



## **GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE VENTURA COUNTY SEWER POLICY**

### **How do I determine if the Ventura County Sewer Policy applies to my project?**

The Ventura County Sewer Policy (Sewer Policy) requires connection to the public sewer for all subdivisions, and discretionary projects requiring new Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS, e.g., “septic systems”) or increasing the volume of sewage on existing OWTSs. For example, a commercial development on a vacant lot is subject to the Sewer Policy. Additionally, a nonresidential project on a site with an existing OWTS that will add building(s) with plumbing or increase the number of employees such that the OWTS will have to be enlarged is also subject to the Sewer Policy. Projects that are the construction of a single-family dwelling, a duplex, and/or second dwelling unit are exempt from the Sewer Policy.

### **My project is subject to the Sewer Policy, but I do not believe that obtaining public sewer service is feasible. Are there exceptions to the Sewer Policy?**

The Sewer Policy provides for an exception for projects where public sewer connection is infeasible. All 3 of the following conditions must be satisfied in order to utilize an OWTS instead of connection to the public sewer.

1. Step 1 – determine the distance from the project property line to the nearest available sewer connection. This can usually be obtained from the sewer service provider. A sewer availability letter or a written determination that sewer service is not available (“will-not serve letter”) is required to be submitted with the project application. If the distance is greater than 1/2 mile to the property line, your project may not have to be connected to the sewer; go to Step 2. If the distance is 1/2 mile or less, connection to the sewer may still be required. A cost analysis will have to be prepared to determine this. See information related to the cost exception analysis for further details or contact the Environmental Health Division Land Use Coordinator for assistance.
2. Step 2 – each lot size must be at least 40,000 square feet for residential developments and 20,000 square feet (per 1500 gallons of OWTS capacity) for commercial developments. A deed restriction may be proposed to limit a

residential subdivision to one single family dwelling per lot and decrease the lot size to 20,000 square feet. Please contact the Environmental Health Division Land Use Coordinator for further information.

3. Step 3 – each lot must be capable of supporting a septic system. A soils report demonstrating feasibility for a septic system on each lot of the project is required to be submitted with the project application. The report must include information on soils type, percolation testing with site locations and highest historical groundwater level.

**NOTE:** Where public sewer is available within 200 feet of the project, the Ventura County Building Code Ordinance requires that the project connect to the public sewer.

### **What information do I need to provide for the County to analyze the cost exception provision of the Sewer Policy?**

The County will need the following information for the cost analysis:

1. The distance to the nearest available sewer connection.
2. The physical construction costs of installing 2 septic systems (main dwelling and second dwelling) on each lot of a residential subdivision or the construction costs of installing 1 septic system for commercial projects.
3. The physical construction costs of the sewer line installation from the nearest connection point to the property line.\*

\*Administrative costs such as engineering reports, annexation fees, etc., are not considered in the cost analysis

**Click here to view the Adopted Ventura County Sewer Policy:**

[https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/eh/land-use/Ventura\\_County\\_Sewer\\_Policy\\_1996.pdf](https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/eh/land-use/Ventura_County_Sewer_Policy_1996.pdf)