



# Indian River County 2030 Comprehensive Plan

## Chapter 3A

# Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element

Indian River County Community Development Department  
Adopted: October 12, 2010

Supplement #16; Adopted June 12th, 2018, Ordinance 2018-014

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
PURPOSE .....	1
DEFINITIONS.....	2
BACKGROUND .....	4
HISTORY .....	4
COUNTY UTILITIES DEPARTMENT .....	4
CENTRALIZED REGIONAL SYSTEM.....	5
EXISTING CONDITIONS.....	8
SANITARY SEWER PROCESS .....	8
Collection.....	8
Treatment .....	8
By-Product Disposal .....	9
PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEM.....	9
South Regional Sewer Service Area.....	10
West Sewer Service Area.....	11
Central Sewer Service Area.....	12
North Sewer Service Area .....	13
City of Vero Beach Sewer Service Area.....	14
Finance.....	16
PRIVATE SEWER SYSTEMS .....	18
SEPTIC SYSTEMS .....	19
Septic to Sewer Study: Evaluation and Ranking .....	21
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK .....	24
FEDERAL.....	24
STATE .....	24
LOCAL .....	25
ANALYSIS.....	26
COLLECTION SYSTEM.....	26
Service Area.....	26
System Evaluation and Maintenance .....	27
Service to New Development .....	27
Septic Systems .....	28
TREATMENT .....	32
Public Treatment Plants .....	32
Private Treatment Plants.....	36
EFFLUENT DISPOSAL .....	36
SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS.....	37
GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES.....	38
GOAL .....	38

OBJECTIVE 1	Service Concurrent with Development.....	38
OBJECTIVE 2	Regional System Expansion/Correction of Deficiencies.....	39
OBJECTIVE 3	Surface Water and Groundwater Quality.....	39
OBJECTIVE 4	Water Conservation .....	40
OBJECTIVE 5	Capital Improvements .....	40
OBJECTIVE 6	Package Treatment Plants .....	43
OBJECTIVE 7	Septic Systems .....	44
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	.....	47
EVALUATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES	.....	51

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.A.1 Indian River County WWTF Service Areas.....	6
Figure 3.A.2 WWTF Capacity vs. Demand.....	34

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE 3.A.1 - SANITARY SEWER FACILITIES IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.2 - COUNTY REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.3 - INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SUBDIVISIONS WITH INCREASED HEALTH RISKS AND/OR INCREASED PROBABILITY OF GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH CONTINUED SEPTIC TANK SYSTEM USE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.3.1 - INDIAN RIVER COUNTY LIST OF SUBDIVISIONS FOR SEPTIC TO SEWER CONVERSION WITHIN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITY OF SEBASTIAN.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.4 - REGULATION OF SEWAGE .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.5 - TYPICAL CONCENTRATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTEWATER, SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT EFFLUENT .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.6 - SANITARY SEWER SUB-ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.7 - SANITARY SEWER SUB-ELEMENT EVALUATION MATRIX .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>TABLE 3.A.8 - WATER &amp; WASTEWATER CONNECTION MATRIX FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>53</b>

# INTRODUCTION

Wastewater is a term used to describe water leaving a site as sewage. Generally, this includes water from the kitchen and bathroom sinks, toilets, dishwashers, clothes washers, and bath tubs/showers. Each day, every person within Indian River County produces an average of 100 gallons of wastewater.

This wastewater has three possible destinations. First, it may enter an on-site sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS), usually a septic tank followed by a drainfield, where it receives a minimum level of treatment. Second, it may go to a private sewage treatment plant, generally located near the dwelling unit or other structure. Private treatment plants usually provide a greater degree of treatment than septic systems. The third possible destination for wastewater is a regional treatment plant. Such regional plants may be located many miles from the structure where wastewater is generated. These plants generally provide a consistently greater degree of treatment than either septic systems or private plants.

Wastewater treatment systems are comprised of three components; these are collection, treatment, and disposal. The importance of each of these three components varies with the type of wastewater system. This document will address the collection, treatment, and disposal characteristics of septic systems, private treatment plants, and regional treatment systems.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element is to:

- identify existing and projected demand and need (demand - supply = need) for sanitary sewer facilities based on the county's population, existing and future land use, capacity of existing facilities and any future changes to these facilities;
- identify the operational responsibilities, geographic service areas and levels of service provided by each facility;
- identify those areas where public sewer will and will not be provided; and
- identify environmentally sound methods of disposing of treated wastes and sludge from treatment plants.

This sub-element will provide direction for the county in planning for the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater in a manner consistent with federal, state and local laws. In addition, the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element will identify proposed locations and levels of service of sanitary sewer facilities. Finally, this element will establish sanitary sewer policies that complement the county's future land use pattern and serve as a means of directing future growth in the county.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Wastewater means untreated sewage.

Effluent means the liquid by-product of the wastewater treatment process.

Wastewater Collection Network means the system of pipes which convey the untreated wastewater from individual homes and other establishments to the treatment plant.

Wastewater Interceptors are defined as parts of the collection system which connect directly to and convey sewage to the treatment plant.

