

02/18/2026

Dear city Stevenson Council Members and City Administrators,

My name is Brian McNamara. I am writing to address the agenda issue of property owners' mandatory connection to the recently installed sewer line in parts of the city. Additionally, I wish to address the issue of mandatory fines for not connecting when a homeowner has a functional septic system in place. This issue is of great concern to me because I am a property owner and resident being adversely affected by these decisions.

The problems with the sewer treatment infrastructure are well documented. Past and present planning commission and city council members have admitted that these issues got out of hand due to past lack of foresight, neglect, and mismanagement. The planning commission and city council moved forward with residential developments and encouraged businesses that have high water use and effluent discharge which increased the load on an insufficient and sewer treatment plant. The city has been forced by the state to upgrade the treatment plant due to excessive effluent discharge. These issues are not of the making of residents or property owners.

Here are the issues that bother me the most (in no order):

- The entire sewer system east of Rock Creek is reliant on transport to the sewage treatment plant located on the west side of the outdated Rock Creek Bridge. The sewer pipes run under the bridge. Rock creek upstream of the bridge is a known high landslide risk area. One major landslide has already occurred heavily impacting the viability of the bridge. Flooding has also been an issue.
- City council, planning commission and administrators have repeatedly stated the need to capture more payers to help pay the costs. Water and sewer rates have skyrocketed.
- Input prior to implementation was apparently gathered in a working group that was limited to a few hand-picked property owners.
- The city implemented the extension of the city sewer line in a poorly communicated fashion and heavy-handed manner.
- Property owners were not notified of the mandatory repayment costs and fines for not connecting in advance. These charges will be a burden on properties with functioning septic systems.
- A carrot and stick approach was implemented after the fact to force property owners to accept these mandates which do not adequately address these costs. This especially true for the elderly and those on fixed incomes. Property liens may be implemented for those not paying.

- Property sale values can be adversely impacted in several ways.
- If landlords are forced to pay city connection and septic decommissioning renters are likely find rents increasing and significantly higher bills further reducing affordable housing.

All that said I would like to make the following suggestions:

- Timely and direct notification to all affected property owners including invitation to a special meeting with the City Council and administrators prior to public hearings or ordinances.
- The city should waive the forced payment of the cost of a project many did not request. The cities after the fact offer of 6 months grace period is not a real carrot for a property owner with a functional septic system.
- The city should waive the monthly fines for not connecting until such time as the owner's current septic system fails. Mandatory connection would seem reasonable at that time.
- Finally, owners who do connect should not have to decommission a working septic system in case there is another landslide, flood or other factor shutting down the sewer system in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brian McNamara