



# City of Seven Hills

## Engineering Department

Updated August, 2018

TO: All Affected Residents within the Proposed Hemlock Creek Watershed Sanitary Sewer Project

RE: **13 Frequently Asked Questions for Special Assessment Projects**

Dear City of Seven Hills Resident:

Please see the below frequently asked questions that can assist you in regards to the upcoming special assessment Hemlock Creek Watershed Sanitary Sewer Project:

**Question 1: Why is this Project necessary?**

*Answer 1:* The neighborhood, when originally built, did not have public sanitary sewers installed. In regards to sanitary discharge, individual private septic systems were acceptable, planned and installed to serve all properties in this area of the City. It has been determined by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, together, with the Ohio EPA, that these antiquated sewer systems are not functioning within the current Ohio EPA regulations related to sanitary discharges. Therefore, the Ohio EPA is requiring the City to replace all septic systems with public sanitary sewer systems. The Hemlock Creek project is the final required replacement in the City of Seven Hills.

**Question 2: How much money will this sanitary sewer improvement project cost me?**

*Answer 2:* According to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 727.01, each municipal corporation shall have special power to levy and collect special assessments for public improvements of sewers, sewage disposal works and treatment plants and sewage pumping stations together with the facilities and appurtenances necessary and proper therefor. This chapter allows special assessments to be levied by one (1) of three (3) methods, and the method determined to be used for this project is by proportion to the benefits that may result from the improvement (benefit use). This was determined to be the "fairest" option for all of the affected residents of this improvement project since all properties are benefitting from this project. Each resident was mailed by Certified Mail a letter of preliminary assessment (see "NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS" letter dated 01-03-2018) indicating the cost for their benefit use.

In addition, there are additional costs associated with connecting a house to the sanitary sewer system. These costs are the various Permit & Inspection fees associated with the work to be performed by the homeowner to connect their home from the sanitary sewer lateral clean-out (at the right-of-way), and the construction cost to connect the home to the sanitary sewer lateral clean-out and abandonment of the existing septic system. These costs will be unique for each house location and paid for by the property owner.

**Question 3: How much will my sanitary sewer bill be?**

*Answer 3:* Each resident of Seven Hills that is connected to a public sanitary sewer pays a Sanitary Sewer Maintenance fee of \$0.45 per linear foot of frontage of your property. Those residents not connected to a public sanitary sewer (but will be connected by this project) will now pay this fee once they are connected. In addition, each resident that is connected to a public sanitary sewer will receive a bill from the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) for sewer usage. Information regarding average bills and costs can be found at [www.neorsd.org](http://www.neorsd.org).

**Question 4: How do we connect to the sanitary sewer main if it is on the other side of the road?**

*Answer 4:* As part of this project, a sewer lateral will be connected to the sewer main and extended to the public road right-of-way line or edge of the sewer easement on your property where a clean-out stack will be installed, regardless of the location of the sewer main. There is no additional cost to properties that are located on the opposite side of the road from the sewer main.

**Question 5: Who runs the sanitary sewer lateral from the sewer clean-out to the house?**

*Answer 5:* The individual property owner will be responsible for having the house connected to the provided clean-out.

**Question 6: Will I be forced by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and Ohio EPA to connect to this new sanitary sewer main?**

*Answer 6:* Yes, you will be required to connect. The time frame required for connecting to the public sanitary sewer will not be until after the new public sanitary sewer has been accepted by the City of Seven Hills and the NEORS. Further information regarding exact timelines will be communicated to all parties as it becomes available.

**Question 7: Is the City paying part of the sewer and pavement costs?**

*Answer 7:* Yes. The City portion of the project (local cost) will cover about \$395,492.60 to replace pavement removed by the construction. To further help offset and reduce your assessment costs resulting from the pavement replacement portion, the City is also contributing funding (local cost) of about \$831,951.75. The City portion of the Project costs to date and in future proportional debt issuance payments is reliant on General Fund monies.

Also, all of the approximately \$3.5 million in grant money obtained by the City will be used to reduce your total assessment. In addition, over \$1 million from the City of Cleveland Division of Water (CWD) will pay for replacement of portions of existing water mains that are exhibiting deterioration, as well as pay for the associated partial pavement replacement.

**Question 8: Will you repair my driveway if it is damaged?**

*Answer 8:* Yes, your driveway and any other areas disturbed during construction will be restored to their original condition or better.

**Question 9: What can I do with my septic system?**

*Answer 9:* The existing septic system will need to be emptied, filled in /crushed, and abandoned as part of the "change-over". Each property owner is required to comply with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health requirements and complete a Septic Tank Abandonment Permit Application.

**Question 10: How much will this increase the value of my property?**

*Answer 10:* We do not have any information concerning the possible increase in property value following the installation of a sewer main. We would suggest that you contact a realtor in the area to help determine any changes in value due to the sewer main installation.

**Question 11: What happens if we sell the property with this assessment on it?**

*Answer 11:* The special assessment will be transferred to the new owner. The City of Seven Hills does not require that special assessments are paid off at the time of transfer.

**Question 12: Can I pay the assessment amount and not have it placed on my property tax?**

*Answer 12:* Yes, after the Project has been constructed and all actual costs are determined, property owners will be notified of the final assessment amount and be given a minimum of 30 days to pay the assessment in full. If the assessment is not paid within the 30 days, the assessment will automatically be placed on the property tax as a special assessment.

**Question 13: Can I pay off the assessed amount before the 20 years?**


*Answer 13:* Yes. However, once the bonds have been sold, the entire principal plus interest must be paid. There is no incentive to pay the assessment off early.

Attached is the "Summary of PRELIMINARY Cost of Special Assessment Project" page that breaks down all associated costs for the Project while showing how the assessment cost was derived.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [dcollins@rlba.com](mailto:dcollins@rlba.com) or Assistant City Engineer, Mr. Mark Schmitzer, P.E. by e-mail at [mschmitzer@rlba.com](mailto:mschmitzer@rlba.com). If you wish to reach one of us by phone, please call (216) 525-6258.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you kindly for your time and attention on this matter.

Respectfully,



Daniel J. Collins, P.E.  
City Engineer

