

## **Top Things to Remember as You Consider the Wastewater Rate Increase Tonight**

### ***The Need for a Rate Increase:***

The city has identified \$1.5 billion dollars in drainage needs citywide and has the means to allocate only about \$20M annually for capital improvements.

Stormwater infrastructure is costly and \$20M each year buys less and less, as construction and materials costs rise.

The storm drainage rate increase will allow us to:

- address serious flooding and drainage problems that exist across many parts of Denver
- replace and maintain aging infrastructure
- improve the city's water quality
- Fund the Platte to Park Hill project, which focuses on areas east and north of downtown that are most at risk for flooding.
- Tackle a list of 39 other storm drainage projects currently in the 6-year plan (see attached)

Please recall combined Denver storm and sanitary sewer charges are below average in the metro area and below what many other metro area communities currently pay including Boulder, Longmont, Fort Collins, Parker, and Colorado Springs.

If the rate increase is not passed, the future cost to maintain and rehabilitate the aging infrastructure will increase exponentially and the reliability of this system will decrease in the same proportion.

### ***About the Platte to Park Hill Program***

The Platte to Park Hill projects will make immediate drainage improvements in the Montclair and Park Hill basins and protect neighborhoods most at risk for flooding in Denver. These basins are the highest priority because these basins have no open waterways and a limited storm drainage system to slow and manage stormwater.

The Platte to Park Hill projects represent a little over \$5 of the \$23 yearly rate increase for the average residential customer.

If a rate increase is not passed, residents in neighborhoods east and north of town will remain at risk for catastrophic flood damage in a significant storm event.

### ***Other Benefits of the Platte to Park Hill Program***

Redesigning the existing Globeville Landing Park, while adding about a half an acre of new parkland and new park amenities.

Reducing flood risk with a mile-long open channel along 39th Avenue between Franklin and Steele streets and adding new recreational open space with a multi-use trail.

Thoughtful integration of water detention into the landscape of City Park Golf Course, while making the design of City Park Golf Course even more enjoyable for golfers and the community.

### ***How about sanitary system rates and improvements?***

The rate increase will provide \$8 million dollars a year to upgrade the city's sanitary sewer system

The increase will help fund needed improvements and upgrades citywide at a time when our population is growing by roughly 1,500 people a month.

The cost to maintain and upgrade the pipes is becoming more and more expensive, diverting resources from other needs. In areas of the city with rapid changes, the size of our pipes are not capable of carrying the new demand.

In some areas, Denver's sanitary sewer is seeping into the storm sewer, thus contaminating our waterways.

### ***What about Globeville***

The Platte to Park Hill program will not impact Globeville.

The potential for flooding in Globeville comes from 2 sources: 1) river overtopping the levee and 2) local drainage issues

The Urban Drainage & Flood Control District and the Corps of Engineers are currently investigating the river over-topping issue. The solution will be in the millions of dollars

Local drainage improvements at a cost of \$62 million (2013 \$\$) are recommended in the 2014 Storm Drainage Master Plan.

The 2014 Storm Drainage Master Plan identified one Significant Flooding Location (43<sup>rd</sup> & Sherman) in the Globeville Neighborhood which can be addressed with Project 0059-01-J for \$7M (2013 \$\$). This can be done in phases with the Neighborhood Needs funding.

### ***Responses to Recent Statements Made by the Public:***

**Statement:** the Annual Storm Drainage Service Charge will be increased after Jan. 1, 2021, in perpetuity, without a vote by City Council

**Response - False:** Per City Ordinance, increases to the annual storm and sanitary service charge above and beyond Consumer Price Index (CPI) requires a City Council approval.

**Statement:** The P2PH project, in contrast to the City's representations and photos, will provide little to no flood benefit to the majority of Denver residents who are paying for it, including neighborhoods located within the Montclair and Park Hill basins.

**Response- False.** P2P is the start to a necessary backbone drainage system for Montclair and a continuation of the backbone system for Park Hill that began in the early 2000's. For Montclair specifically, P2P will have significant immediate benefit to hundreds of properties north of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The city recognizes that P2P is not the full solution for Montclair, and even with CPGC detention, more improvements south of the 39<sup>th</sup> Ave channel will still be needed to fully protect the residents in Cole, Clayton, Skyland & Whittier, however P2P is a big first step in creating a reliable system.

**Statement:** the P2PH project did not exist in Denver's 2014 Storm Drainage Master Plan and proceeding with this project will delay other fixes identified in the plan.

**Response:** The master plan is a high level planning tool, not a design document. Justification for P2Ps enlarged backbone drainage systems is based upon engineering analysis (defines the problem) and the corresponding system size that would be needed to address the potential flood risk (defines the solution).

The statement that "proceeding with this project will delay other fixes identified in the plan" is false. The city continually assesses needs based upon a variety of technical and social criteria to create a citywide storm capital program that balances addressing both large projects with small projects, neighborhood needs with priority basin needs, and water quality.