2026 Library Chats Summary

Meeting neighbors where they are for project updates

Last summer, we heard that the community wanted more one-on-one time with the Black Diamond Sewer Upgrade project team. To create those opportunities, we hosted Library Chats at the Covington and Black Diamond libraries this spring. At these events, community members:

- Learned how water flows through the sewer system
- Saw maps of the current pipe location
- Asked questions about the project
- Signed up for project updates
- Shared feedback

Image description: A project team member stands at a table with project information at the Covington Library.

Event and attendance

We spoke with 45 people at these events:

- March 13, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Covington Library
- March 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Black Diamond Library
- April 17, 3 to 6 p.m., Covington Library
- April 25, 12 to 4 p.m., Black Diamond Library
- May 9, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Covington Library
- May 12, 4 to 7 p.m., Black Diamond Library

Information shared with interested community members

Staff shared project information, including:

- Black Diamond Project Flip Book
- Frequently Asked Questions (English)
- Frequently Asked Questions (Spanish)
- Frequently Asked Questions (Vietnamese)
- How Wastewater Flows Graphic

People asked the team about the wastewater system and career opportunities

Here are some of the questions we heard and answers we provided:

Project questions

How will this project affect local wildlife?
No matter where we upgrade the pipe, we will follow rules that protect wildlife.

We know the area has forests, streams, and lakes. These resources support birds, deer, fish, and small animals.

The existing pipe is located mostly under roads. If the upgraded pipe stays in the same place, impacts to wildlife should be low.

Will you need to remove trees?
Sewer work often requires digging. To dig, we may remove trees and plants. King County replaces plants when we remove them. Our Mitigation and Monitoring team checks new plants for years to make sure they survive.

How are these pipes impacted by flooding and big storms?
In this area, the pipes that carry sewage are separate from the pipes that carry rain. The pipe we're working on only carries sewage. Rain and floodwater should not enter the sewer pipes.

Sewer service

Will septic users be required to connect to sewer as part of this project?
No. This project upgrades a regional pipe. Homes and businesses cannot connect directly to it.

Local sewer agencies manage the smaller pipes near homes and businesses. They also decide where people can connect to new sewer service. King County's role is to move and treat the wastewater that local agencies send to us.

Why should septic users care about this project?
As project neighbors, we want to talk to you because:

- **Construction will slow traffic.** The existing sewer pipe is located under local roads.
- **Email updates will help you stay informed.** You can learn about traffic impacts and share feedback.
- **King County runs a 24/7 septage disposal and treatment facility.** This is at South Treatment Plant in Renton.

Do septic users pay King County's monthly wholesale sewer rate?
No. Septic users do not pay this rate.

How can I connect to sewer service if I am on septic?
Local sewer agencies decide where residents can connect to new sewer service. To learn more, contact:

- Soos Creek Water & Sewer District
- City of Black Diamond
- City of Kent
- King County Local Services (for unincorporated areas)

Wastewater system

What is the difference between a water district and a sewer district?
Sewer districts collect and treat water that goes down the drain. This water is also known as wastewater.

King County partners with 18 cities, 15 local sewer utilities, and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. We collect and treat wastewater from King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties at our five regional treatment plants. Wastewater from your area is treated at South Treatment Plant in Renton.

How does wastewater get treated?
At our regional treatment plants, wastewater goes through these steps to get clean:

- **Primary Treatment:** First, we use screens to remove trash and other things that don't belong. Then the water flows into a big tank. In the tank, heavy human waste sinks to the bottom. Then screens remove it.
- **Secondary Treatment:** Next we add air (oxygen) to the water. This helps bacteria that exist in human waste grow. As it grows, the bacteria breaks down and "eats" remaining human waste (like pee, poop, and puke).
- **Disinfection:** We treat the water with bleach or ultraviolet light. This kills the remaining germs and viruses.
- **Advanced treatment:** Some of our treatment plants make recycled water. This water gets extra cleaning so our customers can use it to water sports fields and landscaping.

To learn more, visit our website about how we clean wastewater.

How do I sign up for treatment plant tours?
Sign up for a public tour on our Upcoming Events page.

Career opportunities

Is there opportunity for part-time employees at King County WTD?
There are full-time and part-time jobs available in clean water services. To learn more and search for job opportunities, visit our job opportunities website.

For more information or to schedule a meeting:

- **Email** the project team at BDSewerUpgrade@kingcounty.gov
- **Call** Annie Plumley at 206-263-3203
- **Visit** the project website.

Alternative Formats on Request: 206-477-5371 | TTY Relay: 711