



Planning Commission

Draft 2013 Wastewater Management Plan

Agenda Date: 6/17/2013
Agenda Item Number:
File Number: 13-0399

Type: report **Version:** 2 **Status:** Filed

Draft 2013 Wastewater Management Plan

Issue:

This oral report presents draft policy changes regarding onsite septic systems and other alternative wastewater technologies proposed within the City's draft 2013 Wastewater Management Plan. The policies may have land use implications.

Commission Deliverable: Provide policy input to City staff.

Staff Contact:

Steve Sperr, P.E., Water Resources Engineer 360.753.8739
Andy Haub, P.E., Planning & Engineering Manager, 360.570.3795

Background and Analysis:

The City's Wastewater Management Plan guides the Wastewater Utility in operating, maintaining and replacing its existing infrastructure as well as planning for growth. The current Plan was adopted by City Council in 2007 and has been largely implemented.

The Plan is currently being updated, and a draft 2013 Plan is scheduled for adoption by City Council later this year. The draft Plan reflects the current healthy state of the Wastewater Program. In general, the City's Wastewater Utility is:

- Financially stable.
- Enacting adequate policies and regulations for new development.
- Responding proactively to infrastructure needs.
- Providing one-to-one technical expertise to community members.
- Incorporating wastewater needs with broader water resource issues such as stormwater and drinking water.

Key policy changes in the draft Plan compared to existing policies include: more financial assistance for those seeking to convert onsite systems to the public sewer system, and a shift toward allowing new onsite septic systems under a broader range of circumstances. The use of alternative technologies such as STEP and grinder pump systems would also be allowed under certain limited conditions. These refinements to existing policies and codes could better facilitate infill and small plat development without appreciable

public or environmental health implications. The permitting of new onsite septic systems would be consistent with a recent evaluation of onsite risks completed by the Thurston County Environmental Health Section.

Specifically, policy changes proposed in the draft Plan are as follows:

- No net increase in onsite septic systems (Objective 1B). Conversely, the 2007 Plan calls for a reduction in the number of septic systems over time. New septic systems in limited infill circumstances would be allowed under this Plan.
- Provide limited utility funding for sewer extensions associated with individual septic system conversions to public sewer systems (Strategy 1B3).
- Allow the payment of City sewer connection fees over time for septic conversions (Strategy 1B4).
- Allow the limited use of alternative sewer technologies, specifically grinder pumps, for new development (Strategy 1C1).
- Allow STEP sewer systems for septic conversions and limited infill development (Strategy 1C2).
- Initiate volume-based sewer rates for residential accounts (Strategy 3A1).

If adopted by the Plan, these policies would be further evaluated and potentially adopted into the Olympia Municipal Code in 2014-2015. The draft Plan meets the Department of Ecology's requirements for wastewater planning.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Plan will affect current and future residents of Olympia. Key interested parties include residents likely to pursue infill and small developments, as well as septic owners.

Options:

1. Provide input to staff for potential incorporation into the Plan and/or discussions with City Council.

Financial Impact:

None at this time. The draft Plan does not directly implement changes in wastewater rates or regulations.