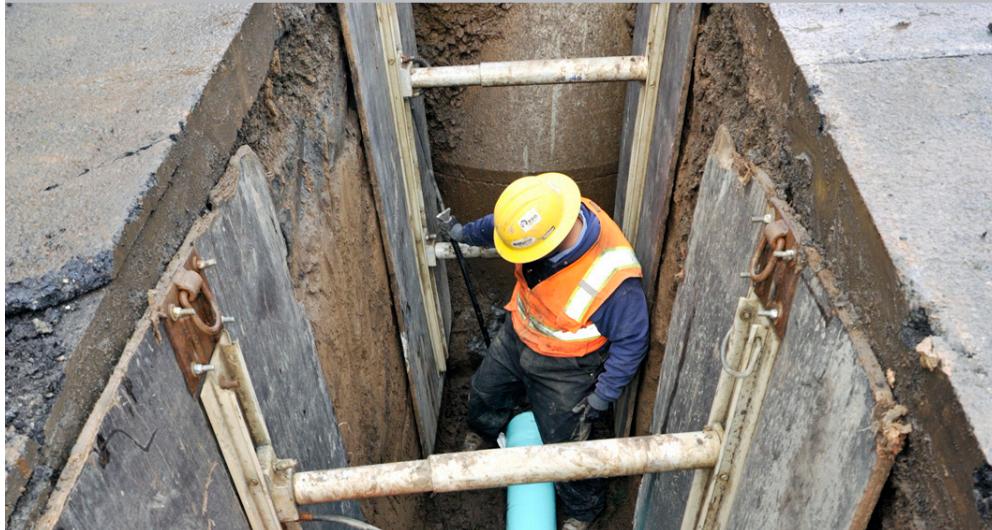


SANITARY LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS



In areas where the homes are on septic systems, issues may arise involving aged and deteriorating tanks or vaults, failing leach fields, or long-term concerns about public health. The transition to the sanitary sewer system can be expensive. Taxes and general fund revenue are not an option because “local improvements” are considered to provide a benefit to specific properties, not to the whole city or county.

One way property owners can build and finance these services is by forming a Local Improvement District (LID) to spread the cost across all the benefitted properties. In urbanized unincorporated Washington County, Clean Water Services (CWS) administers the Sanitary Sewer LID program and offers financing to help property owners manage their share of the cost.

The LID Assessment

The cost of a sanitary LID project includes project management, engineering, construction, inspection, legal services and compensation for easements. All owners whose property is newly served by the sewer are billed an LID assessment for their proportional share of the total project cost. The most typical assessment methods are to divide the cost based on the size of the lots, or to divide the cost equally among lots.

How is Owner Input Considered in Formation of an LID?

Owner input helps staff define a project area and develop a preliminary design and cost-sharing approach. The process usually begins with a conversation between one or more property owners and Clean Water Services. A neighborhood champion generally circulates a petition in the neighborhood to gauge neighborhood interest.

If the petition indicates substantial interest, CWS staff conducts a neighborhood meeting to provide general information about LIDs. If neighborhood support continues, a series of actions by the CWS Board of Directors authorizes a formal engineering study and assessment report. CWS staff shares the results at another neighborhood meeting and asks property owners to cast a ballot in support of or opposition to forming the LID. Subsequent public hearings in front of the Board give the neighbors opportunity to provide additional feedback prior to the Board's decision whether to proceed with the project.

Other Costs

The LID assessment covers building the public sewer line and lateral pipe to the property line and all associated restoration.

Other costs involved in connecting a house to the new sanitary sewer system include:

- Decommissioning the septic system by pumping out the tank and filling it with dirt or gravel. (Licensed contractor.)
- Constructing the private lateral (pipe) on private property. (Licensed plumber or property owner.)
- Washington County plumbing inspection fee.
- CWS System Development Charge, also known as sewer connection permit fee.
- CWS monthly or bimonthly sanitary sewer charges.

