



STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 10, 2019

DISCUSSION

AGENDA ITEM: New Septic Systems in the Old Village/MUSA
SUBMITTED BY: Kristina Handt, City Administrator

BACKGROUND:

In 2016 the City Engineer presented the Old Village Capital Improvement Phasing Plan. It included bringing sewer, replacing watermain and roads to seven areas in the Old Village. A copy of the phasing plan is attached. The City is planning to begin Phases 5 and 6 in 2021 and Phase 7 tentatively in 2023. It was noted in his presentation that the portion of Phase 6 just south of the railroad tracks would only be done if the property owners granted the city an easement to run sewer and water since those properties are not located on a city road but rather a private drive. Some areas were not included in the plan because they were not feasible at the time. Also most of these properties have larger lots and can likely accommodate their own septic needs onsite even if replacements are needed in the future. They will continue to be evaluated as development progresses in the area.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the City be doing anything differently related to new septic systems in the Old Village/MUSA?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The Mayor has asked that we have a discussion about the city's response to requests for new septic systems in the MUSA area, particularly in areas where municipal sewer is not readily available at the time the request for a new septic is received.

The city's practice has been to allow Washington County to permit new septic systems in areas where municipal sewer is not currently available and no definitive plan has been adopted. For example, a request for a new home along the private drive south of the railroad tracks came in and since the city did not have any other option to provide sewer service to that parcel, they were directed towards a private system.

In areas where we know we will be bringing sewer in the future, i.e. phase 5, phase 6 (north of the tracks) phase 7 and Heritage Farms, we have worked with the county to have them not require replacement of non-compliant systems at the time of sale given that we have plans to bring municipal sewer to the area in the next few years.

There was a new connection to the city drainfield system along 32nd St that was approved in 2018 due to a non-compliant system. In that case the city required the property owner to sign an assessment waiver before we allowed him to connect to the 201 system.

Should the city continue with the practices described above? Should we prohibit new septic systems, thereby prohibiting development, in the MUSA until municipal sewer is available? Should we require future assessment waivers in all cases?

FISCAL IMPACT:

NA

ATTACHMENTS:

- Old Village CIP Phasing Plan