

Cabrillo Estates Connection Poll Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose/Background:

- What is the Local Area Management Program (LAMP)?
 - The LAMP is a document which develops minimum standards for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) within San Luis Obispo County. The purpose of the LAMP is to allow the continued use of OWTS within the jurisdiction of SLO County and to expand the local program to permit and regulate non-conventional OWTS (NOWTS) while protecting water quality and public health. The LAMP was adopted by Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board on September 25, 2020, and was adopted by SLO County BOS on June 8, 2021. The LAMP was adopted by reference to the County Building and Construction Ordinance, Title 19, Chapter 7.
 - [County of SLO LAMP Website](#)
 - [County of SLO LAMP FAQs](#)
- Why are residents asking to connect to the Los Osos Wastewater System (LOWWS)?
 - Due to individual costs of complying with the LAMP when individual systems fail, residents are exploring other options for dealing with wastewater as a community.
- Where can I learn more about my community's groundwater conditions and issues?
 - Los Osos Basin Management Committee (BMC): [Los Osos BMC Website](#)
 - Cabrillo Estates Property Owners Association: [CEPOA Wastewater Website](#)
- Is connection to the LOWWS necessary or mandated? Explain the legal process to mandate connection?
 - The project would be a discretionary action by the County since property owners can comply with wastewater discharge requirements through the Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP). The process associated with the project is briefly discussed on page 9 of the MNS report posted on the Cabrillo Estates Property Owners Association website: [CEPOA Wastewater Website](#).
- Are there other options to comply with the Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP)?
 - Yes. Compliance pathways under the LAMP depend on the type of system failure, as there is an important distinction between septic tank failure and dispersal (leach field) failure.

A failing septic tank, such as a baffle failure or structural integrity issues resulting in wastewater exfiltration or groundwater infiltration may be

replaced without triggering a full system upgrade. In these cases, replacement of the septic tank alone would not require installation of a Supplemental Treatment System (STS), provided the dispersal system remains functional.

In contrast, a failing dispersal system, evidenced by conditions such as effluent surfacing, wastewater discharge to the ground surface, or backups into plumbing fixtures due to inadequate percolation, requires more extensive corrective action. This constitutes a major repair, and the dispersal system must be replaced, repaired, or modified to restore proper function and comply with the LAMP. Under these circumstances, the replacement system would be required to include a Supplemental Treatment System (STS), which typically consists of an advanced treatment unit paired with a drip dispersal field in this area.

It is unlikely that the continued use of seepage pits would be approved due to local percolation rates and depth to groundwater. Additionally, installation of a LAMP-compliant system may require removal or modification of existing landscaping or hardscape to accommodate the new infrastructure.

Advanced treatment systems also require ongoing maintenance and monitoring in accordance with the LAMP, including annual inspections and associated fees from both a qualified inspector and the County.

- Cabrillo Estates Property Owners Association (CEPOA) has posted information regarding such systems here: [CEPOA Wastewater Town Hall and Report](#)
- The County of SLO LAMP FAQ's (linked above) also has information regarding this topic.
- Will the Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP) requirements be suspended while the process to connect takes place? Are there exclusions for mandated connections, for example, those that have already installed an on-site system that complies with the Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP)?
 - This has not been determined but could be a consideration for the project. If a path for connection to sewer is established, the County would consult with the Water Boards to determine if there are any exclusions or allowances for non-conforming repairs while the connection process is underway.

- How many septic tanks have failed?
 - It is challenging to accurately define this number. While the lifespan of a septic system can vary, the EPA Frequent Questions on Septic Systems recommends that homeowners start planning for an upgrade before they are in an emergency situation if the septic system is more than 25 to 30 years old. At that age, it is likely the system is close to its useful lifespan. [Frequent Questions on Septic Systems | US EPA](#)
- Why didn't Cabrillo Estates connect when the wastewater system originally was constructed?
 - The Water Boards did not include the Cabrillo Estates area in the prohibition zone it enacted in 1983. The Water Boards based this decision on hydrogeologic study available at the time the discharge prohibition zone was put into place.
 - More information can be found here: [Water Board FAQ](#)

Finance:

- How much would this add to my property tax bill on a yearly basis? How accurate will the estimate be? Are there grants available to lower costs to residents? What will be the length of repayment term on our taxes?
 - The County would include a financing evaluation of grant opportunities as part of the project should the Board of Supervisors approve moving forward. Financing plans typically include escalation and contingency factors that are refined as the project proceeds.
 - Until the County develops the project further, the information provided to date (and posted below for reference) is the most accurate estimation.
 - The amount added per tax bill will vary depending on the funding sources, loans and grants available; loan repayment terms can vary between 20-40 years.

Connection Costs and Service Rates

The following cost estimates are provided for planning purposes only and will be updated should the Board approve moving forward with the project

Project Phase	Estimated Per Parcel Cost
Common Sewer Infrastructure Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding required by all property owners• Paid on property bills over 20-40 years	\$82,000 to \$97,000
Individual Connection Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buy-in cost to the existing wastewater treatment facility• Excludes cost for the lateral hookup to the common sewer infrastructure, which varies by property	Up to \$25,000
Sewer Service Rates & Charges (monthly) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on an average single-family dwelling	Currently \$100 to \$120 per month

- Are vacant parcels exempt from paying for this project?
 - This has not been determined but could be a consideration for the project should it move forward.
- Explain the buy in cost and why we would be responsible for it when we must pay for infrastructure to connect?
 - The use of additional capacity in the County’s wastewater facility by future connections requires additional capital infrastructure and a fair share buy-in investment in Los Osos Wastewater System (LOWWS) existing public facilities.
 - [Resolution establishing LOWWS Capacity Fee](#)

- Is there a low-cost loan option for the individual connection phase?
 - This has not been determined but could be a consideration for the project should it move forward.

Logistics:

- Can Bayview Heights residences be included in the project?
 - Unlike Cabrillo Estates which has a property owners association, Bayview Heights or other areas outside of the Prohibition Zone in Los Osos are not currently included in the Cabrillo Estates sewer connection project.
- How long will it take to connect to the sewer? Is there a deadline for when each parcel must connect to the sewer in the individual connection phase?
 - The schedule would be developed as part of the project should it move forward.
- Is it mandatory to disclose the pending charges on sales of property?
 - Certain property taxes, property-related fees, and assessments on a property are required to be disclosed during a property sales process.
- How will the County address community impacts and infrastructure considerations, including system design, access, and construction logistics, to minimize burden on residents throughout the project?
 - The project would include a community outreach and communications plan to identify the County's efforts for key milestones during the project development should it move forward.