

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Sewer Project

*My system works fine. Why do I have to hook up?*

You may not have a problem flushing your toilet, but that is not proof that your system works fine. Without a dye test to show where the sewage actually goes, there is no way to know if your wastewater is being absorbed into the ground, or traveling along the clay soil barrier to Lake Erie or to the Mississippi via French Creek.

*Why is it costing so much?*

This is a large system, with 45 miles of pipes, 424 manholes, five pump stations, 277 grinder pumps, and about 1,000 customers. Initial estimates brought the cost to \$44,000,000. With favorable bids, we have been able to reduce the cost to about \$32,000,000.

*Why didn't you get more grants for this?*

The Township, along with the engineers, evaluated several funding sources: Private bonds, USDA Rural Water Program and PENNVEST among them. It was determined that working with PENNVEST, they would bring us to the affordability rate as they calculate it. The affordability rate they determined was \$114 per month based on the average income as reported to the census bureau. This results in being awarded 30 year loans at 1% of \$14,016,056, and grants of \$15,875,234. The final monthly rate is \$96.00, most of which covers debt service for the loans.

*I don't live in the Lake Erie Watershed. Why do I have to hook into the sewer?*

There is a requirement that the Township officials make sure Greene Township is a safe place to live, and we are subject to the laws of the Commonwealth and federal governments. The regulatory agencies such as EPA and DEP have long known and pushed for Greene Township to put a sewer system into place. They made an exception to the boundaries created by the Watershed, and extended the lines further south to help clean up the failing systems.

*Why do I have to have a grinder pump?*

Grinder pumps are part of the low pressure lines along certain roads, and help push the sewage into the line. They are also needed when pushing sewage up hills, so depending on your topography, you may need one.

*I have valuable trees, bushes, fences, etc., that will be ruined. Will I be compensated?*

The contractors have videotaped or photographed the entire path of the sewers. They will restore the landscaping as close as they can to what it was before, but trees cannot be planted because they will infiltrate the pipes.

*What if I refuse to hook up?*

The Ordinance that was passed by the Township requires properties within 150 feet of the sewer line to hook up. We have brought the sewer to within 150 feet of your building in some cases. This is legally enforceable. If you refuse to cooperate, we will have no choice but to place a lien against your property. A lien is a notice attached to your property telling the world that a creditor claims you owe it some money. A lien is a public record and will be filed with the county records office.

*Why aren't you bringing water as well?*

We cannot install water and sewer lines in the same trench. Water would come from Erie Water Works; they already serve a few houses on Kane Hill Road. Requests for water should come from the residents directly to Erie Water Works. They require 75% of customers agree to hook into the water lines in order to extend the lines. However, water will not be extended outside the Lake Erie Watershed. You can reach Erie Water Works at 814-870-8000.

*How can we help get the cost down?*

Pay your tap in fee, pay your bills on time, and keep infiltration of storm water out of the system.

We have to pay our loan payments, and we can only do that if we receive the money from the system users. Spending money on legal fees to lien property, do Civil Actions, and send notice after notice costs everyone money.

We pay for every gallon that crosses the Millcreek line and goes to the City Wastewater Treatment Plant for cleaning. Keeping gutters and other rainwater drainage out of the system will help keep the costs down.

*Is there any good side to this?*

Keeping raw sewage out of our ditches and streams, and ultimately out of Lake Erie will help keep the Lake clean. Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) are becoming more frequent on our portion of the Lake, and this system will help reduce them.

**Greene Township Sanitary Sewer System Project**  
**Frequently Asked Questions for Property Owners**  
**Receiving Easement and/or Grinder Pump Agreements**

**February 2018**

**Q: What is the Easement Agreement for?**

**A:** The sanitary sewer has been designed to be installed on your property and the easement will permit the Township's Contractor to install it and for the Township to maintain the sewer once in service.

**Q: What is the difference between permanent and temporary easement?**

**A:** The permanent portion of the easement will remain in-place on the property for as long as the sewer exists and may be utilized by Township personnel for access and maintenance of the sewer. The temporary portion of the easement will be utilized during construction for the installation of the sewer. The Contractor may use this area for material storage, staging, placing of excavated material and equipment mobilization.

**Q: Is there a "frontage" assessment?**

**A:** The Township will not be charging a frontage assessment for this project.

**Q: How was the sewer alignment determined/designed?**

**A:** Many factors went into the design of the gravity sanitary sewer system, including:

- It must be installed near to and generally downslope of the structures it is serving.
- It must follow natural topography and drainage (downward sloping).
- It must avoid existing structures and other utilities.
- It should have a minimum number of manholes and changes of direction.
- It should be cost effective by reducing the amount of disturbance and surface restoration.
- It should avoid environmental features (wetlands and streams) to the fullest extent possible.
- It should reasonably avoid PennDOT Rights-of-Way where possible.

Once the above criteria were satisfied, the engineer attempted to minimize private property impact by staying within property setbacks and remaining as parallel with property lines as possible. The alignments have been approved by many regulatory agencies including the Department of Environmental Protection, the Erie County Conservation District and PennDOT.

