



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2010

COMMITTEE ON ENGINEERING

Mr. Richard Lanyon, Executive Director

Clarification of policy regarding MWRD Sewerage System Permits for areas currently served by septic systems

Dear Sir:

The Engineering Department periodically receives Sewerage System Permit Applications for sanitary sewer construction in conjunction with taking a facility off a failing septic system and providing a connection to an existing public sewer. Stormwater detention for such projects is required under the Sewer Permit Ordinance (SPO) and the Manual of Procedures for the Administration of the Sewer Permit Ordinance (MOP).

To prevent or mitigate the adverse impacts of new development on flooding, effective January 1, 1972, the MOP was amended to add Article 6-4 which requires that in separate sewer areas, stormwater detention be provided for all sewer permit projects exceeding certain acreage limits. The intent of the detention requirements is that the rate of stormwater runoff from a site after its development not exceed the rate of runoff from the area in its undeveloped, natural state.

Article 6-4 of the MOP was further amended in 1998 by revising Section c(1), which now sets forth detention requirements specifically for redevelopments (i.e. totally or partially previously developed areas undergoing further development or redevelopment). In administering Article 6-4c(1), if a site undergoing redevelopment is already served by a sanitary sewer, and the site is part or all of a contiguous ownership totaling five acres or larger, then stormwater detention is required for the specific area being disturbed or redeveloped (e.g. a new or expanded building within the developed site). This requirement for stormwater detention also applies to areas that are unsewered. An existing facility and the adjacent property served by a septic system is considered an unsewered area. When an unsewered site connects to a sanitary sewer system, stormwater detention is required for the entire site.

The Engineering Department requests direction from the Board of Commissioners regarding projects where property owners are served by failing septic systems and wish to connect to an existing public sewer system but are dissuaded by the stormwater detention requirements of the SPO and MOP. The cost of the stormwater detention facilities often greatly exceeds the cost of connecting to the public sewer and results in the cancellation of the Sewerage System Permit application.

We believe that it is in the best interest of the public and public health to encourage property owners to abandon septic systems whenever possible. The Engineering Department recommends that in such cases the property be encumbered under a Schedule L recording which requires stormwater detention when the property is subdivided or redeveloped at a future date. If the Board of Commissioners agrees with implementing this policy, the SPO and MOP will be revised to reflect this change when they are updated.

In light of the Engineering Department's opinion it is requested that the Executive Director recommend to the Board of Commissioners that it provide further direction regarding the handling of future requests of a similar nature.

If further clarification is required, please advise the undersigned.

Requested, Kenneth A. Kits, Director of Engineering, WSS:MD

Recommended, Richard Lanyon, Executive Director

Respectfully Submitted, Frank Avila, Chairman Committee on Engineering

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for December 16, 2010