



South I-35 Water/ Wastewater Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1: What is the South I-35 Water/Wastewater Program and why is it needed?

A: *The South I-35 Water/Wastewater Program is the Austin Water Utility (AWU)'s solution to meeting south Austin's rapidly growing water and wastewater infrastructure needs, specifically alongside and east of Interstate 35. AWU had developed a service plan that was tied to service extension requests (SERS) submitted by developers. However, the need to provide services in a timely manner for the large number of SERS received mandated a new approach. AWU created the Program to facilitate the SERS as well as the utility's long-range plan.*

Q 2: How does the South I-35 Water/Wastewater Program fit in the with the City of Austin's Smart Growth Initiative?

A: *The Program conforms to the Smart Growth Initiative. One key goal of Smart Growth is to encourage development in the Desired Development Zone (the area of the City roughly east of Loop 1) and discourage urbanized growth in the environmentally sensitive Drinking Water Protection Zone. All developments that will receive water and wastewater service under the Program are located within the Desired Development Zone.*

Q 3: Who will receive services from the Program? If I currently have a well and septic system, will I be able to hook up to the lines?

A: *The Program is primarily designed to provide services to new developments, as mentioned above. However, in the future, it may be possible for those not currently receiving City water and wastewater services to request them as a result of the new infrastructure that will be in place after construction is complete in 2010. Those desiring future service may be able to apply through the Austin Water Utility's Tap Office. For more information on the Tap process, visit AWU's website at www.cityofaustin.org/water*

Q 4: What exactly will be done and when?

A: *AWU will be installing water and wastewater pipelines and other infrastructure in two phases. Phase I will be complete by the end of 2010 and will address immediate needs, whereas Phase II will be complete by the end of 2012 and will address the longer-term needs.*

Q 5: What's included in Phase I?

A: ***Phase I Water Improvements** include a new, approximately 20 million gallon per day (MGD) capacity pump station (expandable to 50 MGD) at the existing Pilot Knob Reservoir and about 70,000 feet of 36-inch to 48-inch water transmission main.*

***Phase I Wastewater Improvements** include approximately 17,000 feet of 54-inch diameter interceptor that will convey wastewater from the proposed Zachary Scott Tunnel, Onion Creek Package Wastewater Treatment Plant (OCPWWTP), and new developments located further upstream (south) to an existing 54-inch diameter tunnel located near the intersection of Slaughter and Onion Creeks. The interceptor will be split into two construction projects. The north segment will be tunneled and will convey wastewater from the OCPWWTP and Zachary Scott Tunnel to the existing Slaughter Creek Tunnel. The south segment will convey wastewater from future developments south and southwest of the Onion Creek neighborhood to the north segment. At this time, alignment of the interceptor has not been finalized.*

Q 6: What, exactly, is a wastewater interceptor?

A: Wastewater is produced whenever someone takes a shower, flushes a toilet, or runs the washing machine. This wastewater is carried through a pipe into a municipal sanitary sewer pipe, which is connected to a regional “interceptor” sewer, and is then conveyed to a wastewater treatment plant.

Q 7: What’s included in Phase II?

A: Phase II Water Improvements include a new 3 to 4-MGD elevated storage tank located west of I-35 and north of the proposed SH-45.

Phase II Wastewater Improvements include additional interceptors to provide wastewater service as needed to serve future developments.

Q 8: Where will the water line be located?

A: The water line will be located along Interstate 35 from approximately Slaughter Lane south to FM 1327, east to Bradshaw Road, north to E. Slaughter Lane, east to Thaxton Road, then north to the existing Pilot Knob Pump Station.

Q 9: Where are the main lines with which the interceptor line could connect?

A: The downstream connection point for the future interceptor is at an existing junction box near the confluence of Slaughter and Onion Creeks. The future interceptor will also connect to the Zachary Scott Interceptor near OCPWWTP to divert flows away from the plant. Connections further upstream will be to new developments south of the Onion Creek neighborhood.

Q 10: At what depth is each of those main lines?

A: The downstream connection is at approximate elevation of 518, about 22 feet below ground. The upstream end near the existing treatment plant site is at an approximate elevation of 533, about 33 feet below ground.

Q 11: What alternate routes for the interceptor line are being considered and where are these routes in relation to the Cypress Ridge and Onion Creek Subdivisions?

A: Four alternate routes are being considered. A map of the route alternatives, including proposed locations for geotechnical boring tests can be found by clicking on this link: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/downloads/06102008_North_segment_alternatives.pdf

Q 12: What are the pros and cons for each route that could be considered, including homeowner property and environmental implications?

A: Construction cost and schedule, disturbance to environment, property owner feedback, number of easements to acquire, and long-term maintenance are among the issues to be weighed in selecting the interceptor alignment.

Q 13: What scope of work is planned and what options on that scope are being considered?

A: Tunnel construction is planned; other options for construction are unlikely.

Q 14: At what average depth would the proposed intercept line be placed?

