



Fairfield to replace 2-mile stretch of water main pipe along Ohio 4



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FAIRFIELD — Motorists will not have an easy time on Ohio 4 this coming spring, especially those who navigate the road at night.

The city of Fairfield is set to replace a two-mile stretch of 60-year-old water main pipe, which a disproportionate number of water main breaks since 2014 had occurred in this section of pipe and is why it's one of the city's most "critical project next year," said [Fairfield Public Utilities Director Adam Sackenheim](#). Since 2014, nearly 200 water main breaks had occurred in the city.

The estimated \$3 million project will take six months to complete, and work will be done primarily at night.

"It is the biggest water line improvement project, dollar-wise, the city has ever done," said [Sackenheim](#). "And a lot of the new pipe is going right down the middle of (Ohio) 4."

The project comes a year after Duke Energy conducted utility work along the same stretch of road, and a year before Ohio 4 will be repaved, [Sackenheim](#) said.

The water main will be replaced with a new cast iron pipe that will be wrapped in a plastic and surrounded by gravel before being buried under dirt and topped with asphalt. [Sackenheim](#) said this process protects the pipe from the corrosive elements in the soil and clay and allows for movement, which gives the water main the potential to "last 100 to 200 years."

“Sixty years ago they dug a hole and that pipe might be laying on a big rock, or it’s laying in a big layer of clay, which can be highly corrosive,” he said. “So you’re seeing pitting from the outside in.”

And as Fairfield is removing some of its oldest water main pipe, Sackenheim said they’re up-sizing the pipe that will help move water through the booster station at Holden Boulevard and Ohio 4 to the industrial corridor off Seward Road.

Fairfield City Manager Mark Wendling said the project will “enhance the integrity” of the city’s water main system.

“We want to make sure we stay on top of our support so it’s sustainable and it’s continually an asset to the community.

The current 1957-era pipes are “continuing to fail at increasing frequent rates.” Sackenheim said he’s never seen so many water main breaks in a city the size and age of Fairfield.

“It’s double of what’s expected,” he said of water main breaks.

The engineer’s estimate, which Sackenheim said is “under development,” is expected to be known after the city submits the project for the Ohio EPA to review. The project could go out to bid sometime in January and bids could be opened by mid-February. The project is slated to begin in April or May.

Jungle Jim’s International Market sits in the middle of the 2-mile project, and Director of Development Phil Adams called the project a “much-needed” fix.

“It’s something that needed to be done, and if they didn’t, it was going to be a major problem,” he said. “You can’t have crews out there (fixing water main breaks) every other week.”

Adams doesn’t see the project interfering too much with business, especially because it will be done mostly at night.

“I don’t see an impact on our store, nor any other store on Route 4 for that matter,” he said.

Last year the city [realigned Ohio 4 and the South Gilmore/Holden Boulevard intersection](#), and Adams said “that went fairly smooth considering the magnitude of that project.”

CORRECTION: This story has been updated to accurately reflect that the nearly 200 water main breaks occurred systemwide within the city of Fairfield.

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