

JUNE 2003 ■ *Protecting Your Home ...and its Resale Value*

What is Grant Water & Sanitation District?

Grant Water & Sanitation District (*the District*) is a quasi governmental entity established to own and maintain in perpetuity the sanitary sewer and underdrain systems in Grant Ranch. It is governed by an elected Board of Directors, all of whom own property in the District.

What is the Underdrain System?

The underdrain system originated in 1995 when geotechnical engineers for Bowles Metropolitan District strongly advised that such a system be built in Grant Ranch to help

Next, each individual home's foundation drain system was designed and constructed by each developer/builder.

All builders signed agreements and purchased sewer and underdrain taps from the District for their homes. It was their responsibility to connect each of their homes to the main collection lines of the systems. To help ensure the builders' understanding of this underdrain system, the District held a meeting for all Grant Ranch builders to review the rules, regulations and procedures for tap installations. The builder needed to establish the elevation point of the underdrain connection of each home *before* setting the building elevations since the underdrain was required to be gravity fed.

As part of the tap application fee, the District also completed inspections of both the sanitary and underdrain service line connections. Each and every residential tap to the underdrain main in the street was inspected before homes were constructed. Later, a second inspection was done at the property line to ensure the sanitary line was connected into the sanitary sewer stub-in and the underdrain service line to the underdrain stub-in order to prevent any cross contamination. For a clearer understanding of this process and the responsibilities of each party, please see Diagram A on the next page.



control ground water and its impact on homes. This advanced underdrain system, located beneath the streets, was designed and constructed by the Bowles Metropolitan District and then deeded to the District when completed.

In this issue...

- *What Are the Concerns*
- *Schedule for Your Strategic Meeting*
- *Information on the Strategic Effort*
- *Commonly Asked Questions*
- *Diagrams of Solutions*

Why There are Concerns...

