

# Area K central sewer homeowners' guide for properties served by vacuum collection systems

Central sewer service is coming to 14,000 homes and businesses in the Phillippi Creek drainage basin, an area that stretches from University Parkway south to Clark Road, and from I-75 west to Sarasota Bay.

One of Sarasota County's goals during the project is to help affected property owners know what is happening, what to expect and whom they can contact when questions or issues arise. Project engineers and county staff are available and committed to resolve issues quickly.

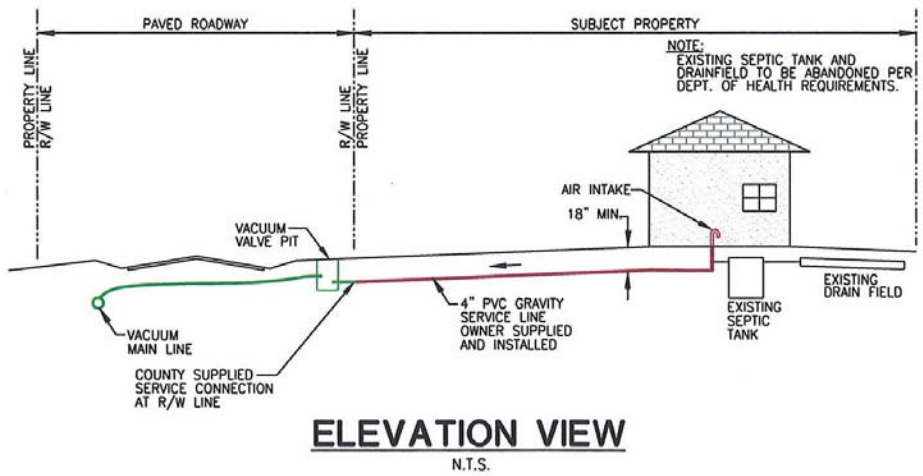
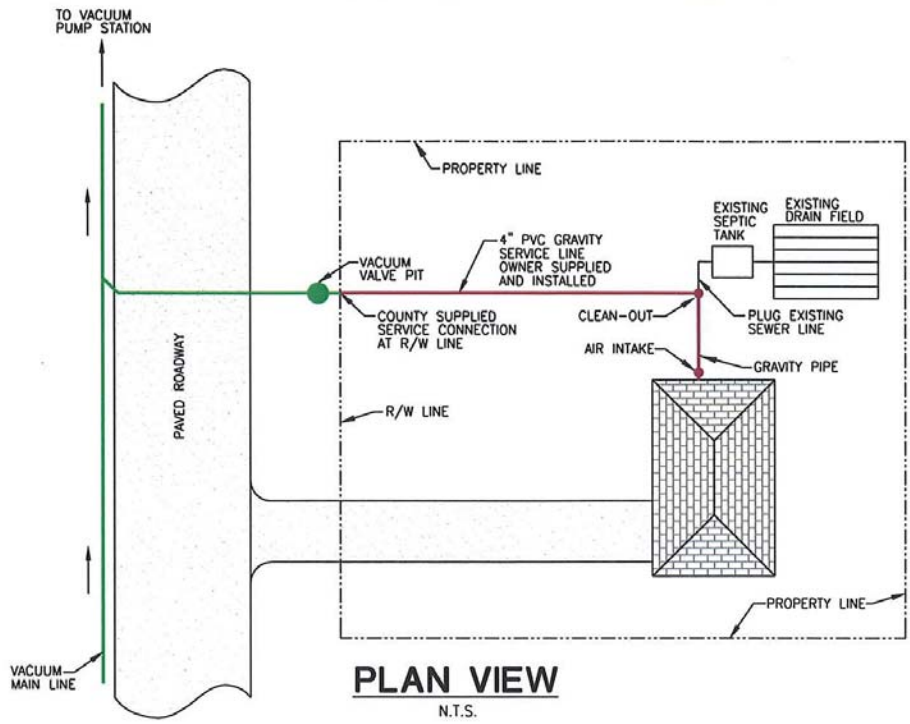
Within this guide, you will find:

