CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS

BUREAU OF SANITATION

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May 9, 2008

Tracy Egoscue, Executive Officer
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA. 90013

OW.RE

Dear Ms. Egoscue:

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT No. 3 FOR PERIOD ENDING MAY 11, 2008 REGARDING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS (OWTS)

The City of Los Angeles is pleased to submit the third annual report on the status of compliance, progress, and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region and the City of Los Angeles, regarding Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS). This report was prepared and submitted for the period ending May 11, 2008 pursuant to MOU Section IV. The provisions of the MOU are designed to protect water quality throughout Los Angeles through regulating the discharge of wastewater where the public sewer system is not available or is not utilized. This report demonstrates the City's diligent efforts in compliance with the MOU and beyond, to achieve the general goals of protecting the water resources, both surface water and groundwater, within the City of Los Angeles. Our commitment has not only resulted in compliance but, in fact, surpassed the requirements of the MOU.

To ensure effective implementation of the MOU, a group, known as the Septic Tanks Policy Review Taskforce (Taskforce) was formed to coordinate activities related to septic tank issues and to develop any necessary policy changes and modifications. The Taskforce consists of representatives of the Office of the City Attorney, Chief Legislative Analyst, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Environmental Affairs Department, the Bureaus of Engineering and Sanitation, the Board of Public Works, and Council District 11. The Taskforce meets quarterly to review and coordinate compliance.

There are eight separate requirements listed in Article IV of the MOU. One of the eight requirements has a specific deliverable in the third year, which is to provide an annual update of the OWTS inventory to the RWQCB. The City has completed all the requirements of the MOU, as demonstrated in the attached report.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please contact myself at (323) 342-6236 or Hyginus O. Mmeje at (323) 342-6241.

Sincerely,

Brent Lorscheider, Acting Division Manager
Wastewater Engineering Services Division
Bureau of Sanitation

c: Cynthia Ruiz, President - City of LA Board of Public Works
Paula Daniels, Commissioner - City of LA Board of Public Works
Andrew Adelman, General Manager- Department of Building and Safety
Enrique Zaldivar, Director, Bureau of Sanitation
Christopher Westhoff, City Attorney's Office
Keith Pritsker, City Attorney's Office
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Mike Mullin, Mayor's Office
Rafael Prieto, Chief Legislative Analyst
Dana Prevost, Department of Building & Safety
Dionisia Rodriguez, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Whitney Blumenfeld, Council District 11
Norman Kulla, Council District 11
Tom Erb, Department of Water & Power

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD, LOS ANGELES REGION AND THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES REGARDING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS (OWTS)

Effective Date: May 12, 2005 (Execution Date by City) C-108122

ANNUAL PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

AS OF: MAY 12, 2008

ANNUAL REPORT NO. 3

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

ANNUAL PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (REPORT NO.3) ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD, LOS ANGELES REGION AND THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES REGARDING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to review the progress of the various Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) projects, coordinate activities, resolve issues, and ensure compliance with the mandated schedules.

BACKGROUND:

On May 12, 2005, the City of Los Angeles (City) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) that requires the City to:

- Conduct an inventory of existing septic tank properties in the City by May 11, 2006,

- Inform property owners of their responsibilities to properly maintain and operate their septic tanks located within the City by May 11, 2007,

- Amend City Code by adopting an ordinance, within five years, which will require operating permits for high-risk septic tank properties (those within 900 feet of active water well or within 600 feet from impaired water bodies).

Additionally, the MOU has other requirements, all of which the City is in compliance with.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

The City's Septic Tanks Policy Review Task Force (STPRTF), also called Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) Taskforce, and the various City staff continue to review the MOU and implement its requirements. There are eight separate responsibilities or requirements listed in Article IV of the MOU, only one of which has specific deliverable, in the third year. The specific deliverable is:

Requirement 3: **The City shall provide annual updates of the (owts) inventory to the Regional Board.** (Article IV, Item No. 3)

Detailed progress on the various requirements of the MOU is reported later herein.

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE AND PROGRESS REPORT

The City continues to work on completing all the requirements in the MOU and on issues outside the current scope of the MOU related to septic tanks. The third year of MOU requirements has been successfully completed and specific deliverables have been completed.

MOU REQUIREMENTS (Responsibilities)

Requirement No. 1

1. The City shall remain the agency responsible for the enforcement of all applicable Code requirements for the siting, design, approval, installation, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of City-regulated OWTS.

   Due Date

   On-going.

   Progress/Status

   On-Schedule

   Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) continues to process OWTS permits applications including new construction, repairs, replacements, additions, and abandonment. In instances where septic tanks are proposed in close proximity to streams, the LADBS staff will work with the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) staff and with the RWQCB to determine the best course of action, including but not limited to requiring supplemental septic treatment systems. These requirements are now set forth by the LADBS in the Plan Check and Inspection System (PCIS) and in the Information Bulletin (attachment #8).

   In accordance with this MOU, the City accepted and shall remain the agency responsible for the enforcement of all applicable Code requirements for the siting, design, approval, installation, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of City-regulated OWTSs. However, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is developing State regulations regarding existing and future septic tanks that may require connection to sewers or addition of supplemental septic treatment systems to existing and new septic tanks where the site is not suitable for a conventional septic system, and where water quality objectives are

violated due to the discharge of the septic system. Because of the changes, the City will be discussing with the RWQCB regarding whether or not to reopen the MOU.

Requirement No. 2

2. The City shall review the Code within the time required under applicable state law or regulation following the effective date of any statewide standards adopted pursuant to sections 13290 and 13291 of the California Water Code (CWC), if necessary, in order to retain its Qualified Local Agency (QLA) status under this MOU.

Due Date

On-going.

Progress/Status

On-schedule, pending the final development and adoption of the State Regulations regarding septic tanks.

The SWRCB continues to work on developing State regulations regarding existing and future septic tanks that may require inspection and/or connection to sewers or the addition of supplemental septic treatment systems to existing and new septic tanks where the site is not suitable for a conventional septic system, and where water quality objectives are violated due to the discharge of the septic system. Because of the potential changes and to ensure alignment with the potential State regulations, the City is holding off on any review of the Code and the regulation pending the final development and adoption of the State regulations. Once the State regulations are adopted, the City will review them and their impacts and evaluate the necessary action including whether to reopen the MOU.

