



2022 IGA REFERENDUM FAQs



What will appear on the ballot?

The formal resolution that will appear on the November 8 ballot is as follows:

“Shall the Village of Germantown provide water and sanitary sewer service for a fee and on an ongoing basis to customers in a portion of the Village of Richfield pursuant to the terms of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Village of Richfield and the Village of Germantown?”



Why is this issue being put to a referendum vote?

The Germantown Village Board of Trustees understands that providing water and sewer services to Richfield for a fee is a topic of interest to Germantown residents. As a result, the Village Board is seeking input from voters and has committed to following the guidance of the community.

The Germantown Village Board could not reach consensus on this issue and deemed it important enough for all residents to decide.



What will it mean if a majority of voters vote “yes?”

A “yes” vote would result in the execution of the negotiated Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) so that Germantown would provide water and sanitary sewer service for a fee and on an ongoing basis to customers in the “Northeast Corridor” of the Village of Richfield.



What will it mean if a majority of voters vote “no?”

A “no” vote would mean that the negotiated Intergovernmental Agreement would not go into effect and Germantown would not provide water and sewer service to Richfield.



Didn't the Village Board already pass an Intergovernmental Agreement with Richfield on this topic?

The Germantown Village Board of Trustees voted to place a referendum question on the November 8 ballot asking voters whether the Village should enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Village of Richfield to provide water and sanitary sewer service for a fee to customers in a portion of Richfield located between Interstate 41, Holy Hill Road, Highway 175 and Pleasant Hill Road.

The Germantown Village Board could not reach consensus on this issue and deemed it important enough for all residents to decide if the Village should provide water and sewer services, for a fee, on an ongoing basis to allow the Village of Richfield to add development along the interstate corridor.

Terms of the IGA dictate that the Village of Richfield would be responsible for bearing all costs associated with the expansion of service to customers in Richfield, require Richfield to construct infrastructure in accordance with Germantown specifications and provide protections against future encroachment on Germantown water and sewer services. The IGA also sets the rates for potential future Richfield customers, with sewer rates set 20% higher than the rates charged to Germantown ratepayers and water service rates, which are regulated by the Public Service Commission, set at the same rate as Germantown ratepayers.

The IGA is available in its entirety at the Village Clerk's office or online at www.germantownwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6376/Germantown-Richfield-Utility-Service-IGA-Clean-for-Approvals-220317?bidId=.

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Why is Richfield seeking to access water and sanitary services from the Village of Germantown?

Based on the Village of Richfield's analysis of alternatives, service from the Village of Germantown is the most cost-effective option to provide sewer and water to the Northeast Corridor of Richfield.



How long would this agreement last? Is there a sunset on this referendum?

There is no sunset on this agreement. The negotiated IGA states that Germantown would provide, for a fee, water and sewer service to the "Northeast Corridor" of the Village of Richfield on an ongoing basis.



What would this cost the Village of Germantown?

All infrastructure costs to expand services into the portion of Richfield would be paid by the Village of Richfield, in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement conditionally approved in May 2022. Costs to construct infrastructure in Germantown to provide those services would also be paid for by Richfield.

Once infrastructure is in place, Germantown would provide water and sanitary sewer services to Richfield for a fee. Germantown will charge a 20% premium on sewer and the same rate for water service that is charged to Germantown businesses and residents.



How would Village of Germantown ratepayers be impacted if this does pass?

Village of Germantown Water and Sewer Utilities customers would not see any change in their rates at this time. In the future, paying customers from Richfield would share in the funding of ongoing utility maintenance and other costs.

While there will be rate increases in the future, the impact of those increases may be reduced if the Utilities' customer base is expanded.



How would Village of Germantown ratepayers be impacted if this doesn't pass?

Village of Germantown Water and Sewer Utilities customers would not see any change in their rates at this time. In the future, no Richfield customers would share in the funding of ongoing utility maintenance and other costs.



Will the Village of Richfield fund maintenance of the Utilities, or will those costs fall on Germantown taxpayers in the future?

The cost to maintain the Germantown Water and Sewer Utilities is funded by rates charged for service. The IGA sets the rates for potential future Richfield customers, with sewer rates set 20% higher than the rates charged to Germantown ratepayers and water service rates, which are regulated by the Public Service Commission, set at the same rate as Germantown ratepayers.



