

BEAR LAKE SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT

Summary of Wastewater Impact Fee Facilities Plan

What Is an Impact Fee Facilities Plan?

An impact fee is a one-time charge paid by new development to cover its fair share of the cost of public facilities needed to serve that growth. Under the Utah Impact Fees Act, before the Bear Lake Special Service District (the “District”) may charge a wastewater impact fee, it must adopt an Impact Fee Facilities Plan (“IFFP”). The IFFP identifies the District’s existing level of service, the level of service it plans to provide, any excess capacity in the existing system, the demands new development will place on the system, and the improvements the District will build to meet those demands. The IFFP is the foundation for the Impact Fee Analysis, which calculates the fee itself. Impact fees may be used only for growth-related capital improvements; they may not be used to fix existing deficiencies or to pay for ordinary operation and maintenance, which remain the responsibility of existing users through sewer rates.

About the District

The District provides wastewater collection and treatment along the western and southern shores of Bear Lake in Rich County, Utah, including Garden City. Its main collection line, built in 1984, runs about 7.5 miles from the Utah–Idaho border south to the Sweetwater development, with a south shore system added in 2003. Because much of the area sits below the highway lines, the system relies on ten major lift stations and approximately 94 grinder pump stations. Wastewater is treated in a five-cell, total containment lagoon system of about 49.7 acres. The District serves approximately 2,385 connections, and because of short-term rentals, campgrounds, and recreational visitors, summer flows can reach four times winter flows.

Growth and Future Demand

The plan uses a 30-year planning period (2023–2053) and assumes 2.5% annual growth, which tracks the District’s experience over the last 15 years. On that basis, demand is projected to grow from about 4,874 equivalent residential units today to about 8,956 by 2053, nearly doubling the load on the system. Several existing lines are already near or over capacity, and additional pipes, force mains, lift station pumps, and treatment capacity will be needed as growth continues.

Planned Improvements

The plan recommends a strategy that upsizes portions of the existing collection system and completes a parallel sewer line in Garden City’s planned 300 West corridor, which will carry new growth and relieve the original system. The estimated cost is approximately \$19.8 million in 2023 dollars, including about \$4.9 million for the 300 West corridor and about \$14.9 million for existing system upgrades phased through 2053. On the treatment side, the plan recommends building a new 14-acre lagoon cell before 2029, converting an existing cell to primary treatment before 2031, and moving toward land application of treated wastewater before 2039.

Why It Matters

Adopting the IFFP allows the District to set impact fees that make new development pay its proportionate share of the facilities needed to serve it, rather than shifting those costs to existing ratepayers. The IFFP and Impact Fee Analysis are available for public review, and all interested persons may comment at the public hearing.