



# City of Homer

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## Public Works

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## Memorandum 20-158

TO: Mayor Castner and City Council  
THROUGH: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
FROM: Janette Keiser, Director of Public Works  
DATE: September 23, 2020  
SUBJECT: Tasmania Court Special Assessment District – for Sewer

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**Issue:** The City Council is expected to authorize the Tasmania Court Water Improvement Special Assessment District to provide the neighborhood with City water. This neighborhood is not currently served by City sewer. We propose the Council initiate a Special Assessment District for the purpose of extending City sewer service to this neighborhood in conjunction with the project to extend City water service.

### **Background:**

The properties involved in the Tasmania Court Special Assessment District currently rely on on-site sewage disposal systems. These systems must be permitted by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation when they are installed. At one time, this agency conducted regular inspections of such systems. However, due to budget cutbacks, this is no longer the case. On-site septic systems are challenging in Homer because of bad soils, high ground water and copious quantities of surface water from rainfall, open springs and storm water runoff. We know at least one property owner in the Tasmania Court neighborhood had to replace their septic leach field in the past year, at the cost of about \$11,000. Plus, people connected to City water usually use more water than those who rely on hauled water; typical household water use for City water is 150 gallons per day, instead of 25 or fewer gallons per day for households using hauled water. It is reasonable to expect that access to City water will exacerbate the challenges related to septic systems in the neighborhood and the City has little means to address this.

A City sewer main is relatively close. Our estimated costs to install a sewer line are just slightly higher than the costs of the proposed water line. Certainly, installing the two lines at the same time would achieve some economies of scale. The City Code authorizes the Council to initiate the formation of a Special Assessment District for the purposes of extending the sewer line. Once the process is started, we will investigate the engineering, estimate the costs and talk with the property owners about the concept of a sewer project. This would be done over the winter, as the process of designing and planning for the water line takes place. Then, if the sewer element goes forward, the two utilities, water and sewer, can be extended at the same time.

**Action Recommended:**

That the City Council pass the proposed resolution initiating the Special Assessment District process for the Tasmania Court neighborhood for the purpose of extending City sewer service to the Tasmania Court neighborhood.