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**WEKIWA SPRINGS SEPTIC TO SEWER PROJECT**  
**PHASE 2 – THE PALMS 1 & 2**  
**DISTRICT 2**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021**

**PRESENTED BY:**  
**David S. Arms, P.E.**  
**Chief Engineer**  
**Orange County Utilities**

# Welcome



District 2 Commissioner  
Christine Moore  
[District2@ocfl.net](mailto:District2@ocfl.net)



# Agenda

- Background
- Project Overview
- Design Status Update
- Funding Status Update
- Balloting Status Update
- Construction Preview
- Questions & Answers

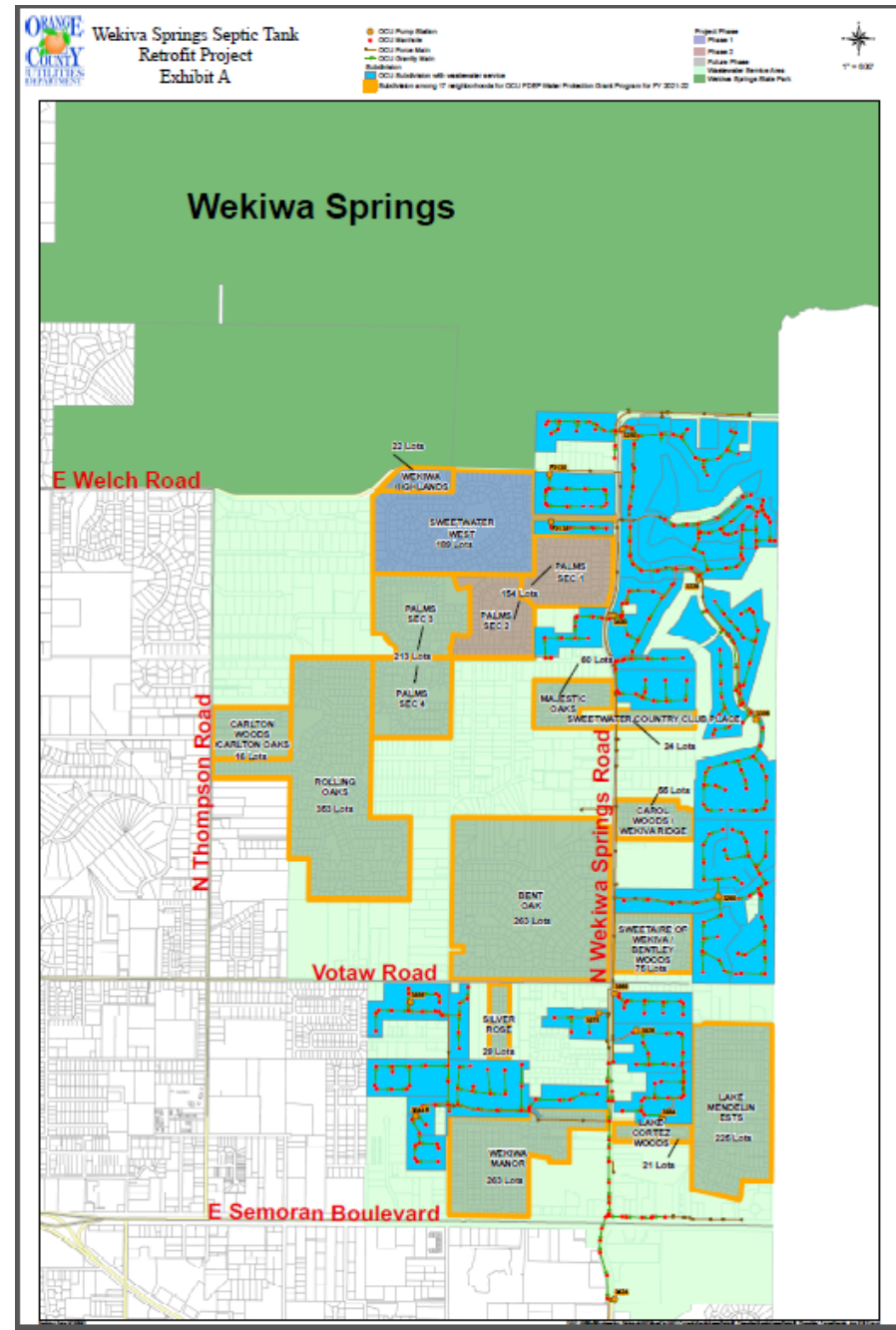
# Background

- The Wekiva River and Wekiwa Springs are impaired by nutrients
  - Phosphorus
  - Nitrogen
- Excess nutrients cause excess algae
  - Fish kills
  - Reduction of diversity, plants, and animals
- Wekiwa Springs and Rock Springs Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) update in 2016
  - Requires nutrient load reductions
    - Identified septic tanks as the source of 29% of nitrogen in the springs
    - 18,000 septic tanks within the Orange County Utilities service area inside the Priority Focus Area (PFA)



