

## Takoma Park Eastern Avenue Water and Sewer Main Replacement

Project Status: 80% Design

Last Updated: August 28, 2017

Thank you for your patience as we continue to answer questions and address concerns regarding this project. Upon request of neighbors from the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue and Westmoreland Avenue, WSSC reinvestigated environmental impacts of the backyard sewer alignment with a horizontal directional drilling (HDD) installation method, as well as the feasibility of a front yard gravity sewer alignment alternative for the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue. WSSC received the request for additional information at a meeting with concerned residents, Councilmember Hucker, Councilmember Reimer's office, Mayor Kate Stewart, and Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite in February 2017. In March and April 2017, the design team conducted multiple field visits to review the feasibility of a front yard gravity sewer alignment. In a June 2017 meeting with elected officials, WSSC presented the draft report which responded to the concerned residents' request. The elected officials requested that the design team make revisions to the report for clarity; the final report of our findings is now available on the public website.

### **Sewer Alignment Status for the 6700 Block of Eastern Avenue**

WSSC is working to reach the finish line for this urgent project, and needs to finalize the rehabilitation method for sewer mains in the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue. Following our investigations this past Spring, the remaining three rehabilitation method options are as follows: (1) backyard gravity sewer alignment installed by the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) trenchless method (backyard alignment); (2) front yard pressure sewer alignment with grinder pumps (grinder pumps); and (3) front yard gravity sewer alignment with new sewer exit points at the front of the homes (front yard alignment). A fourth option, a front yard gravity sewer alignment with sewer laterals around the home, is not being considered because it violates existing plumbing codes (please see report for additional discussion). The three remaining potential methods are described below.

## Alignment Option #1 – Backyard Gravity Sewer Horizontal Directional Drilling Alignment



The backyard gravity sewer alignment includes installation of a new sewer main parallel to the existing sewer main alignment at the rear of the Eastern Avenue properties. WSSC will purchase a 20-foot-wide easement from each affected homeowner to complete construction and future maintenance on the sewer main in the backyard location. WSSC's contractor will install a new sewer cleanout at the edge of the 20-foot easement, identifying the location at which maintenance responsibility of the sewer service lateral transfers from WSSC to the homeowner. The homeowner will be responsible for future maintenance on the sewer lateral from the cleanout to the house.

The gravity sewer main will be constructed by the horizontal directional drilling (HDD) trenchless installation method. HDD is an established technology for pressurized main installations, and recent improvements in the technology have made it suitable for use in gravity sewer installations. The method now comprises tighter control to maintain the vertical and horizontal alignment during installation, reducing the possibility of sags in the pipeline. WSSC has identified the consultant firm GHD as the designer for HDD, in the case that we move forward with this rehabilitation method.

### Outstanding Easement Appraisals for Alignment Option #1

If the backyard alignment is chosen, the design consultant will develop final permanent and temporary construction easement documents for the homeowners in the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue. The consultant will also prepare temporary easement documents for homes with tree impacts along Westmoreland Avenue. WSSC's Land Unit will contact homeowners directly to

discuss easement appraisals. We anticipate easements to value approximately \$21,000 per property. Please note that easement appraisal values will vary based on actual lot size and the presence of mature trees and structures on the property.

### **Alignment Option #2 – Front Yard Pressure Sewer with Grinder Pumps Alignment**



WSSC will install a new small diameter pressure sewer main in the roadway in front of homes. New pressurized sewer laterals will be installed around the sides of the homes to connect from the existing sewer exit point at the back of the home to the new main in the roadway. Each home will require a grinder pump to move wastewater from the basement level of the home (the existing sewer exit point) to the roadway at the front of the house.

WSSC will require signed Right-of-Entry from each affected homeowner to install a grinder pump and new sewer lateral on the private property. WSSC will pay the costs for installation of the sewer main, service laterals, grinder pumps, necessary electrical panel upgrades to provide compatibility with the grinder pump, and a portable backup generator for each affected home. Following installation, the new sewer laterals and grinder pumps will have a 2-year manufacturer warranty. For the grinder pumps, WSSC will pay for an additional 10-year warranty, for a total 12-year warranty. At the end of the warranty periods, the homeowner will be responsible for maintenance costs of grinder pumps and laterals up to the property line.

