



MEMORANDUM

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TO: Greenfield Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee
FROM: Planning Staff
DATE: February 26, 2025
SUBJECT: Greenfield Neighborhood Plan Sanitary Sewer Memo

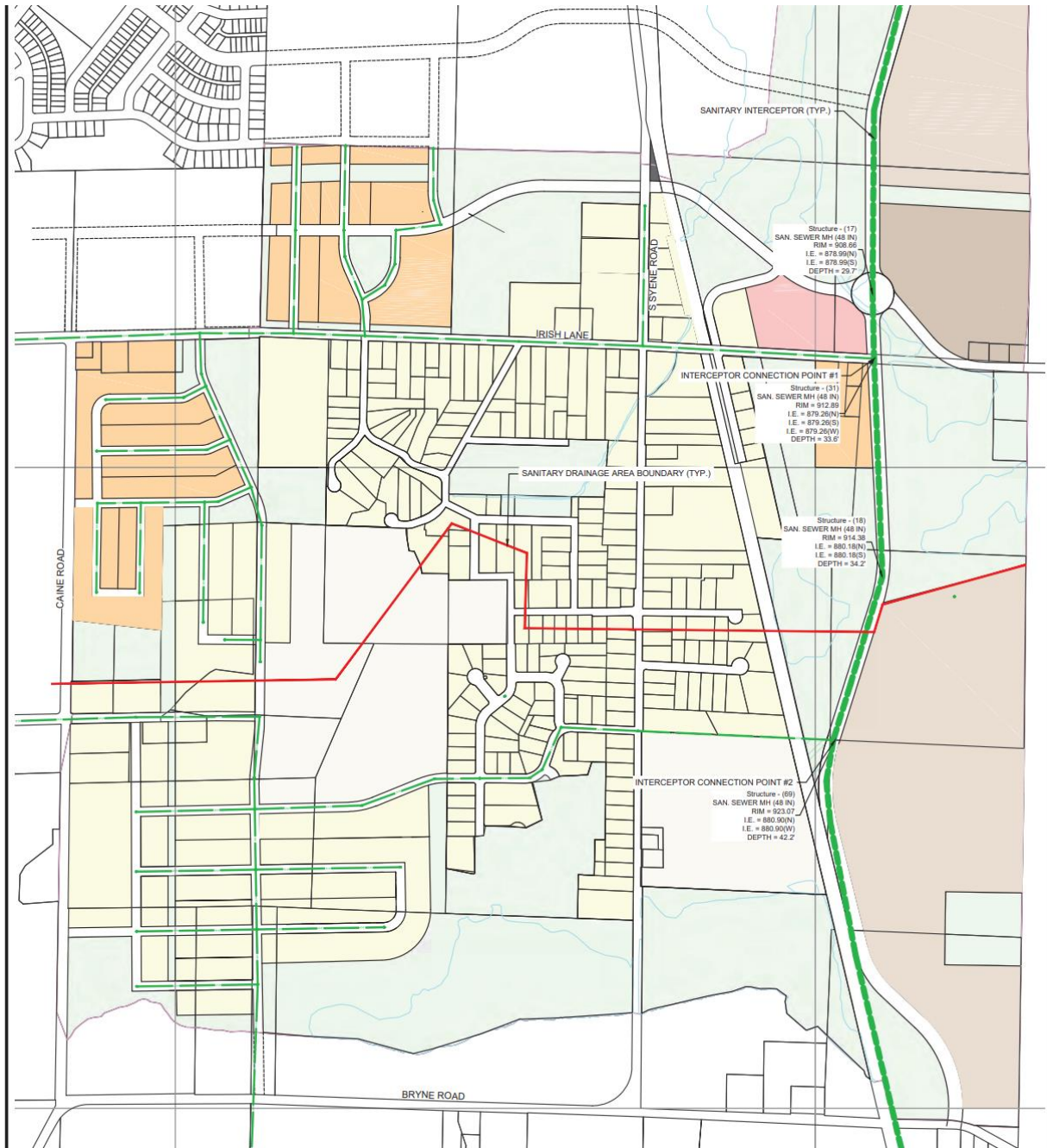
Overview

The City of Fitchburg is completing a neighborhood plan for the Greenfield future urban development area. A neighborhood plan is the first step in the expansion of Fitchburg's urban service area. The urban service area is the portion of the City's area served by public utilities – including sanitary sewer and water.

The City's comprehensive plan provides clear policy direction limiting new development on private septic:

- Policy 1.3.5: Discourage development on private septic, unless associated with Rural Cluster Development or Rural Residential Development Criteria (RRDC).
- Policy 1.1.2: Focus development in areas that can be serviced by gravity flow sanitary sewer.
- Policy 2.2.1: Locate housing in areas that are served by full urban services, including sanitary sewers and public water, with convenient access to community facilities, employment centers and to arterial highways.
- Policy 2.2.2: Do not allow unsewered subdivisions.

