



Wastewater Treatment Plant IMPROVEMENTS

JUNE 2019

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are we upgrading the treatment plant?

A: Stevenson's wastewater treatment plant is old. It needs major upgrades and expansion to comply with federal and state regulations, and to meet the community's current and future needs.

Q: What will happen if we don't do this project?

A: The Department of Ecology has informed us of multiple violations to the City's NPDES permit, and is ordering us to comply with the terms of our permit. Failure to do so could result in large fines, additional moratoria on future growth or new connections, and other penalties.

Q: When will improvements be constructed?

A: Immediate improvements to address violations will be constructed this fall. Construction of larger-scale improvements to address capacity and loading will start Fall of 2021.

Q: How will this project impact ratepayers?

A: Preliminary cost estimates could be up to \$16 Million. This is a major undertaking for our community, but the time to address this challenge is now. Sewer rates are based on the cost of operating the existing sewer system, and capital improvements to that system. Because these capital improvements will cost money, sewer rates will increase to pay for these improvements. We are working diligently to reduce the rate impacts of this project.

Q: How is the City reducing costs and rate impacts because of this project?

A: There are two ways to reduce impacts on rates: reduce overall costs, and optimize low-interest funding sources. City staff are aggressively pursuing every available avenue to reduce costs and obtain funding. We recently completed a value engineering study for cost reduction opportunities. The City's engineer will also be designing improvements to optimize grant funding (instead of high interest loans, which we have to pay back with interest).

Q: How can I help?

A: Reduce the amount of waste you send down the drain. Residents can do this by avoiding sending food waste and animal waste down the drain. The City has been helping restaurants to prevent greases and other food waste from reaching the treatment plant. We've also been talking about this with industrial users, who are working hard to implement Best Management Practices and reduce the demands they place on the overall system.

SEE OTHER SIDE

For more Frequently Asked Questions





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FAQs (continued)

Q: What does the wastewater treatment plant do?

A: Our plant treats all of the wastewater produced by the residents and businesses within the City of Stevenson. At home or at work, anytime you flush a toilet, or wash dishes, all of it goes down the drain to our wastewater treatment plant. Also, businesses, schools and industries contribute wastewater. At the plant, we treat this wastewater through a variety of biological and mechanical processes until it is clean enough to outfall into the Columbia River.

Q: I heard there was a development moratorium right now. What does that mean?

A: Yes, there is a moratorium for certain types of development: this means that specific businesses cannot apply to develop in Stevenson. These include new commercial connections with a BOD strength higher than residential strength. Examples include restaurants, cafeterias, hospitals, nursing homes, bakeries, coffee shops, grocery stores, and some industrial uses. These development uses are allowed if they can pretreat their wastewater down to a BOD strength of 300 mg/L (residential strength). Residential and other commercial users can still apply for development within Stevenson's City limits.

Q: What is BOD?

A: BOD stands for Biochemical Oxygen Demand, and it is a way of measuring the quality of wastewater. The higher the BOD, the more work it takes at our treatment plant to treat that wastewater. A typical house generates a certain amount of BOD: a large restaurant generates a lot more. The City's permit issued by the Department of Ecology has specific limits for BOD. This project will increase our treatment plant's capacity to treat BOD, therefore allowing our community to add new businesses and homes.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Check the City's project website:

<http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/cleanwater/>