

STAFF REPORT

On-Site Sewage Disposal Requirements

1. Contact Person

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2. Introduction

In the fall of 2006, the Growth Management Hearings Board found that the County was not in compliance with growth management (GMA) requirements due to insufficient regulatory control in the Belfair Urban Growth Area (UGA) to prevent the development of on-site sewage disposal systems. The design of a sewer system for the Belfair UGA is now under contract and the financing is in place to develop the project once design is completed. To comply with growth management requirements, meet urban densities, and provide for a customer base adequate to support the public sewers in Belfair and Allyn, Mason County must move away from the use of on-site systems. On-site systems require a large amount of land area and because of that urban densities are difficult to achieve. Compliance with the revisions will allow us to meet growth management rules and regulations. Failure to secure GMA compliance could jeopardize the ability of the County to fully access Washington Legislative and Department of Ecology grants and loans. This could severely inhibit our ability to develop sewers in the Belfair area in a timely and orderly manner.

3. Discussion

During the last legislative session Mason County received sufficient funding to complete the development of the initial phase of Belfair sewer project. The work is comprised of the installation of collection and transmission lines to serve properties along State Route 3 and the construction of a Membrane Biological Reactor (MBR) treatment plant, which has the capacity to serve all of the Belfair UGA.

Because the entire UGA will not be initially served there is the potential that the development community will want to continue the use of on-site systems to meet sewage disposal needs in the Belfair area. Because on-site systems require an extensive use of land it is impossible to meet urban densities. In addition, the continued use of on-sites detracts from the customer base needed to financially support a public sewer system. To allow development to continue it is possible that the use of community drainfields, cluster systems and other alternative disposal methods as interim applications until public sewers are made available could be considered. In addition, there are previously platted lots that have permits to install individual on-site septic systems; however, this growth must be managed. The proposed new on-site control regulations spell out how new development using on-sites would be managed and outlines requirements to control existing lots of record. The new standards allow for the orderly development of Belfair and Allyn growth areas to occur and makes certain that urban residential densities are met and a stable customer base is maintained to support the public sewers.

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4. Recommendation

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OPTIONS:

1. Continue the public discussion until July 31, 2007 and adopt the revisions at that time.
2. Suggest modifications to the standards and continue the public discussion until July 31, 2007 for additional testimony
3. Do not recommend the adoption of the revisions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Continue the public discussion and recommendation the adoption of the new standards on July 31, 2007.

- Adoption allows us to move forward with the development of the Belfair sewer on schedule
- Makes more certain the County's continued compliance with growth management requirements.
- The revisions can serve as a model for the Hoodspout area as sewage management is brought to that area in the near future.
- The revisions allow for the continued development of Belfair and Allyn but requires future connection to public sewers.
- The revisions ensure a stable customer base to support public sewers.

Attachments: On-Site Sewage Disposal Revisions