As part of the neighborhood planning process, the consultants prepared an analysis of future sanitary sewer infrastructure needs. See Map 1. To serve new development proposed on the northwest and west portions of the neighborhood, sanitary sewer lines are proposed within the Irish Lane and Old Indian Trail rights of way. Property owners fronting on Irish Lane and Old Indian Trail will be required by ordinance and/or statute to connect to the public sanitary sewer if a public sanitary sewer line is installed (see the section below regarding applicable ordinances and statutes).



Map 1: Proposed Sanitary Sewer lines, Greenfield Neighborhood Plan. (The green lines show sanitary infrastructure. The red line divides the two sanitary sewer subbasins.)

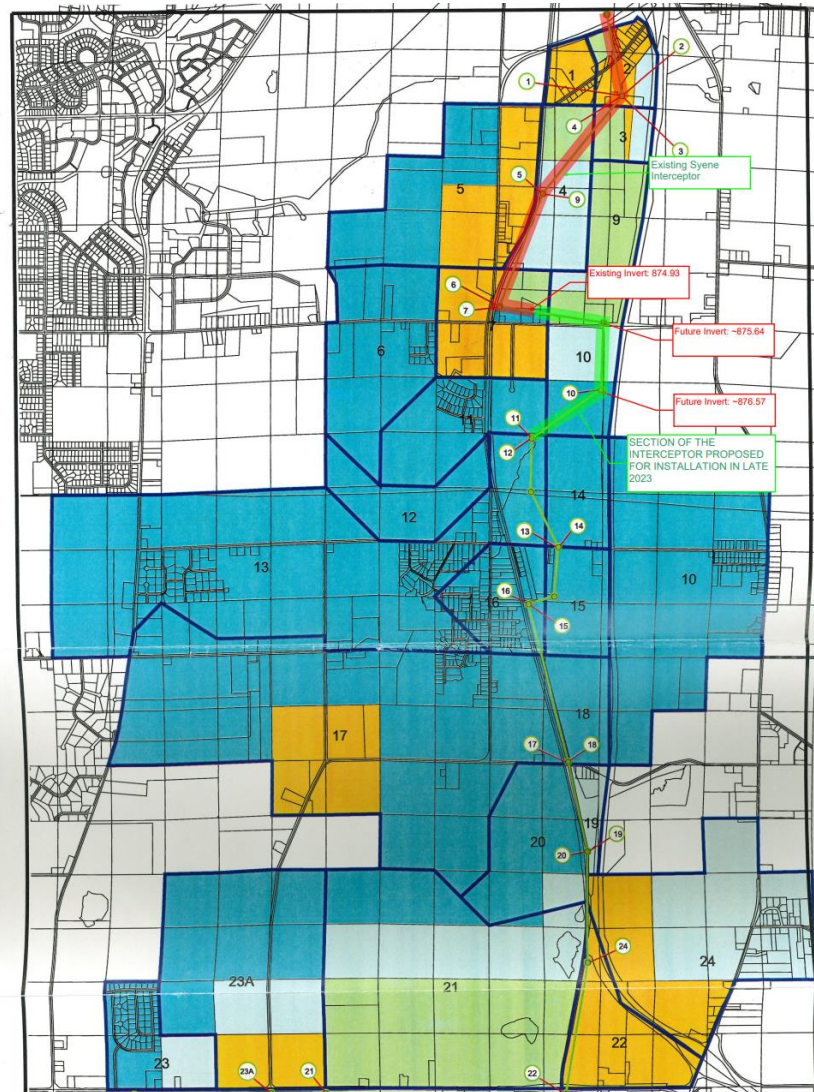
Key Points for Greenfield

- The City of Fitchburg ordinances require sewer connection within 90 days of notification by the City. The property owner is assessed by the City for the cost of installing the sewer main and the lateral from the main to the property line within the right-of-way. The property owner is responsible for the installation of the lateral from the property line to their home. The property owner is also required to properly disconnect and [abandon](#) their existing septic system.
- The property owner is responsible for Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)

and Syene Interceptor fees associated with sewer connection. The MMSD fees are based on land area of the property served. The 2025 MMSD fees are available at this [link](#). The Syene Interceptor fee is based on usage. These fees are adjusted annually. The City typically includes these fees in the assessment.

