

MEMORANDUM


Date: December 1, 2020
To: City Council Members
From: Joseph Helfenberger, City Manager
Re: City Utilities



At the December 7, 2020 City Council meeting, I will have a proposal from Jones Edmunds for a Water Route Feasibility Study to provide potable water from the City Water Plant to a location in the North Florida Mega Industrial Park to be determined by the study. It is critical to do this study before spending a large sum of money on a water main extension that could be over four miles long. If the water line is over-sized there is a high potential for a large amount of stagnant water. If the water line is under-sized, another line could be required in the immediate future. The study will take about three months to do.

Staff from Jones Edmunds will also discuss an overview regarding master planning for the City water, sewer, and natural gas. About 50% of the sewer lines in the system are not yet mapped. Roughly 25% of the water lines are not yet mapped. These steps need to be taken before doing master planning. This process will take more than one year to complete. There are several possible scopes of work regarding the master planning itself. City staff need enough detail to effectively work on the systems. It will be important to schedule out the work and stick to the schedule. This process will be costly, but necessary to prepare for the future utility needs of the City and the County.

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From: Joseph Helfenberger, City Manager 
Re: Utility Expansion in the North Florida Mega Industrial Park

Development and marketing of the North Florida Mega Industrial Park (NFMIP) can provide a significant amount of new jobs, property tax base, and housing for our community. There are several steps that need to be taken to provide utilities to this area. The amount of resources necessary to provide these services necessitates a partnership between the City of Lake City, Columbia County, and Weyerhaeuser (the owner of the land.)

Currently the City provides potable water, sewer, and natural gas to the NFMIP. The water is near capacity and a new water main extension needs to be installed. A water route feasibility study is necessary in order to determine the correct size and location for the extension.

The City has several development agreements to consider in addition to a general development agreement between Weyerhaeuser, Columbia County, and the City.

As I envision the partnership, the City would be expanding the potable water it currently supplies to the NFMIP. The City's consumptive use permit limits the gallons per day of water allowed to be pumped. Currently, the City pumps about 3.6 million gallons of water per day to serve the needs of the City and the County. While the City has the physical ability to pump up to 9 million gallons of water per day, under its consumptive use permit, it is only allowed to pump 4.1 million gallons per day. While the City is doing an alternative water supply analysis in partnership with the Suwannee Rive Water Management District, this will add some additional water allowed to be pumped but not enough to service large industrial water users.

The County has moved in the direction of providing raw water to the NFMIP and is in a better position to do so than the City. The City can assist the County on a temporary basis.

The City can provide an additional 130,000 gallons of sewer collection in the NFMIP but needs an agreement with the County to facilitate repairs along the force main servicing the area. These agreements need to be negotiated and reviewed by legal counsel.

The partnership that the City, County, and Weyerhaeuser forge can service our community with amenities that raise the quality of life for all.