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**CITY MANAGER**  
Stan Brown

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Tangee Puckett

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## **Oakwood to upgrade sewer project**

Oakwood is turning what would have been a localized sewer project into an effort that could have a wider impact and fuel long-term development as part of its 2030 plan.

City Council voted Monday night to go forward with an amended engineering design of the project, work that would cost an additional \$32,664.

“I think it’s the right project to do,” City Manager Stan Brown said.

The council voted last year on a project that would mainly serve the 20-unit Hidden Valley apartment complex off McClure Drive, where a septic drain field has been failing for years.

The project would have involved laying about 1,400 feet of gravity and force-main lines and construction of a pump station.

The total project had been estimated to cost nearly \$225,000.

The project also called for abandoning the septic system, using available land for “neighborhood park space,” Brown has said.

To offset costs, the city received a \$50,000 “Immediate Threat and Danger” grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Since last year, “we’ve had some conversation about whether there’s a better solution to that problem, more of a long-term solution that gets you out of having to put in a pump station and also opens up more property for sewer service,” Brown told the council Monday.

The new concept would involve running a sewer line in the downtown area, from Flat Creek and Oakwood roads, along a creek and railroad right of way, over to the apartments, then to the Gainesville system on Flat Creek Road.

The project ends up calling for 4,600 feet of line.

“The cost is about twice (what it was), but you’re opening up a whole lot more property for future sewer development, as well as our downtown plan,” Brown said.

The city had planned to use \$800,000 from the special purpose local option sales tax approved by voters in 2009 for downtown sewer improvements.

Downtown sewer is a major component of the city's 2030 plan, a vision for development in the city's downtown core, an area between Thurmon Tanner Parkway and Flat Creek/Old Oakwood Road.

"That was something we put in the budget for this year to start the engineering and design work, and hopefully begin to fund it with SPLOST proceeds next year," Brown said.

Mayor Lamar Scroggs said the expanded sewer work "has been a goal all along of the city council — to try to serve those areas — and it has taken a long time for us to be able to build to that point."