

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

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SUBJECT

Items Relating to Wastewater Lift Station City Code Changes and Amendments to the Wastewater Design Criteria Manual.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. First Reading of Ordinance No. 040, 2026, Amending Sections 26-206, 26-260, and 26-287 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins Regarding Wastewater Lift Stations.

B. First Reading of Ordinance No. 041, 2026, Adopting the Fort Collins Utilities Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual.

The purpose of this item is to adopt wastewater lift station requirements into City Code and readopt the Fort Collins Utilities Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual, including new wastewater lift station design criteria. The proposed updates establish design standards for developer-constructed wastewater lift stations that will be transferred to City ownership and maintenance, ensuring facilities accepted by the City are high quality, efficient, and maintainable. This will enable development in areas currently limited to septic systems and expand the number of customers served by the municipal system. The updated Design Criteria Manual also includes minor revisions and clarifications to existing standards to align with current City codes, industry terminology, and good engineering practices.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinances on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Some areas within the City's wastewater service area cannot be served by traditional gravity systems and require wastewater lift stations to enable development. A wastewater lift station uses pumps to move wastewater from lower elevations to higher elevations, allowing it to continue flowing by gravity to the treatment plant. These facilities typically include a wet well, pumps, controls, pressurized force mains, and backup power to maintain service during outages.

Currently, the City's wastewater collection system operates entirely by gravity and the City does not own or maintain any lift stations. City Code allows lift stations but does not establish detailed design standards for facilities that would ultimately be transferred to City ownership. The proposed amendment requires any

lift station intended for City ownership to be designed and constructed in accordance with new criteria adopted into the Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual. These standards ensure lift stations transferred to the City are high quality, efficient, and maintainable.

Under this approach, developers will be responsible for the full cost of designing and constructing lift stations needed to serve their projects. Upon completion and acceptance, lift stations meeting the City standards will be transferred to the City for ownership, operation, and long-term maintenance. While this will introduce additional operational responsibilities and future maintenance costs for the City, it will enable development in areas of the wastewater district that are currently limited to septic systems and expand the number of customers served by the municipal system. Lift station locations will be identified through wastewater master planning to serve broader areas and minimize the total number of City-owned facilities.

In addition to adding the Wastewater Lift Station Criteria, the updated Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual includes minor revisions, clarifications, and corrections to existing criteria. These updates include terminology and wording adjustments to align with current City codes and industry terminology (for example, changing “single family” to “single unit” to match the Land Use Code and “curb stop” to “control valve” matching current industry terminology). Minor technical clarifications are also included, such as specifying that service connections are not allowed on transmission mains unless approved by Fort Collins Utilities and clarifying valve and service configurations for fire services. These updates are consistent with Municipal Code Section 26-29(b), which authorizes the Utilities Executive Director to adopt minor additions, revisions, and corrections necessary to better conform to good engineering and construction practices, provided they are consistent with existing policies, do not create significant additional costs, and do not materially alter the standard or level of service provided.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Wastewater lift stations involve pressurized, mechanical, and electrical components and therefore require more cost for ongoing maintenance than traditional gravity infrastructure. Although the construction and acceptance of City-owned lift stations will introduce future operational and maintenance responsibilities, City Code already allows lift stations. The proposed design criteria are intended to ensure these facilities are efficient, durable, and maintainable, which will reduce long-term operational costs compared to lift stations constructed without clear standards. Lift stations will also enable development in areas not currently served by gravity systems, expanding the number of utility customers and associated service revenue.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Water Commission provided the following discussion and feedback on this item which are also included the attached meeting minutes:

Commissioners asked whether proposed ordinances account for future capacity needs at wastewater lift stations. Staff confirmed lift stations would be designed to accommodate all developable land within each designated service area. Additional discussion addressed potential future rebate or cost-recovery mechanisms associated with lift station construction. Commissioners also inquired about risks unique to lift stations compared to gravity sewer systems. Staff noted lift stations introduce operational considerations including specialized training requirements, ongoing maintenance needs, and infrastructure lifecycle costs. The city will conduct inspections prior to assuming ownership, consistent with procedures used for other City-managed facilities. Staff reviewed typical infrastructure lifespans, including pumps and force mains, and noted associated maintenance and replacement considerations. Staff also identified additional areas in northwest and northern Fort Collins where lift stations could enable future utility service expansion.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS / LINKS

1. Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual (redline version)
2. Water Commission Meeting Minutes, February 19, 2026
3. Ordinance No. 040, 2026
4. Ordinance No. 041, 2026