# Background

- Eliminate septic tanks in 17 neighborhoods closest to Wekiwa Springs
  - Multi-year plan
  - 1,962 septic tanks
  - \$118 million
- Phase 1 (Sweetwater West and Wekiwa Highlands) is under construction
- Phase 2 is next and comprised of The Palms 1 & 2 (154 homes)

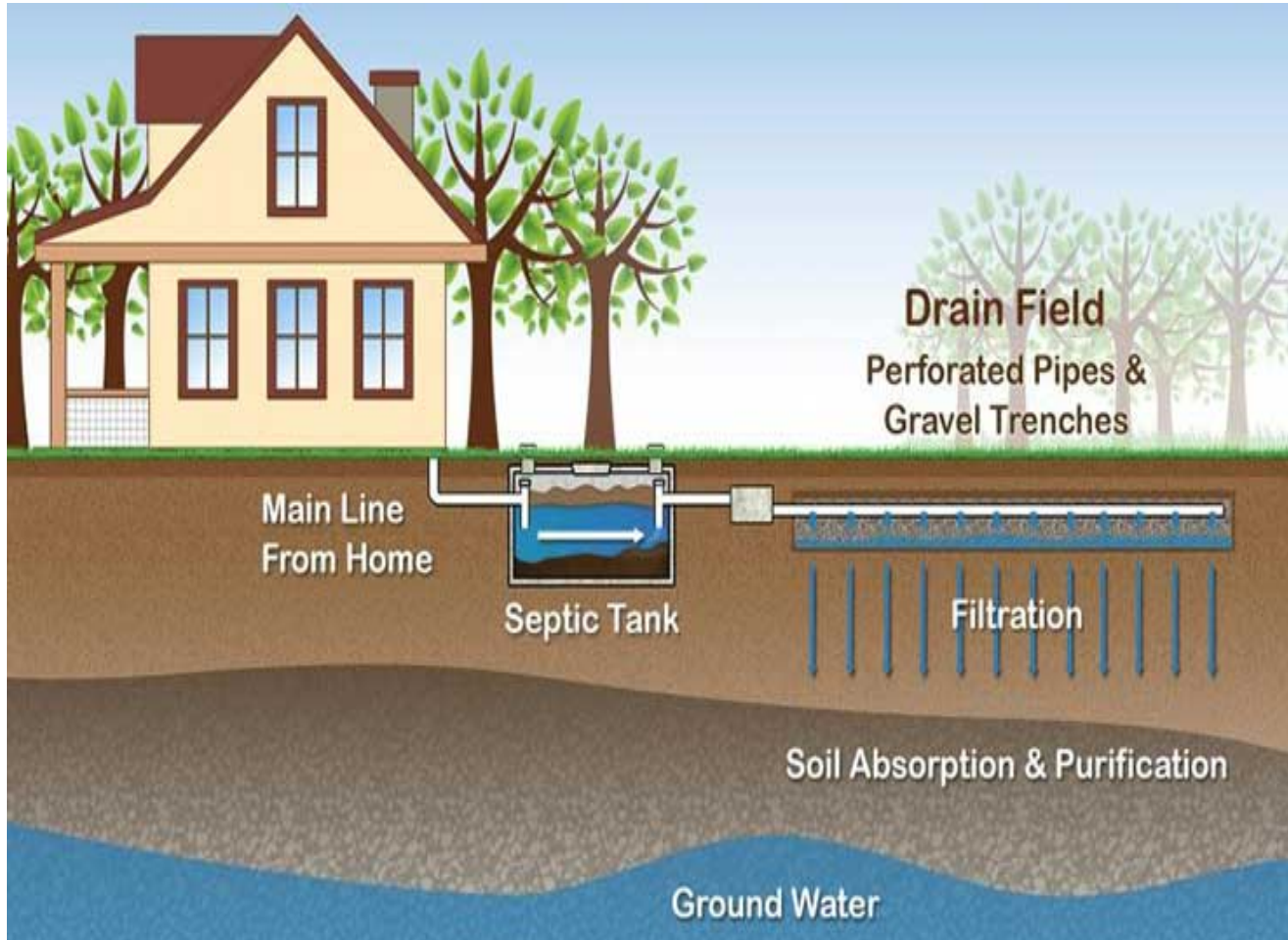


# Project Overview

- Project Considerations
  - Each lot currently disposes of wastewater through a septic system
  - Septic systems allow sewer effluent with chemicals and bacteria to enter the groundwater system
  - Groundwater and surface water pollution can result due to presence of these chemicals and bacteria
- Project Objectives
  - Construct a closed central gravity sewer and associated pump station to collect and transmit wastewater flow
  - Eliminate all septic systems thereby eliminating major contributions to groundwater and surface water pollution
- Project Requirements
  - If the project moves forward, each resident will be required by County Code to connect to central sewer