Requirement No.3

Upon the effective date of this MOU, the City shall begin an initial inventory of all existing City-regulated OWTSs, utilizing an electronic database. This may be accomplished using water meter computer records that do not pay sewer fees. Such initial inventory shall be completed within one (1) year of the effective date of this MOU. The initial inventory shall consist of:

- The total number of existing City-regulated OWTSs
- The location of each existing City-regulated OWTS by street address.

Notwithstanding the earlier termination or expiration of this MOU, the City shall continue to compile the inventory described above until it is completed.

Due Date

May 11, 2006.

Progress/Status

Completed, please refer to the first annual report (Report No. 1), which was due May 11, 2006 and previously submitted to the RWQCB.

Requirement No. 3 (second part)

The City shall mail out a verification survey to those properties that are identified as potentially having OWTSs based on the initial inventory. The survey shall inform the property owners of their responsibilities to properly maintain and operate their OWTS and shall include a questionnaire verifying the OWTSs records, including the type of subsurface disposal system in use, if such information is available to the property owner. The City shall consult with the Regional Board in the development of the survey. The initial inventory will then be updated based on the completed surveys. The time frame for mailing out the survey and updating the initial inventory will be two (2) years from the effective date of the MOU. The City shall provide annual updates of the inventory to the RWQCB.

Due Date

May 11, 2007.

Progress/Status

Completed, the City prepared a questionnaire **(Attachment 1),** and submitted it to the RWQCB for their review for MOU Requirement No. 3. The subject questionnaire was mailed, in 2007, to those properties that the City had identified as potentially having OWTS based on the initial inventory. The initial OWTS inventory was included in the Annual Report No. 1 submitted to the RWQCB, by May 11, 2006.

In 2007, the City mailed out the questionnaire to 13,892 properties listed on the OWTS initial inventory plus 65 additional properties that were later identified as potentially having OWTS. This brings the total to 13,957. To provide the OWTS customers with some useful information on maintenance and operations of their system, as required by the MOU, a Homeowner's Guide to Septic System **(Attachment 2)**, was prepared in English and Spanish, by the City and was mailed out along with the questionnaire.

Additionally, the internet link to the City's website for the septic system: **http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/index.htm** **(Attachment 3)** is now provided for reference.

The recipients of the survey were given the option of returning their questionnaire via mail, or fax, or internet. The City staff also offered help to those who wanted to complete their surveys over the phone.

2007 OWTS Inventory:

As of April 1, 2007, the City received 5405 completed surveys out of a total of 13,957 that were mailed out. A total of 564 surveys stated that their properties were connected to the sewer and 3,258 surveys stated their properties were connected to a septic system. In addition, there were 831 incorrect addresses and 14 duplicate data entries. Based on the 2007 survey result, the City updated the initial inventory, showing 12,548 properties (13,892+65-564-831-14=12,548) as potentially having OWTS.

2008 OWTS Inventory:

As of April 1, 2008, the City has completed a second survey of the remaining estimated 8,560 OWTS properties that did not respond to the initial survey, in 2007. The City received approximately 3,675 completed survey responses out of the approximately 8560 surveys questionnaires that were mailed out. Approximately 547 of the completed survey responses indicated that they are connected to the sanitary sewer and are hereby removed from the 2008 inventory, pending further investigations. .

Further, as indicated above, eight hundred and thirty one (831) OWTS were removed from the inventory, in 2007, as incorrect addresses pending field investigations or verifications. In 2008, we completed the field investigations and found that only 774 of them are truly incorrect addresses and that the remaining 57 are valid addresses and are hereby returned to the inventory.

Additionally, upon further research and investigation of the permit records of the potential OWTS properties in our inventory, we found that 437 of them have permit numbers that indicate potential connection to the sanitary sewer. These 437 properties are hereby removed from the 2008 inventory pending further investigations.

In addition, during this reporting period of April 1, 2007 to April 1, 2008, the City issued approximately 20 OWTS permits of which three of them are for new developments, while the remaining 17 are for repairs, replacements or modifications of the exiting OWTS.

In summary, based on the outcome of the second survey result, in 2008; the field investigation of incorrect addresses; and the addition of 3 new permits issued during this reporting period, the City has updated its potential OWTS inventory as of April 1, 2008 and it now shows a total potential OWTS inventory of 11,624 (12,548 + 57 – 547 – 437 + 3 = 11,624). For more information, please see the 2008 OWTS Inventory Table, below. Also, for further details, please see **Attachment 4** for a map and a list of the locations of the updated inventory of existing potential 11,624 OWTS properties in the City.

2008 OWTS Inventory Table

Description	Additions to the Inventory	Subtractions from the inventory
2007 OWTS Inventory	12,548	
Field verified OWTS	57	
OWTS connected to the City sewer based on survey/questionnaire responses		547
OWTS connected to the City sewer based on the review of existing permit records		437
New OWTS permits issued during the reporting period. (*not included in GIS map attachment #4)	3	
Total 2008 OWTS Inventory	11,624	

Requirement No. 4

4. Within one (1) year of the effective date of this MOU, the City shall provide the Board with estimated depths to groundwater based on available data in areas in which OWTS have been identified.

Due Date

May 11, 2006.

Progress/Status

Completed, please refer to the first annual report (Report No. 1), which was due May 11, 2006 and previously submitted to the RWQCB.

Requirement No. 5

5. Within two (2) years of the effective date of this MOU, the City shall utilize the inventory to identify those properties with OWTSs that may pose a potential threat to water quality (defined thereafter as high-risk systems). High-risk systems shall be defined as those properties with OWTS that are within 900 feet of active water well or within 600 feet from water bodies identified as impaired due to high levels of nitrates and/or bacteria under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. The City shall submit the list of those high-risk systems to the Regional Board no later than two (2) years from the effective date of this MOU.

Due Date

May 11, 2007.

Progress/Status

Completed.

