

Comparison of Sewer and Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS)

Issue	OSTDS	Sewer
Cost	Generally low cost for passive system: \$3,000 to \$6,000 for standard 3 bedroom single family residence. Nitrogen reduction - \$10,000 - \$15,000.	High up front cost for construction of treatment facility and connection lines. Connection costs for family residence range from \$2,500 to \$20,000.
Maintenance and Monitoring	Homeowner responsible for monitoring and reporting problems. Minimum maintenance required. Inspection and pump-out (\$250-\$400) recommended every 3-5 years. EPA recommends management and maintenance program for all onsite systems.	Minimizes homeowner responsibility. Homeowner not responsible for maintenance but pays monthly service charge based on usage.
Water Recharge	Provides for recharge on individual lots.	Takes effluent away from area to central location and disposal site.
System Life	Systems generally last from 15-25 years depending upon use and maintenance.	Requires ongoing maintenance of treatment plant and collection system.
Failures	Failures may be undetected but limited to small amounts (300 – 400 gallons per day). Failures generally isolated and limited to one specific site.	Monitored 24/7. Spills can be very large (1000 – 100,000 gallons) but monitored and reported. Line leaks may be undetected. Failures affect multiple homes and can potentially contaminate large areas.
Treatment	Technology currently limited to advanced secondary treatment. Significant increase in cost and requires ongoing maintenance and oversight.	Advanced wastewater treatment.
Funding	Individual owner pays full cost, few funding options available.	More funding options – both loan and grant programs.
Upgrades	Upgrades less costly but impacts individual owners.	Upgrades costly but impact all owners over shorter time frame.
Development Options	Limits development options for site. Takes up physical space on site as well as requiring setbacks to wells and surface water and future modifications. Limits on flow and type of waste. Using cluster systems provides additional options for development.	Opens areas to development. Few limitations on lot size. Few limits on lot flow or type of waste. Requires land area for sprayfield