



Important Information for Cabrillo Estates Homeowners

Comparing Options for Wastewater: Advanced Septic Systems (OWTS) vs. Sewer Connection

Due to rising nitrate levels in our local aquifer, you can no longer repair a failing septic system. Instead, you must install a costly advanced treatment system (OWTS). As an alternative, our community is exploring connecting to the nearby sewer system.



Here's a simple comparison of the two options:

Option 1: Stay with Individual Septic Systems (OWTS)

-  Pros
 - You don't need to act until your system fails.
 - Until then, you just maintain your current septic system (e.g., tank cleaning every 3–5 years, about \$1,000).
-  Cons
 - Environmental impact: Nitrates, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals from septic systems continue entering our aquifer—our only water source.
 - Inevitable failure: The average lifetime of a residential, traditional septic system is typically 20 to 30 years. Many systems in Cabrillo Estates are at or above that age.
 - Costly replacement:
 - Advanced systems cost \$75,000–\$120,000 to install.
 - Site-specific design by a licensed engineer is required.
 - Installation may involve removing landscaping and hardscaping.
- These costs must be paid immediately.
 - Many lots in Cabrillo Estates are small. Finding space to place a new, horizontal leach field may be difficult.
 - Ongoing requirements:
 - Must be under a service contract and monitored online.
 - Annual county testing (with a fee).
 - Advanced systems include pumps that increase household electricity use.

- Potential impact on home sales:
Buyers may hesitate to purchase a home with a septic system, especially if it's aging. Property owners may need to negotiate repairs or price concessions.
- Regulation risk:
 - Future rules may mandate OWTS for everyone—even if your current system hasn't failed.
 - New contaminants like PFAS could prompt more expensive treatment regulations.

Option 2: Connect to Sewer System

-  Pros
 - You're protected from future septic regulations.
 - Wastewater is treated at a regional plant and reused for irrigation or aquifer recharge—protecting our water supply.
 - Costs are shared among property owners and typically financed over 30 years as part of property taxes.
 - There is the possibility of obtaining grant funding to cover part of the construction costs.
-  Cons
 - Higher property taxes for a period of time, due to sewer project financing. Current county estimate is from \$271 (lower range) to \$406 (upper range) per month for the construction of the Cabrillo Estates sewer and being connected to the existing Los Osos sewer system, plus an ongoing additional average \$100 per month service charge (exact amount depends on water usage).
 - Temporary inconvenience due to road construction during sewer line installation.
 - Homeowners are responsible for the cost of the lateral line from their house to the main sewer line in the street and decommissioning the existing tank (varies by property).

Want More Information?

- See cost estimates for sample properties: <https://www.cepoalososos.com/wastewater>
- Learn more about septic system failure: Search online for “what causes a leach field to fail.”