



## **River Ridge – Water Line Replacement Planning**

WCID No. 17 staff and engineers have recently completed a review and revision of our waterline replacement plan. We have categorized the replacement needs based on fire flow capacity, the number of homes served, and line maintenance history, including past breaks. Our assessment has identified eight water lines in the River Ridge service area that need replacement due to material deterioration or inadequate fire flow. These lines are among the most problematic in the District and pose a significant risk to your community in that due to the age of the lines and their size they are not capable of providing fully rated fire flow. Replacing these lines will be a funding challenge that needs to be addressed.

The estimated cost to replace these water lines is approximately \$13.6 million plus any necessary costs. To meet this need, the WCID No. 17 Board of Directors has approved an update to the Out of District Fee (ODF). Starting on January 1, 2025, the monthly fee will increase to \$80. Given the total funding required for these improvements, this fee will likely continue to increase in subsequent years, potentially reaching as much as \$320 per month based upon the Engineers estimates for the necessary water line replacements. Three quarters of these funds will be allocated to a reserve for River Ridge waterline improvements, while the remaining quarter will support the District's operational expenses, including personnel, equipment, and supplies to ensure 24-hour emergency and regular services to River Ridge.

A natural question upon learning this is likely to be why is the District passing these costs on to the residents of the River Ridge area. As you may know, the River Ridge ODF was originally created to fund waterline improvements in River Ridge after the community opted not to join the District when we took over the water system serving your area. While this decision spared River Ridge residents from having to pay District taxes, it also placed the financial responsibility for maintaining the local water distribution system on the residents.

We understand that the fee increase may be concerning, but it is crucial to emphasize the serious risk posed by inadequate fire flow in your neighborhood.

WCID No. 17 has identified several options for the River Ridge community to consider:

### **Option 1:**

- River Ridge residents may be able to request annexation into the District by forming a Defined Area. This would allow the District to issue bonds on behalf of the Defined Area (up to the amount approved by voters). This option would create a tax rate specific to River Ridge to fund bond repayment. Additionally, if you should join the District all property owners would be responsible for paying the District's Operations & Maintenance tax rate.
- With these bonds, the District would have immediate access to the necessary funds to proceed with waterline replacements on approximately a 5 – 10-year timeline.

### **Option 2:**

- If River Ridge chooses not to form a Defined Area, WCID No. 17 would have to continue raising the ODF to cover the cost of the necessary water line replacements.



- For Fiscal Year 2025, the fee will increase from \$40 to \$80 per month, with future increases potentially bringing it to approximately \$320 per month. This would allow the waterline replacement project to be completed over approximately a 20-year timeframe.
- This option does not account for rising construction costs over time, which could extend the duration of the fee until all waterlines are replaced.

**Option 3:**

- A combination of the above, where our River Ridge customers partner with the District to seek outside funding from County and/or State sources to assist with waterline replacement costs.

\*Please review the enclosed FAQs and map highlighting the waterlines identified as needing replacement.

We are open to discussing all potential options and strongly encourage residents to participate in shaping the future of River Ridge. We will be reaching out to set up a community Town Hall event where we can discuss this vital issue in more detail.

In the meantime, we look forward to discussing this complex issue with you and working together to identify the best possible path forward. Please take a few moments to review this information and feel free to reach out to us directly to ensure you are included in all future communications on this issue. By emailing the District at [RiverRidgeWaterline@wcid17.org](mailto:RiverRidgeWaterline@wcid17.org) we can ensure you are kept informed as we move forward.

WCID No. 17  
Travis County

