

Equitable wastewater futures in King County

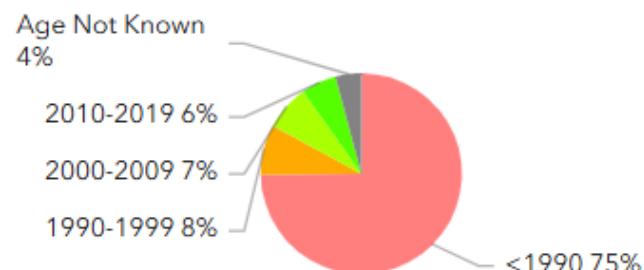
Urban King County is home to over 37,000 on-site sewage systems (OSS), many of which are past their intended life span and vulnerable to failure.

Public Health – Seattle & King County's Equitable Wastewater Futures Program works to identify the best wastewater treatment solutions for these properties, which includes sewer connection or OSS replacement.



Why we're tackling this

- Commitment to equity:** Historic inequities excluded certain communities, particularly in south King County, from sewer connections. Today, 44% of urban OSS are in areas highly vulnerable to public health emergencies.
- Protecting public health:** Many of these aging systems are likely to fail in 10-20 years, which can expose people to untreated sewage and contaminate nearby bodies of water.
- Reducing costs:** Replacing an OSS costs \$40K to \$60K, and sewer connections can be even more expensive! These costs are usually wholly covered by the homeowner. By proactively planning, we can reduce costs and help secure grant funding.
- Planning for the future:** When you replace an OSS, it can't go in the exact same location. Smaller urban lots can only replace their OSS so many times. Sewer connections are more sustainable long-term and provide more housing options.
- Preparing for a changing climate:** OSS are more vulnerable than sewers to flooding, which will occur more in King County due to climate change.



Year **urban** OSS were built

What we're doing

- We're collaborating with utility, land-use planning, and community partners to develop a model septic to sewer conversion program that equitably spreads the costs to convert.
- We developed [information](#) to help property owners navigate the process to connect to sewer.
- For more information, check out these [resources](#).

