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DISTRICT UPDATE NOVEMBER 2023

The Los Olivos Community Services District (LOCSO) continues to methodically evaluate technical approaches, obtain cost estimates, engage our community, and pursue grant opportunities for feasible wastewater treatment solutions. This past quarter the District:

- Hired a Consultant to Complete a 30% Engineering Design on Collection Approaches
- Applied for a Santa Barbara County Grant to Install Three New Groundwater Monitoring Wells

As noted in prior updates, any final wastewater treatment and water reclamation solution put forth by the Board will be the result of significant community input, environmental review and then subject to a vote by District property owners in accordance with Proposition 218. Since the District is still evaluating technical solutions, no specific timeline for the property owner vote has been established.

District Hires Consultant to Complete a 30% Engineering Design on Hybrid Collection Approaches

On October 16, the Board of Directors authorized an engineering contract with Regen, PLLC. to examine a “hybrid” approach to sewage collection. The hybrid approach that Regen will start with was developed by the [District’s Technical Subcommittee](#). The Technical Subcommittee based its approach after careful consideration of population densities, parcels sizes, and previous studies. The hybrid approach includes both gravity fed and effluent collection approaches to sewage collection. The Regen engineering effort is being made possible by a generous grant from Preservation of Los Olivos, a 501(c)4 organization. In 2022, the District received engineering designs from Stantec for a 100% gravity fed collection system solution with a Membrane Bioreactor treatment approach at an estimated cost of \$40 million. Because of the cost, the District has been looking to find more cost-effective solutions. Details of the Stantec gravity fed collection design can be found at: <https://www.losolivoscscsd.com/technical-studies-and-reports>.

Over the next 150 days, Regen will examine parcels within the District’s boundaries to determine where the use of effluent collection approaches might be more effective and efficient, while potentially saving District property owners money. As part of its early work, Regen will examine the Technical Subcommittee’s hybrid approach to determine what efficiencies can be achieved via a “value engineering” effort. Regen will report its early findings at a Board of Directors meeting in January or February 2024. Based on direction received in that meeting, Regen will complete its contracted 30% engineering design of a hybrid sewage collection system that can then be compared to the gravity fed solution.

Effluent Sewer System vs. Traditional Gravity fed System: Effluent sewer systems use a tank on or near your parcel to separate solids from liquids. Once the solids are separated, an effluent sewer system conveys the liquid portion of the sewage to a centralized sewage treatment plant for further processing, as opposed to putting it directly in the ground via a dry well or leach field as is done with your current septic system. As with your current septic system, the solids that remain in the tank are pumped out every three to five years. Sending the liquids to a centralized sewage plant allows them to be treated. As

the waste is treated, harmful substances, such as concentrated nitrates, can be removed. The resulting treated liquids can be safely put back into the groundwater table or used for other purposes such as watering landscaping.

Most of our conversation about effluent sewer systems has been focused on a specific effluent sewer system known as septic tank effluent pumping, or STEP. With STEP systems, once the initial solids/liquid separation is completed, the liquid portion is pumped *under pressure* to the treatment plant. Using pressure helps solve some of the problems presented by gravity systems. For example, the liquid can easily be “pushed” uphill without additional system components. STEP collection pipes can also be installed without digging deep trenches required for gravity fed systems. Avoiding deep trenches would likely mean a quicker installation, fewer impacts to our roadways, and less disruption in our community.

One of the problems with implementing STEP systems in our community are recently implemented requirements to separate sewage tanks from drinking water lines. Regulations require that community drinking water lines be at least 25 feet from new sewage separation tanks. For many commercial properties and smaller parcels within the District, obtaining this separation is anticipated to be very problematic. For these parcels, gravity fed collection may be the only viable solution. This is one of the reasons why the Technical Subcommittee drafted a solution that used a combination of gravity fed and effluent collection techniques. As part of its value engineering efforts, Regen will closely examine the separation that can be obtained on parcels within the District.

Another community and Board of Directors discussion that will need to be held has to do with the ownership and access to STEP separation tanks. There are pros and cons to having parcel owners maintain ownership of the tanks. There are also pros and cons to having the District own and maintain the tanks. Because ownership does not affect engineering design, the discussion about ownership and maintenance will be addressed after Regen completes its work.

