

BASIC

Wastewater Regulations and Bayview Heights



Agenda

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BASIC

The BAYview Heights Sewer Investigation Committee (BASIC) strives to find a cost effective solution for complying with California's updated wastewater disposal regulations for our neighborhood.

Meet the team



Cliff

Founding BASIC member

Avid mountain biker, hobbyist mechanic, engineer, and public interest technologist.



Tanya

Founding BASIC member

Rattlesnake relocation volunteer, loves both pickles and pickleball.



Mary

Founding BASIC member

Nature lover, retired dietician, and crafter extraordinaire.



You?

BASIC member

Come help us organize for our neighborhood's future!

What are Current Septic Regulations?

New requirements

When a septic system fails or homes are renovated, new requirements must be met.



Most Lots Require Additional Treatment

Higher cost, uses space, electricity, and monitoring.

Well water additional complications.

Leach Lines Preferred

Leach pits discouraged, lines require significantly more unutilized space.

100% Expansion reserve required.

Must meet strict setbacks.

Ongoing Maintenance and Monitoring Costs

Annual operating permit

Annual testing plus contract with septic company.

How Did we get Here?

An extremely abbreviated history



1983 Nitrates
Discovered



2000 AB885
Passed



2016 LO
Sewer



2021 SLO LAMP
Adopted



Today



In 1983 the Los Osos groundwater basin was discovered to have nitrate levels exceeding state standards for drinking water.

Amended California Water Code Section 13290, requiring the State Water Board to develop statewide water quality standards or regulations for permitting and operating OWTS.

Los Osos Sewer is (finally) completed, but only serves a subset of the community.

San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors votes to adopt Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) specifying requirements for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS).

Homeowners with failing systems are on their own to install expensive systems with supplemental treatment. Cabrillo Estates has voted to connect to the sewer, but SLO County declined to fund the project.

What's Next

Charting a Path Forward



Organize our Neighbors

Most homeowners in Bayview Heights are unaware of these new regulations.

Let's talk with our neighbors and bring them up to speed.

Investigating Options & Funding

Explore feasibility of a sewer for Bayview Heights.

Investigate funding options available to the neighborhood.

Collaborate to Implement a Solution

Once we know what is right for our community, we will need to work with local and state leaders to make it happen.

OWTS (septic) vs Sewer

OWTS (new requirements)

Costs

- \$75-120,000 upfront cost for advanced system
- Pumping every 3-5 years (\$700+)
- Annual operating permit: Currently \$943, may increase
- Inspection and water quality testing annually for non-conventional systems, likely additional cost

Lifespan

- Variable with usage, expected 15-40 yrs; early failure possible
- Disruptive and unpredictable failure with complicated fix
- Renovation requires re-evaluating the system

Repair or Install

- All systems require engineered design unique to property
- Multiple components required
- Install in new location when fails
- Must meet current regulations

Land Use

- Tank, leach system, and ATU require unused land, visible risers
- 100% expansion zone required, also unused land
- Main and expansion area usage restrictions
- Increased setbacks and leach line requirements

Restrictions

- Onerous restrictions on appliance and cleaning product use

Sewer

- Annual financing amount estimated: \$3200-4800 for 30 yrs
- Upfront sewer lateral connection cost, \$varies by property
- Annual service fee estimated: \$1200 ongoing, may increase
- Inspections only as needed when issues arise

- 100+ years built with modern materials
- Disruptive failure with easy fix
- Renovation not impacted by sewer, no expansion necessary

- Some homes simple installation
- Siting may require additional components
- Repair in same location when required
- Regulation changes unlikely to impact property owner

- Temporary landscaping removal upon installation
- Inspection ports need to be kept accessible
- No further landscaping restrictions

- General care is recommended for product and appliance usage, but not required to avoid failure

Taking Care of your Septic System

Don't Strain Your Drain



Stagger water usage

Showers, laundry, dishwashing, etc, at the same time strain the system and lead to early failure. Leaks also strain system. System function can be degraded during rainy weather.



Eliminate or limit garbage disposal

Extra solids from food down the drain adds strain to your system and may require pumping sooner. Dispose of them in the trash.



Use caution with water-using appliances

Water softener discharge prohibited in septic system. Lint traps for washing machines reduce strain on system. Dishwashers may cause additional strain with modern soaps.



Careful what you do above or near it

Don't park or drive on, build sheds or buildings on, place hardscaping/decks/pools/ponds above (even if temporary). Children should not play near the system.



Careful what you plant on or near it

Don't plant trees or shrubs near any part as roots can clog pipes and lead to failure. Watering landscaping above leach system degrades functionality. Don't plant edible plants near the system.



Don't bury lids or inspection ports

This makes regular maintenance and inspection harder and adds cost, and some require access to air to function.

Protect Your System

Think at the Sink



Don't pour Fat/Oil/Grease down the drain or flush it

This can clog household pipes and damage the system. Put it in the trash.



Carefully select cleaners & don't pour chemicals down the drain

Toxic chemicals, paint, and certain regular household cleaners can damage beneficial bacteria needed to keep the system functioning, and lead to early failure.



Flush only toilet paper, carefully

Use proven septic safe toilet paper so it properly breaks down in your tank. Don't flush any wipes, feminine products, or other items, even if they say "flushable", as they won't break down in your system.



Pump and inspect every 3-5 years, or as needed

Consult a licensed professional for recommendations. Regular pumping and inspecting can detect problems early, decreasing cost.



Clean your effluent filter (or install one)

Regularly clean your effluent filter every 6 months. If you don't have one, installing one can extend system life.



Annual testing for non-conventional systems

SLO county requires annual water quality testing for systems with ATUs, and an annual operating permit. Consult a professional to ensure your ATU is properly functioning.

Maintain Your System

Help us!



Talk to Your Neighbors

Talk to your neighbors about how these regulations impact them, invite them to a meeting!

Come to Future Meetings

We will have future meetings around once per month to check in on progress and once per quarter with guest speakers like Bruce Gibson and Lynette Tornatzky.

Help us Organize

We need help coordinating research on financing and engineering options as well as with outreach (our website and emails).

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Thank you!

Contact us

basic@followtheflush.com