- The assessed portion of the sewer cost is payable with the next tax bill or over 7 years on a low interest payment plan (City's borrowing cost +1% interest). There is a cost threshold for the 7-year payment plan to be available, but all recent sewer projects have exceeded this threshold.
- Sewer is typically installed when the City is doing a road reconstruction project, there is a development that needs to connect to sewer, or if over half the property owners petition to extend sewer.
- The Greenfield conceptual sanitary sewer plan locates sanitary sewer in the Irish Lane and Old Indian Trail rights of way. Sewer connection from the west is not possible because the Woods Hollow interceptor does not have capacity to serve this area. The Syene Interceptor is designed to service the Greenfield area and lands to the west extending beyond Fish Hatchery Road (see Map 2).
- It is unlikely that all of Greenfield will be connected to sanitary sewer unless property owners request it. At this time, the plan proposed sanitary sewer in only the Irish Lane and Old Indian Trail right of ways.

- **Timeline:** The timeline for sanitary sewer in Greenfield is unknown.
 - Extension of the Syene Interceptor through the Hartung Fields development is planned for 2025-2026. See Map 2.



Map 2: Syene Interceptor Service Area

- Staff does not expect extension of the Syene Interceptor south of the Hartung Fields development until new development is proposed in the northeast of the Greenfield Neighborhood. The timeline for new development in Greenfield is unknown.
- **Costs to Property Owners:** The costs to individual property owners are unknown. There are several variables related to cost:
 - The costs of sanitary sewer connection may be significantly different in five years, ten years, twenty years from what it is today. Given the significant and unpredictable inflation that we have experienced recently, there is little basis from which to estimate future costs.
 - The costs to extend sanitary sewer connection to Greenfield will be borne by all those connecting. The more houses and businesses that connect, the lower the cost will be for individual property owners. Staff notes that to accommodate the concerns of existing property owners, the Greenfield neighborhood plan has

- o significantly reduced the housing density and amount of business land use area.
- o MMSD costs may be adjusted each year. It is unknown what the future connection fees will be.
- o An accurate estimate of costs to an individual property owner requires engineering and bidding of the Syene Inceptor extension south from Hartung Fields and the infrastructure in the Irish Lane and Old Indian Trail right of ways. This engineering is not planned or budgeted.

Applicable Statutes & Ordinances

Wisconsin Statute [200.37\(3\)](#) provides metropolitan sewerage districts the power to require connection of any property owner located along an interceptor sewer or municipal sewer line.

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)'s [ordinance Section 4.5.1](#). requires connection when all the following conditions exist:

- a) The parcel of land is adjacent to public sewer;
- b) There is located upon such parcel a building or other structure used or usable for human habitation...;
- c) Such building or structure is being served by a private sewerage disposal system.

MMSD ordinance 4.5.2. requires connection no later than twelve (12) months after the installation of the public sewer adjoining such parcel.

Dane County ordinance [46.15](#) requires that every building intended for human habitation or occupancy, for which public sewer is available, shall be connected to the public sewer. When connection to public sewer is required, the use of a private sewage systems shall be discontinued within the period required by order of the sewer district.

City of Fitchburg [Ordinance Sec.40-631\(a\)](#) provides that connection is required if the following conditions exists:

- a) The parcel of land is located with the utility adjacent to a utility sewer;
- b) Ther is located upon such parcel a building or other structure used for human habitation;
- c) Such building or structure is being served by a private sewage disposal or treatment works.

Sec. 40-631(a) defines the term "adjacent" as 50 percent or more of the frontage abuts upon a right-of-way or easement in which is installed a utility sewer. Sec. 40-631(a) also requires that connection be made within 90 days after the date of written notice by the board.

Sec. 40-631(b) allows the board of public works by unanimous vote upon application by the property to grant a temporary waiver. The waiver period may not exceed one year after installation of the sewer adjoining the parcel. The granting of a temporary waiver will not delay the collection of special assessments unless thew board so provides. The temporary waiver applies only to the property owner receiving the waiver. In the event ownership of the property changes, the temporary waiver automatically expires. Lands zoned Exclusive Agriculture (A-X) shall be granted a connection waiver.

Strategies for Reducing Connection Fees to Existing Property Owners

- Higher housing densities and more businesses – Though larger sanitary lines may be needed for higher densities; staff expect more users within a given area will reduce the overall costs of sanitary service for individual users.
- As noted above, fees can be paid over the next 7-years with a financing fee of 1% above the city's financing rate.
- City council could choose to fund a larger portion of the Syene Interceptor and not assess all the costs back to users.
- Tax Increment Financing could support extension of the Syene Interceptor serving new business and industry east and west of Highway 14. Staff notes that the proposed Greenfield Neighborhood plan includes limited business and industrial land uses. This limits the amount of tax increment financing that can be expected.
- Federal, state or regional grants. At this time, staff is unaware of grants to support sanitary sewer expansion for new development.