

Section 9: LOCAL WASTEWATER PLANNING

The Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan is a regional planning document that must be implemented by the local governments and local wastewater providers. A local wastewater master plan is a more detailed, long-range plan specific to each community and their wastewater treatment system. Local wastewater master plans need to be integrated with the Metro Water District's Wastewater Management Plan as well as other state and regional plans.

LOCAL WASTEWATER MASTER PLANS

Because the Wastewater Management Plan is regional in breadth, it covers a wide range of topics. The specifics will be developed and/or refined at the local level by the local jurisdiction. A local wastewater master plan typically evaluates the local system and facilities and recommends solutions to address the design, construction, and financing of facilities to meet anticipated regulatory requirements, residential and commercial growth, and system reliability needs. Local wastewater master plans are important for providing a dependable wastewater system for existing and future customers.

Local wastewater master plans, at a minimum, must ensure that wastewater services are developed cost effectively, with a long-term regional perspective while providing good customer service. This Section discusses the actions required to implement the recommendations associated with local wastewater master plans.

ACTION ITEM 9.1 – DEVELOP LOCAL WASTEWATER MASTER PLANS

ACTION ITEM

Develop a local wastewater master plan that addresses wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, and effluent and biosolids management.

OBJECTIVE

Local wastewater providers should develop and implement a local wastewater master plan (also called a wastewater management plan) that identifies future sewer service areas, projects future wastewater flows, identifies treatment capacity needs and collection system extensions and expansions to support proposed infrastructure improvements to the wastewater management system. To remain current and relevant, wastewater master plans should be updated every 5 years, at a minimum.

DESCRIPTION OF MEASURE

Wastewater master plans typically address local and site-specific issues related to wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, reuse (both indirect potable and non-potable), and effluent and biosolids management. The master plans should have a minimum planning horizon of 30 years. Recognizing that wastewater master plans are “living documents,” local wastewater providers should consult master plans when making critical infrastructure decisions and update these plans as necessary to address changing local conditions.

Local wastewater providers have flexibility in the development of their local wastewater master plan. A large system will likely have a more detailed master plan than a smaller system. Wastewater master plans should include the following minimum elements:

- **Introduction** – describes the planning period, program objectives, regulatory framework and key stakeholders involved in the planning process.
- **Inventory and evaluation of existing wastewater system** – identifies the existing sewer service area and analyzes the local wastewater collection system, including hydraulic capacity, as well as wastewater treatment capabilities, including optional analyses of wastewater treatment processes, the identification of problems with treatment processes, and identifies reuse opportunities.
- **Future wastewater flow forecasts** – projects future wastewater flows based on demographic forecasts and the projected sewer service area boundary and future reuse needs.
- **Future wastewater conveyance and treatment alternatives** – create system alternatives for future expanded areas and flows with a recommended solution for conveyance and treatment capacity needs, as well as effluent and biosolids management in the recommended solution.

<p style="text-align: center;">Responsible Party</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Local Government</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Wastewater Provider</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">In Coordination With</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stormwater Department</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Development/ Zoning</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Water Providers</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Board of Health</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>neighboring wastewater providers (where appropriate)</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Related Regulations</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPDES Water/Wastewater</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Safe Drinking Water Act</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>O.C.G.A § 36-70-20, the Service Delivery Act</u></p>

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Communities with septic systems need to consider septage disposal needs when upgrading or designing new wastewater treatment facilities. If reuse applications are considered then a summary of treatment technology, quantities, quality, and permitting requirements should be included. The consumptive use implications of these alternatives should be identified and factored into the decision making process.

- **Future sewerred and unsewerred area planning** – Local wastewater master plans need to identify and plan for wastewater management. Planning for the near term must be included, long-term planning is expected to be generic in nature and evolve through the master plan updates. The planning will address the following areas:
 1. Areas to be sewerred within the near term (approximately 5 years).
 2. Areas that are in transition and will not be sewerred in the near future but are expected to be sewerred in the next 20 years. The local wastewater plans should address how wastewater will be handled in these transition areas with consideration of the requirements in Section 8, Septic Systems and Decentralized Systems. Local jurisdictions need to determine if development on private decentralized facilities will be allowed. If private decentralized systems are used then local wastewater master plans should account for these private systems and create a plan to tie in the areas, including obtaining easements, served by these facilities into the larger collection system once those private facilities are decommissioned.
 3. Areas that are not planned to be sewerred. Areas that are not intended to be served by sewer in the future should be zoned appropriately for long-term septic system use. For most parts of the Metro Water District, one-acre or more minimum lot sizes should be considered. It is recommended that the County Board of Health be involved in the septic system area planning.
- **Implementation of recommended alternative** – describes the recommended alternative, including a high level overview of the potential environmental impacts, required permits, institutional impacts, estimated costs and a capital improvements phasing plan associated with the recommended alternative. Environmental justice analyses should be conducted, as appropriate, as part of the local wastewater master planning process.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

These master plan amendments should be developed in cooperation with all affected jurisdictions. These jurisdictions may include the county, cities within the county, neighboring counties, and local wastewater providers. All inter-jurisdictional projects should be in compliance with O.C.G.A § 36-70-20, the Service Delivery Act.