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## Sarasota County's pledge to residents

1. We will make every effort to keep residents informed of the construction schedule and will work to limit inconveniences during construction. Work will generally be conducted between 7:30 a.m. and sundown, mainly on weekdays, although there may be circumstances when night and weekend work is required.
2. We care about your neighborhood's appearance and quality of life. The county requires the contractor to restore construction areas to original conditions, based on conditions documented by a pre-construction videotape. The only exceptions may be for unpermitted obstructions (shrubbery, etc.) located in public rights-of-way or dedicated utility easements.
3. Excavations or trenches will be backfilled at the close of each workday and/or otherwise approved safety barricades and fencing will be erected. Your safety is our top priority.
4. The contractor will patch roads where they are disturbed by construction, and after sewer construction is completed throughout the area, the county will resurface county-maintained roads to provide a smooth roadway surface. This will occur after allowing sufficient time for pipe testing and trench settlement.
5. A county-employed inspector will be on-site and will work to resolve issues that are reported in your area. With other questions or issues, please contact Utilities Customer Service at 861.6790.

# PHILLIPPI CREEK SEPTIC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROGRAM TYPICAL VACUUM SEWER CONNECTION



**LEGEND**

- COUNTY SUPPLIED AND INSTALLED
- OWNER SUPPLIED AND INSTALLED

# Customer Costs

Single-family homes that are required to connect to a central sewer system when the service becomes available in their neighborhood are subject to fees as follows:

**1 Capacity fee** - customer's share of costs to build and maintain wastewater treatment plants and related facilities. New customers that connect to the county's central sewer system pay this fee. The current capacity fee is \$2,031 per single-family residence.

**2 Non-ad valorem assessment** - based on a portion of costs the county incurs to build the system. This assessment starts the year that central sewer service is made available to the property, and appears on the property tax bill at \$165 each year for 20 years. This assessment also may be paid up front for \$2,345.

**3 Sewer deferred standby fee** - \$8.28 per month from December 2003 until date of application for service. This fee is due in full when application for service is made. It represents the county's effort to fairly assign system construction costs and associated debt for all sewer connections countywide.

**4 Rate surcharge** - \$19 monthly for 20 years to offset the remainder of costs involved in construction of sewer collection system.

**5 Monthly wastewater service charge** - based on water use.

**6 On-lot expenses** - for abandoning customer's septic system and connecting the home to central sewer system will vary. Property owner pays this cost directly to the plumber hired to perform the work. Amounts will vary depending on site-specific conditions. See estimated on-lot cost detail on next page.

**7 Assistance for customers with limited income**

For owner-occupied properties with income-eligible homeowners, fees may be paid through a no-interest, deferred payment loan offered by the Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development. Assistance is limited and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 941.951.3640 for program details.

**Please note: an incentive rebate of up to \$1000 is available** for property owners who connect within 90 days of notification of service availability. Details will be included in a future mailing.

Estimated Costs				
	Item	One-time cost if paid up front	Cost if financed	Other / notes
1	Capacity fee	\$2,031	20 years at 3% interest; billed at \$11.26 per month <sup>1</sup>	One-time fee of \$11.41 payable to Clerk of Court is required if financing the capacity fee
2	Non-ad valorem assessment	\$2,345	\$165 billed annually with property taxes for 20 years <sup>2</sup>	This assessment also applies to vacant lots.
3	Sewer deferred standby fee	\$8.28 per month from Dec. 2003 until date of application for service –	N/A	This fee is paid in full at the time application for service is completed
4	Rate surcharge	N/A	\$19 billed monthly for a 20-yr period	This surcharge also applies to vacant lots.
5	Monthly wastewater service charge	Wastewater service charge is subject to change	N/A	Estimated charge is \$34 - \$50 per month, based on average water use of 3,000 - 5,000 gallons; customers using wells for drinking water pay a flat fee of about \$42 per month
6	On-lot expenses	See following page for detail of estimated on-lot expenses		

<sup>1</sup> The capacity fee balance may be paid in full at any time with no penalty. The county requires this fee to be paid in full if the property is sold. The capacity fee is financed through Sarasota County Utilities and is offered to all customers in the program.