**Q: When will construction begin?**

**A:** The project will take place in four phases, dependent on financing; the first of which began in April 2017. Each subsequent phase shall begin approximately 6 months apart following the start of Phase I. Overall the project is anticipated to take approximately 3 years to complete.

**Q: How can I be assured my property will be properly restored to my satisfaction?**

**A:** One of the first actions that takes place after the contract is awarded is documentation of existing conditions. This will be completed by the Contractors along the entire project area and include private property and public road rights-of-way. This is done to protect all parties and to ensure that existing conditions are restored to an equal to or better-than condition following construction.

The contract that is in place between the Contractor and the Township will require minimum standards for restoration that again require equal-to or better than restoration. It will also require timely restoration of completed areas. Since the Contractors are anticipated to work throughout the year, this will be dependent on weather conditions, but the Contractor will be required to restore areas when weather permits. For instance, temporary "cold patch" paving will be utilized when weather conditions are not suitable for hot-mix asphalt. The cold patch will later be removed for the permanent hot-mix placement. Lawn seeding will be dependent on time of year as well.

The Township has engaged the design engineer to observe the work as it takes place and ensure that the Contractors are meeting their obligations. If a Contractor has not adequately restored a property, the Township can withhold payment until the contract conditions have been satisfied.

**Q: Who do I call with concerns during construction?**

**A:** During construction, Township staff are available to take your calls and will convey concerns/complaints to our engineer who will examine the issue and address with the Contractor as necessary. We do ask your patience with some temporary inconveniences such as truck traffic, lane restrictions, dust and noise while construction is on-going. Work-zone traffic safety will be a paramount concern and again the Township asks for your patience when driving through work-zones.

**Q: Where will my sewer tap location be?**

**A:** In general a property's tap (the location where the sewer lateral from the house connects to the main sewer line) will be on the lower side of a lot. However, during construction, each property owner will be given a stake or flag to let the Township's Contractor know where it is preferred to be. Each property owner should talk to their own plumbing Contractor ahead of time, so that the plumbing Contractor can advise the property owner of the best location for the sewer tap. The Township's Contractor and engineer will determine if each location is feasible for gravity service. If it is, then the tap will be installed at that location and marked. If it is not feasible, the engineer will contact the property owner and determine a better location.

**Q: When will I have to connect to the sewer?**

**A:** Properties will not be required to connect until after the phase of work they are in is complete. For example, if your property is in the phase 1 construction project, you will not be required (or allowed) to connect until after work is fully complete and accepted by the Township. Often times, owners ask to connect while the area is still disturbed, however this often creates issues between the Township's Contractor and the private Contractor regarding restoration; therefore, this will not be permitted. Once the work on a particular phase is fully complete and has been accepted by the Township, the Township will actually mail a written "Notice to Connect" to each property owner in that phase, instructing the property owner how to proceed.

**Q: Can I have the Contractor connect my home while they are installing the sewer?**

**A:** No; at the time the sewer is being installed it is not ready to accept sewage flow. The Township's Contractor still needs to perform testing on the installed sewers, some of which needs to be completed at least 30 days after installation. Additionally, the sewer is often not connected to a completed system yet; for example a pump station may not be complete. System users will need to hire their own Contractor to complete the system connection. The sewer lateral will need to be inspected by the Township after installation and the Township may need to enter the building as a part of the inspection.

**Q: What are these stakes and markings in my yard?**

**A:** Surveyors will be placing stakes, not only where manholes will be installed, but for "offsets" as well. These offset stakes are necessary to determine where the manhole is to be installed when the manhole stake is disturbed during installation; therefore, typically three stakes are required to be set for manhole locations.

Paint markings could mean many things, but are often used to mark existing underground utilities so they are known to the Contractor during excavation.

**Q: The sewer is proposed to cross the water line from my well, how will the Contractor protect it?**

**A:** It would be of great benefit to the Contractor, Township and most importantly the property owner to mark any known locations of private underground utilities that may be in the sewer's proposed path. This could include water and gas service lines, underground electric lines, existing septic systems, drainage pipes, electric dog fences, etc. The Contractor will be required to protect and repair all of these facilities.

**Q: What are the anticipated monthly sewer charges?**

**A:** The Township's goal is to secure funding that will result in a user monthly residential user charge of approximately \$100 per month. This is the same rate that was contained in the Act 537 Plan that was published for public comment.

**Q: What is the tap-in fee?**

**A:** The Township has set the tap-in fee at \$4,750. This must be paid before you're authorized to connect.

**Q: Are loans available for the connection costs?**

**A:** Yes, PennVEST has a low interest loan program that home owners can apply for to pay for the first-time connection to a sewer system. Information can be found at:

<http://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/On-Lot.aspx>

#### Additional Questions?

- Call 825-3347
- Visit Township office at 9333 Tate Road (former Greene Elementary School)
- Attend one of the Supervisor Public Meetings. Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.
- Visit <http://www.mygreenetownship.com/> for additional information.