



Vernon System—Water Service: Frequently Asked Questions

VERNON SYSTEM: WATER IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Dubuque (City) is acquiring the Vernon water system from Central Iowa Water Association (CIWA). Central Iowa Water Association will assign its Vernon water service agreements with all Vernon system customers to the City of Dubuque. The existing Vernon system will be connected directly to the City's municipal water system on or before December 31, 2017.

What happens when the City acquires the Vernon system?

The City's Water Department will own, operate, and maintain the private water system. The City will be responsible for the maintenance, repair, and operation of the water system in compliance with all applicable county, state, and federal requirements.

When will this transfer happen?

The City will provide water service to all Vernon system customers through the existing Vernon water system beginning December 19, 2016 as part of its acquisition of the Vernon system.

The City of Dubuque will connect the Vernon water system to the City's municipal water system on or before December 31, 2017.

What happens then?

The only change for property owners is the improved water service provided by the City of Dubuque. Septic systems remain private. All other service costs remain the same. Property taxes remain the same. Public safety services continue to be provided by the Dubuque County Sheriff's Department and the Epworth Fire Department. Refuse collection and snow removal remain private services. Street maintenance and repair remain private expenses. The City of Dubuque will provide no other services to Vernon customers through this transaction, nor will it have any other presence in the Vernon customer area through this transaction.

What will I pay for City water?

Property owners will pay 1.5 times the standard rate charged to residential water customers in the city of Dubuque. The typical Dubuque household of four uses 6,000 gallons of water per month, and the average monthly water bill is \$29.53. The service fee at 1.5 times the standard rate equates to \$44.30 per month for 6,000 gallons of water. These numbers reflect the current fiscal year 2017 water rates.

After the Vernon system is connected to the City's water system, property owners will be billed 1.5 times the standard city water rate for actual water usage.

The City will send its first water bill on or around January 9, 2017. This bill will reflect the flat rate of \$44.30 mentioned above. The City anticipates that residents in the current Vernon customer area will be billed at this flat rate of \$44.30 for the bills received in January 2017, February 2017, March 2017, and April 2017. During this time, the City, through licensed plumbers, will install water meters for customers located within the current Vernon customer area. The City expects this installation to be complete by April 2017.

If the meter installation is completed on time, bills received in mid-May 2017 will reflect the actual water usage for residents in the current Vernon customer area.

Do I have to sign a pre-annexation agreement to receive City water?

No, property owners in the existing Vernon customer area do not need to sign pre-annexation agreements to receive City water. The City presently has no plans to annex the property located in the Vernon customer area. This transaction is a water system purchase only. The agreement between the City and CIWA states:

Unless the customers described herein, or their successors in interest, voluntarily sign a petition for annexation, the present Dubuque City Council agrees that it will not attempt to annex such customers prior to January 1, 2018. Dubuque does not have any present plan or intention to annex the property owned by customers described herein. The present Dubuque City Council states as a matter of policy, and in a good faith effort to resolve pending litigation regarding such customers, that the City of Dubuque should not annex such customers via either an involuntary or 80/20 annexation proceeding.

If the city council of the City of Dubuque changes its policy, CIWA would have no right to claim the City breached this agreement.

Do I need a City water meter?

Yes, the City will install, or contract licensed plumbers to install, water meters on Vernon customers' internal plumbing. The one-inch diameter or smaller water meters (one per service line) will be installed at no expense to the property owners located within the current Vernon customer area.

Will I have a water connection fee to connect to City water?

No, property owners located in the existing Vernon customer area will not pay water connection fees to connect to City water.

Who maintains the water service lines?

The City Water Department will maintain the public water mains (typically located in the street). For the existing Vernon customer area, the City will also maintain the water service line from the public water main up to and including the control valve (stop box). Property owners maintain the private water service lines (the pipe starting at the control valve (stop box) to a house or building) servicing their property.

Control Valve (stop box) and Valve Boxes:

The covers of stop boxes and valve boxes must be the same height as the sidewalk or the surrounding ground. While the City operates and maintains the stop boxes, property owners must ensure that stop boxes are readily accessible at all times.

Maintenance of Control Valve (stop box) by Property Owner:

The control valve (stop box) must be in good condition and ready for use at all times. If a property owner does not maintain the stop box in proper condition, if the stop box fills up with debris, or if the control valve (stop box) needs repair at any time, the City will clean or repair the control valve (stop box) without giving notice to the property owner. The City's cleaning and repair exceed routine operation and maintenance, and the cost will be billed to the property owner. If the property owner refuses to pay those costs, water service may be turned off until payment is made.

Installation and Maintenance at Expense of Property Owner:

All service connections from the control valve (stop box) to a house or building are installed and maintained at the expense of the property owners served by those connections.

What is the quality of City water?

The Water Department is dedicated to producing and delivering drinking water that complies with all state and federal drinking water standards. As regulations and drinking water standards change, Dubuque continually strives to adopt new and better methods of delivering the best quality drinking water. Dubuque commits to incorporate these changes system-wide in an expeditious and cost-effective manner.

The Eagle Point Water Treatment Plant is supplied by five shallow and four deep wells and does not use water from the Mississippi River. The Water Department delivers high-quality water that complies with all standards set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Over 200 tests a day are performed by water treatment plant operators.

In addition to these tests, the Dubuque Water & Resource Recovery Center Laboratory performs over 60 bacteriological analyses of City drinking water on a monthly basis. Other compliance-related testing is performed by the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory and Keystone Laboratories. All these analytical measures ensure that the City water reaching your home is safe to drink.

Do I need a water softener?

Dubuque water customers do not need to soften their water. The Eagle Point Water Treatment Plant is a lime softening plant. Starting with groundwater that is virtually free of sediment, the lime softening process reduces the total hardness from about 280 mg/L to 100 mg/L. The estimated savings on softening costs for a recipient of Dubuque water is \$17.60 per month, or \$211.20 per year, including electricity and amortization costs of the softening unit.

For more information on City water services, call (563) 589-4291 or visit www.cityofdubuque.org/Water