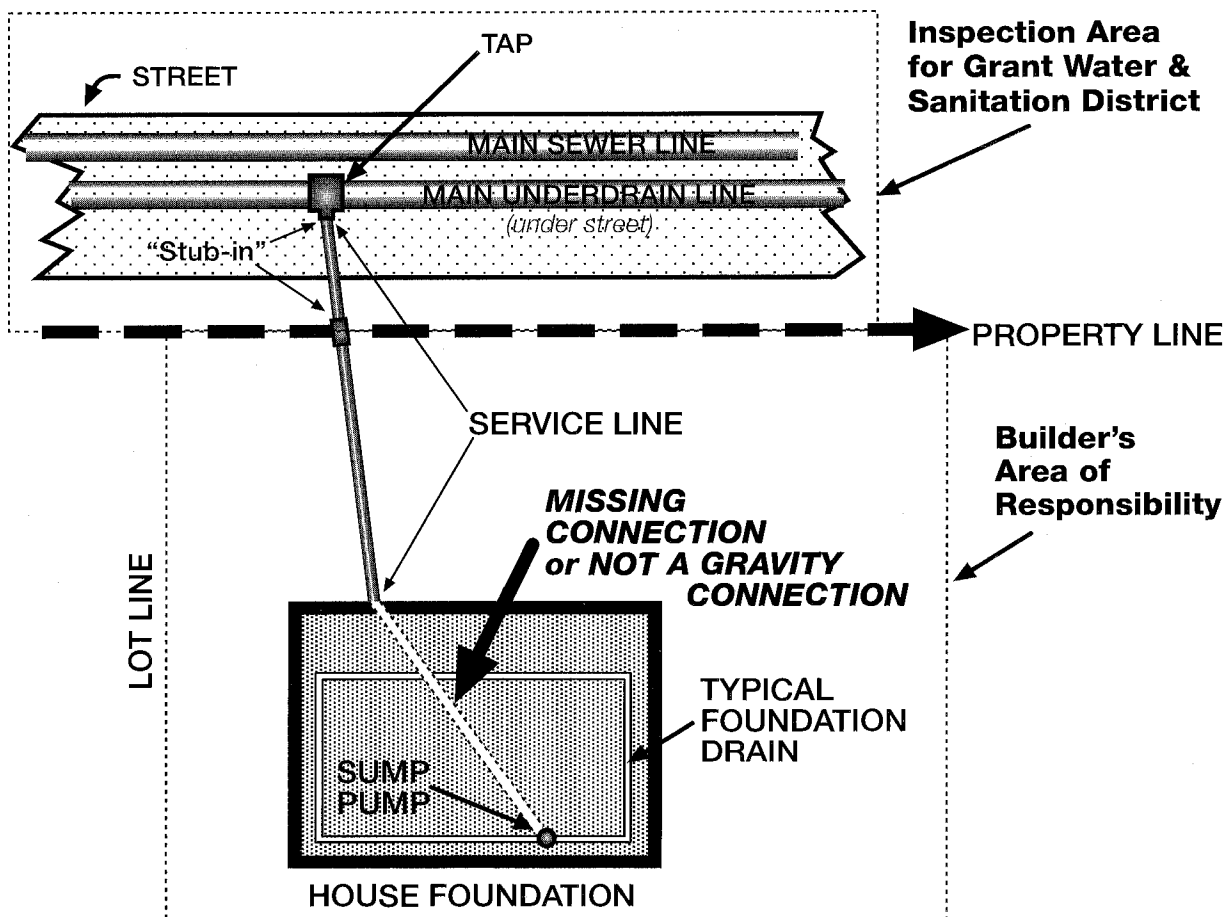
The underdrain system was built to control ground water in the District. If properly installed, it will help protect the home's foundation, thus, the value and resale value of every Grant Ranch home. The goal was to provide a discharge point for any foundation water collected, just as the sanitary sewer provides for household waste. In a newly constructed home, if there is a problem with the sanitation system, it is apparent immediately. You would call your builder to resolve it. An underdrain connection failure, however, is more difficult to detect. When there is an improper connection or no connection, the results take much longer to appear. This is what is now happening in *some* homes.

Over the last two years, as problems began to appear, the District invested nearly \$100,000 ascertaining the extent of the problem and

consulting with experts (engineering, legal, and geotechnical) concerning the issues involved with different possible courses of action. It is now apparent that a number of builders did not always make the connections. None of them did so deliberately; rather it seems to be related to sub-contracting and communication issues.

As Diagram A indicates, in some of the homes, the service line to the main underdrain exists but the pipe was never connected to the foundation drain system. This "missing connection" is critical to the proper function of the entire system. Since the builders designed their own foundation systems, there are a number of variations of foundation drains in Grant Ranch. There are homes with a variety of connection problems as well as homes with no connection problems whatsoever. The responsibility for the correct connection still lies with the owner/builder/warranty company. Most homes are

DIAGRAM A: AREAS OF INSPECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY



probably still within their warranty period. The District is responsible for the routine maintenance, cleaning and repair of its underdrain lines located under the streets.

As a result of discovering numerous underdrain connection problems, the District is determined to help homeowners protect their home value and is launching a strategic one year effort to assist homeowners to resolve this issue.

The Strategic Effort on Your Behalf...

In many cases, groups of Grant Ranch homeowners may face the same connection problem since their homes were designed by the same builder. Therefore, it makes sense to unite homeowners to help them resolve this issue together. Since the extent of the problem is now more clear, the District will no longer be providing underdrain survey inspections; instead we will be focusing on implementing the Strategic Effort in support of homeowners gaining their proper connections. We will also be training interested homeowners to assist them in disseminating information and coordinating neighborhood efforts to resolve this problem. The overall basics of the District's Strategic Effort on behalf of homeowners are outlined below.

