PORTAGE
A Natural Place to Move

Residential Sanitary Sewer Improvement Fact Sheet

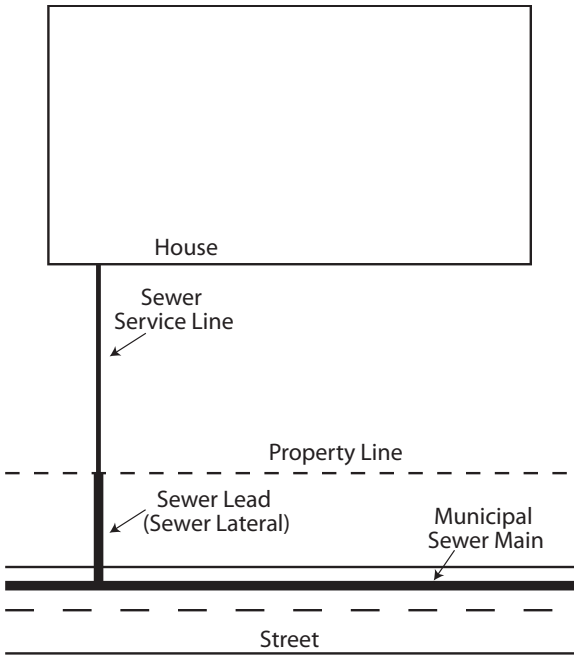
Effective January 1, 2013

To protect the valuable groundwater resource used for public drinking water from contamination, the City of Portage has a comprehensive program for the provision of public sanitary sewer service to Portage residents. While municipal sanitary sewer service is available in most areas of the City of Portage, certain neighborhoods remain unserved by the utility. Through the annual development of the city Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the City Administration identifies streets / neighborhoods in need of sanitary sewer mains. The identified locations are then prioritized based on needs, environmental issues, land use, proximity to public water bodies and other factors to maximize the protection of the environment and effectively utilize available funding. Sanitary sewer main installation projects are funded through a combination of sewer revenue bonds and special assessments charged to benefiting property owners (see Project Funding below).

Special Assessment Fees

The assessment rates and sewer lead charges for the installation of new sanitary sewer mains are reviewed and adjusted annually by City Council. The residential rates and charges contained in this fact sheet are effective January 1, 2013. The actual assessment rate and sanitary sewer lead charge for the installation of new sanitary sewer mains will be the assessment rate and sewer lead charge in effect at the time Resolution #1 is adopted by City Council. Resolution #1 initiates the Special Assessment process.

- **Assessment Rates**: A charge of $31.31 per front foot, up to a maximum of 80 feet (or $2,504.80), is normally assessed per buildable lot for the installation of an 8-inch diameter sanitary sewer main. Additionally, installation of a 6-inch diameter sewer lead from the municipal sewer main to the property line is included in the assessment for residential properties at a cost to the property owner of $977. Sewer leads installed after sewer construction must be installed by a city-approved licensed contractor and paid for by the property owner. At current rates, the typical maximum assessment per residential site is $3,481.80 This residential rate applies to single-family zoned properties only. Duplex and multi-family uses are assessed at commercial rates for the full width of the serviced properties.



- **Project Funding**: For residential sanitary sewer main installation projects, property owner assessments represent approximately two-thirds of the average construction cost associated with the installation of sanitary sewer main, with the city-at-large funding the remaining one-third of the cost.

- **Assessment payments:** Assessments for sewer main installation may be paid in full or can be paid in up to twenty installments, with interest on the unpaid balance. If Resolution #5 is approved September through March, the first installment is payable with no interest the following August. If Resolution #5 is approved April through August, the first installment is payable with no interest in August of the following year. In either case, the remaining nineteen installments with interest are payable each August thereafter. The interest rate that applies to the special assessment is typically charged at a rate one percent higher than the rate the city received for the special assessment bonds sold to finance the project. Balances may be paid off at any time.

Connecting to Municipal Sanitary Sewer

Property owners wishing to connect to City of Portage municipal sanitary sewer may contact the Portage Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4477 to request a sewer-use permit application. Information contained on the sewer-use permit application is used to determine if a sewer lead was installed during the construction of the sewer main or if one needs to be installed, the cost of assessment fees, if applicable, sewer connection charges and other conditions that may be unique to the property. A sewer connection charge (tap fee) of $300 is charged at the time of connection to sanitary sewer. City staff will also determine if installation of a water meter on a private water well is necessary (in those cases where the building is not connected to municipal water). The meter will be used to determine water usage and, therefore, sewer usage. Current meter rates are $225 for a 5/8-inch meter, $280 for a 3/4-inch meter and $345 for a 1-inch meter.

Following review and processing of the sewer-use permit by the Department of Community Development, the property owner will be contacted and advised of connection-related charges, which must be paid prior to issuance of the sewer-use permit.

- When connecting a building to a previously assessed sewer main, payment of the sewer lead charge (if not paid as part of the assessment), sewer connection charge (tap fee) and the cost of a meter, if necessary, is required at the time of issuance of the sewer-use permit. Any remaining assessment installments may continue to be paid on the established annual schedule.
- When connecting a building to un-assessed sanitary sewer main (sometimes referred to as an extension district), payment of the sewer lead charge, the sewer connection charge (tap fee) and the cost of a meter, if necessary, is required to be paid in full at the time of issuance of the sewer-use permit. The assessment charge is based on front footage and the special assessment rate in effect at the time of connection. The assessment may be paid in full or can be paid in up to twenty installments, with interest on the unpaid balance. The interest rate that applies to the assessment is typically charged at a rate one percent higher than the rate the city recently received for bonds sold to finance similar improvements. The first installment is payable with no interest at the time the sewer-use permit is issued. For sewer-use permits issued September through March, the second installment is due the following August. For sewer-use permits issued April through August, the second installment is due in August of the following year. In either case, the remaining eighteen installments are payable each August thereafter. Balances may be paid off at any time.

Following issuance of the sewer-use permit, it is the responsibility of the property owner to arrange for the installation of the sewer service line from the sewer lead to the building. In most cases, property owners will select a State of Michigan Licensed contractor to perform the installation of the sewer service line. Please contact the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4477 for more information about connecting to City of Portage municipal sanitary sewer.

Sewer Billing Rates

The quarterly sanitary sewer bill is the sum of the sewer basic charge (determined by the size of the water meter) and the usage charge (determined by the amount of water used). Current rates are noted below*.

Basic Charge for 5/8-inch Meter $24.50
Basic Charge for 3/4-inch Meter $36.75
Sewer Usage Charge..... $4.81 per 1,000 gallons

*These rates are for Portage water customers only. Schoolcraft and Pavilion Township rates vary.

To account for water used for lawn irrigation during the summer months (which does not flow into the sewer system), a "cap" on sewer charges for the non-winter quarters is set at 125% of the sewer usage charge from the previous winter quarter that includes the month of January. (This applies to residential customers only.)

Septic System Abandonment Requirements

The operation of private septic systems is under the regulation of the Environmental Health Division of the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department. For safety purposes it is strongly recommended that the septic system be pumped, crushed and filled when connecting to municipal sanitary sewer. Questions pertaining to septic systems and their abandonment may be directed to Kalamazoo County Environmental Health at (269) 373-5337.

Questions and Information

Should you have any questions or need further information about water improvements in the City of Portage, please contact the Department of Transportation and Utilities at 329-4422.