



Costs and Payment Options Fact

In July 2007, Mason County Commissioners passed Ordinance 91-07 establishing that properties within 500 feet of the sewer alignment in the Belfair Urban Growth Area will be required to hook into the sewer system as it becomes available. The rates and fees for the new sewer system are authorized under the Washington State Constitution (Article VIII, Section 10) and Washington State Law (RCW 36.94.140 and RCW 35.67.360) in order to operate the sewer system and finance the costs of building the sewer.

When connecting to the Belfair Wastewater and Water Reclamation Facilities, property owners will be responsible for three main costs:

1. The costs associated with construction of your side sewer from your building to the stub in the street.
2. A connection charge paid to the County for connecting to the sewer system; this is sometimes called a “conversion fee” and is assessed for switching from a septic system to a sewer system.
3. A monthly rate to operate the sewer.

How did the County develop the rates and fees for the system?

The County is developing the rates and fees for the system using a standard industry practice of estimating anticipated water usage. When designing a new sewer system, non-residential and multi-family water demands are compared to the typical amount of water a single-family residential unit uses. We use the term “equivalent residential unit” (or ERU) as a basis for this comparison. Because single-family homes are the most common type of service, and they have relatively uniform water use patterns, it makes sense to base “equivalent per unit” water demands on them. Typically, one single-family house is considered one ERU. A business or multi-family residence could have multiple ERUs depending on the amount of water they use.

How much will the connection charge be?

The fee for connecting to the sewer system will be \$3,000 per ERU. If your property is multiple ERUs, you will pay \$3,000, times your ERU. Single-family residences are considered one (1) ERU. Commercial properties/businesses are encouraged to provide their 2010 water usage data to facilitate finalization of an ERU designation. Twelve months of water data is requested for verification purposes. If no data is provided, your ERU will be a standardized estimate based on assumed water usage for properties like yours (i.e. grocery store, hair salon, gas station, etc.). Please call 360-801-2482 or email info@masoncountywastewater.com to discuss the ERU for your commercial property.

The connection charge will be due at the time you apply for a permit to build your side sewer. If you do not pay the connection fee by February 28, 2012, you will be assessed the connection fee for future phases and new development which is anticipated to be \$15,000.

What will the monthly rate be for the sewer?

The monthly rate you will pay after connecting to the sewer system will also be assessed based on your ERU. For one (1) ERU, the sewer rate will be \$96 per month. The charges will not begin until you connect to the sewer system later this year.

Summary of property owner connection costs

Type of cost	Estimated cost	Due date
Side sewer construction costs (including septic tank decommissioning)	Property dependent, see next page for more information	When you build your side sewer
Connection charge	\$3,000 per ERU	When you apply for a permit
Monthly sewer rate	\$96 per month	After sewer is operational (anticipated Sept. – Dec. 2011)

Paying for your side sewer

The following payment options are available for the property-owner costs outlined on the previous page:

Option #1 Up-front payment of costs and fees

Mason County has been informing property owners of their requirement to connect to the sewer system since 2008. We anticipate that some property owners have been saving for this investment for some time. If you have the money to pay for the construction costs for your side sewer and connection fee, you may pay these costs up-front to the County *when you apply for a permit to construct your side sewer*.

The benefits of this option include:

- No interest on construction and connection fees.

Option #2 USDA grants and loans

If you are a low-income property owner you may qualify for low-interest loans or grants through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Program. For more information, or to see if you qualify, visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa>, or call Shayna Dickie at 360-704-7717.

The benefits of this option include:

- Potential grants to fund your connection fee and construction costs; meaning no up-front costs.
- Potential low-interest loans on the connection fee and construction costs.

Option #3 County hook-up program

Mason County is offering a hook-up program, where property owners would opt-in to have the County hire a contractor, or contractors, to construct their side sewer and decommission their existing septic tank. This option is only available to single ERU property owners. If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact us by phone at 360-801-2482 or by email at info@masoncountywastewater.com.

The benefits of this option include:

- Opportunity to finance half of the connection fee (or \$1,500) and the entire construction costs for building your side sewer and roll it into your monthly sewer bill, lowering your up-front costs.
- No hassle of hiring a contractor and applying for a permit; the County will do this for you.
- The County takes on the liability for the contractor constructing your system.

Construction costs for side sewers will vary based on the type of connection for your property (i.e. gravity system vs. low pressure system) and the distance from the stub to your building. To identify the connection type for your property, refer to the property map provided to you by the County. The County will estimate the construction costs for your side sewer as a part of this program.

Estimated construction costs for County hook-up program

Connection type	Estimated construction cost (for connections 150 feet or less)	Additional charges for longer connections
Gravity to Gravity	\$5,900	+ \$1,000 per additional 75 feet
Pump to Low Pressure	\$7,500	+ \$1,000 per additional 75 feet

**There are many circumstances (i.e. topography, connection type, pump requirements, and distance from a building to the public right-of-way) that could make a connection cost more than the estimates above; all properties will be evaluated for special cases.*

Questions?

Please contact us by phone at 360-801-2482 or by email at info@masoncountywastewater.com.