

**GENERAL LISTENING SESSION  
FOR THE  
PROPOSED ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM ORDINANCE**

**Session #1 Summary  
August 3, 2010  
1:30PM to 3:30PM  
2714 Media Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065**

The following is a summary of some of the session's questions and answers:

1. Q. Are there laterals (connecting sewer line from the property to the City's main line sewer in the street) for every home?  
A. No
2. Q. Do we have to build the lateral?  
A. Yes and sometimes the main line, too.
3. Q. What is the definition of High Risk?  
A. Originally, there were four criteria for defining high risk OWTS, but after meeting with the Neighborhood councils, it has been reduced to the following two: 600 ft from an impaired water body (using Bacteria and Nitrogen) as defined by the 303(d) list of the Clean Water Act., and 900 ft of active drinking water wells.
4. Q. You defined sewer availability as 200ft from a sewer, is it to the property line or to the building?  
A. Per the Plumbing code and Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), it is to the building. [LAMC 94.713.4]
5. Q. If there is a sewer 200ft away and the property is on top of a hill, are you still required to connect?  
A. The LADBS and the City's Bureau of Engineering will coordinate in determining if it is logical to connect to a sewer, on a case-by-case basis. It can be decided that the sewer is unavailable because it would require pumping.
6. Q. Is a maintenance hole required on the sewer to connect to the property?  
A. No
7. Q. Can the OWTS maps be made available on line?  
A. Yes, by this Friday (8/6/2010)
8. Q. When will the ordinance be approved?  
A. City target is end of December, 2010.
9. Q. When will the draft of the proposed ordinance go before the Board of Public Works?  
A. October to possibly late November.
10. Q. At the next round of neighborhood council meetings, will the proposed ordinance be presented? Will a draft be shown prior to the final?

- A. Yes. We will also make it available on the web site and provide advanced notice.
11. Q. Neighborhood council representative said that it takes a month from the time one member can disseminate all the info to the neighborhood council. Will there be enough time to allow communication and review of the draft?  
A. Yes.
12. Q. The last Sunland/Tujunga neighborhood council meeting was very contentious. Don't feel comfortable that October is a reachable goal. Should we ask for an extension?  
A. We have to follow a diligent process before asking for an extension and make all best efforts to try and meet the goal, but by September, the staff will know if the date can be realized or an extension is necessary.
13. Q. Is there a distinction between Residential and Multifamily?  
A. No, all OWTS are included in the proposed ordinance.
14. Q. How will the OWTS impact home sales based on grandfathering in or other status? How do we find out a home's OWTS status?  
A. Most of the information about a home's sewer connection, permit dates, etc is available on Navigate LA at: <http://navigatela.lacity.org/index.cfm> NavigateLA provides online access to the public information the City maintains on the properties within the City of Los Angeles and the physical facilities.
15. Q. How did the city come up with the list of OWTS, and if a homeowner is connected to sewer can that homeowner be removed from the OWTS list?  
A. The City's OWTS inventory was developed from a list of DWP customers who receive water from DWP and pay water bills, but do not pay sewer fee. However, if a homeowner claims her/his property is connected to the sewer and should not be on the OWTS inventory, we can do a dye test to verify and remove the property from the list.
16. Q. What is the requirement for connecting to sewer?  
A. This proposed ordinance does not address sewer connection requirements. However, existing municipal code stipulates the following:
1. If the septic system fails and there is a sewer within 200 feet of the dwelling, the property will be required to connect. All sewer connection inquiries should be directed to the Bureau of Engineering at 213 482-7030 or 818 374-5090 or 818 374-5088.
  2. If you make an improvement to the structure that adds more bedrooms and exceeds the current capacity of the septic system and is within 200 ft of the sewer, you must connect to the sewer. [This is existing law as described in the Los Angeles Building and Safety Department's Information Bulletin, available online at: [http://www.lasewers.org/private\\_sewers\\_septic/septic\\_systems/owts.pdf](http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/owts.pdf)]
17. Q. Do the high risk OWTS need permits?  
A. High Risk OWTS need permits. All 300+ high risk OWTS addresses will be posted on the web, at [www.lasewers.org](http://www.lasewers.org), to make it easier on homeowners to know who is in a high risk area.