<sup>2</sup> Non-ad valorem assessment balance may be paid in full at any time with no penalty. The county does not require this assessment to be paid in full if a property is sold. The new owner may assume payments on balances due.

Mortgage holders may have different requirements. If paid over time, the non-ad valorem assessment is collected and enforced by the Tax Collector the same as property taxes.

**Information is subject to change.**

<b>Estimated Costs to Owner for On-lot Work</b>		
<b>Vacuum Connection</b> compared with Low Pressure Connection		
Item Description	Low Pressure	Vacuum
1) Abandon septic tank	\$650	\$650
2) Install sewer service (assumption: house is 50' from right-of-way)		
a. Gravity connection: 4" PVC gravity line		
25' to front of house		\$375
50' front of house to right-of-way line		\$750
b. Low Pressure:		
25' of 4" PVC gravity to pump chamber	\$375	
50' of 1-1/2" force main to right-of-way	\$500	
3) County-supplied and installed pump chamber*	\$0	
4) Owner-installed electrical control panel**	\$250 to \$500	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$1,775 to \$2,025</b>	<b>\$1,775</b>
<b>Difference:</b>	\$0 to \$250	
<b>Variables</b>		
1. Landscaping restoration*	Lot-dependent	Lot-dependent
2. Additional gravity pipeline (beyond 50' assumed above for illustration)	\$15/linear foot	\$10/linear foot
3. Additional force main line (beyond 50' assumed above for illustration)		
4. Permits as required by the Building Department and Department of Health	Owner's responsibility	Owner's responsibility
* County assumes no liability for landscape restoration.		
** Estimated cost applies to customers whose electrical service panel can accept the additional circuit required. Additional costs would be incurred if any upgrade to the existing service panel and/or upgrade to the service line from the roadway is required.		

# What to expect during vacuum sewer construction

Before work crews arrive to install sewer collection systems in your neighborhood, Sarasota County Utilities/Environmental Services hopes you will take time to learn about the construction process and how you can help reduce "frustration factors" that come with any disruption to neighborhood services.

Following is a summary of the construction process. The contractor will give as much notice as possible before beginning work on your street.

**Stage 1 - Survey staking and pre-construction video** - This stage includes physical staking of the proposed utility system using stakes or other markers. After staking, the site will be videotaped to record pre-construction conditions. Residents are urged not to disturb the survey stakes/markers.

**Stage 2 - Right-of-way trimming and clearing** - This stage could take a few days per street and may involve cutting and removing driveway sections, drainage structures and other obstructions located in public rights-of-way or dedicated utility easements.

**Stage 3 - Directional drilling** - In selected cases, rather than using an open trench for pipes, work crews will use small drilling machines to install portions of the pipe network without significantly disturbing the area. This technique is used to protect heritage trees and deal with other restrictions like narrow rights-of-way and decorative driveways. Each drilling operation is usually finished within a few hours. Small piles of dirt and drilling medium at each end of the installed pipe could remain for a longer period.

**Stage 4 - Mainline piping** - Residents should expect inconveniences during construction of the sewer collection lines. Work crews will cross driveways, walkways and may excavate entire streets. Streets will remain open, but partial lane closures may be necessary. Residents will notice the contractor digging trenches of various depths as other crews follow, assembling and installing lengths of pipe. The length of pipe installed in one workday varies from 300 to 1,500 feet depending on ground conditions. A resident's driveway may be inaccessible for a short time. By the end of each day, the contractor will temporarily restore driveways and replace mailboxes and backfill trenches and/or otherwise erect approved safety barricades and fencing. Because of high water table conditions, groundwater "dewatering" is often necessary. This involves setting temporary well points and pumping groundwater with portable

pumps and hoses to approved points of discharge, usually into existing stormwater drainage systems. Sometimes the dewatering equipment operates during the evening and it is important that only authorized personnel operate and adjust this equipment.

