

History of the “Persigo” Sewer System and the 201 Sewer Service Area Boundary 201 Sewer Service Area By Greg Trainor

The 201 Sewer Service Area is a boundary that is derived from the original engineering estimates of what area a new wastewater plant could/would serve.

The term “201” comes from Section 201 of the 1972 amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (PL 92-500); better known as the “Clean Water Act.” The stated goal of the Act was to insure the waters of the United States would be “fishable and swimmable” by 1983 through the control of all point and non-point sources of water pollution.

This effort in the Grand Valley was started in 1975 by the development of a Section 208 facilities plan (after Section 208 of the Clean Water Act) which looked at solving water pollution problems through integrated, area-wide waste treatment facilities. Development of an area-wide waste treatment plan was a precondition to the Grand Valley receiving Federal grants that would pay for 75% of wastewater facilities.

From the area-wide 208 facility plan, detailed engineering estimates were developed for the area that a new regional treatment plant would serve. This planning effort became known as the 201 Plan. It was directed by a committee of community members comprised of the City, Mesa County, area businesses, the development community, the State Health Department, etc. An area boundary was drawn to incorporate all developable areas within the central part of the Grand Valley. From this geographic area, estimates of sewage flow were made based on existing zoning, existing development on septic systems, and existing development on small, package treatment plants. From this estimated flow, the size, dimension, location, and capacity of the treatment plant was determined. This was to become the Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant. The name “Persigo” comes from the wash or arroyo to which the effluent from the wastewater treatment plant discharges; that is, Persigo Wash.

Persigo Board

In the late 1970s, it was recognized that development was and would continue to occur not only within the City of Grand Junction but also outside of the City. In fact, there were numerous small, packaged treatment plants that had been constructed by developers to serve their developments outside of the corporate limits of the City of Grand Junction.

The City of Grand Junction, at the time, was considering moving and expanding its West-Side Treatment Plant. The City had applied for a 75% Federal grant under the Clean Water Act to pay for these plant upgrades. It was determined, however, to regionalize the treatment plant. The City would give up its place in line for the Federal money in favor of Mesa County. In 1980, an agreement was reached between the City and the County which provided for joint ownership of the Valley-wide sewer system, management of the system by the City because of its historical sewer experiences, common decision making as to budgets, rates and fees, and capital improvements. The City would continue to require that anyone wishing to connect to the sewer system would be annexed by the City of Grand Junction.

Under the agreement, the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners would meet once per year to review the budget, set rates, and to examine any amendments to the 201 sewer service boundary. This is usually done in July, but for various reasons, this date has fluctuated from time to time. The Persigo Board has also met more than once during the year to accommodate changing conditions within the sewer system.

The 1980 agreement was subsequently replaced by a new agreement, dated October 13, 1998. This is known as the "Persigo Agreement." It changed numerous provisions of the 1980 agreement, including the provisions for automatic annexation by the City in exchange for sewer service.

201 Sewer Service Area Boundary Amendments

Modifications to the 201 Sewer Service Area Boundary are carefully considered. To enlarge the boundary would result in some increase of the number of potential customers. This increase would use up the capacity of the treatment facility and require enlargement of the plant sooner than originally planned.

Modifications to the 201 sewer service require that new flow estimates be made, that existing collections system systems be examined, and how new areas would be served based on the topography of the amended area. Of critical concern is whether new development is occurring at the same densities as anticipated under the zoning at the time the original 201 plan was developed. To date, evidence shows that, for the most part, new development is occurring at lower densities than the original zoning that existed in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

2005 Persigo Board Meeting and 201 Boundary Changes

The City Council and the Board of County Commissioners meet annually to discuss boundary changes. This annual meeting of the Persigo Board includes, as part of its charge, the review of requests for additions and deletions to the 201 Sewer Service Area Boundary.

In 2005, for example, because of the impact of extending sewer into the area on the North Central Plan, the Persigo Board proposed to table action on the inclusion requests for six months allowing for an *ad hoc* committee of the Persigo Board to review the requests and consider what recommendation could be made. The Ad Hoc Committee conducted two open houses in the area to give an opportunity to property owners to comment on the inclusion requests. In March of 2006, formal changes were made to the 201 Boundary north of I-70.