

Proposed Port Austin Township Water Expansion Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **Who appointed the five-member water expansion committee?**
 - The committee was not appointed. The members of the committee are individuals from the Port Austin area that represent the HRWA, PAASWA, Port Austin Township, and interested residents that would like to have clean municipal water available to them. They came together to form a steering committee to see what it would take to bring municipal water to areas not served.

The steering committee members are VOLUNTEERS.

- **Is Lake Huron water safe to drink?**
 - Lake Huron water is extremely safe to drink. It is thoroughly regulated by the State of Michigan. The State requires testing for Mercury, Arsenic, PFAS and many other things. The only additive to our water is chlorine which is required.

- **How was Spicer Engineering firm chosen to draw up the plan?**
 - Spicer Engineering has done several projects with HRWA, PAASWA and the Township.

- **How was the per parcel estimate assessment of \$32,486 determined?**
 - Spicer Engineering estimated the entire proposed project cost at \$30 million. There are 928 parcels in the proposed water expansion map. The total estimated project cost was divided by the number of parcels.

- **Will residents that own multiple parcels be charged the final assessment cost for each parcel of land?**
 - If the parcel is buildable and included in the final district they will be assessed.

- **If I own an unbuildable parcel, will I have to pay an assessment on it?**
 - If the parcel is unbuildable, it will not be assessed.

- **Will there be any other costs associated with this project?**
 - Each homeowner will have to pay for their own connection to the system. Each connection will be priced separately.

- **Will there be any Government money available to help offset the cost?**
 - The committee is working with state and federal officials to see what may be available in the near future. In order to apply for grants and low-cost loans the project must show it is “shovel ready.” Shovel ready is a project that has been finalized, approved, and moving forward.

- **Does the final assessment need to be paid all at once?**
 - The assessment can be spread out over 30 years or more depending on what the township requirements are. The assessment will be charged annually as a line item on the property owners township tax bill.

- **What is the next step in determining if the water expansion project will go forward?**
 - A survey is available with each parcel and owner listed. The parcel owner may indicate if they are “interested” “NOT interested” or “want more information.” When the majority of the district has been surveyed, the water subcommittee will make a recommendation as to what the final district should be.

- **When the survey is complete and the final assessment district is determined, what are the next steps?**
 - Public Act 188 of 1954 dictates how a municipality establishes a special assessment district. We must follow the law. Also please see the attached timeline for a more in depth look at the future for the project.

- **If a large multi-acre parcel is subdivided, will owners of the subdivided parcels have to pay an assessment?**
 - Yes, any parcel that is divided after the assessment that wishes to be developed will have to pay the assessment.

- **How will a multi-unit development such as a campground work? Will a full assessment be charged to each site?**
 - The assessment will be charged per parcel.

- **If I sell my property, do I have to pay off the assessment?**
 - Under most circumstances, the answer is no; usually the new owner would pay the assessment going forward. Sometimes the owner and buyer might negotiate a different scenario. Occasionally, lenders will have specific requirements.

- **Why was there a switch from a petition to a survey?**
 - Many residents felt that by signing the “petition” they would be locked into the project at the current price, many chose not to sign. Based on that feedback we believe that a petition was not the appropriate approach at this time.

- **Is the Survey binding?**
 - By filling out the survey the property owner is not committing to anything. The survey is simply being used as a data tool to understand where there is a want/ need for this project.

- **How long will the survey be available to sign?**
 - We hope to have the surveys completed by Memorial Day 2024.

- **Where can I sign the survey?**
 - Members of the Committee will have the survey available in the Township Hall. Committee members will make a schedule of times to be available to answer questions and allow time to fill out the survey. We will keep updates of the schedule on the township website as well as the Proposed Port Austin Water Facebook page.
 - We will also distribute surveys to those residents that request one via email: pawaterexpansion@gmail.com
 - Due to the survey being 30 pages we unfortunately do not have the financial means to send one to every resident.