



## Vacant Lots in Los Osos – FAQs

### WASTEWATER PROJECT

The Los Osos Wastewater Project is complete. The Los Osos Wastewater project **cannot** serve vacant parcels until the County amends the Estero Area Plan - Los Osos Urban Area (hereafter referred to as the Los Osos Community Plan) to incorporate the following:

- A sustainable buildout target that indicates that there is water available to support such development (buildout) without impacts to wetlands and habitats
- A community-wide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the long-term preservation of sensitive habitats

Vacant lots have not been assessed for fees for sewer connections.

The County is currently working on both of these fronts—the Los Osos Community Plan and the community-wide HCP.

### LOS OSOS COMMUNITY PLAN

The Public Review Draft of the Los Osos Community Plan is available at the following link:

<http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building/Active-Major-Projects/Los-Osos-Community-Plan-Update.aspx>

The Los Osos Community Plan provides a framework to allow new development in Los Osos. Due to the degradation of the groundwater basin, development of vacant lots is contingent on implementation of the Los Osos Basin Management Plan.

Once the local approval process is complete, the Coastal Commission will need to approve and certify the Los Osos Community Plan. Estimated completion date is Summer 2020.

### COMMUNITY-WIDE HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

The Los Osos ecosystem supports a globally rare habitat of a unique composition, including several endangered species. To protect this sensitive habitat and the endangered species, while allowing development within the community; the County is working on a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). A Habitat Conservation Plan is a required part of an application for an Incidental Take Permit, a permit issued under the United States Endangered Species Act. The County is seeking a programmatic incidental take permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The County, as the applicant, is requesting a permit term of 25 years to authorize take of covered species associated with covered activities in the Habitat Conservation Plan area, which is approximately 3,560 acres bounded by the Los Osos Urban Reserve Line. As the permittee, the County will have the ability to issue certificates of inclusion to confer incidental take coverage to landowners and other entities as long as their activities are included on the incidental take permit(s).

The HCP will be incorporated into the Los Osos Community Plan.

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### LOS OSOS GROUNDWATER BASIN

The Los Osos Groundwater Basin is in a Level III severity. The basin is made up of several aquifer layers, underlying the Los Osos community and surrounding areas. The Upper and Lower aquifers are the main sources of municipal and domestic water supplies. Due to water quality degradation of the Upper aquifer from septic systems (nitrates), water purveyors have been pumping from the lower aquifer. Groundwater extractions have exceeded the sustainable yield of the basin in the lower aquifer in the western area; this has resulted in seawater intrusion. The groundwater issues Los Osos faces pre-date the drought and the current restrictions.

To address the groundwater issues, the water purveyors developed the Los Osos Groundwater Basin Management Plan (BMP). The BMP calls for many infrastructure projects and breaks them into two categories: the first is to fix the existing problem (with no future development) and the second is to allow new development. Funding is also divided into two categories: no future development and buildout of the community.

The BMP was approved on October 14, 2015. However, the BMP still needs to be funded and implemented. This means that although the County is working on the Los Osos Community Plan and the HCP, new development will not be able to occur until the BMP is fully funded and implemented.

The Los Osos Groundwater Basin Management Committee (BMC) Board of Directors is scheduled to hold regular meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of every month starting at 1:30 p.m. The regular meeting location is the South Bay Community Center at 2180 Palisades Avenue in Los Osos, California.

For more information regarding the Basin Management Committee, visit this website:

<http://www.slocountywater.org/site/Water%20Resources/LosOsos/>