A: Depth will vary from about 60 feet maximum depth to 20 feet depth.

Q 15: Will the depth be the same throughout the length of the intercept line?

A: The line will have a constant grade between shafts.

Q 16: Would lift stations be required?

A: No new lift stations are expected.

Q 17: What tunnel depth would be required to cross Onion Creek? Would the pipe be at the same, a lesser, or a greater depth for its entire length?

A: *A creek crossing will require at least 2 tunnel diameters or about 20 feet of cover between top of the tunnel excavation and the bottom of the creek. The depth of cover for the rest of the tunnel will be significantly greater than 20 feet.*

Q 18: If the final conclusion is to lay the intercept line under the Cypress Ridge or Onion Creek subdivisions, what are the specific aspects of the project and what is estimated time frame for each aspect?

A: *The interceptor is expected to be completely tunneled. Construction is estimated to begin in early 2010.*

Q 19: How will the homeowners' association(s) and any affected homeowners be compensated? How will the compensation be determined and when would it be paid?

A: *Once a final alignment is determined, subterranean easements along that alignment will be acquired. For each easement, an outside appraiser will determine easement cost. The City will review the appraisal, and then make an offer to the property owner. Timing of payment is dependent on the appraisal process.*

Q 20: How soon after laying the intercept line will the Cypress Ridge Homeowners' Association property "be returned to its original condition," which would include, at a minimum, the replacement of all flora and fauna currently situated on the property with reasonable substitutes (i.e., trees of at least the same or greater trunk diameter)?

A: *The Cypress Ridge HOA property will not be affected during tunneling; therefore, no restoration will be required.*

Q 21: Will the homeowners affected by the line being laid and the affected Homeowners' Association(s) be allowed to see and approve plans for the "restitution" of the property to its "original condition" after completion of the intercept line project?

A: *Although tunneling will prevent any disturbance to properties where subterranean easements are needed, we will provide information to the affected property owners.*

Q 22: Where will the new Interceptor line intersect the line coming from the Bradshaw area and how deep will the hole be at that point?

A: *The line will connect to either a junction box or an existing shaft on the south side of Onion Creek at a depth of approximately 30 ft below the ground surface.*

Q 23: What is the expected life span of the Onion Creek WWTP?

A: *Package plant life spans are generally in the 30 to 50 year range. The Onion Creek WWTP could easily exceed this range if maintained and upgraded properly.*

Q 24: What assumptions changed that caused COA to reduce the size of the pipe going into the OCWWTP to 8"?

A: *The capacity of the OCWWTP limits the volume of wastewater that can be treated; additional volume will be routed to the proposed 54" Interceptor, and treated at the South Austin Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.*

Q 25: Do those assumptions cause the OCWWTP to become irrelevant?

A: *No.*

Q 26: If the preferred route of the Intercept line crosses the creek then proceeds north along and under Shinnecock Dr., how many mucking holes will be needed and where?

A: *There will need to be a shaft on the south side of Onion Creek at the south crossing and a shaft on the north side of Onion Creek at the north crossing. All tunnel spoils will be removed from the north (downstream) shaft, which will be accessed via E. Slaughter Lane.*

Q 27: How many survey/test holes will be drilled on Shinnecock Dr. and how deep will they be?

A: *Two geotechnical borings will be drilled along Shinnecock Dr. to a depth of 100 ft. Piezometers for monitoring groundwater levels will be set in these borings.*

Q 28: Since Shinnecock is our only entry, what steps will you take to not block our access?

A: *The drilling will take approximately five days to complete. During the drilling, the equipment will be located on the side of the road so as to allow thru traffic at all times. Accessibility during construction will not be affected since the project will be a tunnel.*

Q 29: What is the engineering schedule?

A: *Preliminary engineering work is currently being performed for all Phase I improvements. Rights of entry have been requested from some property owners so that survey work, environmental assessments, and geotechnical studies can be scheduled. Preliminary engineering work will be completed before URS makes recommendations to AWU on the preferred pipeline alignments. Detailed engineering will be complete by next summer.*

Q 30: When will construction begin?

A: *Construction for Phase I is expected to begin in August of 2009 and be complete by December of 2010. Phase II construction is expected to begin in 2010 and be complete by 2012.*

Q 31: Who will be doing the work?

A: *Due to the large size of the Program, AWU has hired URS Corporation (URS) to manage the Program, and Group Solutions RJW to coordinate and communicate with the public.*

Q 32: How can I find out more information? Is there a project hotline?

A: *The project hotline (512) 314-9000. The Public Involvement Team at Group Solutions RJW will be answering the hotline during normal business hours (8 am - 5 pm) Monday through Friday. Team members will either answer questions directly or relay the question to the appropriate person and call you back promptly with a response. If you call after business hours or on weekends, you may leave a message and your call will be returned on the next business day.*

Q 33: What about a website?

A: *The website address is www.cityofaustin.org/water/si35ww.htm*