



Devils Lake Water Improvement District

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January 20, 2011

Dear Mayor Anderson and City Councilors:

I am writing you in support of a recent request made to the City of Lincoln City by a group of its citizens to form a Local Improvement District (LID) on the west side of Devils Lake. This LID would provide for the development of an alternative sewer system and pave existing unimproved road surfaces in a neighborhood near Regatta Grounds. As I see this project there are many environmental, social, and economic benefits which warrant its approval, and I urge the City Council to approve their request helping move this worthy project forward.

The project calls for the development of a relatively inexpensive, DEQ approved technology for sewerage areas traditionally difficult to serve by gravity. The pressurized, grinder pump based system that is proposed mechanically exports solid and liquid wastes from what is otherwise a traditional septic tank. The drainfields of an existing septic system would then be taken out of service as the wastes would be pumped to a pressurized collection line. Nutrient rich waters thus would no longer flow towards the lake or into the groundwater, but would be treated effectively at Lincoln City's state-of-the-art tertiary waste water treatment facility on Schooner Creek. This is a real opportunity for nutrient abatement in the watershed, nutrients that lead to cyanobacteria blooms and nuisance aquatic vegetation. In fact this one project, which could be replicated in similar enclaves around the lake, would eventually replace 1 in 14 septic systems in the watershed.

Another benefit of this proposal is the step-wise approach for sewer hook up. In the proposal, all the property owners would pay for their share of the main sewer line, but would electively connect to that main line at a time that fits their individual budgets, requirements, and desires. This would allow an individual with a recently improved septic system to make full use of their investment through its useful life, prior to paying for a service connection to the main sewer line. This makes the project more affordable and sensible for those that ultimately pay for the system, the property owners in the LID.



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Lastly, the 16' wide road improvements proposed to be built without curbs, gutters and storm drains are themselves another type of LID. The acronym, LID, also stands for Low Impact Development, which as a philosophy strategizes development to have its least impact on the environment. Reducing the paved portion of the road from the zoning prescribed 40' to 16' will provide a 60% reduction in impervious surface over traditional development. This will reduce the amount of stormwater, which itself is the number one pollutant of America's waterways. Not having curbs and gutters provides another benefit. Traditional development collects and pipes stormwater concentrating flows and pollutants. These traditional systems rarely provide any water treatment before entering receiving waters. On the contrary, using natural swales and vegetated ditches as the conveyance system for the water provides significant treatment as water infiltrates, nutrients are utilized by plants, and the runoff is filtered of particulates.

Overall this project simply makes sense. Property owners with aging septic systems are provided a low cost alternative to traditional sewer, those with functioning systems have the infrastructure readily available at the street when their systems reach their useful life, and the street improvements are designed to reduce stormwater. Additionally this project has wide support from the property owners which ultimately will make it a success. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this progressively designed Local Improvement District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Paul Robertson, MSc. Environmental Diagnosis
Lake Manager