

# **GRU Water/Wastewater Extension Policy and Land Use Impacts Report**



**Presented to the Regional Utilities Committee, January 6, 2004**

**Presented to the City Commission, January 24, 2004**

## **GAINESVILLE REGIONAL UTILITIES WATER AND WASTEWATER EXTENSIONS (Effective July 2004)**

**Policy Objective: The cost of capital facilities required to serve new customers shall be borne by those new customers through a combination of connection charges and extension policies.**

### **New Connection to Existing Water and Gravity Sewer Lines**

1. New connections to existing water lines shall pay all applicable connection charges including the meter set charge, water main tapping charges (applicable to 1-1/2" and larger meters, T&D charge, and treatment plant charge.
2. New connections to existing gravity sewers shall pay all applicable connection charges including the collection system charge, treatment plant charge, pump station charge, and the force main base system charge. Some charges shall not apply as in the following cases:
  - a. When the applicant's wastewater does not flow to or through any city-owned or operated pumping station or force main enroute to the wastewater treatment plant.
  - b. When the property has had the City's relevant wastewater collection system costs recovered previously for such property.

### **On-site Water Lines and Gravity Sewer Lines**

1. The developer constructs and finances all on-site water and wastewater lines. These facilities must be constructed to GRU standards, and are then deeded to GRU for operation and maintenance.
2. The developer shall be required to construct the on-site system to enable extension of service to future phases of development and adjacent property under the same ownership.
3. The developer may be required to construct the on-site system to enable future service to adjacent properties as determined by GRU.
4. Private on-site water distribution and wastewater collection systems may be allowed if adjacent properties can not be served from such systems and if assurance is provided that an appropriate financial mechanism is established to provide perpetual operation and maintenance.

### **GRU Initiated Off-Site Extensions**

1. GRU may initiate off-site extensions to improve system performance or efficiency, or to ensure system reliability.
2. Cost recovery mechanisms include Transmission and Distribution (T&D) charges, Collection System charges, and Force Main Base System charges.

### **Developer Initiated Off-Site Extensions (Water Mains and Gravity Sewers)**

1. Prior to construction, the initiating developer is required to pay Contribution In Aid of Construction (CIAC) for off-site extensions. CIAC shall be the cost estimated by GRU to construct a water or gravity main appropriately sized for the proposed development to the point in GRU's water distribution or wastewater collection system where adequate capacity is available.
2. GRU shall determine the size of extensions based on the geographic service area and the anticipated loads from the development as well as future needs. GRU may choose to oversize extensions or may choose an alternate routing or connection point and pay the incremental cost of oversizing.

### **Developer Initiated Off-Site Force Main Extensions**

1. The developer desiring a force main extension shall pay CIAC prior to construction of the force main.
2. CIAC shall be the cost estimated by GRU to construct a force main appropriately sized for the proposed development to the point in GRU's wastewater collection system where adequate capacity is available to accept the flow.
3. GRU may elect to oversize the force main for future anticipated flows, or may choose to extend the force main to an alternate point in the wastewater collection system. GRU shall pay the incremental cost for oversizing or for alternate force main alignments.
4. In the event that a connection is made directly to a "rebate force main", a rebate shall be collected from the subsequent developer and paid to the original developer. See Force Main Rebate Section.

## **Wastewater Pump Stations**

1. When a new pump station is required to provide wastewater service to a new development, the developer shall pay all costs associated with the pump station.
2. In order to be accepted, operated, and maintained by GRU, the pump station must be designed and constructed to GRU standards.
3. The station shall at a minimum be designed to serve the proposed phase and all future phases of the development.
4. GRU may elect to have the pump station oversized to serve existing or future customers beyond the proposed development.
5. The developer shall be required to provide all necessary landrights to allow GRU to extend gravity sewers to serve adjacent or surrounding properties.
6. In the event that a connection is made that flows via gravity to a "rebate pump station", a rebate shall be collected from the subsequent developer and paid to the original developer. See Pump Station Rebate Section.
7. Private pump stations may be allowed if adjacent properties can not be served, if the developer obtains all required permits for the station, and if assurance is provided that an appropriate financial mechanism is established to provide perpetual operation and maintenance.

## **Pump Station Rebates**

1. Pump stations constructed after June 1996 are eligible for rebate.
2. Pump station rebates redistribute pump station costs from the originating developer to subsequent developers to provide some equalization of costs for customers benefiting from the pump station.
3. Rebates apply only to gravity flow to a rebate pump station.
4. The rebate period is limited to 10 years from completion of lift station construction.

## **Force Main Rebates**

1. Rebates may be calculated for each developer installed force main installed after December 1996. Force main rebates will have two components, on-site force main rebate and off-site force main rebate.
2. Force main rebates redistribute pump station costs from the originating developer to subsequent developers to provide some equalization of costs for customers benefiting from the pump station.
3. Rebates apply only to units connecting directly to a rebate force main, or to the pump station from which a rebate force main emanates.
4. The rebate period shall be 10 years.