**Stage 5 - Collection system component installation** - The contractor will install vacuum valve pits in the right-of-way and extend gravity service laterals from the pits to each resident's property line. The valve pits are fiberglass tanks that range in height from five to eight feet. They are buried flush with the ground in the public right-of-way or dedicated easement.

**Stage 6 - Restoration** - The contractor will rely on the construction plans and the pre-construction videotape when restoring construction areas to original conditions. Restoration activities that will begin once the pipe installation is complete may take several weeks or longer, depending on construction. Residents with concerns about the quality of restoration work should call the project manager at 861.0566. The county will resurface county-maintained roads in the project area after all restoration is complete.

**Stage 7 - Notice of service availability** - Once the system is certified for use, the county will notify residents when it is time to abandon septic systems and connect to the sewer system. You will receive a complete package of information on how to connect once the sewer system is operational in your area.

## How can the property owner prepare?

1. Plan now to remove unpermitted obstructions (shrubby, basketball assemblies, etc.) from the public right-of-way or dedicated utility easement. The county cannot guarantee they will be replaced.
2. During construction, keep children and pets away from work areas and equipment.

# Phillippi Creek Septic System Replacement Overall Program Frequently Asked Questions

## Who is affected?

### How can I tell if I am in one of the areas to receive central sewers?

The county will notify property owners in the areas to be served by central sewers through this program. If you would like to confirm the area in which your property is located, please call Customer Service at 941.861.6790 and provide your address. You may also contact us by email at [mycentralsewer@scgov.net](mailto:mycentralsewer@scgov.net).

### If I am in the area to receive central sewer, do I have to connect?

Yes. Florida Statute No. 381.00655 and Sarasota County Ordinance No. 2000-079 require that you connect to an available central sewer system within 365 days of written notice that service is available to your property.

### Are there any exceptions to this requirement?

No. Connection is mandatory for anyone receiving official notification that service is available to the property. Failure to comply as required in the ordinance may result in code enforcement procedures against the property owner.

## How & when to get connected

### What is required of me to connect to central sewer?

Sarasota County will notify you in writing when service is available in your area and will provide information you need to establish your sewer account with Sarasota County Environmental Services. The county will also provide details on abandoning your septic system and connecting your house to the central system.

### When will service be available to us?

After the vacuum pump station is completed and on-line; working schedule is included in cover letter of this package. Letters will be sent indicating when sewer service is available.

### How will I know that service is available?

Once the pump station is operational, Utilities Customer Service will send certified letters to customers where connection points have been provided, notifying them that sewer service is available. The customer's signing of receipt of the letter starts the clock for both the 90-day rebate for early connection and the 1-year requirement to connect to the system. Property owners can request an extension in writing not to exceed 45 days. Notices are sent by certified return receipt to the owner's address on file with the Sarasota County Property Appraisers Office.

### What if I am away when a notice is sent?

Notices are sent to the property owner's address on file with the Sarasota County Property Appraiser's Office (same address used for tax bills). If the notice is not received, a new notice will be sent.

### Why do we have to hook up within a year?

Florida Statute No. 381.00655 and Sarasota County Ordinance No. 2006-093 require that you connect to an available central sewer system within 365 days of written notice that service is available to your property. There are no exceptions to this requirement. Connection is mandatory for anyone receiving official notification that service is available to the property. Failure to comply as required in the ordinance may result in code enforcement procedures against the property owner.

## **General construction concerns**

### **On which side of the street will you construct the sewer lines?**

The county will hire an engineering firm to design each phase of the program. The engineering firm will determine where sewer collection lines will be placed and where connection points will be located. In general, sewer lines will be installed along the side of the road. During construction, every effort will be made to minimize, or repair, disruption to driveways and landscaping.

