

Town of Chilhowie

Fire Hydrant Replacement Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Fire Hydrant Replacement Project?

The Fire Hydrant Replacement Project is multi-year effort to repair, replace and add fire hydrants to the Town of Chilhowie water system.

2. Why is this project necessary?

Many of the fire hydrants on the Town water system are getting old and are in need of repairs or replacement. Typically, the useable life of a fire hydrant is around 50 years and several hydrants on the system exceed that age.

Having a reliable system of fire hydrants is vital to an organized fire protection system. Access to fire hydrants reduces insurance rates for residential and commercial properties.

3. How long will the total project take to complete?

Currently, the project is expected to be completed over a period of years. Spreading the work out over a longer period of time helps keep the annual costs low and allows for a continual evaluation of the value of the project.

4. What will the \$1.00 be used for?

Funds derived from the \$1.00 fee will only be used to purchase materials such as the fire hydrant, the 6" valve and associated fittings necessary for the installation. It is estimated that each fire hydrant installation will cost around \$2,500.00. All labor for the project will be provided by the Town of Chilhowie Public Works Department.

5. How did you decide where the fire hydrants would be located, and in which order they would be replaced?

A careful study was undertaken to determine the areas where improvements could be made. In many cases, existing fire hydrants are not in the most optimum location for use by the fire department. This project will eventually address every fire hydrant on the Town system.

Our priorities included:

1. Removal of fire hydrants on old 4" water lines which are not recognized by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).
2. Removal of fire hydrants that were placed out-of-service when new fire hydrants were installed in the same general location.
3. Replacement of fire hydrants approaching or exceeding 50 years old.
4. Replacement and/or relocation of fire hydrants serving large numbers of structures.

6. Where is the work taking place?

Work will be divided equally each year between inside the Town of Chilhowie and the area of Smyth County served by the Town of Chilhowie water system.

7. If I have an old fire hydrant in my neighborhood, does this mean that it doesn't work?

No. All fire hydrants owned by the Town of Chilhowie are maintained in a state of high readiness at all times. Any deficiencies found are corrected immediately. This project simply addresses the ongoing need to maintain the fire hydrants on the system.

8. What if I don't have a fire hydrant in front of my house, will I still benefit?

Yes. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) will typically provide you a better homeowners insurance rate if your home is located within 5 miles of the fire station and within 1,000' of a fire hydrant. In many cases, the rate reduction can be significant.

Even areas not served by fire hydrants within 1,000 feet of a structure benefit – many areas of our district do not have hydrants close enough to lay hose to your house. In those areas, we rely on tankers to haul water to the scene. Having additional, well placed fire hydrants shortens the distance the tanker must haul water.

9. Does the fire hydrant have to be in my yard for me to benefit?

No. You will receive insurance credit as long as the fire hydrant is within 1,000' of your home.

The fire department can help you with this, see below.

10. Is the plan available so I can see when my fire hydrant will be replaced?

Yes. A copy of the plan is available in the Town Hall and the fire department.

It is important to note that modifications will be made to the plan. If funds are available, fire hydrant replacements can move up on the list.

11. Can I talk to someone about this project or my homeowner's insurance policy?

Yes. We will be happy to talk with you about this project. You can contact the Town of Chilhowie Fire & EMS Department by calling (276) 646-3131 or by emailing us at chilhowiefire@gmail.com

We are also available to help you review your current homeowner's insurance policy to determine if you are receiving credit for our current Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of a 3/3X. This places the Town of Chilhowie Fire & EMS Department in the top 12% of fire departments nationwide and in the top 7% of fire departments in Virginia.

If you are unsure whether or not you have a fire hydrant within 1,000' of your house, you can contact us, and we will determine the distance for you and provide any documentation necessary for your insurance provider.