## **Reclaimed Water System Service**

1. Service connections to new reclaimed water customers from existing reclaimed water lines that do not require an extension shall be made at no charge to customers.
2. GRU shall pay for extensions to serve new customers in accordance with the attached table that values disposal capacity as well as the monthly charges associated with reclaimed water service (Table 1).
3. In the event that extension costs are greater than the allowable expenditures determined from the table below, the developer requesting service shall pay a CIAC equal to the total cost of the extension less allowable GRU expenditures.
4. Reclaimed water extensions may be pursued by GRU to generally make reclaimed water available to new areas or to enable projects that are required by regulatory agencies.
5. GRU shall determine the size of extensions based on the geographic service area and the anticipated loads from the development as well as future needs. GRU may choose to oversize extensions and pay the incremental cost of oversizing.

## **GAINESVILLE REGIONAL UTILITIES WATER AND WASTEWATER EXTENSIONS IMPACTS ON LAND USE**

**Policy Objective:** Development patterns are a function of the adopted land use and zoning, and water and wastewater extensions are based on the provision of adequate public facilities.

### **Future Land Use and Utility Extensions**

The provision of water and effective sewage treatment is considered one of the most important modern influences on planning and development in Ten Successes that Shaped the 20th Century American City<sup>1</sup>. However, extension of water and wastewater infrastructure without consideration of consequences has been one of the purported precursors to sprawled land use patterns. The Gainesville Regional Utilities extension policy ties the construction of new facilities to the growth plans outlined in the City of Gainesville and Alachua County Comprehensive Plans under the planning tenet of "adequate public facilities"<sup>2</sup>. The plans contain an adopted future land use map that reflects the intent of the elected officials for future development. Changes to this map and associated zoning must be made by the City and County Commission. Gainesville Regional Utilities long range capital planning is based upon the potential uses permitted in the future land use plan.

## **Impacts of Prior Comprehensive Planning Methods on Development**

Prior to 1991 the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan required the accumulation of sufficient points to warrant development. Available water and wastewater services counted favorably towards the necessary points. It could be argued that under the pre-1991 Comprehensive Plan the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure contributed to the potential for development. The 1991 adopted Plan, and the current pending Alachua County Comprehensive Plan contain a Future Land Use Element. The Future Land Use Element details locations suitable for types of development for each parcel in Alachua County. The Future Land Use Element designations, not availability of water and wastewater determine development patterns.

## **Extension Funding Sources and Land Use**

The funding source for water and wastewater extensions is vital in the determination of their impact on land use. The Gainesville Regional Utilities extension policy requires those that want the extension of water and sewer infrastructure to pay for it, as well as to pay connection fees. This fulfills the recommendations of the Sierra Club publication titled "Sprawl Costs Us All: How Your Taxes Fuel Suburban Sprawl,"<sup>3</sup> which outlines the importance of fully funding extensions to avoid subsidy of utility infrastructure by existing customers. GRU will not extend water and wastewater service to serve new development that is not permitted by the City or County. The GRU extension policy meets the tenets of good planning.

The GRU extension policy:

- 1) Is a function of the adopted land use and zoning, and extensions are based on the provision of adequate public facilities; and,
- 2) Reinforces the importance of total cost recovery for extensions in the patterns of development that result; and,
- 3) Does not act as a precursor to development.

<sup>1</sup> Gerkens, Laurence C., 2000, "Ten Successes that Shaped the 20th Century American City" Planning Commissioners Journal #38.  
<http://www.plannersweb.com/wfiles/w171.html>

<sup>2</sup> Schiffman, Irving, 1999 "Alternative Techniques for Managing Growth" University of California, Institute of Governmental Studies.  
[http://www.plannersweb.com/sprawl/solutions\\_sub\\_sewer.html](http://www.plannersweb.com/sprawl/solutions_sub_sewer.html)

<sup>3</sup> Sierra Club, Spring 2000, "Sprawl Costs Us All: How Your Taxes Fuel Suburban Sprawl," <http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/report00/>

**Table 1: GRU MAXIMUM EXPENDITURES FOR RESIDENTIAL  
REUSE EXTENSIONS**

Lot Size	Lot Acreage (acre)	Average Reuse Flow/Lot (gpd/lot)	Value of Disposal (\$)	Present Value of Monthly Charge (\$)	Allowable GRU Expenditure Per Lot (\$)
Small	<0.2	79	\$178	\$1,035	\$1,213
Standard	0.2 - 0.33	251	\$564	\$1,035	\$1,599
Medium	0.33 - 0.6	631	\$1,420	\$1,035	\$2,455
Large	0.6 - 0.8	902	\$2,030	\$1,035	\$3,065
X-Large	> or = 0.8	1033	\$2,325	\$1,035	\$3,360

Based on Least Cost Alternative - Rapid Infiltration Basins @ \$2.25/gpd disposal capacity  
 RCW Service Rates fixed at \$10/month for first 5 yr then increased 3% per year thereafter  
 RCW irrigation assumed to be 20% higher than irrigation usage of potable water  
 PV of monthly charge adjusted for general fund transfer of 14.65% and billing/customer service allowance of 3%