2007 High Risk OWTS Inventory:

In 2007, the City utilized the updated OWTS inventory of 12,548 potential existing OWTS in the City to identify 100 properties with OWTS that may pose a potential threat to the water quality. Eighty-seven of the 100 properties were within 600 feet of impaired water bodies, while 13 properties were within 900 feet of active water wells.

2008 High Risk OWTS Inventory:

Since the 2007 high risk OWTS inventory, the City has obtained a more accurate stream map from the USGS, which the City has used to identify high risk OWTS properties. Additionally, the Unified Plumbing Code (UPC) and the California Plumbing Code (CPC) has increased the requirement for OWTS setback from streams, from 100 feet to 150 feet. The City has also used this new setback requirement to identify high risk OWTS.

In light of the above changes in USGS stream maps and the new setback requirements of the UPC and CPC, the City has utilized the updated 2008

OWTS inventory of 11,624 potential existing OWTS, in the City, to identify 1,341 high risk OWTS, which are properties with OWTS that may pose a potential threat to the water quality. The identified high risk OWTS for this reporting period are listed in **Attachment 5**, and depicted on a map as **(Attachment 6).** Specifically, 43 of the 1,341 identified high risk OWTS properties are within 600 feet of impaired water bodies, 21 are within 900 feet of active water wells, while 1,260 are within 150 feet of a stream, other bodies of water or a flow path. Additionally, there are 17 high risk OWTS properties that overlap or are both within 600 feet of impaired water bodies and within 150 feet of a stream, other bodies of water or a flow path. Please, see the table below for a summary of the City's 2008 High Risk OWTS inventory.

2008 High Risk OWTS Inventory Table

Description	Additions to the Inventory	Subtractions from the inventory
OWTS within 600 feet of impaired water bodies	43	
OWTS within 900 feet of drinking water wells	21	
OWTS within 150 feet of streams, other bodies of water or flow paths	1,260	
OWTS that overlap (within 600 feet of impaired water bodies and within 150 feet of streams, other water bodies or flow paths)	17	
Total 2008 High Risk OWTS Inventory	1,341	

Requirement No. 6

6. Within five (5) years of the effective date of this MOU, the City shall review and amend its Code by adopting an ordinance requiring an operating permit for high-risk systems in accordance with code. The operating permit will require the owner to submit an inspection certification once every three years to the City. The period for enrolling all properties that

are considered a high-risk system will be ten (10) years from the effective date of this MOU.

Due Date

May 11, 2010; Adoption of the ordinance.
May 11, 2015; Enrollments.

Progress/Status

On-Schedule. The City is in the preliminary stages of developing an ordinance to require an operating permit for high-risk systems as required by the MOU. Additionally, the ordinance may also require operating permits for conventional OWTS in the City of Los Angeles.

Requirement No. 7

7. Within two (2) years of the effective date of this MOU, the City shall review its current enforcement procedures relating to OWTSs that are not properly installed, operated and maintained.

Due Date

May 11, 2007.

Progress/Status

Completed; the City has reviewed its enforcement procedures as summarized in **Attachment 7.**

Additionally, the City's LADBS has finalized and adopted an Information Bulletin **(Attachment 8)** that sets forth the minimum criteria for the approval of OWTS, for single to two family dwelling units in the City of Los Angeles. The Information Bulletin is also available online at: **http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/owts.pdf**

Requirement No. 8

8. The City shall require any applicant for a Sewer Permit for a Private Sewage Disposal System ("Permit") to install or repair an OWTS that is required to obtain a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) from the Regional Board pursuant to Section III hereof to notify the Regional Board and shall not issue any such Permit until the applicant has received a WDR from the Regional Board.

Due Date

On-going.

Progress/Status

On-Schedule.

The City has adopted the OWTS permitting flowchart **(Attachment 9)** for proper handling of the OWTS permit applications. This includes referring OWTS applications that are determined to be multi-residential (more than two units on a property), commercial, or located in high-risks areas to the RWQCB.

During this reporting period, the City of Los Angeles has referred two potential OWTS properties to the RWQCB and the RWQCB issued WDR permits to them. The City of Los Angeles continues to comply with this requirement as necessary.

ADDITIONAL CITY EFFORTS OUTSIDE THE MOU

Septic Tanks Policy Review Task Force

As indicated in our first annual report (Report No. 1), a group, known as the Septic Tanks Policy Review Taskforce (Taskforce) was formed at the request of Commissioner Paula Daniels of the Board of Public Works, to coordinate activities related to the septic tank issues and to develop any necessary policy changes and modifications. The Septic Tanks Policy Review Task Force consists of representatives of the Office of the City Attorney, Chief Legislative Analyst, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Environmental Affairs Department, the Bureaus of Engineering and Sanitation, the Board of Public Works, and Council District 11. The following are progress reports on initiatives undertaken by the Taskforce:

OWTS Report for the City Council

The Taskforce prepared and submitted a council report **(Attachment 10)** on issues of septic tanks, which was adopted by the Board of Public Works on October 18, 2006 and forwarded to the City Council for consideration. Also included in attachment 10 is a revision to the council report, dated March 18, 2008. The purpose of the council report and the revision to it is to provide updates on City's efforts to address specific issues of septic tanks and water quality in the City, and the broader issues of defining, restoring and protecting streams from impacts of construction activities and close proximity of septic tanks to streams.

Although, the City Council has yet to consider the referenced report, the implementation on the interim policy for permitting septic tanks within the report is already being implemented and has been included in the LADBS procedures (Attachment 7).

Coordination among City Departments and Bureaus and with the RWQCB – Permitting Flowchart

Various City Departments, RWQCB and the Taskforce worked together to develop and review the attached permitting flowchart (Attachment 9)

Providing Sewers to Unsewered Areas of the City of Los Angeles:

The City continues to pursue its overall goal of protecting the groundwater, surface waters, and streams by encouraging people to move away from septic systems and connect to the sewers. The Taskforce may be looking at potential installation of sewers in areas of the City of Los Angeles that are presently unsewered and to possibly require properties to connect to sewers, at some point in the future depending on the State regulations for OWTS.