How would adding customers in a portion of Richfield impact local water supply in Germantown? Water quality?

Studies have indicated that providing water and sanitary sewer services to the Northeast Corridor of Richfield would not impact water supply or quality in the Village of Germantown.

The Germantown well that would supply water to that portion of Richfield is equipped to monitor the aquifer elevation continuously, and will provide constant readings about the supply and quality of water available.

As an additional protection for Germantown residents, the IGA would require that Richfield place \$50,000 in the Germantown residential well protection fund to fund any work necessary if wells within one-half (0.5) mile of Germantown well number 12 experience lowered water levels necessitating the deepening or replacement of the well and/or pump.

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Q

Does the Germantown Sewer Utility have the capacity to hold and treat additional volume from this portion of Richfield? Would expansions in infrastructure be necessary?

The Utility has determined that it has the capacity to provide service to Richfield's Northeast Corridor without any negative impacts to Germantown or its projected future growth, based on the planned service of Richfield's Northeast Corridor by a sewer line extended from the intersection of Freistadt and Goldendale Roads. The IGA includes limits on the amount of sewer flow from Richfield to preserve Germantown capacity.

Q

Is there any other way Richfield could gain access to municipal water and sanitary sewer services for its Northeast Corridor that doesn't involve the Village of Germantown?

Yes. The Village of Richfield has had conversations with the Village of Jackson for those services, and could also build its own well. The aquifer supplying water in Germantown also supplies water to Jackson, Menomonee Falls, and other local communities.

Q

How would potential increased development adjacent to Germantown impact the Village economically?

Providing water and sewer service to Richfield's Northeast Corridor for a fee is anticipated to drive additional development along the I-41 corridor.

Q

What kind of development is Richfield considering for which water and sanitary sewer services are necessary? Does Germantown have any input about the kind of development that would occur?

Potential development in the Northeast Corridor of the Village of Richfield may include office, light industrial, logistics and warehousing development. Any future development proposals in this portion of Richfield would be determined solely by the Village of Richfield.

Q

Is there any precedent for Germantown collaborating on utilities with other communities?

Germantown and Richfield have previously collaborated on utility service. The communities entered into a cost-sharing agreement in Fall 2021 to fund a height extension on the Germantown water tower along Rockfield Road, enabling the tower to provide sufficient water pressure to potential future extensions of service in Richfield's Northeast Corridor.

More than 10 years ago, the Village of Germantown entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Menomonee Falls to provide water and sewer utilities service to a development along County Line Road because Menomonee Falls had not extended its water service to that development.

Q

When would utility work begin? How long would it take?

If the referendum passes, the IGA would go into effect and the permitting process could start immediately. Construction of water and sewer connections would start in late 2022 or early 2023, and be completed in late 2023.

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I live in Germantown but I am not on Germantown water. Why don't I have access to these services?

The Germantown Water and Sewer Utilities service areas are determined by the Village's comprehensive plan, and installation of water infrastructures is always dependent on available funding and need. The Village does not typically require residents to connect to the Germantown system, and it can be cost prohibitive to extend water and sewer service to a single or small number of residents.

Providing service to a portion of Richfield for a fee may create future benefits to Germantown community members who are not current Utility customers. If the referendum passes, Germantown residents and businesses on Holy Hill and Rockfield Roads west of Gateway Crossing would gain access to sewer and water service through new infrastructure paid for by the Village of Richfield, leaving more money in the Sewer and Water Utilities available for other expansions in Germantown.



When and where do I vote?

Germantown voters can cast their vote one of three ways: through absentee mail-in ballots, early in-person voting at the Germantown Village Clerk's office, or in-person voting on election day, November 8, 2022.

Voters can request a mailed absentee ballot from the Village Clerk's office. The application must be received by the Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 3.

In-person early voting will take place Oct. 25–Oct. 28 from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Oct. 31–Nov. 3 from 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Nov. 4 from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. On November 8, all polling places will open at 7:00 a.m. and will close at 8:00 p.m. Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID in order to vote.

Additional voting information, including about polling places and requesting an absentee ballot, can be found on the Village's website at <https://www.germantownwi.gov/99/Elections-Voting-Information> and myvote.wi.gov.

