

# Ackerman Sewer Expansion Project

## FAQs

Updated 11/2/2020

### **MSBU**

#### ***What does ERC stand for?***

Equivalent residential connection

#### ***What is a Unity of Title?***

A Unity of Title is a form that allows you to reduce the amount of ERCs (Equivalent Residential Connections) that you currently have.

#### ***What is a deferment?***

A deferment enables you to not have the assessment of the MSBU until you build. This option is only available to undeveloped/vacant parcels.

#### ***Can I submit my neighbors Unity of Title?***

Yes. They can give it you to turn in/record or they can mail it to our office at **18500 Murdock Circle, Room 229, Port Charlotte, FL 33948**. Please return your completed form by **January 3, 2020**.

#### ***Is there a fee to record/process my Unity of Title?***

No. There are no fees for the Ackerman MSBU Unity of Title forms.

#### ***What happens if I sell my property?***

This assessment stays with the property and will be transferred to the new owner.

#### ***Why do I have to connect when my septic is good?***

The Board of County Commissioners has determined that due to aged septic systems and water quality problems, central sewer will be installed in the Ackerman neighborhood and each developed property will be required to connect to the sewer after it is installed.

#### ***If I already consolidated my lots with the Property Appraiser do I still need to complete a Unity of Title?***

Yes, consolidating your lots through Property Appraiser does not operate to lower your assessment, since there is nothing to prevent you from splitting the lots in the future or building another dwelling unit on the adjacent platted lot. By completing the Unity of Title and having it recorded in the public records, you are agreeing to combine the lots and be assessed for only one ERC (Equivalent Residential Connection). While the Unity of Title is in effect, you cannot split up the tax parcel or add any dwelling units to the site. If you want to sell one of the lots or build an additional dwelling unit, you have to obtain a Release of the Unity of Title from the County and pay the appropriate utility fees.

## **Vacuum Sewer System**

### ***What is a vacuum sewer system?***

A vacuum sewer system utilizes negative pressure to draw the effluent from the various homes to the central receiving tank in the vacuum station similar to a straw in a beverage container.

### ***Why was a vacuum sewer system selected for this project?***

A preliminary engineering report was prepared for this project which reviewed six different sewer alternatives. Vacuum sewer was determined to be the most feasible and cost-effective solution for the majority of this neighborhood.

### ***Where is the vacuum station located?***

The main vacuum station will be located at 18330 and 18338 Ackerman Avenue.

### ***Does the vacuum station have a generator?***

Yes, the vacuum station is equipped with a generator that can keep the station running for days.

### ***What is a vacuum valve pit?***

A vacuum valve pit is a chamber containing a valve that collects wastewater from your home. All the water from your laundry room, kitchen and bathrooms flow to this chamber by way of underground piping from your home. The valve in the chamber remains closed until the wastewater collected reaches a predetermined fill level. Once this level is achieved the valve opens and the collected wastewater is transported by vacuum to a central neighborhood pump station that in turn pumps the wastewater to the treatment plant for processing.

### ***Where will the vacuum valve pits be located?***

Valve pits will be located within the rights-of-way, near the property line. Each valve pit will have a dedicated air intake terminal. One valve pit can serve up to 4 homes.

### ***Is power required to operate the vacuum valve?***

No, power is not required.

### ***Will there be any smell associated with the system operations?***

There should be no noticeable smell from the vacuum system.

### ***Will there be any noise associated with the operation of the vacuum system?***

Any noise generated from the vacuum system will be minimal.

## **Water Main Replacement**

### ***Are the water mains going to be replaced?***

Yes.

### ***Why are the water mains going to be replaced?***

The water mains are being replaced due to age and condition. Additionally, a water booster pump will be installed to improve water pressure and quality.

### ***How much do I have to pay for the replacement of the water mains?***

There is no cost to the homeowner for the replacement of the water mains.

## **On-Going Construction**

### ***Will I be provided notice prior to the start of construction on my street?***

Yes. CCU will be sending a post-card prior to the start of construction in your area. Also, the contractor will be giving prior notice to the property owners a few days before the construction activity takes place.

### ***What can I expect when the contractor is working in my neighborhood installing sewer lines?***

For the vacuum sewer installation, you can expect some inconvenience due to equipment movement, material transport and trench excavation. This sewer system is constructed in the boulevard areas along the streets and only impacts the street at intersection crossings or service lateral crossings. The contractor will try to minimize this inconvenience as much as possible.

The main conflict will be when the pipe installation crosses your driveway which will be restored as quickly as possible.

## **On-Lot Sewer Connection to Home**

### ***What is involved with the on-lot connection?***

The on-lot sewer connection to your home is part of your MSBU assessment. This includes the abandonment of one septic tank.

### ***When will the roads be repaired?***

Road excavations will be temporally restored as soon as possible once the trench has been backfilled, by the end of each day unless some unforeseen problem is encountered. Roads will be completely resurfaced, and drainage will be set to design upon completion of the project.

***Will the condition of my property be documented prior to the start of construction?***

Yes, during the meeting with you to discuss all the aspects of the construction, the condition of your property will be documented and become a part of the signed agreement. Any changes that occur between the initial meeting and start of construction will be documented prior to construction.

***When does construction start in my zone?***

Approximate Construction Dates:

Vacuum Station – 2021

Zone 1 Area – 2021

Zone 2 Area – 2022

Zone 3 Area – 2022

Zone 4 Area – 2022

LPS Area – 2023

See project map at [www.AckermanProject.com](http://www.AckermanProject.com) to find your zone.

