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## **Frequently Asked Questions Wastewater Treatment Plant & Proposed Moratorium December 14, 2020**

**1. Why does the City of Granbury need to build a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP)?**

The City has experienced significant growth in the eastern portion of the overall wastewater system. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires the City to begin planning to expand or construct new facilities when 75 percent of the capacity is achieved in three consecutive months, which occurred in 2016. These capacity peaks normally occur during wet weather events. Numerous sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) have occurred from the collection system that have required the City to notify the TCEQ. The new WWTP will eliminate sanitary sewer flows from the current collection system to the existing treatment facility and reroute those to the new plant.

**2. How long has the City been planning for a new WWTP?**

As early as the year 2000 when the City increased the capacity of the existing WWTP, it began monitoring and recording capacity levels. When the existing WWTP hit the 75 percent flow capacity for three consecutive months in 2016, the City initiated the required studies, engineering and permitting to occur. From that study, a comprehensive wastewater plan for the City was developed. The plan calls for the \$20 million reconstruction of the existing WWTP and the \$13 million construction of the new east WWTP and related collection system improvements.

**3. What happens if the City does not build this WWTP?**

If the new WWTP is not constructed in the City's eastern portion of its collection system, the severity of future SSOs could potentially result in contamination in nearby bodies of water.

**4. Why doesn't the City just expand the existing WWTP in Harbor Lakes?**

A non-expansion agreement between the adjacent Homeowners Association and the city was included as part of the TCEQ approval of the original waste discharge permit for this plant. This agreement prohibits the expansion of the existing wastewater treatment plant property and treatment capacity.

**5. What happens during this proposed moratorium on land development?**

New development applications cannot be approved during the moratorium within the eastern portion of the City (see below map). Once the permit for the new WWTP is issued and the plant construction begins, the moratorium may be lifted.

**6. Why did the City choose the proposed location for the wastewater treatment plant?**

The current site was chosen after a lengthy search on the eastern side of the city. This site was ideal as it has one of the sanitary sewer lines running through it and it provided a lower elevation for the effluent outflow thereby reducing the operating cost for the life of the plant. The proximity to Lake Granbury is also a strong determining factor as the effluent will provide beneficial safe water for the public water supply, aquatic life, irrigation and recreation for the water shed.

**7. Why doesn't the City build or participate in a larger, regional WWTP instead of the proposed plant?**

Approximately 20 years ago, the City participated in the regional WWTP study with other Hood County stakeholders. The study was abandoned because there was a lack of interest from the stakeholders. At the time, the cost for such a plant was prohibitive. By today's cost, it is still beyond anything that would be affordable and acceptable to the taxpayers of Hood County.

The WWTP and respective collection systems would be approximately \$450 million, which would be a monthly payment of \$1.6 million, which would translate into approximately \$25 per month for each citizen in Hood County. Those prices would be just the debt service portion and would not provide the needed maintenance and operations cost. Additionally, the plan did not include servicing 100 percent of the county.

**8. How many property owners will be "affected" by this WWTP under TCEQ guidelines?**

There are 14 affected landowners, according to the TCEQ guidelines in the permit application. Per TCEQ guidelines the following affected landowners were notified:

- Landowners on both sides of the discharge route for one full stream mile downstream of the discharge point, and
- Landowners surrounding the treatment facility property.

**9. How have homeowners near the City's current WWTP been affected by its operation?**

The current plant is located in the middle one of the premier planned developed neighborhoods of Granbury and has never had any TCEQ violations. The Mayor of Granbury lives across the street from this facility and two Council Members and the City Manager live within a mile of it. The current facility is undergoing a \$20 million construction project to further improve its operations, efficiencies and effluent. Both the existing and the new WWTPs will be upgraded to technology that is far more advanced than the City's current facility.

Furthermore, since 2011, the effluent (treated wastewater) for the Water Edge WWTP is used to irrigate the Harbor Lakes Golf Course with no negative impacts. There has never been a golden algae fish kill or any other environmental issue related to the City's current WWTP.

**10. What is the status of the TCEQ permit for the east WWTP?**

TCEQ has issued an "administrative approval" of the permit application and has approved the engineered plans and specifications. TCEQ is compiling the public comments and is preparing an official Response to Comments (RTC) which will be provided to all commentors and interested parties.

A public meeting on the subject was held on September 10, 2020. The RTC is typically published 60 days after the public meeting, however, with TCEQ teleworking, the RTC, and ultimate permit approval, it is anticipated to be delayed beyond the 60-day timeframe.

**11. Will the new WWTP be dumping "raw sewage" into Lake Granbury or its tributaries?**

The term "raw sewage" refers to raw wastewater, which is transported from homes and businesses through the City's collection system to the treatment plant, whereas the term "effluent" refers to the treated, "clean" water produced after all of the wastewater treatment has been completed.

There are safety measures within the design of the plant to ensure safe and legal operation. Dumping raw sewer water into the creek is a violation of State law and comes with hefty fines and penalties. The City will never intentionally violate the state law.

TCEQ compliant effluent is what will be produced and released from the new East WWTP and the permit would allow for the released effluent to ultimately enter Lake Granbury. The effluent from this WWTP will be "Type I Water", which is used for public water supplies, irrigation, aquatic life, and recreational use. The effluent will be a beneficial water flow into a stagnant Rucker Creek and will be cleaner water

than the water that is currently in the lake. The water quality in Lake Granbury (measured by the number of suspended solids, nutrients, and organics already in the lake water content) is substantially inferior to the water quality of the treated effluent that will be coming from the proposed WWTP.

**12. Will there be noxious fumes coming from the wastewater treatment plant?**

The new WWTP will be using state of the art technology to minimize any impact to surrounding landowners. Most odors associated with wastewater tend to come from the collection system, depending on how long the wastewater is in the collection system before it makes it to a WWTP for treatment. For this reason, it is common for odors to escape from the raw wastewater where it enters the treatment plant.

To address this issue, the proposed new East WWTP design includes the use of active odor control for all potentially odor-causing process units (including covers over those structures and foul air capture and treatment). In the secondary treatment processes, the aeration used for biological treatment also provides a secondary benefit of eliminating odors from downstream treatment units. The City has designed the plant to reduce or eliminate noise, light, and odor pollution in the operations far beyond any current TCEQ standard. Granbury is known for its high quality of life, and the existing and the new WWTP will continue to provide its neighborhoods with an attractive, pollution free environment.

**13. Will the new wastewater treatment plant use the same old technology as the City's current treatment plant?**

No. The proposed new East WWTP (and the City's existing WWTP) have been designed to be upgraded to the most advanced wastewater treatment technology, which includes biological nutrient removal and membrane bioreactor technologies (MBRs). Not only do these new treatment technologies meet or exceed the TCEQ's latest requirements for wastewater treatment, but these technologies can provide effluent quality that exceeds TCEQ requirements and also complies with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines.

**14. What is the timeframe for the Moratorium Ordinance?**

If the ordinance for the moratorium on development is accepted and voted into law by the Granbury City Council, it will initially last for 120 days from the date it is passed, pursuant to Texas Local Government Code. Under this code, the moratorium can be shortened, repealed, or extended by the City as needed.

For questions or more information please contact Granbury Public Information Officer Alex Southern at 817-573-6764 or at [asouthern@granbury.org](mailto:asouthern@granbury.org).