# Typical Septic System Layout

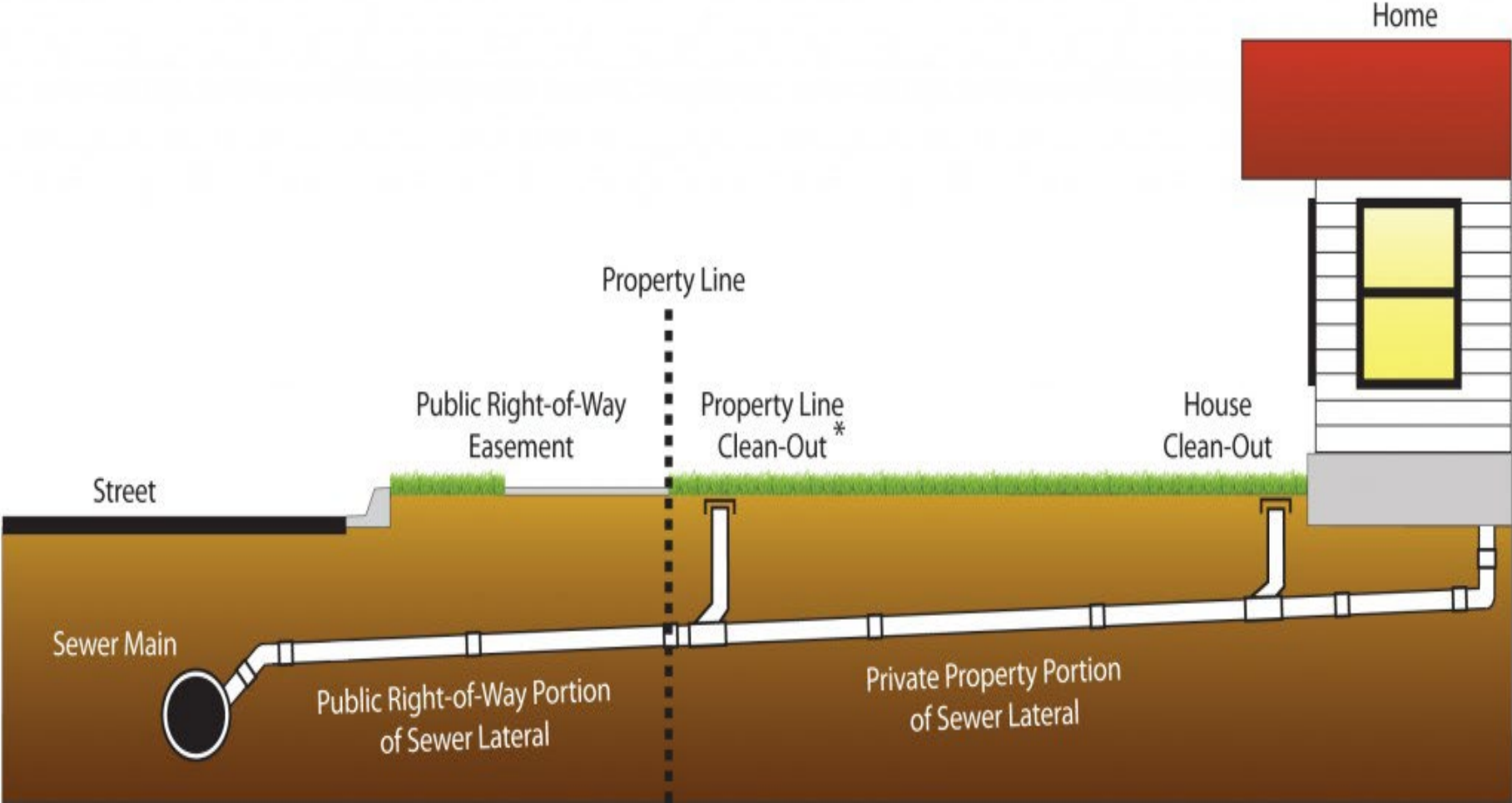


# Septic to Sewer Process

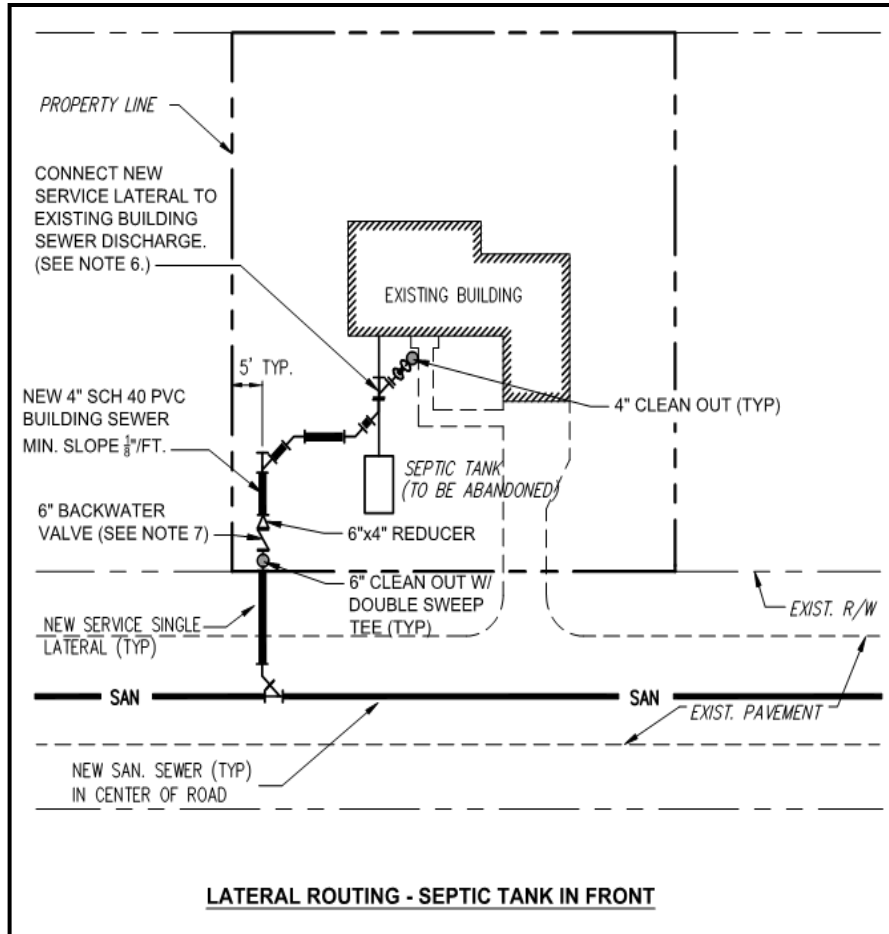
- Construction of new gravity sewer system to serve each home in subdivision
- Existing septic tank to be abandoned; drain field abandoned in place
- New sewer service lateral will be installed from home main line to connection point at property line near right-of-way cleanouts installed in accordance with plumbing codes
- Addition of irrigation meter (if requested) to eliminate costs for water consumption related to irrigation, swimming pools, etc.
- Replacement of asphalt pavement from curb-to-curb throughout the subdivision