Additionally, the City is open to seeking funding sources including grants to provide for sewers.

OWTS Outreach Efforts

The City has undertaken progressively enhanced outreach efforts. The homeowner's guide developed by the City was sent to about 14,000 residences potentially having OWTS system. Copies of the English and Spanish versions of the homeowner's guide are included as attachment #2. The homeowner's guide has been provided to various departments and Council offices for distribution.

Additionally, upon request, we will provide the Homeowner's Guide to libraries, Neighborhood Councils, non-governmental organizations, environmental groups and others planning similar public outreach events. Additionally, the City has developed a septic system website with valuable information for upkeep, maintenance and cleaning of septic system. The City's septic systems website is: ***http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/index.htm***

APPENDIX A

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ITEMS ARE REQUIRED FOR EVALUATION OF THE ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.

1. The City of Los Angeles ("City") shall submit the following information to the Regional Board once every five years upon request:

    A. The number of Permits (as that term is defined in the Memorandum of Understanding to which this Appendix A is attached ("MOU")) issued for new construction, repairs, additions, and abandonment, organized by type (conventional or alternative) of City-regulated OWTSs (as that term is defined in the MOU).

    B. The results of any monitoring program for City-regulated OWTSs.

    C. A log containing complaints, directives to take corrective action and status of responses to directives for City-regulated OWTSs.

2. The five-year evaluation of the City's implementation of the MOU by the Regional Board may include:

    A. Office review of the Code.

    B. Field review of City staff activity pertaining to its performance under the MOU.

    C. Field review of various types of City-regulated OWTSs. Any inspection of such OWTSs shall be done with the permission of the property owner or pursuant to appropriate legal process, the obtaining of which shall be the sole responsibility of the Regional Board.

D. Office review of files, inspection records, monitoring results and reports, plans or other information pertaining to City-regulated OWTSs.

E. Review of City-regulated OWTS owner outreach, education, and compliance assistance programs.

F. Review of any groundwater-monitoring program implemented by the City for the purpose of monitoring discharges from City-regulated OWTSs.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES COMPLIANCE WITH APPENDIX A - INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR EVALUATION OF THE ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Due Date

January 10, 2010, and every five years thereafter

Progress/Status

On Schedule.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: The OWTS verification survey Questionnaire.

Attachment 2: The English and Spanish versions of the Homeowner's Guide to Septic System prepared by the City.

Attachment 3: Internet link to the City's website for the septic system: http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/index.htm

Attachment 4: The updated OWTS inventory and map.

Attachment 5: The updated High-risk OWTS inventory.

Attachment 6: Map of the updated High-risk OWTS inventory.

Attachment 7: OWTS Enforcement Procedures.

Attachment 8: LADBS Information Bulletin on OWTS.

Attachment 9: OWTS permitting flowchart.

Attachment 10: The OWTS City Council report and the revision to it.

I:divfiles/owts/mou/annual reports/2008 owts annual reports

April, 30, 2007

<Property Owner /Resident>
<1234 Any Street>
<City, State, Zip Code>

Questionnaire Id No. _____

Questionnaire About Your Septic System

Please complete the questionnaire on line at www.lasewers.org/septic-questionnaire. You will need the above Questionnaire Id No. to complete the questionnaire on line. If you prefer, return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by February 22, 2007. You may also fax the completed questionnaire to (323) 342-6210. For each question, please check the correct answer and provide the requested information.

1. At the listed above address are you the owner or the resident/tenant? __Owner /___Resident

2. Is your property address correct as stated above? ____Yes / ____No
If no, what is your correct address? Fill in below:

_____

3. Is your property connected to a City/County sewer? ____Yes / ____No / ____Don't Know
If your answer is no or don't know, please go to question number 4. If your answer is "yes", please stop here and mail in your questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, or fax to (323) 342-6210.

4. Does your property have a septic system? ____Yes / ____No / ____Don't Know
If yes, where is it?
Front yard. ____Yes / ____No
Back yard. ____Yes / ____No
Other: (Please specify) _____

5. What type of septic system is it? (See *A Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems* for details)
Leachate system (leach field): ____Yes / ____No
Seepage pit system: ____Yes / ____No
Other: (Please specify) _____
Don't Know: ____

6. When was your house or residence built? (year) _____.
If you don't know, please estimate the age of the house or residence: _____ (years)

7. How often is the septic system inspected? Please check one: every month ____, every 6 months ____, once a year ____, every two years ____, every three years ____, every four years ____, don't know ____, other frequency (please state) _____.

8. How often do you have the septic system cleaned or pumped? Please check one: every month ____, every 6 months ____, once a year ____, every two years ____, every three years ____, every four years ____, don't know ____, other _____.

9. What is the name and phone number of the company that services your septic system?

_____

Questionnaire Id No. _____

10. Has your septic system failed in the past? ____Yes / ____No / ____Don't Know
If yes, when was the last time it failed? (year) _____.
If yes, was any of the following replaced or repaired:
Septic tank? ____Yes / ____No
Seepage pit? ____Yes / ____No
Leach field? ____Yes / ____No
Other? ____Yes / ____No
Don't Know: _____

11. May we contact you directly if we have questions regarding your sewer system?
If so, please provide us with the following information:

Name:_____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

12. Please note below any comments and/or questions you may have about your septic system or this questionnaire.

_____

_____
_

_____
_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this verification questionnaire. If you did not complete this questionnaire on line, please place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope or fax to (323) 342-6210.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Inspect Regularly

Hire a professional to inspect your septic system at least **every three years**.

Pump Regularly

Septic tanks should generally be **pumped every 3 to 5 years**. Alternative septic systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components will need to be inspected more often. The professional who inspects your septic system should be able to give you a better idea as to how often you should have your septic tank pumped.

Use water efficiently

Using water efficiently means that less water will enter your septic system. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a single-family home uses an average of **70 gallons of water per person per day**. Dripping faucets waste some **2,000 gallons of water** each year. **Leaky toilets waste as much as 200 gallons per day**.