- 1** First, in July of 2003, the District will be holding a series of organizational and informational meetings for the homeowners on the details of the Strategic Effort. These meetings will occur by development since the developments differ in the type of connection problems. *Please see the schedule on the following page to find your meeting time.*
- 2** Second, the District will continue to help identify homes with connection problems by working with builders and homeowners.
- 3** Third, the District has developed *a number of solutions* from which builders and/or homeowners can choose. Sample illustrations

of these solutions are on page 6. The District *will also permit unique solutions* if they meet the criteria for the underdrain system.

- 4** Fourth, every home that successfully resolves an improper underdrain connection will receive a **Certificate of Resolution** to verify the home's compliance.
- 5** Fifth, the District will delay any fines for non-compliance for more than one year, until October 1, 2004, to give homeowners more time to resolve any connection issues.

Why the Effort?

Because the District, homeowners, and the builders want the same outcome... homes that retain their value and structural integrity. Mistakes can happen, but how mistakes are corrected clearly demonstrates the integrity of all parties. We intend to continue to do our part on behalf of Grant Ranch homeowners.



Commonly Asked Questions...

Q: *Will the connection to the underdrain system fix water problems in my basement or around my home?*

A: Not necessarily, but it can certainly help the problem if the original underdrain connection was not made. Water problems can arise from a variety of factors such as poor foundation drain construction, over watering vegetation planted too close to the foundation or poor ventilation in the crawl space. *(The recommended distance for plants is at least six feet away from the foundation.)* If the underdrain connection has been made properly, and you still have water or moisture, it is time to consult with your builder.

Q: *Why does the underdrain connection have to be below ground?*

A: It is not commonly accepted practice to have groundwater brought up to the surface. If this were to occur, the additional surface water could impact your neighbor's property as well as your own. You could experience liability problems if water drained from your property across a sidewalk or a street. So, to protect the homeowner, underground connections are standard practice.

Q: *If my sump pump rarely discharges, why can't I direct the drainage to my garden?*

A: With the recent drought, wouldn't that be a great solution! Actually, what seems like a great idea is still not accepted in the industry because we can't control the future. You may be watering your landscaping conservatively but that may not be what the next owner of your home does. The underdrain system has to work regardless of the watering patterns and landscaping someone else may put in, hence the need for a standardized underground system.

Q: *How can the District have rules and regulations, conduct inspections, and still not detect these problems?*

A: Industry standards regulate how and when the inspection process is done. Underdrain inspections are virtually identical to the inspection of a sanitary sewer system which also does not inspect at the home. In the case of underdrain inspections, the primary underdrain system was constructed before any homes since it is located under the streets next to the sewer system. The District does not inspect within the property line. The State of Colorado requires all builders to be responsible for construction within the property lines.

Q: *What do we do if the builder won't respond to our calls?*

A: There are enough homeowners with this problem that a builder could be inundated with calls. That's one of the reasons the District is trying to help organize homeowners and present solutions to builders. We believe all builders are interested in an amicable solution with homeowners and we are bringing some tools to the table to help this effort. *It is vitally important however, that you plan on attending your development's Strategic Plan Meeting to get the correct information on your development.*

Q: *What if I'm not the original home owner? If my home is not properly connected, will the builder connect it?*

A: We are hoping that by bringing owners together we can obtain solutions for everyone before any damage occurs. Most homes in Grant Ranch should still be covered by the original warranty. However, the District is not privy to specific warranty information including transferability.

Your Solutions...

The goal of the underdrain system is to control the discharge of the home's foundation drain system by routing subsurface water to a collection system. Hence, it must carry water away from the home's foundation while not placing other homes, streets, or sidewalks in jeopardy from excess water or ice.

