

Why Are We Here?

- Issaquah recently received numerous requests to install sewer in the Sycamore Neighborhood.
- Our first step is educating your neighborhood on options (status quo vs. a public sewer system).
- We want to hear from you!

Why Consider Sewer?

- Most on-site sewage systems may be past their useful life.
- Failing on-site systems pose a risk to health and the environment.
- Property owners no longer need to worry about maintenance and operational needs.
- Some neighbors need replacement options for their current systems now.
- Your neighborhood has one of the greatest needs for sewer service in Issaquah.

Neighborhood Info

- To proceed, the majority of homeowners must agree to a public sewer system.
- If approved, the project will cause significant, but short-term impacts to local streets.
- This project would reduce the risk of sewage entering the City's stream network or environmentally-sensitive areas.
- This project would not change the current zoning or land-use requirements in the neighborhood.

Resident Info

- The cost to install a public sewer system would be shared among all property owners and City funds, depending on funding option selected and budgets available.
- Upon completion, each resident would have the opportunity to connect to the public sewer system.
- If sewer is installed, residents would pay sewer fees like all other Issaquah property owners, once they connect to the sewer system.

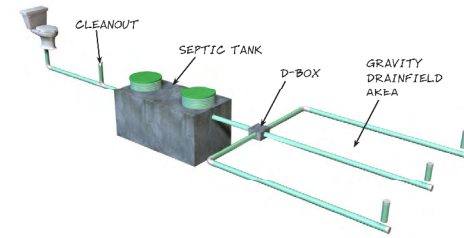
Neighborhood History

- The Sycamore Plat was developed in the 1960s
- Homes were typically built between the 1960s and 1980s.
- Many homes still use their original on-site sewage systems.
- Topography within the neighborhood is challenging for many homeowners to repair or replace drain fields.
- The 20 lots along Issaquah Creek are located near wetlands and critical areas, restricting the use on-site sewage systems.
- The 45 lots on Squak Mountain are located on steep slopes, near small tributaries or situated in ways that is not conducive for drain fields.

Septic Surveys

- Public Health – Seattle & King County identified 23 of 58 septic systems to be in “pre-failure mode” in 1996 and 1997.
- Some property owners constructed new drain fields after the old survey. Others may still be utilizing systems that were in “pre-failure” mode in 1997.
- The majority of on-site sewage systems are older than 25-years, which is longer than the typical lifespan for a regularly serviced drain field.
- Reports of sewer smells or flooded drain fields continue to cause issue for certain properties in the neighborhood.
- If the neighborhood agrees to further analysis, the health department will perform a new survey to determine if conditions have changed.

On-Site Sewage Systems



- Property owners are responsible for the operation, monitoring, and maintenance of their on-site septic system.
- Public health requires evaluations every one to three years.
- Sewage from your house collects within your septic tank. Solids settle to the bottom (requiring periodic cleaning), and wastewater flows to the drain fields.
- Wastewater is then treated in the soil through a biological process.
- In saturated conditions, treatment of wastewater does not occur. Wastewater either stays at the surface or mixes with the groundwater, where it can mix with well water, streams or other sensitive areas.

Minimum Horizontal Separations		
Items Requiring Setback	From Drain Field or Reserve Area	From Sewage Tank and Distribution Box
Water Line	10 ft.	10 ft.
Surface water (measured from the ordinary high-water mark)	100 ft.	50 ft.
Building foundation/in-ground swimming pool	10 ft.	5 ft.
Property or easement line	5 ft.	5 ft.
Foundation drain or drainage ditches		
Below the System	30 ft.	5 ft.
Above the System	10 ft.	N/A
Other site features that may allow sewage to surface		
Below the System	30 ft.	5 ft.
Above the System	10 ft.	N/A
Other subsurface stormwater infiltration systems	10 ft.	N/A

How Long Do Systems Last?