Flush Responsibly

What you flush can damage your septic system. Dental floss, feminine hygiene products, condoms, diapers, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels and other kitchen and bathroom items **can clog and damage your septic system**.

Dispose of Responsibly

Hazardous waste, chemicals, gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze and paint **can stress or destroy biological processes used to break down waste in your tank**. These items can also contaminate surface and groundwater. Safely dispose of household hazardous waste and leftover chemicals by bringing them to a **S.A.F.E. Collection Center** or other **household hazardous waste collection program**.

Take care of your Drainfield or Seepage Pit

- Do not drive or park vehicles on your **drainfield** as it can damage your pipes, tank or other septic system components. It can also cause the soil in your drainfield to become compact so that the drainfield cannot function properly.
- Do not drive or park your vehicle **on top of your seepage pit** as it can cause the to top of the pit to collapse.
- Do not plant anything other than grass over and/or near your **drainfield to avoid damage from roots**. Roots from nearby trees and shrubs can clog and damage your drainfield or seepage pit.
- Keep roof drains, basement drains, other rainwater, or surface water drainage systems **away from your drainfield and seepage pit**. Excessive water in your drainfield or seepage pit can slow down or stop treatment processes and cause your plumbing to back up.

Not in my septic system!

CLOGGERS

Diapers, cat litter, cigarette filters, coffee grounds, grease, feminine hygiene products, etc.

KILLERS

Household chemicals, gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, paint, etc.

City of Los Angeles
Department of Public Works
Bureau of Sanitation

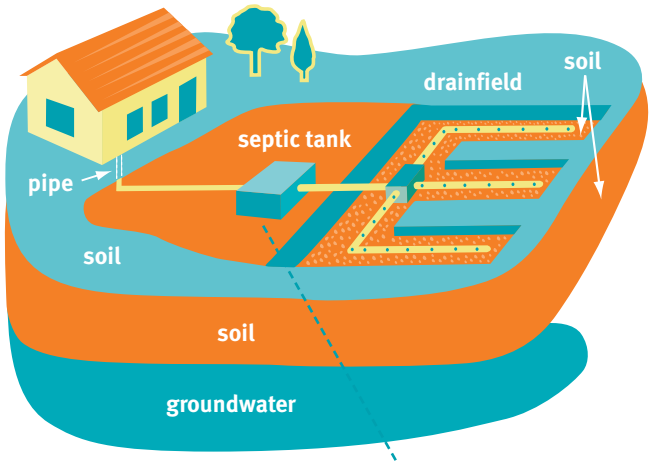
a homeowner's guide to septic systems

WHAT IS A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

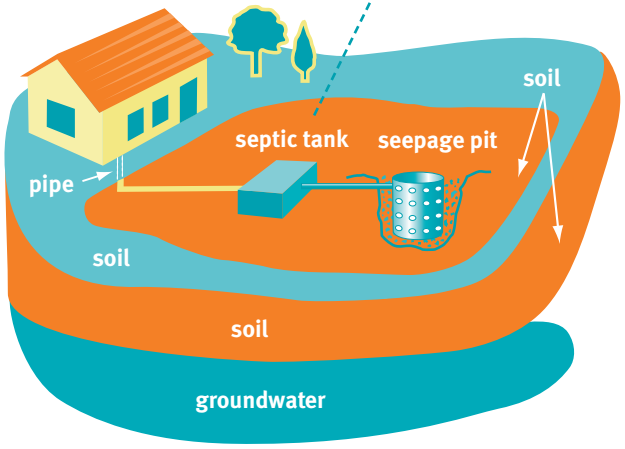
A septic system is a small-scale sewage treatment system that is **not connected to a municipal sanitary sewer system.**

A typical septic system has **four main components**: a pipe to transport wastewater from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield or seepage pit, and its surrounding soil.

Septic system with drainfield

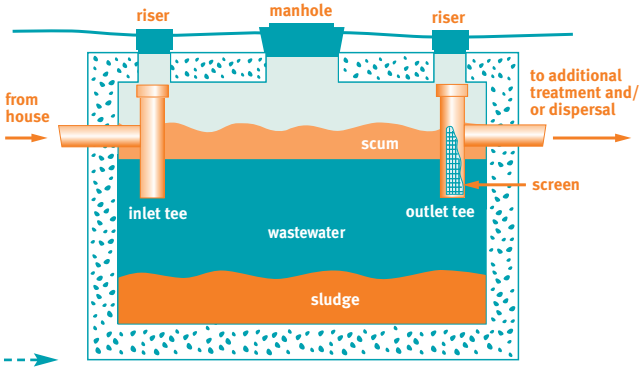


Septic system with seepage pit



HOW DOES A SEPTIC SYSTEM WORK?

A pipe **transports wastewater** from toilets, baths, sinks, showers, etc. from the house to a septic tank. The septic tank, which is a buried and watertight container, holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle and **form sludge**. Oil and grease floats to the surface as scum. Bacteria in the tank works to further decompose solid waste in the tank. Compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent sludge and scum from escaping out into the environment or into the drainfield or seepage pit. **Another pipe moves wastewater** from the septic tank into the drainfield or to a seepage pit. Microorganisms in the surrounding soil further treat the wastewater to **remove bacteria and viruses**.



Septic tank profile

MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM — IT'S A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT!

Your septic system is on your property and **belongs to you**. This means that as a homeowner or resident, you are responsible for maintaining **your own septic system**.

Maintaining both your home and septic system will preserve and protect your investments. A septic tank that is in disrepair or that cannot be used will lower the value of your property and expose you to legal liability. You will not be able to sell your home unless your septic tank is in good working order. When selling your home, you are required to disclose the **condition of your septic system**. If it is not working properly, you may have difficulty selling your property.

A septic system that is properly designed, constructed and maintained can provide your household with reliable, long-term service. A septic system that works properly can effectively **remove pollutants from wastewater** and **protect you, your family and your environment from infection and disease**. These pollutants include disease-causing bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that can cause communicable diseases through direct or indirect body contact or ingestion.