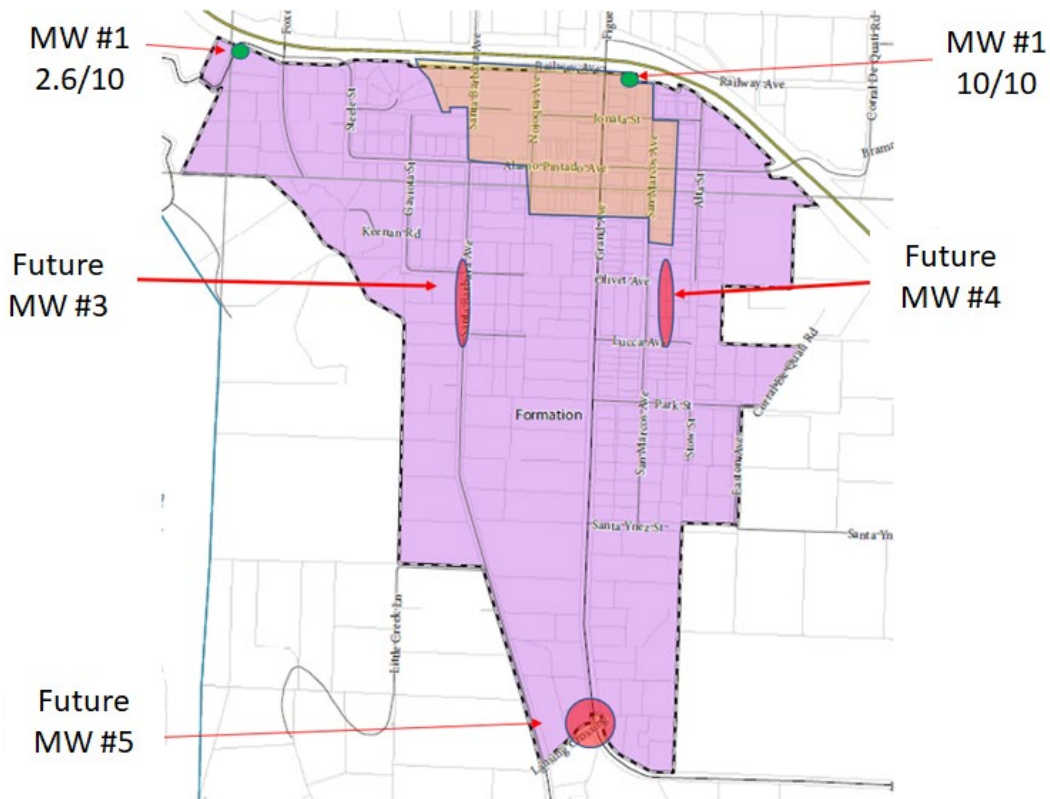
District to Receive Santa Barbara County Grant for Three Additional Groundwater Monitoring Wells

In October, the District applied for a grant through the [County of Santa Barbara Environmental Health Services \(EHS\)](#) to install three new groundwater monitoring wells and perform additional testing on our existing two wells that were installed in 2022. The grant application was filed after a number of discussions with EHS and the [Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board \(CCRWQCB\)](#). The discussions clarified the locations for the new monitoring wells, how often the wells should be tested, and what the testing should include. The grant is anticipated to be approved by the end of 2023, and construction of the additional wells will likely start in January 2024.

The water quality sample test results from our two existing groundwater monitoring wells in January 2023 were:

- Well #1 (MW-1) reported “nitrate as N” at 2.6 mg/L (12 mg/L as N03)
- Well #2 (MW-2) reported “nitrate as N” at 10 mg/L (45 mg/L as N03)

The “nitrate as N” maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water in the State of California is 10 mg/L. This means that MW-1 was below MCL, while MW-2 was right at MCL. Locations of the existing and planned wells can be seen below.



LOCS D Groundwater Monitoring Wells

UPCOMING WORK

Sewage Treatment Options - While the District has mostly focused on Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) treatment solutions due to their compact size and relatively low costs, the Technical Subcommittee will start discussing possible alternative solutions this month. As part of their discussion, the Subcommittee will further examine solutions raised during public comment and revisit the possibility of connecting to the Solvang treatment facility.

Treated Wastewater Disposal - You may recall that during [community workshops](#) held in January, community members stated a clear preference for treated wastewater disposal. Attendees overwhelmingly said they would like to see subsurface percolation chambers, coupled with reuse, for final disposal of our treated wastewater. Further examination of land requirements for disposal using percolations chambers will be completed by the Technical Subcommittee in early 2024.

ABOUT THE DISTRICT: The [Los Olivos CSD](#) was formed by voters in 2018 to give Los Olivos residents and property owners within the district local control over a local wastewater management solution and how to provide a funding mechanism for the construction and operation of the facilities needed to collect, treat, and dispose of sewage, wastewater, and recycled water in Los Olivos.

Stay Informed: [Attend our monthly meetings](#) in person or virtually to stay current with our efforts to determine the best wastewater solution for Los Olivos. This is the most effective way for you to stay informed, to ask questions and get answers, and to ensure your ideas and concerns are heard. We post video of meetings on our website within 48 hours should you be unable to attend a meeting in person.

Check the District's website for meeting agendas and materials at [losolivoscsd.com](https://www.losolivoscsd.com).

Visit <https://www.losolivoscsd.com/subscribe> to sign up for email updates. Please encourage your neighbors, local property owners and other interested community members to sign up as well.

If you have any questions about our District's efforts, please contact Guy Savage, General Manager, at gm.locsd@gmail.com or call him at (805) 500-4098.

STATE OF THE DISTRICT PRESENTATION – DECEMBER 5, 2024 – 6PM – LOS OLIVOS GRANGE HALL

Another opportunity to gain more insight into the activities of the District, ask questions, and general learn more about our wastewater treatment implementation is attending the annual "State of the District" presentation. On December 5, 2024, the General Manager will provide a more detailed overview of the issues impacting our wastewater solution implementation.