18. Q. If a homeowner pumps the cesspool when it is full and hires a pumper who needs a permit to dump into the sewer, isn't that homeowner already paying a tax to the sewer? Why charge him another fee?  
A. BOS expects all OWTS owners to properly operate and maintain their systems, including regular pumping as necessary. The registration (good for five years for non-high-risk OWTS) outlined in this proposed ordinance will serve as a commitment to care for each OWTS. This registration satisfies the requirement mandated by the State. Fees for this registration have not yet been determined, but will be nominal so as to cover costs.
19. Q. What criteria do you use to self-certify conventional OWTS outside the high risk areas?  
A. Similar to Environmental Protection Agency's best management practices guidelines, the City developed "A Homeowner's Guide to Septic Tanks" that is available to everyone online at:  
[http://www.lasewers.org/private\\_sewers\\_septic/septic\\_systems/city\\_of\\_la\\_septic\\_systems.pdf](http://www.lasewers.org/private_sewers_septic/septic_systems/city_of_la_septic_systems.pdf)
20. Q. How much to pay to certify?  
A. Most certification will be at a nominal fee or at no cost to the homeowners and residents. You can certify on-line or at a local office. Self certification is every 5 years, not annually. The 300+ high risk OWTS in the City of Los Angeles will need to certify every 3 years and will require a licensed contractor. The state charges between \$400 to \$900/year up front. The City wants to be lower. The City wants to be a buffer between the homeowners and the State because without this ordinance and the City's MOU with the State, every individual OWTS will be subject to State regulation.
21. Q. Will property owners get a list of certified inspectors?  
A. City of Los Angeles may implement its own system to establish a list of certified inspectors that will be available to the public or adopt the list from other cities, such as the City of Malibu that already has an established list of certified inspectors.
22. Q. Can the City during the implementation period contact the Neighborhood Councils (NC) and get placed on their agenda items early on? Can the City contact a NC in September for November meeting? Can the City get on the NC agendas now as a place-holder?  
A. We will contact the NCs.
23. Q. Will the list of 303d impaired water bodies change, and how often will the list of high risk addresses change?  
A. Yes, that list is revised every two years.
24. Q. What is the City Council members' and their staff's input on the proposed OWTS ordinance?  
A. All City Council offices have been notified or briefed, especially those most affected, like Council District 2. Council District 2 supports protecting water quality, but does not want an overreaching or an overbearing ordinance. The City Council Offices are concerned about the financial impacts on the community. This has resulted in the proposed ordinance being pulled back and revised to

become less burdensome on OWTS owners and residents. The City Council wants to recover costs, but to make it fair so that it is a nominal cost for the majority of the OWTS owners and residents. The City Council wants to show cost recovery, but don't want to have sewer fees subsidize the septic program.

25. Q. (from BOS to attendees) Please give us your feedback. How are we doing?  
A. Learning, better listening than before and responsive.
26. Q. A member of LA32 Neighborhood Council said that though he sees black dots on the map that show OWTS in his NC area, he never was contacted regarding the proposed OWTS ordinance.  
A. The 90+ NCs in the City were emailed notice of the proposed ordinance in April and May 2010, offering presentations to those interested . Today, City has made 25 presentations to those NCs that requested it. However, the City is still prepared and ready now to meet with any NC that invites us. Also, a person from Glassell Park NC (GPNC) requested a meeting with the City for the entire Northeast LA (NELA) NC region. That will take place on Thursday, August 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Glassell Park Community/Senior Center, 3750 Verdugo Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90026.

**Next Meetings:**

1. Listening Session #1 (already held on 08/03/10)
2. Listening Session #2, Tuesday, **August 10 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**, at Council District 2's Sunland-Tujunga Field Office - 7747 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, 91042.
3. Listening Session #3, Thursday, **August 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, at the Bureau of Sanitation's Media Center offices, located at 2714 Media Center Drive, Los Angeles, 90065
4. Listening Session #4, Thursday, **August 12 from 6:30 p.m.**, at Glassell Park Community/Senior Center, 3750 Verdugo Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90026