

Coburg Wastewater System Information Sheet

August 2010

Why Does Coburg Need Sewers?

Groundwater Contamination. Coburg's wastewater now goes into the ground where it, along with other sources, is suspected of contributing to elevated nitrate levels in wells to the north and west of Coburg. The maximum safe level for drinking water is ten mg/L. Well tests nearing that level have caused the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to declare a groundwater management area for Coburg and the contaminated area "downstream" of Coburg¹.

Constraints on Growth. Because Coburg is on septic tanks, there are obstacles to building and remodeling. To build a new structure in Coburg, a property owner must have room for a functioning septic tank leach field and a backup septic tank leach field. This requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. Recent construction has been allowed on smaller lots only because plans have moved forward for a sewer system in Coburg. This construction restriction can apply to remodeling or the addition of "mother-in-law" apartments/cottages.

What Kind of System is Coburg Planning to Build?

Type of System is Determined by Outfall. The key issue for selecting a sewer system for Coburg is: "What do we do with the wastewater we collect and treat?" The City explored four possible "Outfall" options: putting the treated water in the McKenzie River or the Willamette River, piping raw sewage to the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission Treatment Plant on River Avenue in Eugene, or a combination of irrigation and outfall to Muddy Creek. It is the irrigation/Muddy Creek option that proved to be the least expensive, even though it requires the highest grade of treatment for the output.

A Septic Tank Effluent Pump System (A STEP System). To achieve that high grade of effluent, the City has selected a STEP Sewer System with a Membrane Treatment Plant. Wastewater will flow from your house or building to a septic tank on your property. The tank will have an electric pump that will pump the liquid wastes out of the tank into a City-wide collection system. The collection pipes will terminate at a treatment plant about 2,000 feet north of Monaco's factory on Industrial Way. The City plans to own and maintain the residential STEP sewer systems.

What Will this System Cost to Build? The cost (August 2010) of the project is estimated at **\$24,048,452.00**. The estimated lower cost is primarily due to a favorable Bidding Climate Adjustment factor estimated at a negative 15%. The total current (August) secured funding for the project is approximately 26 million dollars (24% grants and 76% loans). The funding reflects a change in the grant to loan ratio due to a change in the availability of funds from the USDA.

What Will all this Cost a Homeowner?

Two Expenses. The current financial plan puts two costs on the owner of a house in Coburg: a sewer rate and an LID assessment. According to the financial plan (not yet enacted by City Council) **the monthly sewer fee is currently estimated at \$76. The LID assessment will not be due until the sewer is up and running (est. 2013) and is currently estimated at \$1548.00 per average household.** Larger lots will pay more and smaller lots will pay less. This, too, has yet to be enacted by Council. When it is assessed homeowners will have the option of paying it in one lump sum or financing it through the City. These two expenses to users, a monthly rate and LID assessment, are interdependent: the higher the assessment the lower the rate and vice versa. City Council will take this into consideration when it acts on these two pocket book issues. Notice of the proposed LID formation will be sent to property owners before the City acts.

For more information on the project, Contact Don Schuessler, the City Administrator at 682-7871 or don.schuessler@ci.coburg.or.us .

¹ For complete information see: <http://gwma.oregonstate.edu/>