

McCormick Woods 2011 STEP System Conversion Program

City of Port Orchard Public Works Department

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question 1: How much will it cost me as the Homeowner?

Answer: Nothing, the City is paying to convert your system from the existing STEP System to the new Grinder Pump System. (\$6,000 per home is the estimated installation cost)

Question 2: How do I benefit as a Homeowner if I convert to the Grinder Pump System compared to my current STEP System?

Answer:

- Currently your septic tank is pumped every five years, with the conversion to the new system that would not need to be done as solids will not remain in the tank, they will go directly to the sewer line from the grinder pump. Homeowners receive a “new” system since there will be a new pump, new control panel, and cleaned septic tank.
- Biosolids, clothing, etc. will not plug the pump which is a common occurrence with the STEP system.
- Converting from STEP to grinder will help eliminate odors at McCormick Pump Station Number 2, located at McCormick Woods Dr. & Old Clifton Road, and reduce corrosion of the sewer system which currently occurs.

Question 3: What exactly is involved with “Regular Maintenance” under the 1986 Agreement you reference in your letter?

Answer: Regular maintenance is a periodic inspection from the City, whereby the City will pump your septic tank once every five years, and if needed replace your pump once every ten years. The Homeowner is responsible for emergency calls after business hours and general service calls to a plumber if a problem occurs.

Question 4: What is the cost of the grinder pump?

Answer: The pump will cost about \$2,700 to purchase this year. Please keep in mind this may go up or down based on the prices of the pieces to manufacture the pump.

Question 5: Which grinder pump are you planning to install? What is the warranty on the pump and would I be able to use the warranty as the homeowner if a problem occurs?

Answer: The City is planning to install a “Barnes” 1.25” NPT Replacement Core Unit with Level Control Submersible Grinder Pump with a minimum of 2 horsepower (HP). The warranty is a limited 24 month warranty which homeowners would be able to use in the event a problem occurs.

Question 6: If I decide to convert will I get Owner’s Manuals or information in the event I need to perform maintenance?

Answer: Yes, the City will provide a copy of the owner’s manuals upon completion to each homeowner that participates.

Question 7: How will the work be performed?

Answer: The contractor will pump the existing system to remove the solids, then fill the pump chamber (where the existing liquid pump is located) with concrete and remove the green lid. The Homeowner will be able to landscape this location or place grass over the top. In addition, the main septic tank will have the chamber where the liquids currently pass through filled with concrete and the solids chamber will be the location the grinder pump is installed. If you currently have three green lids in your yard, you will only have two upon completion of this project. However, if you only have two lids in your yard, you may still have both upon completion of the project. There will be a City Inspector on the site during construction and will be available to answer questions during this process. McCormick Woods STEP/Grinder Conversion Drawings are available at <http://www.cityofportorchard.us/public-works-publications>.

Question 8: Are the pumps simply exchanged?

Answer: No, please refer to Question 7 above.

Question 9: Are the pump outflow orifices the same size on both pumps?

Answer: The contractor will use the same discharge pipe, therefore they would have to be the same.

Question 10: Is the pre-existing sewer line from the septic tank/pump chamber to the street sewer line retained?

Answer: Yes, see Question 7 above.

Question 11: What are the impacts that I'll see to my landscaping?

Answer: None, the design was formulated with low impact development in mind. The green access lids currently in your yard are where the contractor will access the system to perform the work. In all likelihood there will not be any impacts to landscaping, but if there are, the plants will be protected and moved or replaced if needed at no cost to you, the Homeowner. The homeowner will be responsible for any additional landscaping they would like to add.

Question 12: If I convert to a grinder pump what types of service/maintenance issues might I expect?

Answer: No service issues or maintenance issues during the life of the pump which will vary from home to home based on what is disposed of and the amount of use.

Question 13: How often would I need to service the grinder pump once installed?

Answer: A homeowner would want to have the pump checked every three (3) years for an amperage draw and keep the lids clear to allow the pump to adjust with the pressure in the atmosphere.

Question 14: Would a loss of power have the same effect to the grinder system that the STEP system has?

Answer: Yes, the grinder pump will require power. If you do not have a way of powering your current pump during power outages, the grinder pump will not be any different.

Question 15: How is effluent pumped through a grinder pump less corrosive than effluent from the current system?

Answer: Grinder effluent contains solids and is pumped within the next immediate pump cycle once discharged from the house. In contrast, a STEP system has had solids separated and only the liquid is sent through the sewer lines. With the removal of the solids, the liquid begins a process called anaerobic digestion whereby it goes septic and is therefore corrosive to metal pipes and components (i.e. pumps).

Question 16: How is the STEP system considered a primary cause of odor and what would happen with the grinder pump system?

Answer: See Question 15 above.

Question 17: What service/maintenance issues are problematic for the STEP system?

Answer: STEP systems are liquid only pumps, therefore any biomass (diapers, clothing, etc.) will plug the pump as noted above in Question 2.

Question 18: In the past the City has notified us when they are pumping our tank 48 hours in advance, will this change?

Answer: No, the City or the contractor will notify each homeowner 48 hours prior to beginning work on your property.

Question 19: What is the City's timeline for performing the conversion if I decide to do this?

Answer: The City anticipates starting to convert the first sixty (60) homes in mid-October and anticipates completion in March 2012 and will continue with 60 additional homes each year for ten (10) years for a total of 600 homes.

Question 20: Will there be any changes to my sewer rates?

Answer: No, there will not be any changes in your sewer rates based on the installation of a grinder pump. The sewer bill at your residence is set based on your water consumption.

Question 21: Is there an option to convert to the grinder pump at a future date or do I need to make my decision now?

Answer: After the first 600 offers have been completed during the ten (10) year period, the City may decide to go back and check with previous addresses that previously declined the offer the first time through.