



Should You Connect to Public Sewer? Pros & Cons of Maintaining a Septic System

Northshore Utility District is undertaking a review of our connection fees. This may result in sewer connection fee increases in the near future.

If you currently maintain a septic system, you may want to consider applying to connect to public sewer while the existing fee schedule is still in place.

Both systems have their own costs and benefits. Some of the primary issues to consider are outlined here.

For more information on connecting to NUD's sewer, email tcrenshaw@nud.net or call (425) 398-4401.

COMMON SEPTIC ISSUES TO CONSIDER:

Homeowners with septic systems are no doubt aware of some of the issues that can complicate your life. Issues like:

- ▶ **Buying a new home**— you may not know how well the septic system was previously maintained.
- ▶ **Making additions to your home**—septics are sized for specific numbers of rooms, and new landscaping must work around the drain field.
- ▶ **Dealing with frequently rain-saturated ground**, which can block proper effluent distribution.
- ▶ **Having to carefully track water use** because too much "gray" and "black" water (from dishwashing, laundry, showering, and toilet flushing) can overload the system.
- ▶ **And worst of all: dealing with the mess, the health hazards, and the high cost of a failed septic system.** Replacing failed septics can run anywhere from \$25,000 - \$50,000 depending on the size of the home it serves.

THERE IS ALSO THE LEGAL SIDE:

According to King County's Title 13 regulations, homeowners on septic are required to abandon their on-site sewage system and connect to the public sewer system when:

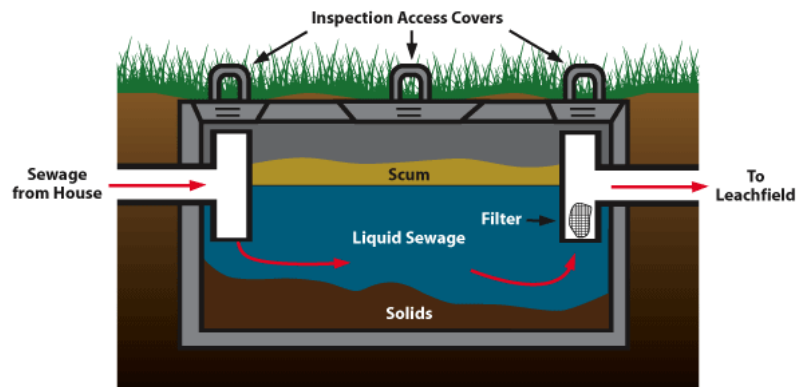
1. Your home is located within 200 feet of available sewer; **AND**
2. Repair, modification or replacement of the on-site sewage system is necessary, or the system has failed and a new system cannot be designed or installed that meets Title 13 regulations; **OR**
3. Additional construction [i.e. home additions, landscaping] is proposed which in any way affects the on-site sewage system.

HOW SEPTIC SYSTEMS WORK:

Septic systems collect your home's wastewater—"gray" water is used water from dish- and clothes-washing; "black" water is solid waste. Liquid sewage filters through the system and is released to the drain field (leachfield) through perforated pipes as "effluent." The system must be pumped every 3-5 years as solid waste builds up.

When properly maintained over their lifespan, septic systems can serve a home well. But when issues do occur, they can escalate to health hazards and high repair or replacement costs.

Some homeowners may decide that the benefits of "outsourcing" their home wastewater conveyance and treatment warrants the costs of public sewer connection.



This unfortunate scenario can occur often with septics: too much rain can "clog" the soil and block wastewater distribution, leaving effluent pools on the ground surface.





TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONNECTING TO PUBLIC SEWER:

Email tcrenshaw@nud.net or call (425) 398-4401

WEIGHING COST VS. BENEFIT OF CONNECTING TO PUBLIC SEWER:

Connecting to the public sewer system is costly—more expensive than yearly septic maintenance costs. *[Costs outlined below.]* As a homeowner, you have to decide whether the costs of connecting outweigh the benefits.

- ▶ The most obvious benefit is **not having to deal with your wastewater or sewage again**. NUD takes care of maintaining the sanitary sewer system and safely transporting your wastewater for you.
- ▶ Besides the responsibility and hassle, **connecting also spares you the expense and health hazards of dealing with a failed system**.

CONNECTION FEES MAY SOON INCREASE:

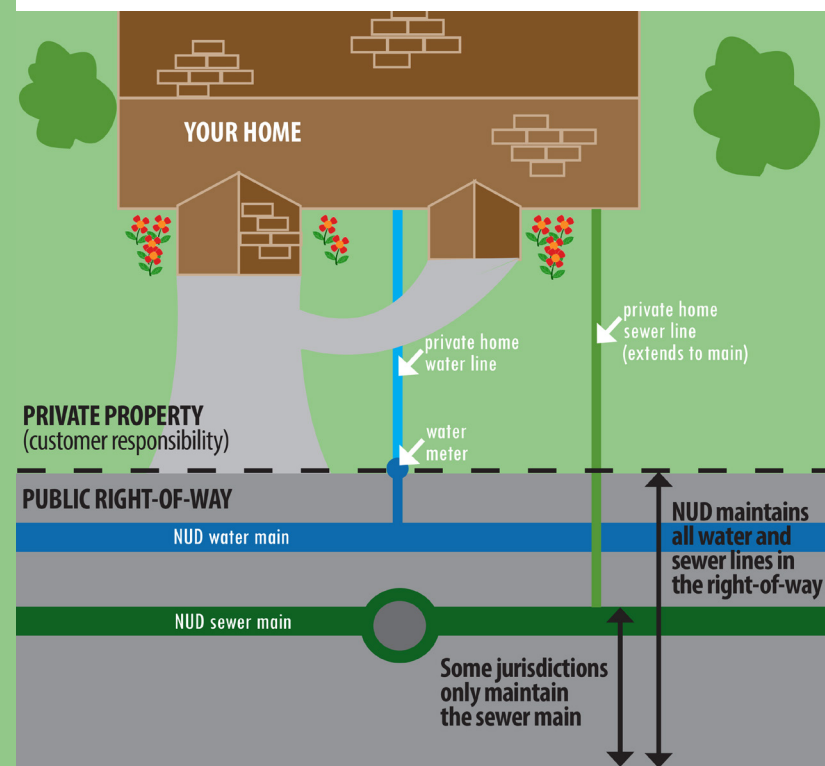
NUD's connection fees have remained constant for more than 10 years, while the cost of upgrading the local sewer system to meet new population demands has increased.

As a result, the Board of Commissioners is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of all connection charges soon, which may result in higher fees in the near future.

If you have considered connecting, or know you'll soon face a situation that will require you to connect, you may want to begin the process within the year to take advantage of the existing rate structure.

FURTHER BENEFIT FOR NUD CUSTOMERS:

Whereas many jurisdictions only take care of the sewer main [see diagram below], NUD maintains both the main and the portion of the side sewer line in the right-of-way. NUD handles any issues that occur in the right-of-way, sparing you the cost of road excavation and repairs.



2017 SEWER CONNECTION FEES:

Sewer connection fees are based on the potential amount of water that could be flushed into the wastewater system—generally determined by the size of the water meter that serves the home. Below are the typical connection charges for a single-family property served by a 3/4 or 1" water meter.

You have the option to pay the connection fees either in one sum, or over a 15-year period in bi-monthly installments.

Meter Size	Major Facilities Charge (MFC)	Local Facilities Charge (LFC)	Total Connection Fees	Minimum Standard Permit	Minimum ROW Permit
3/4" and 1"	\$1,925	\$5,075	\$7,000	\$300	\$645