

**From:** [Merlin Pfannkuch](#)  
**To:** [City Council and Mayor](#)  
**Cc:** [Teresa Albertson](#); [Phillip Sitter](#)  
**Subject:** Request to continue hearing on Prairie View Industrial Center connection fee district at Jan. 31 meeting  
**Date:** Monday, January 30, 2023 1:13:57 PM

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Mayor Haila and members of the Ames City Council:

Please continue the hearing on the Prairie View Industrial Center water and sanitary sewer connection fee district UNTIL staff develops and puts in writing some better estimate of just what this infrastructure will cost us taxpayers.

I have mostly been upset from Day 1 on how this project has been handled under the radar. First, council member Gartin adds (or sneaks into to be less generous) this project into the capital improvements plan at the last minute several years ago -- after the public comment period on the CIP was closed. He even later acknowledged in public that maybe this was not a good idea.

With COVID-19, higher cost estimates, possibility of federal funding, etc. this project has been complicated all along.

Now we have staff coming up with some connection fee charges based on what seems to be a totally inadequate way to determine what this infrastructure is costing us taxpayers. Furthermore, staff is saying the connection fee charges should be based on the local costs for adding this infrastructure. Where exactly did this idea come from? The July 18, 2018 council minutes say the council voted "to direct staff to establish an assessment district along this corridor so that any new industries locating there would have to pay a hook-up fee to receive water or sanitary sewer service." There is no mention of recovering local costs only.

It looks like Schainker and staff are viewing this issue to minimize what any industrial (or business) user would have to pay for this connection fee. Is this what council wants?

The per acre connection fee charge is based on that all of the some 1,221 acres in this district eventually pays this connection fee. That is highly unrealistic. Also, no mention of who pays (or when) for the rural water buyout fee of \$2,671 per acre is made in the council action form for Dec. 13, 2022.

So it seems that we have a very incomplete picture of the costs to us taxpayers for these improvements. I think you should ask Schainker to explain why staff is presenting such an incomplete picture.

As I recall, total costs for this project likely will be in the neighborhood of \$9 million. Roughly \$3 million are from federal pandemic funds. Could this \$3 million have been used instead to help finance our indoor aquatic center? I frankly don't know, but if they could have been that would have been a way to lessen costs for us taxpayers for the indoor aquatic center.

In sum, we have been presented with an inadequate picture of the actual costs to us taxpayers for this infrastructure. Surely we can do better. Please table this hearing UNTIL staff develops in writing a much clearer picture of costs to us taxpayers.

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P.S. My health will preclude my attending the Jan. 31 meeting to speak. Also, please forgive me for any

fact errors herein -- my health is such that I cannot spend more time on reviewing this situation.