

From the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Major Issues Committee review
Description of JEA/DCHD Septic Tank Program

Water/Wastewater System Improvement Program

Ordinance 2016-490-E replaced the Septic Tank Superfund Ordinance with the Water/Wastewater System Improvement Program and established 35-targeted areas that have septic tank failures and no existing water lines. This bill also enacted an agreement between the City and JEA to begin the work of phasing out those septic tanks. The first three neighborhoods were covered in this legislation and were funded by both the City and JEA for a total project of \$30 million while funding for all 35-targeted areas runs in the cost range of \$700 million. The City and JEA are continuing to work on identifying additional funding sources for future phases of the program.

JEA is working with the community, churches, neighborhood associations, and going door to door to achieve a 70 percent buy-in from each community where those septic tanks are to be phased out. The 70 percent buy-in refers to the number of property owners required to signify their desire for the new system by signing a letter of intent, which will include access for the construction, connection and maintenance of the system to be installed to serve the priority area. Another important provision of this ordinance is that the cost of constructing wastewater collection lines and water distribution lines to priority areas are to be borne by all taxpayers since the problems are Citywide.

Priority for providing wastewater lines or water lines under the Wastewater System Improvement Program are determined based on the following considerations:

Health Criteria

- 1A. Number of septic tank system repair permits issued in the area.
- 1B. Age of septic tank system.
2. Average lot size in the area.
3. Soil potential in the area.
4. Seasonal highwater table in the area.
5. Threat to potable water in the area.
6. Sanitary conditions in the area.
7. Proximity of the area to any surface water body.
8. Potential for flooding in the area.

Environmental Criteria

9. Proximity to surface waters (% of lots within a 150M buffer).
10. Impaired tributary exceedance factor.

Community Considerations

11. Development prior to 1968.
12. Median home value.
13. Existence of centralized water system (partial or lacking).
14. Elimination of future proliferation of on-site septic systems.

15. Off-site economic development opportunities.

The Major Issues Committee inquired about coordination efforts for additional infrastructure projects when these water and sewer lines are being installed. While that is not a component of the Wastewater System Improvement Program, both JEA and Public Works consider opportunities to complete additional infrastructure projects and will seek out alternative funding options when a related project can be included but is not yet funded. The Committee also inquired about the connection between water and sewer infrastructure and increases in property values. While the intent of the program is related to health and quality of life, one incentive of participating in the program is property value increases.

Major Issues Committee Related Recommendations:

- 1. Update policies to recognize replacement of the Septic Tank Superfund Ordinance with the Water/Wastewater System Improvement Program and the 35-targeted areas that have septic tank failures and no existing wastewater lines pursuant to Ordinance 2016-490-E.*
- 2. Include policies calling for JEA and Public Works to coordinate infrastructure projects with the Water/Wastewater System Improvement Program projects in a manner that promotes efficiency and maximizes the impact of public expenditures.*

From the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Conservation / Coastal Management Element

CCME Objective 7.3 Limit public expenditures that subsidize growth by ensuring that building and development activities are carried out in a manner which minimizes danger to life and property from natural disasters and restricting the intensity of development within designated Coastal High Hazard Areas consistent with public safety needs.

CCME Policy 7.3.5 The City shall limit the expenditure of public funds in Coastal High Hazard Areas to the restoration or enhancement of natural resources and to the replacement and renewal of existing public facilities which may be expanded and improved.

CCME Objective 7.4 Limit development density and intensity within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) and direct it outside of the CHHA, and mitigate the impact of natural hazards in the area.