### **If roads, driveways, sidewalks or mailboxes are affected by construction, will the county fix the damage?**

Yes. The county requires that the area be restored to its original condition, or better. Some landscaping may not be saved or replaced if it is located in the right-of-way. Homeowners with site-specific concerns will be able to discuss them with the engineer during the design phase.

### **How long will my street be disrupted by construction?**

That depends on many factors, including weather, the number of connections on the street and the sewer technology installed. Generally, a street may be disrupted for construction from three to four weeks; however, certain conditions may require more time.

### **Will the county supply a list of qualified plumbers?**

We will make available a list of plumbers who have completed a county-sponsored workshop covering the required connection/installation technologies.

## **Central water service, other concerns**

### **For homes using wells for drinking water, will central water be provided at the same time the sewer system is installed?**

In most cases, central water will be made available, but connection is not currently mandatory. For information on costs, call Utilities Permitting at 941.861.0629 or 941.861.0623 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### **How will the county address vacant lots?**

A future connection will be provided during design and construction of the collection system. The capacity fee will not be levied until a home is built and connected to the central sewer system. The non-ad valorem assessment and surcharge (see "Customer Costs" information) will be instituted while the lot is still vacant and would be due for payment similar to any other non-ad valorem assessment associated with the property.

### **Can we leave the septic tank in place for emergencies?**

No. A major goal of the program is to eliminate hazards caused by septic tank problems. All tanks must be crushed and filled following connection to the central sewer system.

## Costs

### **Will there be an incentive of \$1000 for early hook up? What if we can't get a plumber out before the 90 days expires?**

Property owners who connect within 90 days of notification are eligible for a \$1000 incentive rebate. Property owners can request an extension in writing not to exceed 45 days.

### **What is the \$8.28 monthly deferred sewer standby fee?**

This fee represents the county's effort to fairly assign system construction costs and associated debt for all sewer connections countywide. The county incurred debt to build its central sewer system; the \$8.28 monthly fee is part of a repayment schedule that was adopted as a means of distributing those costs among all who benefit from the system. Major infrastructure such as water reclamation facilities, pumping and transmission piping, and distribution networks need to be in place before all individual sewer connections can be made. Expanded capacity to serve the regional needs of our customers is underway and is a part of the county's ongoing Capital Improvement Program to provide central sewer service.

### **How can economies of scale be realized by getting a group rate on plumbing work?**

Homeowner groups may choose to work together to contract with the same plumbing contractors to do the work. Customers are encouraged to seek bids from reputable contractors, and select the one that is best for them.

### **Do I have to have a licensed plumber? Can I do the work myself as long as I do it to code?**

A homeowner who actually lives in the home can do the work, provided they obtain appropriate plumbing permits and perform the work to code. A tenant in a rental property may not do the work, nor may a property owner who does not live in the home. Permits can be obtained at the Building Department, 1301 Cattlemen Rd., Sarasota, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Thursday hours are 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### **What if I recently installed a new septic system per county regulations and now I need to hook up to central sewer?**

The county will credit your utility account if you have had septic system repairs that cost \$1,000 or more that were permitted by the Health Department within the last 10 years. You will be required to provide the county with proof of payment for the work. The maximum credit is prorated based on when the repair or replacement cost was incurred and cannot exceed \$1,560.\*

If approved, this credit would first be subject to any monies due Sarasota County Environmental Services and the balance would appear as a credit on your first utility bill following approval.

\*In no event shall the credit exceed the costs of the repair or replacement.

## Contact us

### **Where can I get more information about the septic system replacement program?**

Call Customer Service at 941.861.6790 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or e-mail us at [mycentralsewer@scgov.net](mailto:mycentralsewer@scgov.net). Information is also posted on the Web at [www.mycentralsewer.org](http://www.mycentralsewer.org)