- With proper maintenance, a system can last 10-25 years.
- Most systems that fail prematurely are due to improper maintenance.
- Potential problems include plumbing (such as pipe blockages from tree roots); deterioration of the septic tank; or a clogged drain field.
- Once the drain field is clogged, it must be repaired or replaced and can cost thousands of dollars.
- Some drain fields still work fine after 25 years, while others failed in the first week of occupancy of a new home.
- The duration that drain fields continues to function properly depends on the following:
 - Level of usage of the system.
 - Use of a garbage disposal or heavy detergents/chemicals.
 - How often the system is serviced or maintained.
 - If a reserve drainfield is temporarily used to allow the primary system to rest and restore its original biological function.
 - Site characteristics such as steep slope, rock, groundwater level, and soil percolation rates.

Signs Your System is at Risk

- Do you have water and sewage from toilets, drains, and sinks backing up into your home?
- Do your bathtubs, showers and sinks drain very slowly?
- Do you hear gurgling sounds coming from the plumbing system?
- Is there standing water or damp spots near the septic tank or drain field in your yard?
- Are there bad odors coming from your septic tank or drain field at certain times during the year?
- Does bright green, spongy, or lush grass over the septic tank or drain field exist, even during dry weather?

What if My System Fails?

- Repair or replace your system.
- Connect to an off-site system.
- Use a holding tank, and transport sewage to a public discharge location.
- Discuss with the Department of Ecology and City to obtain a National Pollution Discharge Elimination Permit or state discharge permit to discharge to the surface.
- Abandon the property until the system is fixed.

Funding Option: Local Improvement District

- Construction would happen all at once.
- All impacted property owners would pay over time through low-interest, tax-exempt bonds.
- Payments would start when the project is constructed.
- The cost would not exceed the parcel's increased assessed value.
- Deferred payment options are available for qualified senior citizens and economically-disadvantaged property owners.

Funding Option: Capital Improvement Project

- Project is financed through city funds – if available.
- Construction is performed in segments as budget allows. This may cause impacts for several years.
- Each lot pays based on the total cost of construction, divided by the number of lots on that segment.
- Owners pay 100 percent of the cost when they hook-up, and are obligated to secure their own loans.
- If lots do not hook up, the City may never recover all the costs. The City does not charge interest or impose an inflation adjustment.
- No adjustment is made for assessed value increase or economically-disadvantaged property owners.

Funding Option: Developer or Private Group

- The project is funded and constructed by a private developer or group of investors.
- Each lot's share of the total construction cost is recovered by the developer or group as lots hook up.
- Owners pay 100 percent of the cost when they hook-up, and are obligated to secure their own loans.
- The developer or group may never recover the full cost if lots do not hook-up.

Funding Option: Citywide Rate Payers

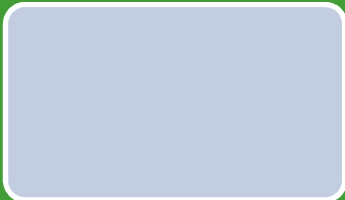
- The City chooses to extend the sewer and fund it by spreading the cost over all rate payers.
- Construction is performed in segments as budget allows. This may cause impacts for several years.
- This may be funded by revenue bonds or pay-as-you-go.

Your Feedback



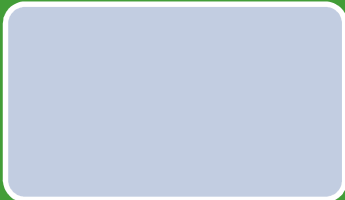
I do not want public sewer.

I am satisfied with my current situation, do not want public sewer within my neighborhood, and request the City to hold off on their investigation.



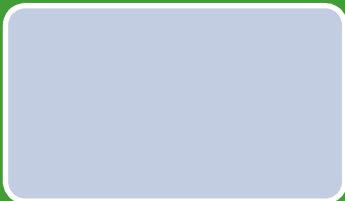
I would like more information before making a decision.

I am curious as to what this project would entail, and would like the City to begin a study into the possibility of installing a public sewer system.



I am interested in this project, but worried about finances.

I am not opposed to the idea of installing a public sewer system in the neighborhood, but would like more information on costs and finances before I make my final decision.



I support public sewer.

My current on-site system isn't working, and I have limited options for improvements.