



A GOOD CONNECTION

GETTING LOCAL SEWER SERVICE

Part I of IV: The Sewer Petition and What it Means

Public sewers are a good alternative to Household Sewage Treatment Systems. Public sewers provide homeowners with a reliable sewage disposal service that protects both public health and the environment. It is the policy of the Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio (the Board) to encourage the use of public sewers.

Where public sewers don't exist, property owners may request, or "petition," the Board to extend the sewer system to their properties. The Board will decide whether to extend sewer service based on several factors, including the location of the nearest accessible public sewer outfall, the level of interest from the property owners who would benefit from the sewer extension, and the cost of the sewer extension.

The purpose of this flyer is to (1) explain the local sewer petition process, (2) explain the property owner cost obligations, and (3) ask that you make a choice about having a public sewer.

WHAT IS A "SEWER PETITION"?

Public sewers that serve a neighborhood or a few streets are called "local sewers." If a local sewer does not exist, property owners may request construction of a local sewer by a petition process. The petition must contain the affirmative support of property owners who represent a majority of the properties to be served or "benefited" by the sewer. The Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County has decided that majority support is the minimum level of interest required for the Board to proceed with a citizen petition for local sewer. A petition with less than majority support will not be acted upon. Your neighbor who is circulating the petition will ask for your signature and your choice: to support or oppose the request for sewer service.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Public sewer service is reliable, cost effective and clean. With public sewer service, you will avoid the cost to operate, maintain and periodically replace your home sewage treatment system. Plus, the value of your property will likely be enhanced with public sewer service. By eliminating home sewage treatment systems, the quality of our environment will be generally improved.

WHAT DOES A LOCAL SEWER COST?

In order to pay for the local sewer, each property that benefits from the local sewer is assessed a charge. This "assessment" is equal to the total cost of the public sewer improvement divided by the number of properties that benefit from the project. Vacant properties that benefit from the local sewer are also required to pay their share.

As of February 9, 2005, total actual per-benefit costs in excess of \$12,000 will be funded from MSD unappropriated funds. Therefore, your cost for the public sewer improvement will not exceed \$12,000 per property.

A Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) Reimbursement Credit may apply to those systems meeting the requirements of the MSD Rules and Regulations. The HSTS Credit will effectively reduce the \$12,000 maximum assessment cost, commensurate with the eligible HSTS reimbursement credit amount.

Each property owner will incur other costs in addition to the assessment, including a tap-in fee and the cost to connect the building drain to the public sewer. The cost to connect your building drain to the public sewer depends upon a variety of factors such as length of pipe, the type of soil and construction obstacles.

SEWER RATES & BILLING PRACTICES

If a local sewer is built for your neighborhood, you will be charged for use of the sewer system after your house is connected to the sewer. Sewer rates and bill pay practices are available at MSD's website: www.msdbg.org/customer_care



FOR MORE INFO CONTACT

MSD ENGINEERING
CUSTOMER SERVICE
(513)557-3594

WWW.MSDGC.ORG

HOW IS THE ASSESSMENT PAID?

If the local sewer is constructed, you may pay your property's sewer assessment within 30 days after the final assessment notification. Any amount not paid within 30 days of the final assessment notification will be financed on your behalf by the County. Your payments, including principal, interest and fees, will be due and payable with each of your property tax statements. The financing period is 20 years. If the property transfers during the financing period, there is no need to pay off the loan; future payments will run with the property. Also, there is no rebate of interest if you pay off early. You should consult with your tax advisor to determine the tax implications of these payment options.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- A valid petition (majority support) does not guarantee that the local sewer will be built. The Board of County Commissioners may decide not to construct the sewer for a variety of reasons.
- Signing the petition does not mean that you will automatically be assessed \$12,000.
- You are not obligated to sign the petition.
- MSD does not determine which properties must connect to a local sewer; your General Health District is responsible for that decision.
- Only owners of the property may sign the petition form; a renter's signature is not valid.
- The Board of County Commissioners must hold a public hearing before it makes a final decision to build a local public sewer.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once the petition is submitted, MSD will confirm the petition's validity by polling all benefited property owners via US Mail. All petition results will be presented to the Board. Returned petitions that do not have a majority of support are not valid under Board policy. Should an outfall sewer not exist, MSD will present options to the Board for provision of trunk sewers. If the Board decides that a local public sewer improvement shall be designed, it will direct MSD to prepare plans, specifications, estimate of cost, and tentative assessments for the local sewer. After the project is designed, all property owners may participate in a public hearing prior to the Board determining whether or not to proceed to construction.