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# Harmony Pump Station Infrastructure Improvements Project (HPSIIP)

## EASEMENT ACQUISITION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### **What is a public sewer easement?**

A public sanitary sewer easement is a legal right that will allow Western Butler County Authority (Authority), or its assigned agents, to access and use a designated portion of private property for the purpose of upgrading, maintaining, or repairing sewer infrastructure.

### **Why is a sewer easement necessary for my property?**

The sewer easement is crucial for upgrading and maintaining the public sanitary sewer system, ensuring the efficient and reliable disposal of wastewater from homes and businesses in the community.

### **How is the location of the sewer easement determined?**

The sewer easement is typically between 20 and 30-feet wide and centered over the sanitary sewer facilities. Sewer lines within the scope of HPSIIP (Project) were selected to either be along the same alignment as existing infrastructure or along a new alignment to minimize impacts to property owner residences and other structures. Where possible we try to maintain sewer alignments within the public road right-of-way.

### **What happens if I want to build or make changes within the sewer easement area?**

Property owners typically need permission from the utility agency before making any changes or improvements within the sewer easement area to ensure the integrity and accessibility of the sewer infrastructure.

### **How will the sewer easement impact my property rights?**

While property ownership and rights remain intact, the sewer easement grants specific rights to the Authority for sewer-related activities. This includes the right to access the property along the

granted easement for upgrades, repairs, and maintenance within the easement area.

### **Can I deny access to my property for sewer upgrades?**

Generally, property owners cannot deny access for necessary sewer upgrades.

### **How long does a public sanitary easement last?**

The Authority is seeking approval for both temporary and permanent sewer easements. The temporary easement will provide limited access for the construction of the Project and will be in effect for a specified period. Conversely, the permanent easement is sought for the indefinite operation and maintenance of the sewer system. The easements requested on your property are defined in the Easement Agreement sent to you, as well as on Exhibit A of the Easement Agreement.

### **What is the difference between a Right-of-Way and an Easement?**

Often times right-of-way and easement are used interchangeably. An easement allows a person or an entity use of a property for a specific purpose. A right-of-way is a specific type of easement allowing for travel across a property. In this case an easement is required for the specific purpose of constructing, accessing, and maintaining sewer infrastructure.

### **What if I refuse to sign the Easement Agreement?**

We would like to work with all property owners to reach an amicable resolution to the easement acquisition process. However, because this is a sanitary project for the benefit of public good and existing customers, if an amicable resolution cannot be reached the Authority will be forced to proceed with an easement by condemnation.

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### **Why do we need new and upgraded Sewers?**

Original infrastructure in Harmony Borough and Zelienople Borough dates back as far as 1901, with many house laterals, or connections, having been installed at the same time. The age of the existing infrastructure allows rainwater (inflow and infiltration – I&I) into the lines which can exceed the capacity of the sewer lines and overload the existing Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) during wet weather events. The identified upgrades are necessary to address both the age of the current facilities, and to address projected growth within the Pump Station’s service area within the next 30 years. If these required improvements to the Authority’s infrastructure are not implemented, the wastewater conveyance system will soon be overloaded, and some customers will experience their own service laterals becoming inundated with I&I and ‘backing up’ in their sewage piping. Obviously, this results in an unacceptable threat to public health.

### **Why did I receive a letter regarding easements, but my neighbor did not?**

Your neighbor may have not received a letter because the Project doesn’t physically affect their property. The letter only addresses new required easements.

### **Will this affect my property value?**

Typically having access to public utilities increases the value of a piece of property.

### **Will construction be noisy?**

There are some inherent noises associated with the installation and rehabilitation of sanitary sewer lines. All contractors will be required to strictly adhere to any local noise ordinances in effect.

### **Will my property look the same after the project?**

Contractors will be required to restore the property as closely to existing condition as feasibly possible, unless otherwise agreed upon.

### **When and how long will construction be?**

Construction for the entire Project is estimated to begin in Summer 2024 and is projected to last two years. Construction will be sequenced to minimize impact to homeowners, so that minimal sections will be worked on at a time.

### **What if my sewer lateral (connection) or other utilities are damaged during the construction?**

As part of the project Contractors will be responsible for reinstating utilities.

### **Will there be any disruption to my sewer service?**

Our goal is to impact customers as minimally as possible. However, there is a chance that your service could be temporarily disrupted and/or you could be asked to conserve water during the hours impacted.

### **Will this cost me money?**

The short answer is “No”. If the connection lateral from your home to the existing sewer pipe is in good condition, it will be connected to the new sewer pipe.

### **Visit our Website for More Info**

As this project progresses, we will provide further information and periodic updates on the our website at: <https://www.wbcasewer.com/>. For additional questions you may contact us by phone at 724-452-5501 ext 6, or by email at [dberkebile@wbcasewer.com](mailto:dberkebile@wbcasewer.com)