# Typical Central Sewer System Layout

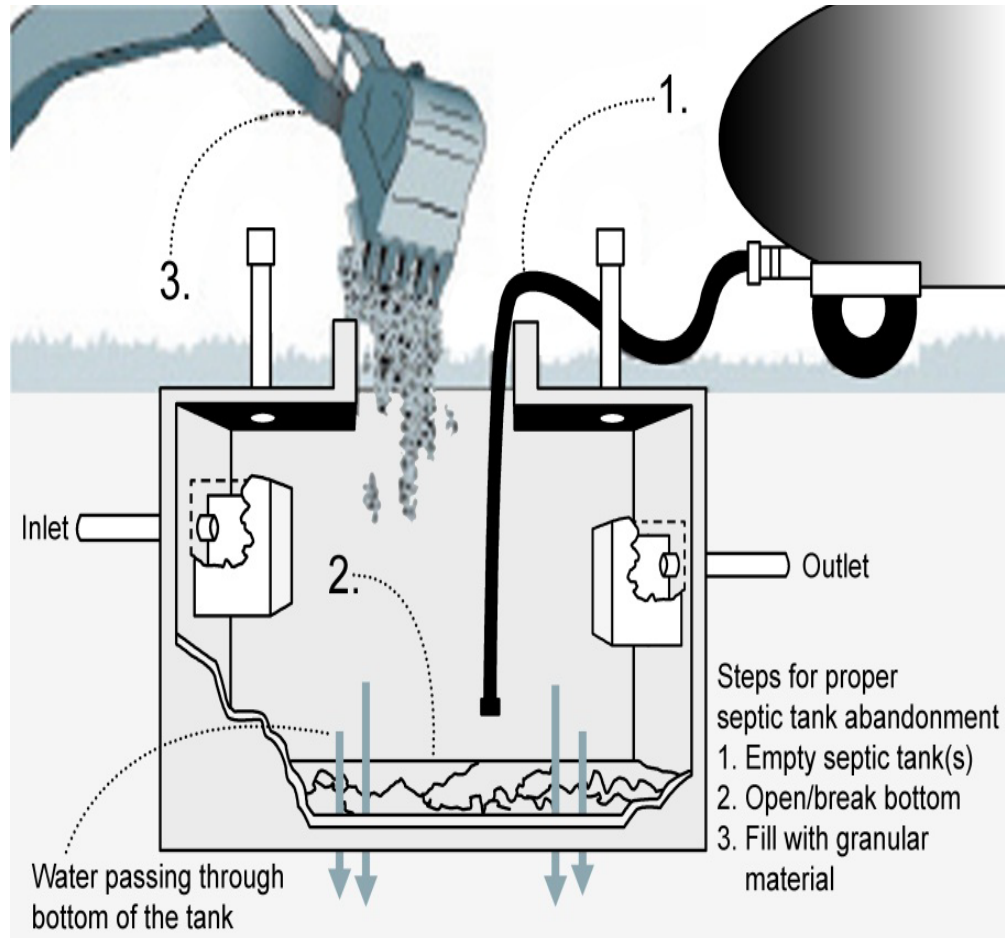


# Sewer Connections & Septic Tank Abandonments

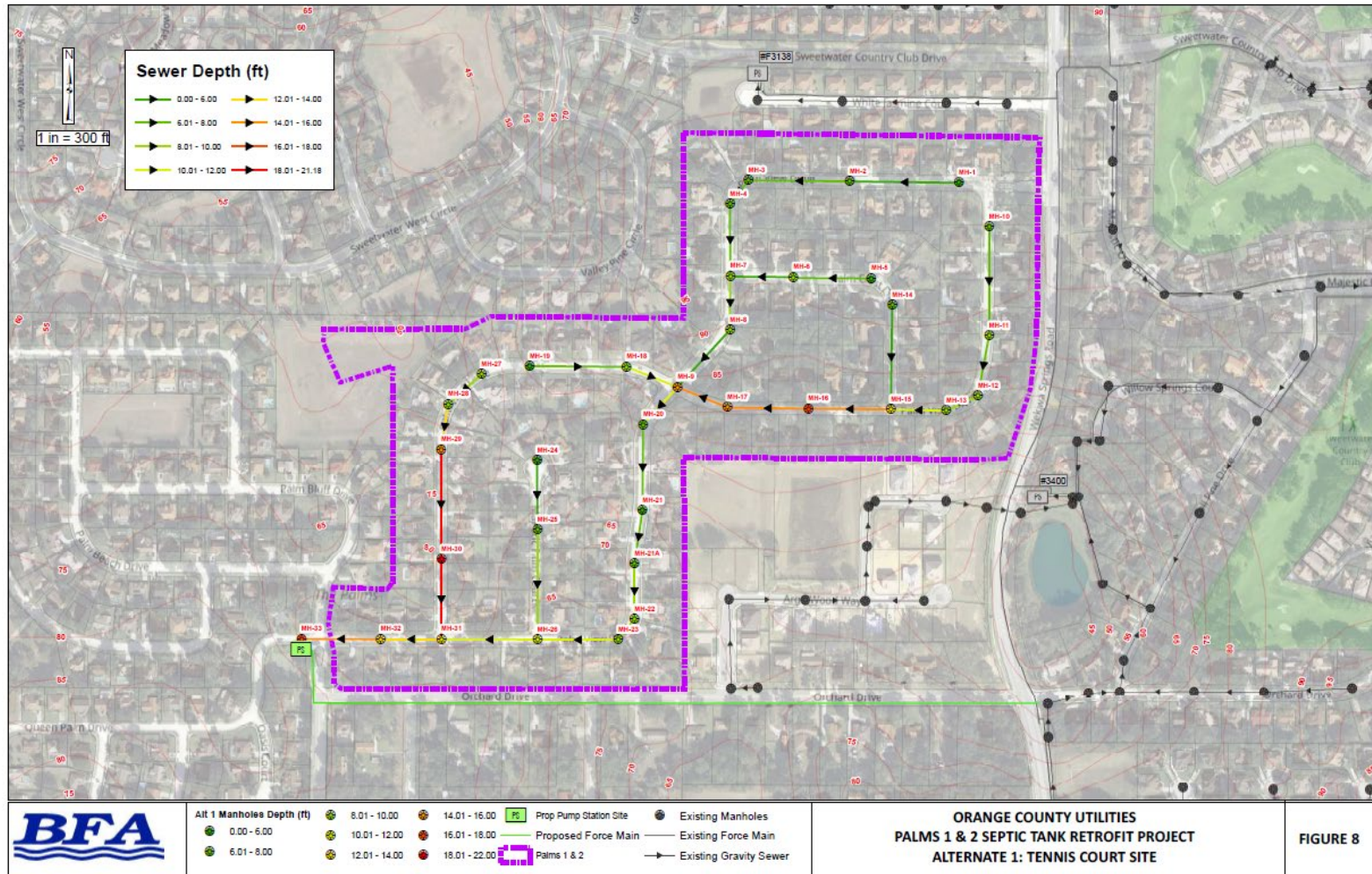


- Install new 4-inch sewer lateral and connect at existing building sewer discharge point
- Work includes connection of each residence to central sewer by the County's contractor upon receiving authorization from the homeowner via license agreement
- Septic tanks will be abandoned in place in accordance with law: remove liquids and sludge, break up the bottom and sides to 12 inches below grade, backfill, and restore with sod
- All of this work is included in the project; there will be no additional costs to the homeowner

# Septic Tank Abandonment



# Central Sewer System Layout with Pump Station Location



# Design Status Update

## Summary of Design Phase Activities

- On-site Activities
  - Topographic and Boundary Surveying
    - Project team will want to obtain specific survey data including finished floor elevations of houses
  - Geotechnical Investigations
    - Data to assist with backfill and asphalt construction
- Ongoing Design Activities
  - Gravity sewer plan and profiles
  - Pump station layout and flow and calculations
  - Coordination with permitting agencies



# Funding Status Update

## Cost Summary

- Design \$ 730,000
