

SEWER ISSUES

The Boston Harbor sewer system is nearing 30 years old, an age when certain parts of the system reach their expected life and need to be repaired, replaced, or upgraded. Capital costs associated with repairs can be expensive. County staff and the Boston Harbor Utility Advisory Committee have started planning for these anticipated expenses and it is one of the reasons that water and sewer rates have increased in recent years.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

We are building a reserve fund so that expensive repairs can be more readily addressed without a costly assessment to homeowners.

We are also addressing ongoing operation and maintenance issues, permit limits, and the added pressure on the water and sewer systems of unauthorized connections, such as rentals beyond one Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU).

**Provided by your
Boston Harbor Utility
Advisory Committee**



Thurston County Public Works

9605 Tilley Road S, Suite C
Olympia, WA 98512

Permitting & Land Use

(360) 786-5490

www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting

Utility Contacts

Pat Allen, Manager (360) 867-2078

Kevin Patching, Supervisor (360) 867-2288

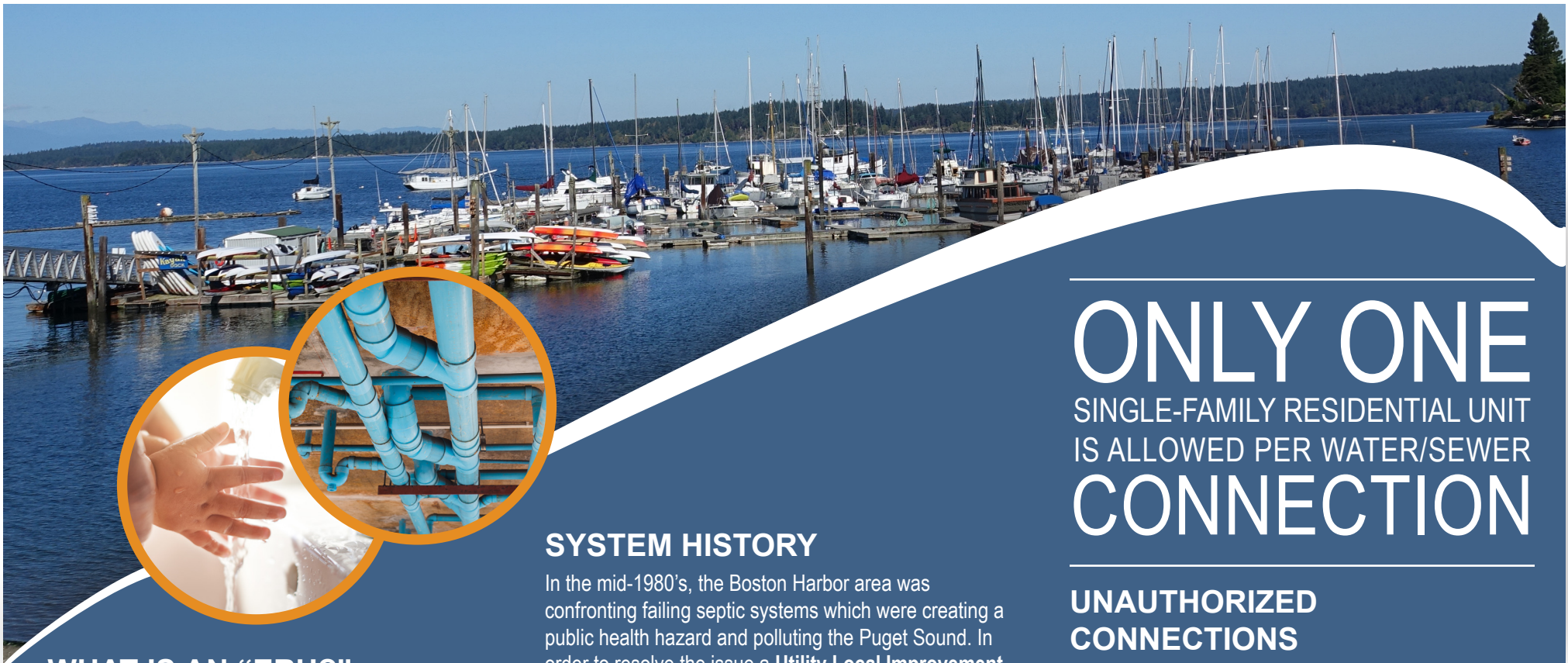
Email: TCUtilities@co.thurston.wa.us

BOSTON HARBOR

WATER & SEWER UTILITY

***HISTORY, OPERATIONS,
& CHALLENGES***

SEPTEMBER 2019



ONLY ONE

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL UNIT
IS ALLOWED PER WATER/SEWER
CONNECTION

WHAT IS AN “ERU?”

An **Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)** is based on a typical Single-Family Residential Unit. As defined in Thurston County Code title 15.12.012 a single-family residential unit means:

“One or more rooms in a residential building or residential portion of a building which are arranged, designed, used or intended for use as a complete, independent living facility for one family and which includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation. Any duplication of the above permanent provisions, specifically cooking, eating, or laundry facilities, will be considered in excess of a single ERU allocation for a single parcel and in excess of the allowed sewer service capacity for one ERU.... any outbuilding with kitchen or cooking facilities, shower stalls, bathtub or laundry facilities are not to be connected or served by the sewer utility...”

SYSTEM HISTORY

In the mid-1980's, the Boston Harbor area was confronting failing septic systems which were creating a public health hazard and polluting the Puget Sound. In order to resolve the issue a **Utility Local Improvement District (ULID)** was formed to fund the construction of a sewage collection and treatment system.

Two years later, a second ULID was formed to fund improvements to the existing water system which suffered from poor source water quality and low pressure. Each property within the ULID was assessed charges based on its approved ERUs in order to pay for the construction and improvements of these systems.

With a few exceptions, the water and sewer system services a limited area which primarily corresponds with these ULID boundaries.

As of July 2019, all authorized water service connections are accounted for, including some undeveloped properties within the ULID boundary as well as other properties outside of the ULID boundary that are already built or for which a **Certificate of Water Availability (COWA)** has been issued.

UNAUTHORIZED CONNECTIONS

The Boston Harbor water and sewer systems are designed to serve a limited number of ERUs. With few exceptions, each property within the ULID is allowed one service connection for water and one for sewer. Each property served and each connection is assumed to be one ERU.

By adding additional living units the financial burden on ratepayers is increased and the capacity of the system to provide adequate water and sewer service is put at risk. This could lead to limited fire fighting capacity, water shortages, and problems with the wastewater treatment plant.

Thurston County has the responsibility to ensure compliance with the requirement that each property served not exceed one ERU. Enforcement of this requirement can include all authorized actions per Thurston County code including water shutoff until the violation is corrected.