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GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Why are new lift stations and a water reclamation facility needed?

The existing Upper Thompson Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) has been serving Estes Valley residents since the mid-1970s and is nearing the end of its useful life. The infrastructure is aging, costly to maintain, and incapable of achieving future compliance with effluent limitations. A new facility is needed to ensure that Upper Thompson Sanitation District can continue providing the services and quality of life to its customers as it has for decades.

2. What will happen to the existing facility?

To ensure responsible financial stewardship, Upper Thompson Sanitation District will minimize costs by not continuing to maintain expensive outdated infrastructure. The aging Wastewater Treatment Facility will be evaluated for repurposing or demolition.

3. Why are there two sanitation districts in a town this small? What is the difference between them?

The Upper Thompson Sanitation District was formed to meet resident and business service needs outside of the downtown core of Estes Park. Today, The Estes Park Sanitation District still serves the downtown area of Estes Park. The Upper Thompson Sanitation District provides wastewater treatment services to the areas outside of the downtown corridor and surrounding communities, this includes portions of Rocky Mountain National Park, YMCA of the Rockies, and Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center.

FINANCIAL SPECIFICS

1. Why do UTSD rates differ from Estes Park Sanitation District rates?

While both districts are providing high quality services to their customers, UTSD's service area is three times the size of Estes Park Sanitation District's service area, and therefore must maintain three times the infrastructure in more rural areas. Despite this difference, UTSD works hard to keep costs low and maintain rates comparable to that of Estes Park Sanitation District.

2. Why doesn't UTSD have a mill levy, and what exactly is an enterprise fund?

UTSD operates as an enterprise fund, which is an accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods and services, such as the wastewater treatment service that UTSD provides for residents within its operating area. This allows us to cover the cost of our services through user fees, as opposed to encumbering a mill levy.

3. How much will it cost to construct the new water reclamation facility?

Designs and final costs are still being determined, however preliminary estimates range between \$48 – 60 million. The project is expected to be financed through long-term, low interest loans from the Colorado Water and Power Development Authority's State Revolving Fund and/or the U.S Department of Agriculture, a federally funded source, in addition to customer rates. We are also exploring grant opportunities.

4. Will customer rates increase?

To ensure our ongoing ability to provide high quality service to our customers for decades to come, we will need to increase rates for this project. Customer rates will increase by eleven percent each year in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The project rate study can be found [here](#).

This rate was determined through the process of a cost-of-service study, the development of a ten-year Capital Improvement Plan, and a unanimous Board vote to adopt the three-year eleven percent rate adjustment and diminishing increases for subsequent years. The Board of Directors will consider service rates to support debt service incurred for the cost of the new Water Reclamation Facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

1. How will the new facility help protect the water quality of the Big Thompson River?

The new facility will incorporate state-of-the-art treatment technologies and experienced staff to protect the water quality of the Big Thompson River through biological nutrient and heavy metals removal. Upper Thompson Sanitation District is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division.

2. Will there be odors?

As is the case with our aging facility, when treatment facilities are designed properly, they have minimal odors. One of our top priorities is being a good neighbor to all in the Estes Valley, and odor control will be thoughtfully incorporated into the design.

3. Will green technology be used?

The Upper Thompson Sanitation District is balancing our priorities of being positive stewards of the environment and fiscally responsible with our customers' fees. We will use green technology in alignment with a positive cost benefit and will consider options such as remanufactured and recycled materials, high energy efficiency electrical equipment, smart telemetry communication systems, and energy efficient windows and insulation.

TIMELINE

Preliminary and final design is anticipated between January 2021 and March 2022. Construction is anticipated between April 2022 and June 2024.

PROJECT PUBLICITY

1. What community outreach has been conducted?

Community outreach to inform and educate customers and the Estes Park community about the new water reclamation facility have been ongoing and include community open houses, public notices, press releases, letters, and emails.

As an organization that provides a public service, engagement with our local community is imperative to the success of this project. We will continue to engage with the community throughout the construction of the new water reclamation facility.