- Other (preconstruction) \$ 100,000
- Construction \$ 6,888,000
- Other (post-construction) \$ 750,000
- TOTAL \$ 8,468,000



# Funding Status Update

## Matching Funding Applications Under Consideration

- SJRWMD Cost Share Program
  - \$1.72 million in funding approved 5/11/2021
- Legislative Appropriations
  - \$500,000 appropriation approved, effective 7/1/2021
  - Administered by FDEP in the form of a grant
- FDEP Funding Assistance
  - \$154,000 Sewer Incentives Grant approved 7/29/2021
  - Springs Restoration Program/Water Protection Grant Program
    - Submitted applications to multiple funding programs at FDEP
    - Follow-up expected in late summer
    - FDEP funding is final “puzzle piece” to complete picture



# Funding Status Update

## Funding Breakdown by Source

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Current % of Total Project</u>	<u>Current Amount (in millions)</u>
SJRWMD Cost Share Program	Approved	20.3%	\$ 1.72
FDEP Funding Assistance	Applied for multiple grants	36%+	\$ 3.05+
FDEP Sewer Incentive	Approved	1.8%	\$ 0.15
State Appropriations	Approved	5.9%	\$ 0.50
Contribution from Orange County Utilities	Per County Ordinance	25.0%	\$ 2.12
Contribution from Residents		10.9%	\$ 0.92
Total Funding Approved/Applied		100.0%	\$ 8.47
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 8.47</b>