This is the automatically approved solution:

Solution 1: *Direct connection from the home's foundation to the underdrain system by gravity*

These approved solutions will need a written variance:

Solution 2: *Creating a non-gravity connection through a sump pump that connects into the underdrain system*

Solution 3: *Creating a connection to an exterior, underground drain that directs water into an approved, existing storm drainage facility or Bowles Reservoir. There are many storm drainage facilities within the District which may be feasible for discharge.*

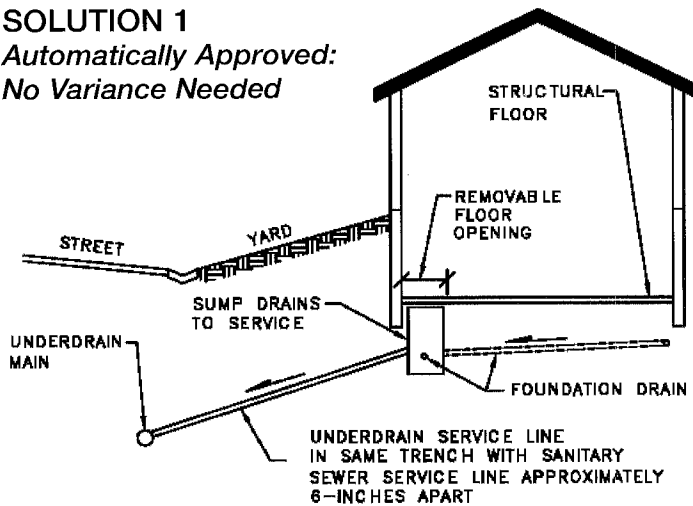
Or... Unique Solutions:

You or your builder can submit a unique solution for consideration. Please call us for more information on this process. The proposed solution must be signed by a professional engineer, licensed in the State of Colorado, and meet the following criteria:

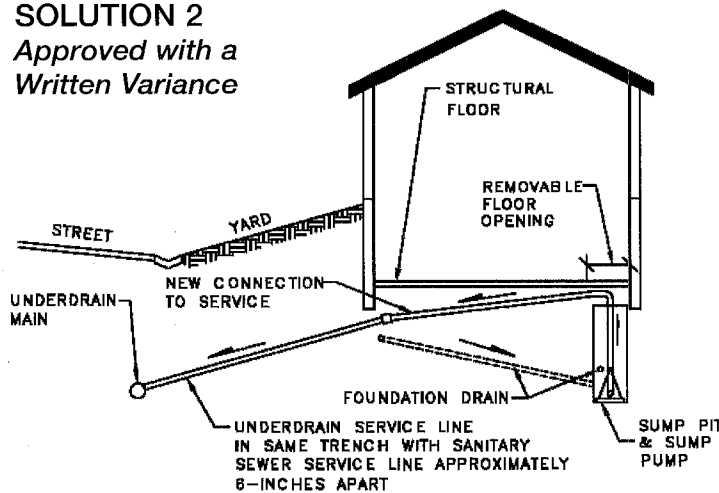
- A. *Solution must allow the ground water to flow into an approved ground water handling system.*
- B. *Water flow must not be directed to the surface of any adjacent property, street or sidewalk, nor impact any adjacent property.*

At the Strategic Meetings in July, the process for obtaining your **Certificate of Resolution** will be distributed.

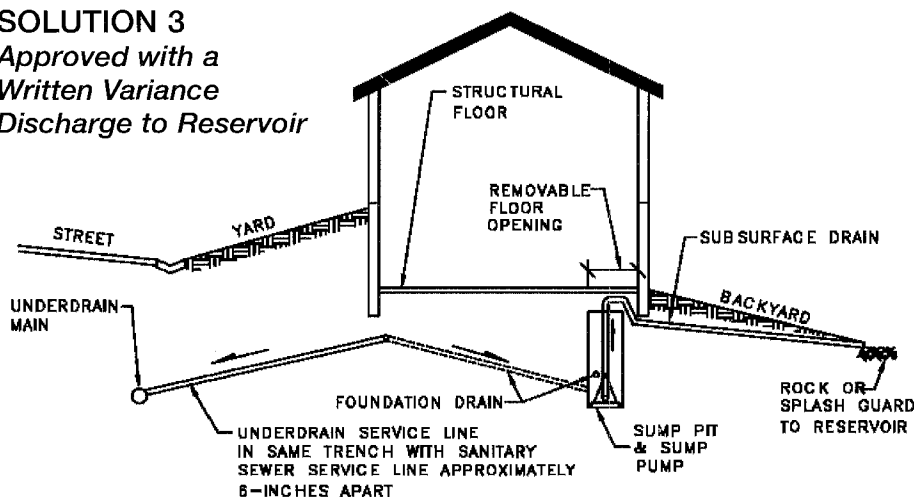
SOLUTION 1 Automatically Approved: No Variance Needed



