



March 11, 2013

Re: Summary Information - Wastewater Services Available to the Cape Haze Area

Dear Property Owner:

You may have recently attended one of three informational open-house meetings in regards to the availability of Charlotte County Utilities (CCU) wastewater services. This document will summarize the information provided during these meetings and answer any questions that were raised during discussions. The informational open-house meetings that were held along with this written summary are strictly for informational purposes only.

Please note that no project has been or is under consideration or discussion by the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners regarding wastewater services to the Cape Haze area. The meetings were strictly to inform the property owners on the current status of discussions taking place, on problems being encountered and possible solutions.

Below is a compiled/itemized summary of information provided at the meetings:

1. Wastewater service can be provided to all or certain contiguous portions of the Cape Haze properties via the extension of wastewater collection mains. A majority of the Cape Haze Property Owners in the area, or in a certain contiguous portion, would be needed to move forward with any wastewater expansion project.
2. If it is the will of the Cape Haze property owners to commit to a program to provide service to all or a substantial contiguous portion of the properties in the area, then CCU would seek funding approval for the project as a Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU) (non-ad valorem assessment). It is presently estimated that the cost per a typical developed residential property is \$13,400 which would be spread out over a 20-year period and collected on the annual tax bill. Preliminary financial analysis indicates that the annual cost would be no more than \$670 per household without any other funding or grant sources being applied to the total cost. Every effort will be made to reduce these costs to the greatest extent possible. The earliest that a MSBU program can be implemented is next fiscal year (FY2014) with consideration of final approval by the Board of County Commissioners in September, 2014.
3. Assuming an MSBU funded program were to be implemented, the preliminary estimate of \$13,400 for a typical Cape Haze residential home is based on a total turnkey program that would provide wastewater service to all or a substantial portion of the properties. A turnkey program would include the cost to construct and install all necessary main lines and facilities (including the service lines), the cost to abandon the existing on-site septic tanks, install the Low Pressure Sewer (LPS) tank, pump and electric panel, and the cost to connect the existing on-site plumbing located near the abandoned septic tanks to the newly installed LPS service system. No other costs would be encountered by the property owners. Properties with multiple septic tanks would be reviewed with the property owner to determine if the multiple systems can be plumbed together or if additional LPS service systems would be needed. An extra LPS service system is estimated to cost an additional \$3,300.00.
4. CCU will make every effort to acquire grant funding to offset the cost of the program for each property owner. The maximum grant funding received is typically 50% of the cost of the program, but varies with each granting agency. Any final grant award is determined by the funding agency in consideration of all applications received. The grant process normally takes approximately 18 months from submittal to final approval.
5. A program is being finalized for those property owners who desire to pay for the wastewater service in-full with cash by offering a discount off the \$13,400 cost. Details of this cash discount will be provided on the CCU website once it is approved.

6. A program is under consideration to offer rebate credits for on-site systems installed in the last several years. Details of this credit program will be provided on the CCU web-site once it is approved.
7. As an alternative to a full scale MSBU program, CCU will be more than happy to work with individual and groups of property owners who are interested in CCU wastewater service under its established Line Extension Program. Factors, including proximity to CR 775, major change in estimated number of properties proposed to be served and unforeseen inflation factors may impact the \$13,400 cost per connection. All fees would have to be paid prior to construction. With any line extension, mandatory connection requirements apply for those properties between the wastewater main terminus and the connecting properties. See item 13 below for further information on mandatory connection requirements.
8. For more information on this program described in Item #7, please contact Chris D'Urso, Development Coordinator, at 941.883.3530 or by email at chris.durso@charlottefl.com.
9. Under either funding program, once a developed property is connected to the wastewater system, monthly billing of utility charges for wastewater services would apply and be added to your current potable water service bill, as per our current Rate Resolution. For example, there will be a monthly base facility charge and a gallonage usage charge. At the present time, those charges are \$27.70 and \$15.44, respectively, (assuming four (4) thousand gallons per month typical usage), for a total monthly cost of \$43.14. Monthly base facility charges ("readiness to serve") are collected even when a home is not occupied.
10. CCU has reviewed viable wastewater collection solutions that could service the Cape Haze area. The selected wastewater system must be best suited to the conditions associated with low lying areas, which have a high water table and abut a major waterway. Further, the installation/construction of the candidate system must not cause any damage to existing landscaping and trees. The types of systems that were considered are as follows:

a. Gravity Sewer:

Gravity sewer systems are designed such that wastewater flow coming from the home travels downhill under the force of its own weight. This requires that the mains be pitched or angled in a way to ensure that flows arrive at a destination. It would be very costly to install gravity sewer in the area since considerable dewatering would be required to achieve the line depths required to handle the pitch or angle required to create a gravity flow. In addition, the gravity mains would need to be located under the street to avoid the landscaping and trees. This option, while it requires fewer pumps to be installed and utilizes natural gravity to function, has been ruled out for the area due to cost and construction considerations.

b. Low Pressure Sewer (LPS):

Each home would have an onsite LPS system (holding tank, pump and electric panel) installed in place of the existing septic system to accept wastewater flows from the home. Liquids/Effluent collected in the holding tank will be periodically pumped to the wastewater main in the right-of-way. Once installed, CCU maintains all facets of the system including the onsite tank and pump, the electrical panel, the mains in the street and the removal of solids from the tank.

This system is well suited to the conditions found in the Cape Haze area. Construction of the wastewater mains is easily performed with minimal open cutting of roads. Due to the directional drilling technique that would be utilized, dewatering is not required or minimized and, as well, the technique provides the ability to circumvent large root systems of landscaping and trees located within the community. The solution is cost effective to install. The disadvantages of such a system are that the LPS tanks are located on each lot and require on-going CCU maintenance and monitoring. From the home owner's standpoint this is a non-cost issue since CCU owns and maintains the entire LPS system including the tank, pump and electrical panel.

c. Vacuum Sewer System (VSS):

VSS is as its name implies. Wastewater flows from the home are sent by gravity to an underground valve pit at the right of way. When sufficient wastewater is collected in the valve pit, a mechanism opens a gate and the flows are drawn into the mains under vacuum pressure. The cumulative wastewater flows are collected at a centrally located vacuum pressure station.

Construction of the VSS wastewater mains requires an open trench method to place the mains at particular grades and elevations. Dewatering may be necessary to install the mains. To avoid the landscaping and trees, these VSS mains would need to be located under the street in many areas thereby increasing costs and inconvenience. A further disadvantage of such a system is that the vacuum pressure station is quite costly thereby requiring more homes to be served immediately to be cost effective. For these reasons, the VSS wastewater system has been ruled out as an option.

Therefore, a Low Pressure Sewer (LPS) System as described above has been chosen as the candidate system to service the Cape Haze community.

11. The seasonal high water table in the Cape Haze area impacts the effectiveness of the on-site wastewater treatment systems. For proper treatment, an adequate distance is needed between the bottom of the drainfield and the seasonal high water table. Therefore, replacement drainfields for those properties with inadequate separation will need to be mound systems which are more expensive than the standard drainfield construction.
12. *Charlotte County Ordinance Part III, Chapter 3-8, Article V, Section 103, Mandatory Connection*, states that where a wastewater collection main is extended along the right-of-way through the limits of a developed property, the said property must connect to the wastewater system within 385 days of notice by CCU. After the 385 day period elapses and connection still has not been made, CCU will begin charging the monthly base facility charge (\$27.70 for a typical residential home) to the property owner and file a lien for the connection fees. A copy of the entire Policy regarding Mandatory Connection may be obtained by contacting our offices.
13. A copy of the FAQs and responses submitted during this process has also been attached for your information. These will be posted on the CCU web-site also for your convenience.

To let us know your interest in the proposed program, please complete the enclosed survey and return it to CCU in the enclosed envelope or utilize the provided internet link <https://www.research.net/s/PCZ6HWC> to complete an on-line survey. If for any reason you are unable to return the enclosed survey and do not have access to a computer, please call Judy Hunter at 941-764-4539 to complete the survey. All completed surveys must be received no later than April 30, 2013.

Sincerely,



Bruce R. Bullert, P.E.
Engineering Services Manager,
Charlotte County Utilities

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