Application pending FDEP review

\$0.924M ÷ 154 = \$6,000 per lot





# Balloting Status Update

## Balloting Process

The Orange County Comptroller will mail MSBU ballots

- Ballots must be returned by mail to be counted
- 67% “In Favor” of project required
- If ballot passes, each homeowner will be responsible for a portion of the project cost as follows:
  - Minimum 10% funding by homeowners, depending on state funding
  - Cost can be paid up front or financed over a 10-year period through an MSBU
  - If MSBU is utilized, homeowner will pay an annual assessment for 10 years
    - A reasonable interest rate and \$2.50 annual admin fee are included in the annual assessment
    - Remaining balance may be paid at any time during the 10-year period



# Balloting Status Update

## Schedule

- Community meeting in October (MSBU amount)
- OCU to meet with BCC in October (MSBU amount)
- Community meeting in November 2021 (official ballot and amount)
- Mail out official ballots in November
- Ballots due to Comptroller (30 days)
- Comptroller to provide verification in December
- Design complete - advertise project for construction
- Prepare Notice of Intent in January. Advertise for 4 weeks.
- Notice of Intent hearing in February 2022
- BCC awards construction contract
- Public hearing prior to 5/31/2022
- Construction start
- Collections begin after 11/1/2022



# Sample Ballot & Cover Letter



OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

ORANGE  
COUNTY  
FLORIDA

PHIL DIAMOND, CPA  
County Comptroller  
Department of Finance and Accounting  
201 South Rosalind Avenue  
Post Office Box 38  
Orlando, Florida 32802-0038  
Telephone: 407-836-5715  
Fax: 407-836-5753

November 16, 2020

Dear Property Owner:

Subject: **Wekiwa Springs Septic Tank Retrofit Project**

Enclosed is your ballot for voting on the construction of an Orange County wastewater project in the Wekiwa Highlands and Sweetwater West subdivisions. This wastewater project would be proposed as a part of the Wekiwa Springs Septic Tank Retrofit Program. In addition to a gravity sewer collection system, the project will also include connection of each dwelling's plumbing to the sewer main, abandonment of the existing septic tank, landscape and site restoration, construction of facilities to provide all benefiting properties with connection to the municipal water system, resurfacing of existing roadways with materials to match existing conditions, (i.e. repaving existing asphalt roadways from curb to curb and/or restoration of unmaintained right-of-ways), installation of a new irrigation service with a meter at each benefiting property, and any associated water and wastewater capital charges and connection fees. In accordance with the Retrofit Program Policy, 67% of the total affected property owners must vote for construction of the wastewater project before the County will continue consideration of the project. Your property has been identified as one that would be included in the project and you would be responsible for any costs indicated below.

Homeowners of all benefiting properties are required to contribute to the cost of the wastewater project in the form of a fixed amount as outlined below. The sum total of the contributions from the homeowners is equal to 12.5% of the project cost. The remainder will be funded by contributions from Orange County Utilities (at 25%) and multiple state appropriations and grants (at 62.5%). The funding structure for the project is detailed in the table below.

Source	Funding (in millions)	Percentage of Total	Funding Contribution per Home
SJRWMD	\$1.500	14.9%	\$7,109
State Appropriation	\$0.500	5.0%	\$2,370
FDEP	\$4.300	42.6%	\$20,379
Orange County	\$2.522	25.0%	\$11,953
Homeowners	\$1.266	12.5%	\$6,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$10.088</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$47,810</b>

Property owners must also indicate their desire for the County to establish the project area as a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU). An MSBU designation provides property owners the opportunity to pay for their share of the cost of the wastewater project over a 10-year period. A fixed amount assessment would be included on the annual property tax bill of all benefiting properties. County policy requires that input from affected property owners be obtained to determine if a significant interest exists for the establishment of the MSBU before scheduling a public hearing with the Orange County Board of County Commissioners.

Your vote is to be indicated on the enclosed ballot. Please read the following and the enclosed ballot carefully.

The ballot options are:

**OPTION 1: CONSTRUCTION OF A WASTEWATER PROJECT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT**

Voting for this option would signify a desire for the construction of a wastewater project to serve the project area and the establishment of an MSBU. The total fixed costs to the OWNER of each benefiting property is \$6,000.00 and may be either paid in full or financed as presented below.

The designation of the project area as an MSBU allows property owner costs to be amortized (financed) over a 10-year period. The cost would be added to your property real estate tax bill as an annual assessment. The assessment includes interest at 2.9% and a \$2.50 administration fee.

Utilizing the 10-year MSBU financing, the annual assessment for the wastewater project and fees would be a total of **\$702.30** for each of the following ten years.