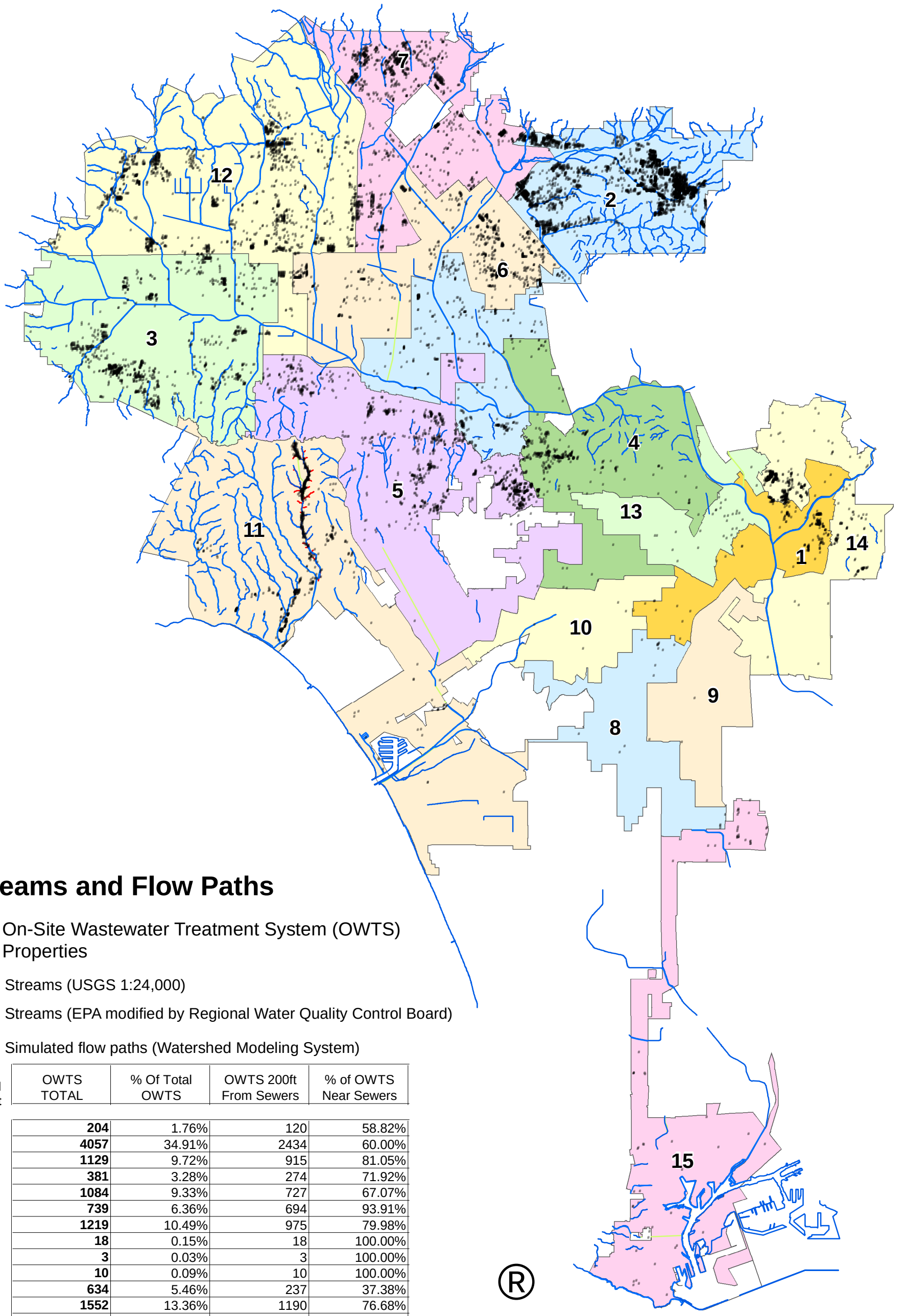
FAILURE TO MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM CAN COST YOU MORE IN THE LONG RUN.

A septic system that is not maintained or malfunctions:

- **Is expensive to repair;**
- **May need to be replaced, costing thousands of dollars;**
- **Can contaminate groundwater that could be a source of drinking water;**
- **Can spread infection and disease;**
- **May expose you to legal liability.**

City of Los Angeles
Streams and Flow Paths

(Attachment 4)



Streams and Flow Paths

\# On-Site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Properties

Streams (USGS 1:24,000)

Streams (EPA modified by Regional Water Quality Control Board)

Simulated flow paths (Watershed Modeling System)

Council District	OWTS TOTAL	% Of Total OWTS	OWTS 200ft From Sewers	% of OWTS Near Sewers
1	**204**	1.76%	120	58.82%
2	**4057**	34.91%	2434	60.00%
3	**1129**	9.72%	915	81.05%
4	**381**	3.28%	274	71.92%
5	**1084**	9.33%	727	67.07%
6	**739**	6.36%	694	93.91%
7	**1219**	10.49%	975	79.98%
8	**18**	0.15%	18	100.00%
9	**3**	0.03%	3	100.00%
10	**10**	0.09%	10	100.00%
11	**634**	5.46%	237	37.38%
12	**1552**	13.36%	1190	76.68%
13	**29**	0.25%	29	100.00%
14	**476**	4.10%	270	56.72%
15	**65**	0.56%	62	95.38%
Out of City Boundary	**21**	0.18%	13	61.90%
Total	**11621**	100.00%	7971	68.59%

Produced by GIS Group
Wastewater Engineering Services Division
Bureau of Sanitation
Department of Public Works
City of Los Angeles