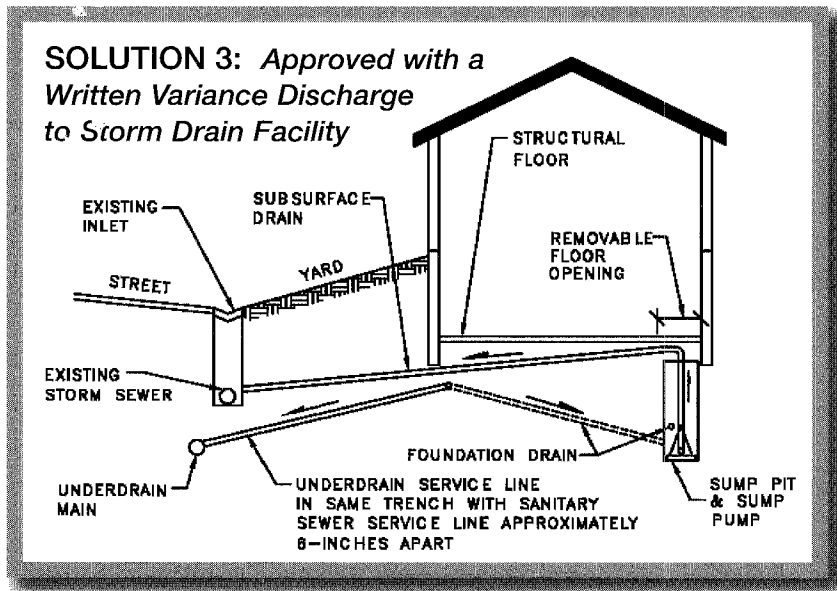
SOLUTION 2 Approved with a Written Variance



SOLUTION 3 Approved with a Written Variance Discharge to Reservoir



Solutions continued...



Any builder which properly connected its homes to the underdrain can provide the homeowner with a letter that verifies the home is properly connected, by gravity to the underdrain system. These homeowners *do not* need a Certificate of Resolution as there is no connection problem to resolve. The home is in compliance.

The survey conducted over the last two years shows that approximately two-thirds of the five hundred homes surveyed did not have any problems. Approximately one-third of the homes appeared to have a problem.

The District's efforts, therefore, are to help homeowners who have known connection problems correct these problems over the next year. Working with builders and homeowners, the District is committed to an educational and collaborative assistance effort that enables everyone to understand what needs to be done. It is essential for homeowners to have the proper connection to help protect their property and their home's resale value.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For all questions or to submit a request for a Unique Compliance Variation:

Please contact Sellards & Grigg, the engineering firm contracted by Grant Water & Sanitation District since 1995 to be the technical resource for the underdrain system:

PHONE: 303.986.1444

FAX: 303.986.0994

PLEASE NOTE:

The District will advise homeowners to help with underdrain connection issues when connecting to the primary system. However, homeowners who have other problems related to foundation drains will need to contact their builders. Connecting to the underdrain *will not solve* all drainage or water problems if there are other foundation drain issues.

GRANT WATER
& SANITATION
DISTRICT

c/o SIMONSON & ASSOCIATES, MANAGER
2922 EVERGREEN PARKWAY • STE 207
EVERGREEN CO 80439

303.674.3379

FAX: 303.674.3380