

Hamilton County Regional Utility District (HCRUD)

Timeline of Key Events

- **August 3, 2022:** Hamilton County submitted a petition to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to create a regional utility district.
- **February 27, 2023:** IDEM approved the petition, officially creating the Hamilton County Regional Utility District (HCRUD)
- **August 28, 2023:** The HCRUD Board of Trustees (who are also the County Commissioners) informed IDEM that the HCRUD district has been expanded. As per IC 13-26-8-1 and 13-26-8-2, this process is allowed.
- **October 5, 2023:** A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the infrastructure at Bakers Corner.
- **October 23, 2023:** Commissioners petitioned the HCRUD Board to expand the district to include Strawtown Koteewi Park, White River Campground, and Lafayette Trace Park.

Governance

- **Board Composition:** The HCRUD is governed by a three-member Board of Trustees, all of whom are the current County Commissioners.

Strategic Importance

- **Indiana National Guard Armory** is being built at 276th street, and needs water and sewer. This is one of the compelling reasons put forth to create the District.
- **Commercial and residential growth.** Without the District, commercial and residential growth would be hindered in rural Hamilton County. This was another leading factor as to the creation of the District.

Property Owner Impact

- **Mandatory Connections.** By State Statute, all property owners will be required to connect to the water and sewer system as it is built out. IC 13-26-5-2(8) is the relevant statute pertaining to this.

- **Exemptions.** As per IC 13-26-5-2.5, A property owner can request exemption. This is a 10-year exemption, with eligibility to apply for 2 additional 5-year exemptions. From the statute: “The property owner, at the property owner's own expense, obtains a written determination from the local health department or the department's designee that the septic tank soil absorption system is not failing. The local health department or the department's designee shall provide the owner with a written determination not later than sixty (60) days after receipt of the owner's request. If the local health department or the department's designee fails to provide a written determination within the time established in this subdivision, the owner, at the owner's expense, may obtain a written determination from a qualified inspector. If the local health department or the department's designee determines that a septic tank soil absorption system is failing, the property owner may appeal the determination to the board of the local health department. The decision of the board is final and binding.”
- **Responsible Party.** All costs to connect to the District infrastructure (water and sewer lines) are the responsibility of the property owner. The District has stated that there will be no connection fee to hook up within a certain time period. This connection fee is only for where the pipes hook into the infrastructure. All costs related to getting pipes from a house to the water/sewer lines are the responsibility of the homeowner.
- **Decommissioned Septic System Responsibility.** When a septic system is taken out of use, it is the homeowner’s responsibility to make the system unusable. This means digging it up or filling the tank with sand.
- **Eminent Domain.** As per IC 13-26-5-6 the Board can use eminent domain to take property within the district. “Sec. 6. (a) Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the board may condemn for the use of the district public or private land, easements, rights, rights-of-way, franchises, or other property within or outside the district required by the district for the accomplishment of the district's purposes according to the statutory procedure for the appropriation of land or other property taken by an eligible entity.”.

Funding and Support

- At the groundbreaking of the wastewater plant, it was revealed that \$10m was taken out of the budget for HCRUD, and on the final day of legislative session(2023) Lt. Gov. Crouch worked to get that funding put back into the budget. \$40m was sourced from ARPA federal funds.