

QUESTION AND ANSWER

I already have water, why are you doing this project? The City Council believes that it is important for the long-term health and safety of the Douglas community that all homes are properly connected to the public water system. Repeating mistakes of the past, however well-intentioned will never accomplish this important public health goal if we don't remedy the problem when we have the opportunity to do so. There are other places in the City that have non-standard water main connections and it is expected that more projects of this kind will be undertaken in the future.

How much is this going to cost? An engineering firm retained by the City has conducted an analysis and provided us with their best estimate of the cost to design, bid and install the new water main. The actual cost will be determined after the project has been bid and firm prices obtained. The City is bundling three separate Special Assessment projects together which saves money on the common elements such as engineering, design, bidding, permitting and inspection.

How did the City determine how much to charge each property? The City Council determined that the fairest way to assign cost to the properties that are specifically benefitted is to divide up the cost based on the frontage of your lot (the length of the pipe that will run in front of your property). There are exceptions to this for properties that have frontage on more than one street.

Is the City paying any part of the cost? Yes, a portion of the cost is being paid by the City and it is listed as the "City Contribution" on the Assessment Roll sheet which is attached. The new water main will run in front of properties that already have a standard connection to a public water main and do not benefit from the new main, so the cost to run the watermain past those properties is being paid by the City-At-Large. Each of the three new water main projects are different lengths with a different number of properties that are directly benefit so the methodology for dividing up the cost is the same but the actual costs for property owners and the city contribution are different for each district.

Why doesn't the city pay all the cost for this new line? Normally water and sewer lines as well as roads and other infrastructure are constructed and paid for by a developer who then passes on the cost when lots or homes are sold. In past generations, as development occurred in some portions of Douglas, the water lines were not constructed in every street. As individual lots sold, people were allowed to run private water lines across their neighbors' private property, through back yards in some cases connecting more than one house to one of these private and undersized water lines. Problems occur over time as properties change hands or these connections freeze, fail or are cut and the cycle is only repeated until the decision is made to construct public water mains.

Do I have to pay the cost of this all at once? No, the cost will be spread over a number of years and will be set by the City Council with the typical range being between 5 and 15 years. The Special Assessment installment payment will be billed once a year and will likely be added to your winter tax bill.