Created 3/27/2008

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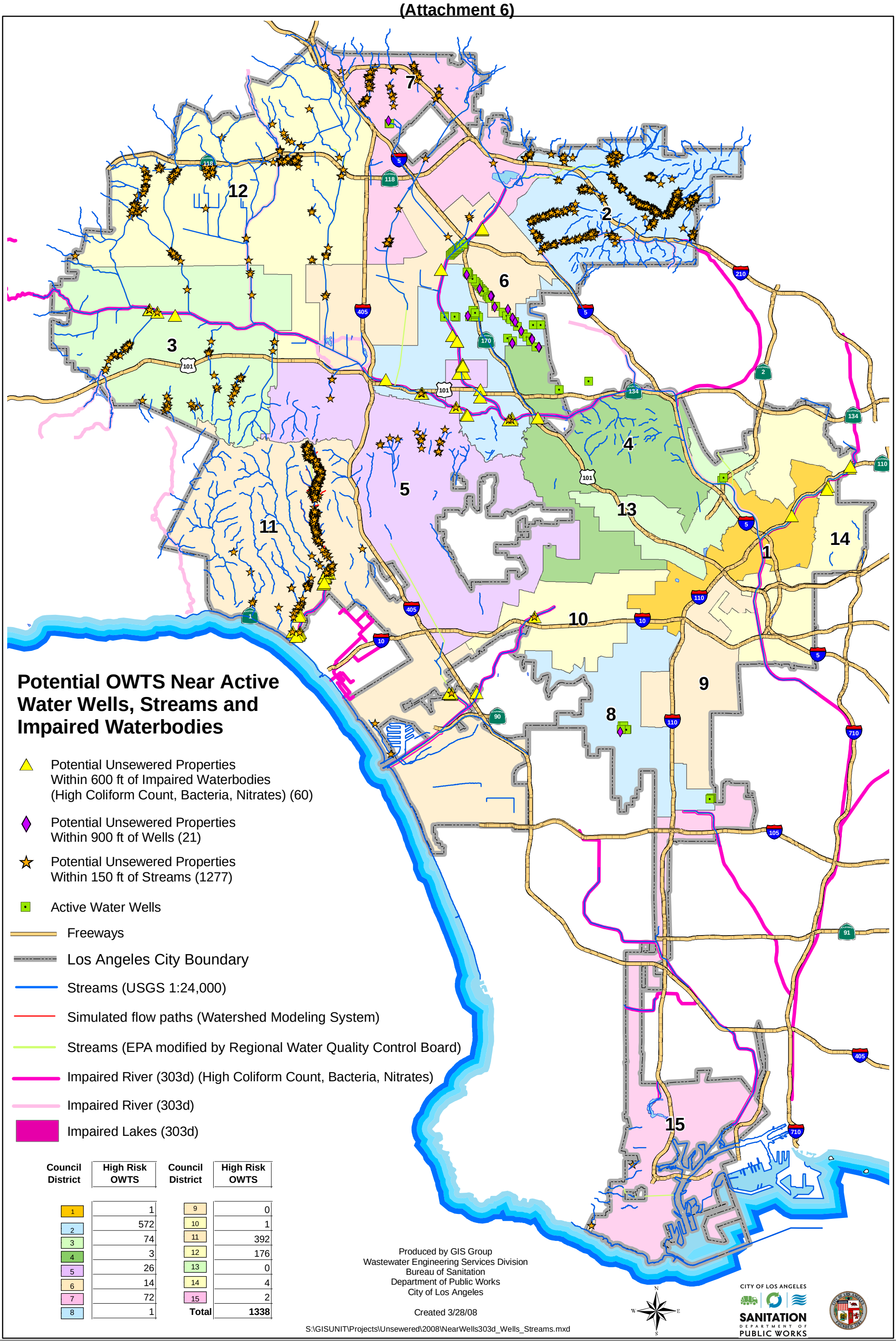
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SANITATION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

City of Los Angeles
Potential High Risk OWTS Near Impaired Waterbodies, Streams and Active Water Wells

(Attachment 6)



Council District	High Risk OWTS	Council District	High Risk OWTS
1	1	9	0
2	572	10	1
3	74	11	392
4	3	12	176
5	26	13	0
6	14	14	4
7	72	15	2
8	1	**Total**	**1338**

Produced by GIS Group
Wastewater Engineering Services Division
Bureau of Sanitation
Department of Public Works
City of Los Angeles

Created 3/28/08

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SANITATION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Attachment 7

CURRENT CITY'S ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES FOR OWTS THAT ARE NOT PROPERLY INSTALLED, OPERATED AND MAINTAINED

Currently, there is no specific inspection program to detect failed OWTS systems. The enforcement of ordinances pertaining to failed OWTS's is done based upon customer complaints or referrals from other agencies such as the L. A. County Department of Health. All complaints or referrals are processed by the Code Enforcement Bureau of the Department of Building and Safety.

STEPS FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A FAILED OWTS

1. Code Enforcement Bureau receives a complaint from the public or referral from another agency.

2. An inspector will verify by visual inspection that the system has failed. The evidence for a failed system is visible effluent on the ground surface.

3. The inspector performs research to determine if the public sewer is available to the building.

4. If there is a sewer lateral within 200 feet of the building, an Order to Comply is issued to abandon the OWTS system and connect to the public sewer.

5. If the public sewer is greater than 200 feet from the building then the Order to Comply will require that within 30 days the property owner shall obtain required plans and permits and all necessary inspections to install a new OWTS system.

6. In the event there is no compliance, the case is referred to the City Attorney for prosecution.

CODES PERTAINING TO FAILED OWTS

2002 City of Los Angeles Plumbing Code, Section 94.101.15 Prohibited Acts:

Prohibited Acts

94.101.15.2 "No person shall use or maintain any private sewage disposal system on any lot or parcel of land, that has failed, is in an overflowing condition or, in the judgement of the Department, is

unsanitary or is a menace to life, health or property. If the private system fails, all drainage piping shall be connected to the public or private sewer when the lot or parcel of land abuts any public way or sewer easement in which a public or private sewer exists and is available."

In addition,

94.101.15.3 "No person shall alter, add to or relocate any private sewage-disposal system on any lot or parcel of land which abuts on any public way or sewer easement in which a public sewer exists and is ready for use."

Therefore, when a Private Sewage Disposal System (PSDS) needs to be pumped or is overflowing on the subject property or adjoining properties, the PSDS has failed and needs to be replaced if no public sewer is available. If a public sewer is available according to 2002 Los Angeles City Plumbing Code Section 94.713.4 and 94.7135 the PSD shall be abandoned according to the requirements of LADBS Grading Division.