### **Alignment Option #3 – Front Yard Gravity Sewer with New Sewer Service Exit Points**

#### **Alignment**





WSSC will install a new gravity sewer main in the roadway. Homeowners will be responsible for hiring a private plumber to reconfigure the wastewater pipes inside of their homes to create a new sewer exit point at the front of their homes. If this alignment is chosen, homeowners will be assigned a one-month deadline to schedule an appointment with a renovation plumber of their choice. By the determined deadline, the homeowners must provide to the WSSC Project Manager the proposed depth of the sewer exit point for their homes, as well as the estimate renovation duration. The design team will then finalize plans and construction schedule to accommodate this information.

WSSC will install a new sewer lateral from the new exit point at the front of the home to the new main in the roadway. WSSC will require signed Right-of-Entry from each affected homeowner to install the new sewer lateral on private property. WSSC will pay the costs for installation of the sewer main and new service laterals. The cost of in-home renovations will be the responsibility of the homeowner. Following installation, the new service laterals will have a 2-year warranty. At the end of the warranty period, the homeowner will be responsible for maintenance costs of the lateral from the house to the property line.

### **Next Steps**

After meeting with representatives for Councilmembers Hucker and Reimer, and Mayor Stewart in [month] 2017, next steps were identified to help towards finalizing the decision. WSSC has been requested to hold another community vote in response to concerns that votes not cast by residents automatically reflected a preference for the backyard alignment option, when in fact, this may not have been the case. As a result, WSSC will hold a public meeting to

outline the next steps and anticipated construction impacts of the three remaining sewer alignment options for the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue. We are currently working with city officials to finalize a date in September 2017. A meeting invitation/notification will be sent via email, postal mail, and posted to the public website. The meeting will include a presentation of the alignments as well as a question and answer session.

Following the meeting date, WSSC will hold a **final alignment vote** for homeowners in the 6700 block of Eastern Avenue (more details below). The voting period will be one month past the community meeting date. Within the one-month period, the WSSC Project Manager will be available to visit homeowners and respond to outstanding questions one-on-one. Residents will have the opportunity to contact the Project Manager directly to set an appointment date and time.

#### **Final Public Vote for the Sewer Alignment in the 6700 Block of Eastern Avenue**

**The deadline for the alignment vote will be one month after the public meeting.** Votes can be submitted by mail or by email. **Your vote must be in writing.** Homeowners may select one of the three feasible alignment options to indicate their preferred alignment. As an alternative, homeowners may select the appropriate box indicating their indifference to the type of alignment. A missing or incomplete vote will not be counted as a vote for one alignment over another; instead, the decision will be made based on the votes submitted. Property owners with missing or incomplete votes will be contacted by certified mail to submit their vote within one week of receiving the certified letter.

As with the previous vote, **WSSC cannot legally require homeowners to own equipment and/or make renovations to their home in order to accommodate a front-yard alignment or grinder pump option. Both of these options will require 100% of the voting block to proceed.** In the case of a tie, WSSC will make a determination of the alignment that is the fastest to implement, as this existing sewer main is at a high risk of failing soon. For mailed-in votes, please clearly indicate a return address. The Project Manager will send, by the same method of contact through which the vote was sent, confirmation that WSSC received your vote.

## **Project Timeline**

The anticipated project timeline is below. The completion date for draft plans and easement appraisals is dependent on the selected construction method. **After the project design is complete, WSSC will not be able to move into the procurement and construction phases until we receive all necessary homeowner permissions.**

September 2017:	Public Meeting
October 2017:	Requested Homeowner Meetings Homeowner Voting Deadline
December 2017:	Draft Plans Completed Outstanding Easement Documents Developed
January 2018:	Draft Plan Review by WSSC and City of Takoma Park
February 2018:	Final Plans Completed Outstanding Easement Appraisals Completed
March 2018:	Obtain all Homeowner Permissions
Spring – Summer 2018:	Procurement Phase (6 months)
Fall 2018 – Spring 2019:	Construction Phase (9 months)

Project contact information, background information, and status updates can be found on the project webpage at <http://www.wsscwater.com/eastern>.