

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021



Kitsap County Public Works | Sewer Utility



Always dispose of PPE properly – in the trash – to protect our waterways



ALL disposable wipes can clog pipes – even “flushable” ones



Household tip – use baking soda to keep your drains clean without harming your plumbing

PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH AND OUR ENVIRONMENT



Over the past year, we've done more than ever to protect our health by staying home and following guidelines like frequent hand washing and wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) like masks around others. Trips we might usually make for entertainment have been replaced by home movie nights and exploring our outdoor environment. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed like nature was getting a break. Without as many people visiting parks and trails, wildlife was left to flourish.

Our actions as a community have no doubt helped save lives. However, the solution of using PPE and taking extra cleaning precautions has led to another problem – pandemic pollution. A disposable wipe flushed down the toilet, or a discarded mask left in a parking lot, these can end up in our sewer and stormwater systems and ultimately pollute our waterways.

The Kitsap County Sewer Utility spoke to KUOW Public Radio about this problem in November. (Visit kuow.org/stories/how-your-used-face-masks-and-gloves-are-contributing-to-water-pollution for the full story.) In some areas where there are combined sewer systems, flushed wipes and discarded masks and gloves end up in the same pipes, with the potential to cause sewer spills. In Kitsap County sewer service areas, we have separate stormwater pipes that collect trash discarded on the ground. However, both sewer and stormwater systems discharge to the Puget Sound. It is our job as responsible citizens to dispose of PPE properly.

In addition to this type of pandemic waste, the Sewer Utility has increased maintenance in some areas due to fats, oils, and grease in the sewer system. Just like too much grease can clog your arteries, it is unhealthy for pipes too. When preparing fried foods or disposing of uneaten foods, please be mindful to keep fats, oils, and grease out of your drains.

Follow these tips at home to protect your health and our environment. Find more on how to protect your sewer line at KitsapGov.com/pw.

SEWERS ARE ESSENTIAL

Gov. Jay Inslee has extended Proclamation 20-23, which prohibits utilities from disconnecting, refusing to reconnect, and charging late fees until termination of the COVID-19 State of Emergency or 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2021, whichever comes first.

For the latest COVID-19 health guidance, statistics and resources, visit Coronavirus.wa.gov.

THANK YOU TO ESSENTIAL WORKERS

While Kitsap County has closed many in-person services, our essential workers have continued working behind the scenes. All Public Works staff have worked within the state guidelines to protect others from COVID-19, including physical distancing, wearing protective equipment, and daily health checks to ensure no one is coming to work sick.

Due to the nature of our work, many operations did not skip a beat. Treatment plant operation continued as usual as well as daily water quality testing. Workers in the field adjusted, staggering shifts as needed to avoid working together too closely. Administrative and engineering services have continued, with staff working from home when possible.

Your Sewer Utility will continue to provide cost-effective service for our customers from a distance. We thank all the essential workers that have contributed over the past year, at Public Works, and throughout our communities in Kitsap County.

KINGSTON TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES



OXIDATION DITCH AT KINGSTON TREATMENT PLANT

Upgrades to the Kingston Treatment Plant were completed at the end of 2020, positioning the Sewer Utility to meet future environmental regulations and capacity needs for the Kingston sewer system. This \$3.5 million capital project upgraded the secondary treatment processes to replace outdated equipment and improve nutrient removal.

The Kingston Treatment Plant uses an oxidation ditch for secondary treatment. This is a type of activated sludge treatment which removes organic pollutants from the water before disinfection and discharge to the Puget Sound. The oxidation ditch aerates and circulates the wastewater to speed up a natural biologic process. Oxidation ditches work by either moving brushes or blowing air that control the process. This recent upgrade replaced the older brushes with mixers and air diffusers.

There are two oxidation ditches at the Kingston Treatment Plant, but just one in use. With this project, there is the ability to put the second ditch online if needed. Upgrades were made in both units. The treatment plant is designed for 290,000 gallons of wastewater per day. The current average in Kingston is 120,000 gallons per day. The second basin provides redundancy and built-in capacity in case the sewer system is expanded in the future.

The brushes previously used for aeration were rotating equipment and more maintenance intensive. The new air diffusers will cut down on maintenance, provide more efficient oxygen transfer, and can also remove more ammonia and nitrogen. This project positions the Sewer Utility to meet changing regulations to reduce nitrogen loads to Puget Sound. It also provides better water quality that will allow for production of recycled water in the future.

Performance at the Kingston Treatment Plant was already impressive, earning it the Outstanding Treatment Plant Award from the Washington State Department of Ecology. These latest upgrades provide an even more reliable system for future water quality needs.

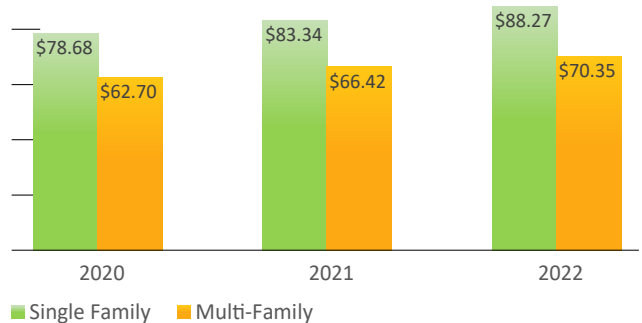
SEWER RATES INCREASE IN JANUARY

The Kitsap County Board of Commissioners approved the current three-year sewer rate schedule through the end of 2022. Rates increase each year in January. Due to the bimonthly billing cycle, some customers will receive a bill with 2020 and 2021 rates combined. The resolution and full rate schedule is available online at kitsapgov.com/pw/Documents/sewerrates.pdf.

Customers that qualify for the Assessor's Senior Exemption Program for property taxes may receive a 25% discount on their sewer account. If you qualify for this exemption through the Assessor's office, please contact Utility Billing at 360.337.7127 to request the discount.

The Kitsap County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution 080-2020 on April 27, 2020, to suspend temporarily penalties for customers unable to pay monthly sewer bills. The Resolution does not relieve a utility customer from the obligation to pay for sewer services.

If you're worried about paying your utility bills, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission may be able to help. Call them at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882) or visit their website at utc.wa.gov.



Monthly Sewer Rates 2020-2022