**OPTION 2: NO CONSTRUCTION OF A WASTEWATER PROJECT**

Voting for this option would signify a desire against the construction of a wastewater project to serve the project area. No wastewater project would be constructed and no MSBU would be established.

PLEASE READ THE BALLOT CAREFULLY. Then indicate on the ballot whether you are **In favor** of construction of a wastewater project and establishment of an MSBU (Option 1), or you are **not in favor** of construction of a wastewater project (Option 2). If you vote **in favor** of the construction of a wastewater project (Option 1), you **agree to pay your share of the cost**.

The final decision concerning the construction of a Wekiwa Highlands and Sweetwater West Wastewater Project rests with the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (Board). The results of the community meetings and balloting will be submitted to the Board for review. Potential projects presented to the Board for consideration would not be acted upon until a public hearing is conducted. All affected property owners would be notified of the date and time of such public hearing by mail. The public hearing would be held during the customary 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday working hours. If you cannot attend the public hearing, you may contact your County Commissioner at 407-836-7350 to present comments concerning this matter.

If you have any questions concerning this, please call David Arms at 407-254-9694. Questions may also be emailed to David.Arms@ocfl.net.

Sincerely,

Ann Dawkins  
MSBU Supervisor, Special Assessments

Enclosures

[www.OrangeCountyFL.net](http://www.OrangeCountyFL.net)

Para más información, por favor llame al Departamento de Utilidades del Condado de Orange y pida hablar con un representante en español. El número de teléfono es 407-836-7000.



# Sample Ballot

## WEKIWA HIGHLANDS AND SWEETWATER WEST WASTEWATER PROJECT

I am/we are the owners of the property included in the boundaries of the proposed Wekiwa Highlands and Sweetwater West Wastewater Project; parcel identification of the property being as follows:

«PARCEL\_ID»  
«NAME»  
«ADDR1»  
«ADDR2»  
«CITY» «STATE» «ZIP\_5»

I am/we are aware of the proposed Project. I am/we are a property owner within the boundary of said proposed project and I/we hereby cast my/our vote as follows:

PLEASE MARK YOUR CHOICE WITH A CHECK



Please choose only one option. Sign your Ballot.

**OPTION 1:** I am in favor of the construction of a wastewater project for the Wekiwa Highlands and Sweetwater West Wastewater Project area. In addition to a gravity sewer collection system, the project will also include connection of each dwelling's plumbing to the sewer main, abandonment of the existing septic tank, landscape and site restoration, construction of facilities to provide all benefitting properties with connection to the municipal water system, resurfacing of existing roadways with materials to match existing conditions, (i.e., repaving existing asphalt roadways from curb to curb and/or restoration of unmaintained right-of-ways), installation of a new irrigation service with a meter at each benefitting property, and any associated water and wastewater capital charges and connection fees. I understand I am responsible for paying the applicable costs described in 1 through 2 below:

1. For each benefitting property, the cost is \$6,000 per parcel for the collection system and other improvements and fees.
2. I am in favor of the project area being designated as a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU), which if I choose, would allow the payment of the above costs over 10 years by way of a yearly addition to my property taxes plus fixed interest at a 2.9% annual rate plus a \$2.50 administration fee. I understand that I may choose to pay all costs up front or the unpaid balance of costs at any time during the 10-year period by one lump sum payment.

**OPTION 2:** I am not in favor of the construction of a wastewater project for the Wekiwa Highlands and Sweetwater West Project area.

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SIGNATURE

DATE

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SIGNATURE

DATE

Owners of the property described above should sign exactly as their names appear on the property deed. Please note that only one property owner's signature per household is necessary. Please return this ballot in the self-addressed return envelope provided. It must be postmarked December 16, 2020 to be counted in the tabulation of ballots.

# Construction Preview

- Sewer and water system will be constructed utilizing open cut construction methods within right-of-way or utility easements
- Involves excavating a trench, installing the pipe in 20 ft. long segments, then backfilling and compacting back to the surface level



# Construction Preview

## Driveway Access



- Reasonable efforts will be made to restore and maintain access to each home outside of the contractor's normal working hours
- Homeowner will be notified in advance of limited access conditions
- Appropriate notifications will be made to emergency service providers
- Reasonable efforts will be made to restore complete access as soon as possible

## Next Steps

- Continue ongoing engineering and surveying activities
- Coordinate funding with FDEP programs
- Prepare for balloting
- Provide project updates as needed

# Questions & Answers

