



A GOOD CONNECTION

GETTING LOCAL SEWER SERVICE

Part II of IV: Tentative Assessments & Public Hearing

The proposed assessment sewer for your street has been designed and the project is now moving into the public hearing/tentative assessment phase of development. The upcoming phase of the project includes a notice of tentative assessment, a public hearing and final legislation.



WHAT IS A TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT?

In Ohio, the process of converting existing homes from home sewage treatment systems (HSTS) to public sewer service is accomplished by construction of assessment sewers. Ohio law provides that assessment sewers are to be financed entirely, or in part, by the owners of properties that are benefited by the assessment sewer. In Hamilton County, the Board of County Commissioners has established a policy that says benefited property owners will pay no more than \$12,000 per benefited parcel towards the cost of the assessment sewer. MSD will provide a credit to each property that accounts for the remainder of project costs. The property owners' share of the project costs are known as "assessments." Assessments do not include the tap-in-fee or the cost to connect your building to the public sewer.

The first step in financing an assessment sewer is for the County Commissioners to approve "tentative assessments." Tentative assessments are the individual estimated amounts that each benefited property will be charged as payment for their share of the local sewer. Benefited properties are determined by current usage. For example, single-family parcels will be charged one benefit. Vacant parcels may also be charged benefits if they are buildable and not subject to a land conservation easement. Tentative Assessments are not liens or final bills. Tentative assessments are the basis for the County Commissioners' discussion with property owners about the local sewer project's total cost. They are the starting point for taking comments from benefited property owners during a public hearing on the local sewer.

HOW ARE TENTATIVE ASSESSMENTS CALCULATED?

MSD calculates tentative assessments in the following manner:

1. Total project cost is estimated. The anticipated costs of all expenditures required to complete the project are estimated. These expenditures include design costs, easement purchases, construction costs and administrative expenses.
2. Total number of benefited properties are determined. Benefited properties are those properties to be served by the local sewer.
3. Total estimated cost is divided by the total number of benefited properties. The resulting number is the gross tentative assessment. This amount is the estimated actual cost of the sewer per benefit.

4. Assessment credits are determined. In order to comply with the County Commissioners' local sewer "cost ceiling" of \$12,000 per-benefit, MSD determines the amount of "assessment credits" to apply to each benefited property. If the gross tentative assessment exceeds the \$12,000 cost ceiling, MSD applies assessment credits to reduce the cost to each benefited property to \$12,000.
5. The Home Septic Treatment System Reimbursement Credit is applied to eligible properties.
6. Net Tentative Assessment amount is calculated. The gross tentative assessment amount, minus any credits, equals the net tentative assessment amount.

In summary, the tentative assessment amount is an estimate that is determined prior to construction of the sewer. Final assessment amounts will be determined after construction of the project and will be based on actual costs. Your cost for the public sewer improvement will not exceed \$12,000 per benefited property.



FOR MORE INFO CONTACT

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WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEARING?

Ohio law requires the County Commissioners to hold a public hearing for any sewer project that is to be funded in whole or in part by the benefited property owners through assessments. MSD will notify you by certified mail of the hearing date, time and location. The public hearing is your opportunity to express your opinion or ask questions regarding the proposed assessment sewer.

Once the Commissioners close the public hearing, each benefited property owner has five calendar days in which to submit in writing any objections to the local sewer project. The Commissioners cannot take legislative action on the sewer project during these five days.

In summary, the public hearing is the opportunity for all benefited property owners to express their opinion on the local sewer project directly to County Commissioners. Ohio law requires the public hearing as a way of providing all benefited property owners equal opportunity to comment (i.e., "due process") before they can be assessed.

FINAL LEGISLATION

After the public hearing and the five-day waiting period, the County Commissioners must address and resolve any objections to the project filed by benefited property owners. This is a necessary and required action by the Commissioners before they decide whether or not the proposed local sewer project should be built .

In order for the Commissioners to build the local sewer, they must adopt three final pieces of legislation: a Resolution to Proceed, a Resolution to Appropriate Funds, and a Resolution to Advertise and Bid the local sewer construction project.