***Who will be responsible for maintenance of the gravity sewer service lateral located on private property?***

The property owner will be responsible for any future maintenance after installation.

***My septic tank is under a concrete slab, porch and/or deck how will it be abandoned?***

Generally, if the septic tank is not accessible, the septic tank is pumped entirely of all contents and then filled with low-strength concrete slurry. If the property's septic tank is not accessible for any reason, it is the owner's responsibility to remove the existing obstruction for the removal and/or crushing of the tank to proceed

***How will my landscaping be impacted?***

Any landscaping will be avoided if at all possible by either going around it or directionally drilling under the landscape features.

***I have trees/shrubs located within the right-of way, what will happen if they are in the way of construction?***

Landscape features located within the right-of-way will be preserved where feasible provided that they do not interfere with installation of utility facilities or swale restoration. If they interfere with construction, they will be removed and will not be replaced.

***What impacts will construction have on my driveway?***

Most driveways will be removed within the right-of-way to install the pipes/mains providing sewer services. The driveway will be restored with like materials. A temporary natural soil driveway will be provided the same day. The final driveway restoration will be scheduled for a later date as restoration of the rights-of-way is being completed. Where feasible, trenchless pipe installation methods will be utilized to avoid disturbing decorative driveways.

***What is a trenchless pipe method?***

Trenchless pipe installation involves horizontal drilling to install a pipe. This requires two pits to be installed on either side of the drill but does not disturb the surface in between. There are limitations that will not allow trenchless pipe installation in all instances.

***I would like to extend the culvert pipe and add a new driveway; can this be done in conjunction with this project?***

Once the central sewer mains are installed, you can schedule a new driveway with culvert to be installed. You will be responsible to contract for this work and obtain the required permits.

***I have irrigation lines located within the rights-of-way, what will happen if they are in the way of construction?***

Every effort will be made to work around the irrigation lines; however, if the lines are located in the rights-of-way, any disruption would be the responsibility of the property owner to correct. The Utilities inspector and contractor will discuss the situation with you at the time of construction.

***I have an irrigation system located on my property, what will happen if it is damaged?***

Every effort will be made to locate the irrigation lines and avoid them if possible. Any damage to irrigation systems on private property will be repaired to original condition by the Utilities department.

***Can anything (sidewalk, landscaping, etc.) be installed over the new sewer service or the abandoned septic system?***

Yes, that is a possibility. Please discuss this in detail with the Utilities staff during the site visit with you.

***Can my existing septic tank be converted to a cistern?***

Yes, that is possible. The septic tank will need to be properly disinfected and all other pertinent regulations followed. If the property owner elects to keep the existing septic tank intact, any future costs associated with maintaining or abandoning the tank will be the responsibility of the property owner. Contact the Department of Health at 941.743.1266 for any requirements.

***Can I reuse or resell any components of my existing septic system?***

Most standard septic tanks do not have any mechanical components. If you have an Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU) or mound system, salvage may be possible but must be done in conformance with all rules and regulations. Removal and reuse of the tank itself would be difficult. If you would like to consider keeping any components of your existing system, please discuss this with Utilities staff during your site meeting. The removal and/or reuse of any part of the on-site system cannot interfere in any way with the construction of the sewer system.

***When will I have to start paying for sewer service and how much will it cost me?***

Once your home is connected to the central sewer system you will be required to pay the monthly service charge. For an average customer using 4,000 gallons of potable water per month, the sewer bill would be approximately \$49 monthly.

***What is offered to undeveloped/vacant lot owners?***

Owners can defer the assessments for undeveloped/vacant parcels.

***Can I construct a porous surface driveway in the future?***

A solid drive surface is required in the rights-of-way. The material used can be concrete, asphalt and pavers. Paver drive surfaces are considered a solid surface and are somewhat porous. Many different types of drive surfaces are allowed on private property.

***Has the water quality improved in the harbor over the last 10 years? How will removal of septic systems make a difference for water quality in the harbor?***

Charlotte Harbor has been impaired for nutrients since 2009. Fecal coliform was added to the list of impairments in 2016.

Based upon research and various studies, the removal of septic systems from the area will improve water quality in the harbor. Factors contributing to system failures are the age of the septic systems along with design factors including the density of the septic systems and the high ground water table to name a few. These factors create an environment that is not conducive for septic systems to treat sewer effectively and therefore the pollutants in the wastewater ultimately discharge into the surrounding canals and into the harbor.

***Can swales be planted with anything other than sod when being restored?***

No.

***What is included in my \$11,500 assessment?***

The standard level of service included in the MSBU cost is listed below:

- Locating currently connected septic tank location
- Pumping and Disposal of Septic Tank Contents
- Removal and/or Crushing of Septic Tank
- Filling the void created by Removal and/or crushing of Septic Tank
- Installation of new Bahia or St. Augustine sod over the void created by Removal of Septic Tank.
- Connection of the property service lateral line to the Vacuum System-if the property is located on a Vacuum zone
- Installation of the Vacuum Pit (to service 4 properties)
- Installation of the LPS tank and electrical panel, if property is located on a LPS zone
- Connection of the property service lateral line to the LPS Tank and from the Tank to the Collection Main-If the property is located on a LPS zone

***Who do I call if my 5-year septic inspection/pump-out is due at or near the time of septic to sewer construction in my area?***

Contact the Department of Health at 941.624.7200, ext. 7387.

***Who should I contact if I have questions?***

For all assessment and septic-to-sewer questions, please call the Ackerman Project Office at 941.764.4305.

For general customer service questions, please call 941.764.4300, Option 3.

For questions regarding septic system failure, please call the Department of Health at 941.624.7200, ext. 7387.