Phase 2 Charlotte Harbor Water Quality Initiative
Ackerman/Countryman Utility Expansion
FAQs

Potable Water

What is potable water?

Potable water is the water that is used for drinking, cooking and bathing.

What is the monthly cost for potable water?

Once your home is connected to the potable water system you will be required to pay the monthly service charge. For an average customer using 3,000 gallons of potable water per month the cost is approximately $37.

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 area. However, the northeast section will be served by standard gravity sewer and the southern section will be a continuation of the low pressure sewer system that already exists in the surrounding area.

Where is the vacuum station located?

The main vacuum station will be located at 18330 & 18338 Ackerman Ave. A second smaller vacuum station will be located on Flamingo Boulevard just north of Edgewater Drive.

What is a vacuum valve pit?

The vacuum valve pit contains a sump and valve that acts as the interface between the gravity sewer service lateral coming from your house and the vacuum system.

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.

Low Pressure Sewer (LPS)

Why is LPS being installed in the most southern area of this MSBU?

There is an existing LPS system along O'hara Dr and then south to the Manchester Waterway. Due to the layout of the canal system, it is more cost effective to continue the LPS system to those roads that abut the north side of O'hara Dr.

Gravity Sewer System

Why is a gravity sewer system being installed in the northeast quadrant of this MSBU?

During the Edgewater Drive road improvement project, a gravity sewer main was installed in conjunction with the road improvements. It is more cost effective to continue the gravity sewer service to this area of the MSBU.

On-Going Construction

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

Yes, 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 potable water and/or sewer lines?

For the vacuum sewer and low pressure sewer installation, you can expect some inconvenience due to equipment movement, material transport and trench excavation. Both of these sewer systems are constructed in the boulevard areas along the streets and only impact 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.

The standard gravity sewer installation; however, will require removal of the entire existing street. Access to your property will be impacted during construction in front of your home. The contractor will be responsible to restore the street area to a reasonable level for access at the end of each work day. The temporary street access will not be asphalt but sufficient for travel purposes to and from your home. The final asphalt surface will be constructed after the entire gravity sewer is installed.

On-Lot Sewer Connection to Home

What is involved with the on-lot connection?

The on-lot sewer connection to your home is not part of the MSBU assessment. The cost of this work will be your direct expense. Each property owner has two options to have this work completed:

1. The Charlotte County Utilities Department has construction crews to complete this on-lot sewer connection to your home. The Utilities staff will provide the property owner with an

agreement outlining the general terms for the connection including the cost and payment options. Additional conditions can be added to this agreement as required.

2. The property owner may choose to hire their own plumber to make the connection to the home, again at the property owner's expense.

If, the property owner chooses Option 1 above then the following is to occur:

- Utilities staff is requesting that each property owner complete and send back the customer survey.

- Utilities staff will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your particular situation, answer any questions you may have and then finalize a site layout and general agreement spelling out exactly what will take place.

- Once the signed agreement is complete, payment is received and central sewer is available the construction crew will be scheduled to complete the work. The Utilities staff will inform you a few days prior of the actual work date.

- The on-site septic tank will be pumped clean to remove all liquids and solids. The septic tank will be property abandoned by breaking the bottom to allow drainage, crushing the lid and filling the tank with natural soil to match existing yard surface.

- The excavation for the gravity sewer service lateral will take place, the service lateral will be installed and connected at the home and at the property line and the trench will be backfilled and leveled.

- The final step will be the replacement of sod which should follow in just a few days.

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 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.

Are there any other fees that I will be required to pay to connect?

No other additional fees will be charged. The central sewer construction costs and connection fees are included in the MSBU assessment that you are already paying and the on-lot sewer connection cost to your home is your expense as stated above. All properties that had received a certificate of occupancy at the inception of this project and are within the boundaries of the MSBU are assessed on the annual tax bill for the connection fees and potable water and/or sewer infrastructure.

My septic system is in failure, do I get priority to connect my house?

The Utilities will definitely take into consideration failing septic systems in the connection scheduling.

When will my home be connected to the central sewer system?

It is anticipated that it will take two to three years to complete the design for all zones within the boundaries of the MSBU. Construction will begin in late fall 2016 on the first zone with all zones being completed by the year 2020.

How long will it take to complete the connection to my home under Option 1?

All of the work should be completed within one day except for the replacement of the sod which will take a few days.

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 under Option 1?

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.

How will my landscaping be impacted and restored under Option 1?

Any landscaping will be avoided if at all possible by either going around it or directionally drilling under the landscape features. If for some reason, avoidance is not possible, Utilities staff will come to a mutual agreement with you on how the restoration will be handled. Those issues will also be documented in the signed agreement.

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 within the rights-of-way.

What impacts will construction have on my driveway?

Most driveways will be removed within the right-of-way to install the pipes/mains providing potable water and/or 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 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 under Option 1?

The Utilities staff will discuss this matter with you during the initial site meeting. 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. The final agreement will document exactly how this matter will be addressed during the construction.

Can anything (sidewalk, landscaping, etc.) be installed over the new or abandoned on-lot sewer facilities?

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 under Option 1?

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 potable water and/or sewer system.

When will I have to start paying for potable water and/or sewer service and how much will it cost me?

Once your home is connected to the potable water and/or central sewer system you will be required to pay the monthly service charge. For an average customer using 3,000 gallons of potable water per month, the sewer bill would be approximately $45 monthly and the potable water bill would be approximately $37 monthly.

Will grant funding lower my assessment?

The Utilities will be applying for various grants to assist in paying for these improvements. Any grants received will offset the MSBU assessments.

What is offered to undeveloped/vacant lot owners for hardship?

There is no approved Hardship Program for undeveloped/vacant lots.

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 (FDEP Waterbody Identification 2065A Upper Segment) has been impaired for nutrients since 2009 and a recent discussion with FDEP indicates that it will remain impaired during their next water quality review period.

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.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please contact the Utility at 941-764-4300 Ext 3.