

2.3 Municipal Water and Sewer Service

The Importance

Central Water and Sewer services have an immense impact on development patterns in any region. Development density is very limited without municipal sewer and water. Without sewer and water service, ample room must be provided for septic fields and to keep water wells separated from the septic systems. Sewer systems are particularly important for the creation of major residential subdivisions. At a certain point of density and number of lots, New York State requires that each lot pass a percolation test in front of a Health Department official if the subdivision does not have sewer service. As a result, given the poor septic soils of the Capital District, no major residential subdivisions have been developed since the early 1980's without sewer service.

There are some health advantages to central water systems, as they must maintain minimum standards of water quality for public consumption. Private wells may become contaminated with no warning signs until health problems indicate the contamination.

About this indicator

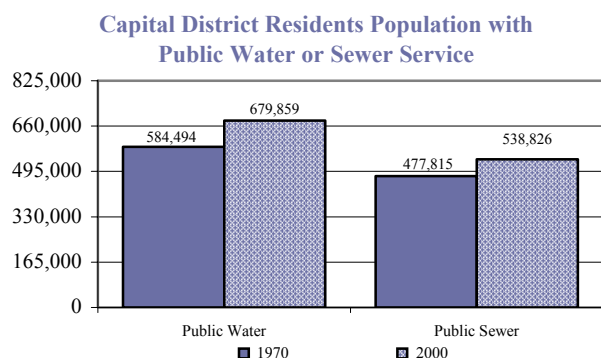
This indicator uses the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Water's data to calculate the number of people in the Capital District served by municipal sewer systems. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Envirofacts database was used to calculate the number of people served by central water service. The 1970 Census collected data on the number of households with central water and sewer service. To provide a historic comparison, the number of persons per household in 1970 is used to estimate the number of people who were served by these services.

Sources for this Indicator

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Water, Descriptive Data of Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants in New York State.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency, Envirofacts database
- The 1970 United States Census

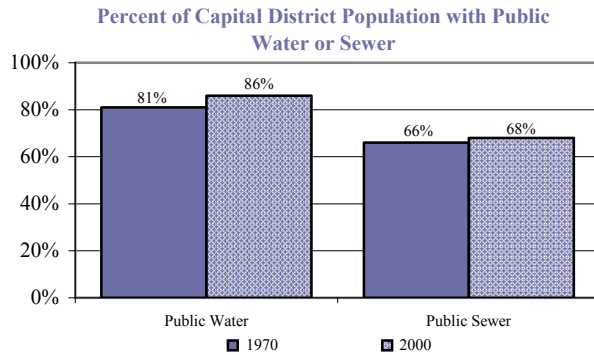
Water and Sewer Service in the Capital District

The growth in the number of people served by central water service in the Capital District has outpaced the population growth. 16% more people are served by public water today than were served in 1970. Over the same period, the Region's population grew by 10%. Considering that the number of persons per



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household has declined significantly since 1970, a much higher number of households receive water service than in 1970. The percentage of residents receiving water service has grown from 80% in 1970 to 86% in 2000.



The number of people receiving sewer service has also outpaced the population growth, though not by as much as water service. There was a 13% increase in the number of people receiving water service while the percent of people receiving sewer service climbed from 66% in 1970 to 68% today. As with water service, the decline in the number of people per household indicates that there was a more than 13% increase in the number of households served.