Per Section 94.713.1 Sewer Required:

Building Sewer
Sewer Required

94.713.1 "Every building in which plumbing fixtures are installed and every premises having drainage piping thereon, shall have a connection to a public or private sewer, except as provided in Sections 101.4.1.3, 713.2 and 713.4".

Interim OWTS Permiting Policy Process (Residential)

Start

(A)
New Construction, Alteration, Replacement of OWTS, or additions that would yield 5 bedrooms or more.
-1-

Yes

(D)
Is Sewer Available within 200 Feet? BOE signs off on the Sewer Clearance and returns to LADBS
-2-

Yes

No OWTS Allowed- Required to use Public Sewer
-3-

No

Use existing OWTS
-4-

No

(A)
LADBS adds BOS in the PCIS (Clearance Summary Sheet) for BOS approval. BOS will provide the applicant with the BOS-signed Permit Review Form
-6-

(A)
More than two Dwelings units
-5-

(B)
High Risk OWTS Parcels:
< 600 feet 303d Impaired Water Bodies or
< 900 feet of active wells, or
-7-

No

Yes

No

Yes

Yes

(C)
RWQCB Issues a general WDR *
-11-

Yes

No

(B)
Potential High Risk OWTS Properties(PHROP)?
= or<500 feet from any stream?
-8-

Yes

No

Yes

Yes

No

(B)
BOS will sign-off on the PCIS clearance
-12-

(B)
PHROP
Survey or Geological Report required -
< 150 feet of the Simulated stream flow using Digital Elevation Model (DEM) Study, or
< 150 feet of USGS Map, or
<150 feet of EPA map modified by RWQCB
BOS provides applicant with OWTS Site Review Package**
-9-

No

(A)
LADBS issues a permit and assures compliance with WDR for construction phase.
-13-

(B)
BOS Signs-off on PCIS-
No WDR required.
-10-

No

(A)
LADBS requests a Installation Certification Letter from installer that the system is installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications
-14-

(A)
LADBS Issues the Grading Permit for the Approved Conventional OWTS
-18-

(A&B)
LADBS informs BOS of Certificate of Occupancy and sends the installation certificate to BOS - BOS then informs RWQCB
-15-

(A)
LADBS Issues Certificate of Occupancy
-19-

(C)
Owner will submit Quarterly Monitoring Reports to RWQCB as specified in the M&RP. The frequency of monitoring will be reviewed and may be diminished based on the impacts to ground water.
-16-

End

(C)
RWQCB will take enforcement actions for violations of the WDR
-17-

Tasks Performed by:

(A) LADBS
(B) BOS
(C) RWQCB
(D) BOE

* RWQCB issues a general WDR Order No. R-4-2004-0146 and a site specific Monitoring and Reporting Program (M&RP) with a CI number.

** Site Review Package consist of Permit Review Form, WDR Instructions,and map (s) if applicable.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

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BUREAU OF SANITATION
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March 18, 2008

Honorable Jan Perry, Chair
Energy & Environment Committee
Los Angeles City Council

Dear Honorable Council members:

RE: Council File 06-0810 – Viable Alternatives for a Revised Definition of a Stream and the Protection and Restoration of City's Street – Interim Policy for permitting Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS). Revision to Council Report

Since the adoption and Transmittal of the referenced Council Report by the Board of Public Works on October 18, 2006, a number of changes have occurred that require the modification of the report. The Department of Public Works' Bureau of Sanitation recommends the revision of the referenced Council Report as follows:

1. Setback of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) from a stream: On January 1, 2008, the revised California Plumbing Code (CPC) and the Unified Plumbing Code (UPC) as adopted by the City Council became effective. As part of the revised codes, the setbacks of OWTS from a stream or lake were revised from 100 feet to 150 feet for seepage pits and cesspools; and from 50 feet to 100 feet for disposal fields, while the setback of OWTS from a stream or lake for septic tanks and building sewers remains the same, at 50 feet. As such, the setbacks from a stream or lake in the referenced Council Report should be revised accordingly, in the following sections of the report:
    a. Page 2 – Background. Replace "Appendix K of the California Plumbing Code requires a set setback of 100 feet for seepage pits or cesspools and the nearest stream or lake; and 50 feet between the nearest stream or lake and septic tanks, building sewers and disposal fields" with "Appendix K of the California Plumbing Code requires a setback of **150 feet** for seepage pits or cesspools and the nearest stream or lake; **100 feet** for disposal fields and the nearest stream or lake; and 50 feet for septic tanks and building sewers and the nearest stream or lake."

b. Page 3 – OWTS Memorandum of Understanding. Replace "Currently, High Risk OWTS are those within 100 feet of the nearest stream or lake" with "High Risk OWTS are those within **150 feet** of the nearest stream or lake."
c. Page 4 – Section C – Interim OWTS Policy. Replace "Conventional OWTS shall be located a minimum of 100 feet away from the stream" with "Conventional OWTS shall be located a minimum of **150 feet** away from the stream."
d. Page 5 – Section D – Definitions.
    i. Conventional OWTS: Replace "Conventional OWTS shall be located a minimum of 100 feet from the nearest stream, flow path or lake" with "Conventional OWTS shall be located a minimum of **150 feet** from the nearest stream, flow path or lake."
    ii. High Risk OWTS: Replace "High Risk OWTS is any OWTS located within 100 feet from the nearest stream, flow path or lake" with "High Risk OWTS is any OWTS located within **150 feet** from the nearest stream, flow path or lake."

2. Section G – Fiscal Impact: Under the original report an authority for a Civil/Sanitary Engineering Associate III position was recommended. Since the adoption of the report on October 18, 2006, by the Board of Public Works, it was determined that the workload can be absorbed by the existing staff for now. However, as we embark on full operation and maintenance permitting and inspection program for all OWTS, in the City of Los Angeles, additional resources may be needed in the future that will be supported by a special permit fee and will be submitted to the Mayor and Council for adoption at that time. As such, the Bureau is withdrawing the request for an authority for a Civil/Sanitary Engineering Associate III position.

Sincerely,

ENRIQUE C. ZALDIVAR, Director
Bureau of Sanitation

ECZ:AH.HM