Investing in Our Wastewater Infrastructure

Sewage from Sandy’s homes and businesses is treated at the City’s wastewater treatment plant located on SE Jarl Road. Despite improved operations, the plant has been unable to reliably meet our permit requirements. Sandy is also a growing community – in just 20 years our population has doubled to 11,000 residents and will double again over the next 20. Investments are needed now to treat that wastewater and comply with laws designed to protect our streams and rivers.

Where does sewage go when it leaves my home or business?

Sewage travels through a network of buried pipelines and pumps (the sewer collection system) to Sandy’s wastewater treatment plant. The final use of the water from the treatment plant depends on time of year.

**In summer** the City produces highly treated “recycled water” used to irrigate plants at a nearby nursery. The City is proud to be conserving water resources through our water recycling program.

**In winter** treated water is returned to Tickle Creek (which goes into the Clackamas River). Higher winter flows from rain and snow increase the creek’s capability to accept treated wastewater without harming fish.

The City of Sandy is working closely with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to address Sandy’s wastewater challenges. Sandy is committed to keeping customers informed about plans for wastewater improvements, protecting water quality in local streams and rivers and keeping it affordable.

Interested in learning more?

- Attend a City Council session on the Wastewater Facilities Plan and projected rates:
  Monday, September 16, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall

- Information is also available on our website at www.ci.sandy.or.us/sewer-wastewater-system-facilities-plan

Or you can contact wsfp@ci.sandy.or.us – or – 503-668-5533
Fixing the problems

Fixing Sandy’s wastewater problems will require significant investments. The City is working to make needed improvements as affordable as possible, including working with our state and federal agencies to secure funding. However, customers’ monthly sewer rates will rise to help support the project. Development fees (called System Development Charges) will also increase to ensure that new development pays its fair share.

### What’s wrong now?

1. **Leaky sewers** — Sandy’s sewer pipelines are aging. As they get older, they leak, allowing groundwater and stormwater to enter the sewers and mix with wastewater in the pipes. The City then has to treat groundwater and stormwater along with wastewater. This problem is called inflow and infiltration (I&I).

2. **Wastewater treatment plant** — Sandy’s wastewater plant is also aging and isn’t performing as designed — the treated wastewater often doesn’t meet federal and state requirements. The plant also lacks capacity to serve new residents and businesses.

3. **Discharge to Tickle Creek** — Tickle Creek flows into the Clackamas River which has special protections under state law. Those laws prevent Sandy from increasing the amount of treated wastewater released to Tickle Creek as the population grows.

### What is Sandy doing?

1. **Sewer system improvements** — The City will repair and replace aging sewer pipelines and disconnect storm drains from the sewer. The City is currently identifying locations with the highest I&I flows where improvements can be made most cost-effectively. These improvements also reduce the volume of water to be treated and discharged from the wastewater plant.

2. **Treatment plant upgrades** — Sandy is investing in upgrades to the existing plant to bring it into regulatory compliance and make the most of our community’s past investments. However, upgrading the existing plant to meet all of Sandy’s long-term needs isn’t feasible.

3. **A new path forward** — Studies show the best path forward for Sandy is to build a second wastewater treatment plant. The new plant will use state-of-art membrane technology producing high quality water similar to what comes out of your tap. Plans call for the highly treated water from this new facility to be released to the Sandy River.