

THE CITY OF GULF BREEZE, FL SEPTIC TANK ELIMINATION PROGRAM



Program Need:

Septic systems, while effective in the proper conditions, do not offer the best environmental solution for domestic waste treatment in many conditions. Poor soils, aging systems, increased use and development density changes can cause existing septic systems to malfunction. Additionally, poorly draining soils, shallow groundwater or flood prone areas can cause septic systems to be unusable during certain times of the year.



Eligibility:

Any existing residence with a septic system is eligible for this program. Existing platted, vacant residential lots may also be considered. Undeveloped property larger than 1 acre and commercial facilities are not eligible. Priority of available city funding will be according to need and environmental benefit.

Need for STEP:

Need will be defined as environmental sensitivity given proximity to surface water, age of existing system, soil compatibility, and depth to groundwater. Other determinations of need are the size of lot, presence of trees and vegetation, density and intensity of land use/ zoning district.

Funding for STEP:

Funding for Gulf Breeze's STEP program is conditioned on funds appropriated, and outside grant sources. A cost match is required. Priority will be given in proportion to matching funds, and the likelihood of additional septic tank abatements in proximity to the new connection line.

STEP Participation Options:

The City provides several options for funding the elimination of septic tanks.

A. Neighborhood Improvement Special Assessment

A neighborhood group can petition the city to create a special assessment program where each property is assessed for the cost of improvements to create the sewer collection system. The city will require that 60% of those affected by the assessment agree to project. Connection to the system

for existing residences will be required within one year of completion of the construction.

B. Individual Funding by Payment Plan

An individual property can (1) apply to the city for financing of the sewer infrastructure required to connect to the sewer system or (2) apply to the city for a payment plan with total costs paid by the property owner and recovered over a specified number of years until paid in full. In both instances, the property owner's amount due is reduced by each additional connection onto the system by properties within 200 feet of the new sewer line with access through public rights of way. The amount of reduction will be specified in the approved payment plan, determined by costs. An agreement for reimbursement to the property owner for additional connections to the system will be developed. In no case will the property owner be entitled to recover more than the original construction costs. Recovery of interest and other fees is also prohibited.



C. City Funding

The city may provide some or all funds for construction costs of the installation of the sewer system. The city may use existing funds or apply for grants to construct the system. City funding will be prioritized for critical environmental issues and projects with significant private contributions.

Procedures for STEP Application:

Interested parties must be the property owner or authorized agent for owner. The application must indicate one of the three above categories for eligibility.

An application form can be obtained at Gulf Breeze City Hall, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561. Additional questions or to obtain an electronic copy of the application please call 850.934.5110 or email PublicServices@gulfbreezefl.gov.

The application will be reviewed by public services staff for completeness and feasibility. A cost estimate will be compiled and project requirements established. These details will be shared with applicant(s) to determine the willingness to continue with the project. Public services will submit a recommendation to the city manager for approval by city council.

Upon approval, public services will contract for the required engineering, permitting and construction. If project costs exceed the estimated costs, the applicant(s) may withdraw from the project and the city council must approve expenditures above the original estimates.

Payment for loans and special assessments will begin upon certification of completion of

construction. Deposits, fees and other direct payments to the city for sewer service are also due at this time.

Special Conditions for Payment Plan:

- The individual will be responsible for the entirety of the construction costs, financed by the city for 3-7 years, at an annual interest rate of 4%, with a mortgage established on the property. Longer terms than 7 years for project costs greater than \$25,000 may be approved by Gulf Breeze City Council.
- If the property ownership changes or is transferred, the remainder of the financed cost will be due in full.
- Failure to make timely payments will result in termination of water service.
- The city will establish the number of total connections within 200 feet of the proposed system with access through public rights of way that could be served by the project. An infrastructure fee will be established for each new connection to be made by dividing the costs by one half the number of connections possible. This fee will be credited to the property owner's amount owed, as fees are collected. This credit will be a maximum of the loan amount under option (1) or the total construction amount under option (2), and only applicable during the payment



plan period while the original property owner is in possession of the property. All excess fees collected will be designated for the city's septic tank elimination program fund

Special Conditions for Special Assessment:

- 60% of those affected must agree to the initial and final project costs.
- Special assessments may be paid in full at any time, but an annual payment will be required with the property tax assessment.
- Liens for non-payment may also be established.

