corners Water and Sewer District's plant. In November the GGWSD Board of Directors met in public session to discuss the engineer's recommendation and, after careful deliberation, voted to accept the engineer's recommendation. In reaching its decision, the Board noted that connecting

to FCCWSD for treatment and disposal of GGWSD wastewater will require less capital costs, allow for lower O&M costs, and would have been the preferred alternative in the 2010 PER, were it not for risk and public comment related to private ownership of the utility at that time. The Board also noted that connecting to FCCWSD for treatment and disposal mitigates the near term risk of the implied continued legal challenge on developing its own treatment plant, which could cause further delays. They expressed the need to be responsive to the community's desire to complete the project as quickly as possible to mitigate the existing health, safety and economic problems of the community. The Board also noted that this decision does not preclude GGWSD from developing its own infrastructure if future conditions make that alternative favorable. Prior to the favorable election in Four Corners in May, the District had submitted a new discharge permit application following the decision by the District Court judge last December in a suit filed by Gateway Village, LLC. The judge's decision last year had the effect of nullifying the District's previous discharge permit. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, MDEQ, issued a new final discharge permit to GGWSD in November for the Cottonwood Road site. MDEQ also gave final approval to the plans and designs for the collection system in November.

Next steps are to negotiate and sign an inter-local agreement with FCCWSD; revise the Environmental Assessment to describe the impacts of connecting to FCCWSD, and to begin engineering design of the pipeline from Gallatin Gateway to the Four Corners treatment plant. The District's engineers are working diligently to finalize the design and to try to put a bid package together this coming spring.

Quarterly newsletters are sent to all landowners in the District to keep them updated with activities of the sewer district, and are also available via email for all those interested in being on the distribution list. If you have tenants living in your property, or know of any

renters currently residing within the District who would like to receive a copy of the quarterly newsletters, please email us at customerservice@gatewaywsd.com and we will be happy to add those names to the distribution list.

The quarterly \$6.00/month Benefited Lot Charge invoice is enclosed for customers of the District. This charge covers general and administrative expenses of the District, not covered by loans and grants. It is applied on all platted lots in the District. It is not the same as a "sewer bill". Only properties with sewer connections will be charged for sewer service once the sewer project is complete. Payments received after the due date listed on the invoice are subject to a \$10 late fee, so please ensure your payments are mailed on time.

If you would like to receive your invoice & communications by email, please email your request to customerservice@gatewaywsd.com.

REMINDER: GGWSD monthly board meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 6:30 PM, in the Board Room of the Gallatin Gateway School, 100 Mill Street, Gallatin Gateway. All members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend. Agendas are posted prior to each meeting at the Gallatin Gateway post office and are also posted on our website at www.gatewaywsd.com. Approved meeting minutes are posted on the District's website, and can also be found on the Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder Documents Page.