Making Costs More Manageable

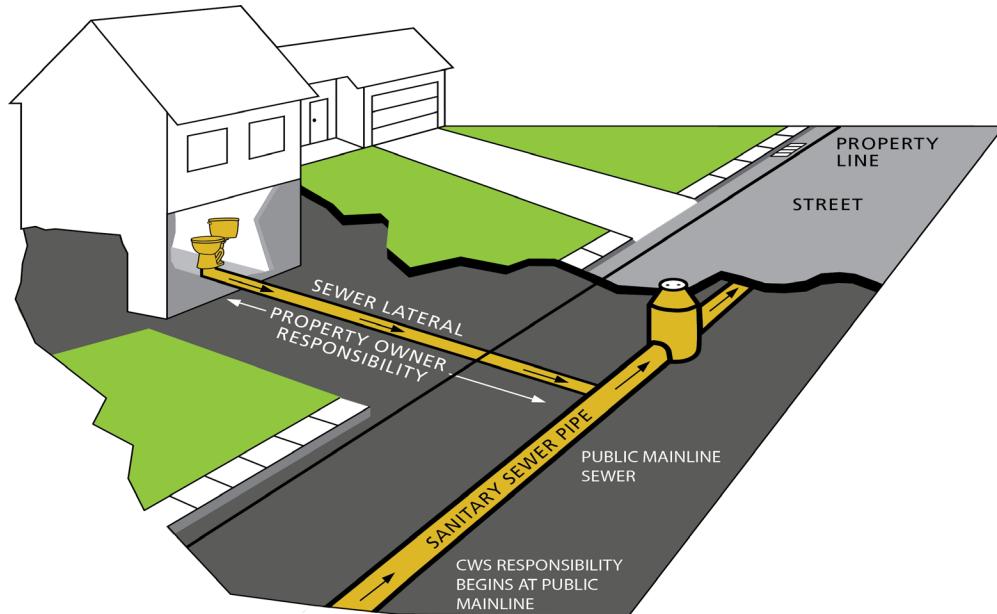
CWS offers several ways to help property owners manage costs:

Waiver of engineering and administration costs: Save up to 15 percent of your LID assessment by connecting to the new system within a year.

Financing: Owners may finance CWS' System Development Charge regardless of connection date. Additionally, CWS offers 10-year financing for the LID assessment at a very low interest rate and up to \$10,000 of the plumbing conversion costs if property owners connect within one year.

Project cost-sharing: CWS can contribute public funds for certain construction costs, including extraordinary costs associated with factors such as extraordinarily deep sewers and rock excavation.

SANITARY LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS



Sanitary LID Step-by-Step

Study & Approval

- Property owners circulate petition and submit petition to Clean Water Services.
- Neighborhood meeting to review LID process and elicit input from property owners.
- Staff presents petition to Board and requests approval to develop a preliminary engineering study and cost assessment report.
- If authorized by Board, staff develops cost estimates and design.
- Neighborhood meeting to discuss report and vote.
- Staff presents final recommendation to Board.
- Board considers final recommendation and holds first public hearing.

Design & Construction

- Surveyors gather information.
- Engineering staff designs the project.
- Staff negotiates easements with property owners when the public sewer main needs to be located on private property.
- CWS advertises the construction contract and selects the lowest responsible bidder. (If the bid exceeds cost estimates by more than 10 percent, property owners meet with staff to decide whether to continue.)
- Staff notifies property owners of the start date and construction schedule.
- A CWS staff inspector oversees the work of the private contractor and makes every effort to keep disruptions and inconveniences to a minimum.

Assessment

- Staff notifies property owners they can purchase a permit and connect to the new sewer.
- Board holds second public hearing to receive final project costs and establish the final assessment amount.
- Staff mails the assessment bill and a loan application to property owners.
- Within 30 days, property owners pay the assessment, sign a financing contract, or provide notice that they intend to defer paying their assessment until they connect to the sewer.
- Within three years, property owners connect to the sewer system. (Extensions up to 10 years may be granted for new septic systems and septic systems in good working order.)

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Resources

Visit cleanwaterservices.org/permits-development for additional information, including fact sheets on:

- Reimbursement Districts (RDs)
- Septic-to-Sewer

Contact CWS Engineering Services to request an LID petition form, or to learn about the Local Sewer Improvement Program: 503.681.5109.



Everything we do at Clean Water Services aims to protect public health while enhancing the natural environment of the Tualatin River Watershed.



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