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LOCAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Wastewater master plans should address local wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, reuse, and effluent and biosolids management issues. Local wastewater master plans should address the following key issues:

- **Consumptive use** – consider local and regional implications of development on septic systems and reuse water for outdoor irrigation.
- **Water reuse** – public perception and acceptance of using this effluent disposal method. Coordination between water and wastewater planning is essential for implementation of water reuse programs.
- **Local system expansions** – include a schedule for system expansions that plans for capacity before current treatment capacities have been exceeded. This schedule should include the number of facilities, location, and treatment capacities. Plans for future growth and how the wastewater generated from this growth will be treated should also be addressed.
- **Biosolids handling and management** – outline the treatment and short term storage needs as well as transport and disposal methods and treatment systems. If any of these factors are affected by seasonal or weather conditions (land disposal or drying beds) provisions should be made to accommodate such conditions. Planning and sizing for such biosolids facilities should be in accordance with wastewater treatment facility capacities and anticipated septage receiving needs.
- **Septage disposal** – local jurisdictions should have a plan for the disposal of septage generated within their jurisdiction, either at a local wastewater treatment plant or alternative disposal location.
- **Private wastewater systems** – local jurisdictions must develop an ordinance as outlined in Section 8, to manage the use of private wastewater systems. Local plans should account for these systems and create a plan to tie in the areas, including obtaining easements, served by these facilities into the larger collection system once those private facilities are decommissioned. If a local government has an ordinance in place prohibiting private wastewater systems the local government must send Georgia EPD a copy of the ordinance so Georgia EPD will be able to make appropriate permit issuing decisions that do not conflict with local ordinances.

SPECIFIC SUB-TASKS

Sub-Task	Description
Develop a local wastewater master plan	Develop a local wastewater master plan that addresses wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, and effluent and biosolids management.
Revise local wastewater master plans	Revise the local wastewater master plan every 5 years and as needed to support projects and to remain consistent with regional and State policy.

ACTION ITEM 9.2 – ESTABLISH POLICIES FOR CONNECTIONS TO PUBLIC SEWER

ACTION ITEM

Local governments must establish policies for connections to public sanitary sewer.

OBJECTIVE

Allow for the transitioning of areas within the community from septic system service to the public sewer systems.

DESCRIPTION OF MEASURE

It is recommended that local governments establish a policy on connections to public sewer in coordination with the local wastewater master plan. The focus of the connections policy is on areas that are currently not served by sanitary sewer but are proposed for future sewer service. The local wastewater provider may elect to extend sewer service with utility funds and/or require developers to extend the sanitary sewer system to service new development areas. Local wastewater providers should also consider whether other measures such as installing dry sewers for future wastewater service connections are appropriate for their community.

Responsible Party

Local Government
 Local Wastewater Provider
 Other: _____

In Coordination With

Site Plan Review Staff
 Community Development/ Zoning
 Local Stormwater Program
 Local Wastewater Providers
 Local Water Provider
 County Board of Health
 Other: neighboring wastewater providers (where appropriate)

The sewer connection policy should address:

- **Connections to new developments** – If the new development is within the planned area for future sewer service and a new sewer will not be extended for the development, the policy needs to address whether or not dry sewers are to be installed at the time of development.
- **Connections to existing developments** – The policy will need to address how sewer connections will be made within the development, which is likely covered in the sewer specifications. It will need to address which properties will connect to municipal sewer systems at a later time and how these connection costs will be handled.
- **Connections to isolated properties** – When sewers are extended to new developments and past properties on septic systems, the policy needs to address whether or not these properties will be required to connect to the sewer immediately, or only if their septic system fails.
- **Funding methods** – The policy must address what the costs of connecting to the sewer system will be, and who will pay them.

SPECIFIC SUB-TASKS

Sub-Task	Description
Develop policies for connections to public sewer	Determine local policies for connections to public sewer for transitioning areas.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES (OPTIONAL)

Specific solutions will vary, depending on the individual local wastewater provider and the extent of wastewater treatment facilities in each jurisdiction. Policies may but are not required to include:

- In locations where the local wastewater master plan designates an area to be eventually served by sewer, but septic systems are allowed as an interim treatment solution, local jurisdictions should consider whether or not developers should be required to install dry sewers for future connection to the public sewer.
- In areas within one mile of an existing sewer, where the wastewater master plan calls for future sewer, developers should be required to extend the sewer rather than to install septic systems.

For existing developments in critical areas and areas with multiple failing septic systems, consideration should be given to extending and connecting to public sewer during the development of local wastewater master plans.