

1. Right of way - Property rights to your home and electric must be given so that county employees can fix your sewer system when needed. Along with the right of way in your yard for digging installation and repairs. Additionally the county will fill your old system and for them to touch your property you must give them the right of way there too. Can you confirm?

The County will need three "permissions" to complete the project.

The first is a right of entry to allow the County's engineering contractors to visit your property in order to effectively design a STEP system to serve the property in an acceptable manner.

The second will be a temporary construction easement on the property to allow a contractor to construct the new sewer system and abandon the existing septic system.

Finally, a permanent easement will be required for the area around the tank and control panel to allow County personnel to maintain the system in perpetuity.

Attached below is a sample design drawing that will be prepared for each homeowner as part of the detailed engineering phase.

2. Private roads - All the private roads must be given to the county. They will in turn be upgrading them at some new cost to the properties on the road. Who will these costs be extended to? Community as a whole or only those who live on those roads?

Private roads do not necessarily have to be given or dedicated to the County.

Our program to upgrade private roads to County standards will remain the same as it has existed for many decades, whereby each property owner along a specific private road pay a proportionate share of the actual cost to the upgrade and improve the road.

If and when such a project begins, the County assumes full maintenance responsibilities for the new road in perpetuity.

Furthermore, the county is willing to take over all of the remaining private roads in the SKI communities with or without a public sewer extension project. In fact, we have recently assumed responsibility for five (5) additional private roads during the years 2004-06 in the community of Kent Island Estates.

As a condition, the county upgraded these roads to public street standards and levied special benefit assessments to the property owners along those individual streets. These projects included Wicomico Road, New Jersey Road, North Lake Road and Baltimore Road. These projects were handled individually on a street-by-street basis based on property owner requests.

The above mentioned road improvement/upgrade projects cost on average \$5,300 per property owner payable over 10 years.

3. Electric panels - If your electric panel is not sufficient for the 210 requirements - who will pay to upgrade it?

The intent is to power the system directly from the meter pan/ meter socket outside of the house in order to avoid the issue of interior panel box upgrades. The pumps will operate with a 110 volt connection.

4. Hook up optional or required - If some people hook up and others refuse no one is sure what will happen. Can you explain?

By law all existing homes are required to connect once public sewer service is made available within a public sewer service area.

However from a practical sense, if a resident does not connect, they risk forfeiting their share of the Bay Restoration Fund grant which has been awarded for their connection fee (\$7,750 per house). Furthermore, they could also lose the opportunity to access low interest loan funding for the installation of the STEP system.

Finally, Homeowners that chose not to connect when service is available will still be subject to the special benefit assessment and will be billed for the system improvements regardless.

5. Construction nightmares - As we saw on postal road in Chester it took longer than expected with people being displaced for weeks. Who will be accountable and how will this effect us who travel up Rt 8 everyday?

Traffic and congestion during construction will be an important matter for both the County and State to manage effectively. And we are all deeply committed to minimizing travel disruptions for the duration of this project.

The most challenging section from a traffic standpoint will be for the force main installation from US 50/301 south until we reach the Matapeake Professional Park. This segment will be scheduled for construction during off-peak hours and/or as night work.

The majority of the work on the force main south of the Matapeake Professional Park will have little impact on traffic. This section will be located west of and out of the travel-way of Route 8. This segment will be located in the general proximity of the South Island Trail.

Construction within communities will be localized and will not create traffic congestion problems or backups. Appropriate temporary detour routes will be established as needed.

We will also provide public outreach notices/materials to inform citizens of construction activities and potential delays so citizens can plan travel arrangements accordingly.

6. We are told \$100 a month for 20 years - The current system has an automatic increase of 2% a year to meet the current shortfall. Which no one feels is adequate to pay the current loans. How long before there are rate increase for SKI? What guarantees do we have?

The financing model consisted of a debt service payment of \$70/month for 20 years and an O&M fee of \$30/month or \$100/month initially. The existing sewer system has an annual 2.5% rate escalator but that is to keep up with normal inflation, it does not go towards any funding 'shortfalls'.

An annual escalator will be needed at some point for this system, but it certainly wouldn't take effect until well after the first phase of the project is complete. The County is also investigating the possibility for a 30-year installment plan. This would reduce the monthly assessment to a lower initial value.

Also \$5 is included in our proposed \$30 O&M fee which is paid to the State as the 'flush tax' which in turn has yielded our ~\$11.8 million Bay Restoration Fund grant for this project. All homeowners are eligible to receive a \$7,750 individual portion of this grant.

The current \$5 flush tax, by law, is programed to be reduced down to \$2.50 in 2031. This reduction will be passed on to residents when it is implemented by the State.

7. Is there an option to pay the entire price without interest up front?

Yes, when the special benefit assessment is levied at the end of the project there will be an option to pay the amount in full or in quarterly installments.

Under the current proposal, which includes a State BFR Grant of \$11.8 million, State Low interest Loans and 560 vacant lots served, the up-front fee would be about \$14,500 for existing homes. You would still have to pay the \$30 per month O&M fee.

8. The new system has some strengths and weaknesses. Did you know if paper towels or feminine products get flushed it can clog the system causing backups? There are talks that users could be fined if their systems are clogged. How much and who decides? All information provided was there was no charge and only had to call for pump-out.

The tanks will be two chambered with a baffle slot separating the initial chamber from the pump chamber, just like the majority of the existing septic tanks in the region today. Practically all of the products described will be trapped in the first "solids" chamber of the tank. This chamber will be pumped out periodically as part of normal operations & maintenance.

Further, the pump is protected by a filter with hundreds of 1/8-inch diameter holes. Experienced operators of STEP systems that we have consulted with have indicated these clogging issues are extremely infrequent (with many decades of experience). In the event that a homeowner has a problem, an alarm will go off notifying that there is a problem. At that point, the homeowner can call our office and a service technician will be dispatched. There is no additional charge for service calls.

Our County Code does allow for a token fine for users who abuse any public sewer system, but no user has ever been fined. Rather we would employ an education campaign targeted specifically to the user in order to avoid these situations