Wastewater Trunk Mains are components of the collection system which connect directly to and convey sewage to the interceptors through a gravity system.

Pump Stations are mechanical devices used to pump sewage through the collection network (force mains) for the purpose of transporting the untreated wastewater to the treatment plant.

Force Main means a pressurized segment of the collection system.

Wastewater Treatment Plant means the facility which functions to remove solid and organic materials from the wastewater.

Wastewater Treatment Process is the means by which solid and organic materials are removed from the untreated wastewater.

Level of Wastewater Treatment is defined by the proportion of solid and organic materials removed from the wastewater. The most common levels of treatment are: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Primary Treatment removes between 30 and 35 percent of the organic material and up to 50 percent of the solids from the sewage. Because screens and settling tanks are the most common methods used to remove the solids, this process is also referred to as physical treatment.

Secondary Treatment removes between 80 and 90 percent of the total organic material and suspended solids from the sewage. This level of treatment generally requires multiple steps involving one biological process and one or more physical processes for removal of suspended solids.

Tertiary Treatment is a level of wastewater treatment which removes the organic material and suspended solids, synthetic organic compounds and inorganic chemicals. If not removed, these agents may cause pollution problems. Tertiary treatment adds steps to the primary and secondary processes which will remove these pollutants. The most common tertiary processes

remove compounds of phosphorus and nitrogen. The effluent from advanced treatment processes often approaches the quality of drinking water.

Septic Systems are small scale wastewater treatment systems consisting of two components. Those components are typically a septic tank where solids settle out and biological action occurs, and a drainfield where the remaining liquid is discharged and further treated. Septic systems provide a minimal level of wastewater treatment.

Regional Wastewater Treatment Systems are large scale sanitary sewer systems comprised of three components: collection of raw sewage; treatment of the sewage; and the disposal of the treated sludge and effluent.

Package Wastewater Treatment Plants are small treatment systems designed and built in modular units and having components similar to larger regional treatment facilities.

Infiltration means water, other than wastewater, that enters a sewer system (including sewer service connections and foundation drains) from the ground through such means as defective pipes, pipe joints, connections or manholes.

Inflow means water, other than wastewater, that enters a sewer system (including sewer service connections) from sources such as, but not limited to, roof leaders, cellar drains, yard drains, area drains, drains from springs and swampy areas, manhole covers, cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers, catch basins, cooling towers, storm waters, surface runoff, street wash waters or drainage.

## **BACKGROUND**

An important aspect of wastewater or sanitary sewer planning involves examining existing conditions. Prior to that, however, it is helpful to consider the background or history of the wastewater system in the county. That provides a perspective regarding county policy on this matter. Instead of a static view of current conditions as the existing conditions section provides, the background section identifies recent trends in this area.

### **HISTORY**

A review of recent history shows that Indian River County has owned and operated sanitary sewer facilities for only a relatively short time. Prior to the 1970's, the use of centralized facilities which provide the highest level of treatment and efficiency was limited to the densest and most intensely developed urban areas of the county. Those areas were located within or adjacent to the City of Vero Beach. While centralized sewer service has been available to the City of Vero Beach since 1926, the rest of the county did not have access to such service until the late 1970's.

In the past, the use of privately owned sewer facilities provided the county with an alternative to publicly owned, centralized sewer services. Private sewer facilities are operated by private companies which are given the authority to provide wastewater service to specified areas. Most private wastewater systems provide service only to an individual subdivision or development.

Prior to the establishment of the County Utilities Department in 1972, the regulation of wastewater facilities rested with several state and federal agencies and often focused on the permitting of new and the expansion of existing treatment facilities. By 1972, the regulatory agencies were becoming more intent on discouraging the use of individual septic tanks and small package systems.

### **COUNTY UTILITIES DEPARTMENT**

Authorized to develop procedures and standards for utilities in the county, the County Utilities Department also issues utility permits. Initially formed to regulate privately owned utility systems, the Utilities Department was also charged with establishing a countywide utilities system. At the time that the utility department was created, centralized sewer services in the county were provided by the City of Vero Beach, by private utility companies, and by private systems serving individual buildings and developments. A majority of residential developments in the unincorporated county, however, relied on individual septic tanks for wastewater treatment and disposal.

In 1973, a master sewage plan was developed for the county. That plan identified the need for publicly owned and operated regional facilities to protect the public health and prosperity of the community. The plan outlined proposed service areas in the eastern portion of the county as well

as the necessary facilities and capitalization required to implement the plan. The plan also recommended eventually incorporating private sewer treatment facilities into the county system.

Also in 1973, the County and the City of Vero Beach entered into an agreement regarding the provision of sanitary sewer services. This agreement established boundaries for areas in the county that would receive services from the city.

### **CENTRALIZED REGIONAL SYSTEM**

The county's first direct provision of wastewater treatment services took place in 1978, as the result of problems at two private sewer systems. The Gifford system (later to be known as the Central Plant) and Ixora Park facilities had experienced system failures that resulted in the release of raw sewage into the surrounding areas. Because of these problems and their environmental impacts, the County Utilities Department assumed responsibility for the operation of these plants. The Central Plant has since been expanded, while the Ixora plant has been decommissioned.

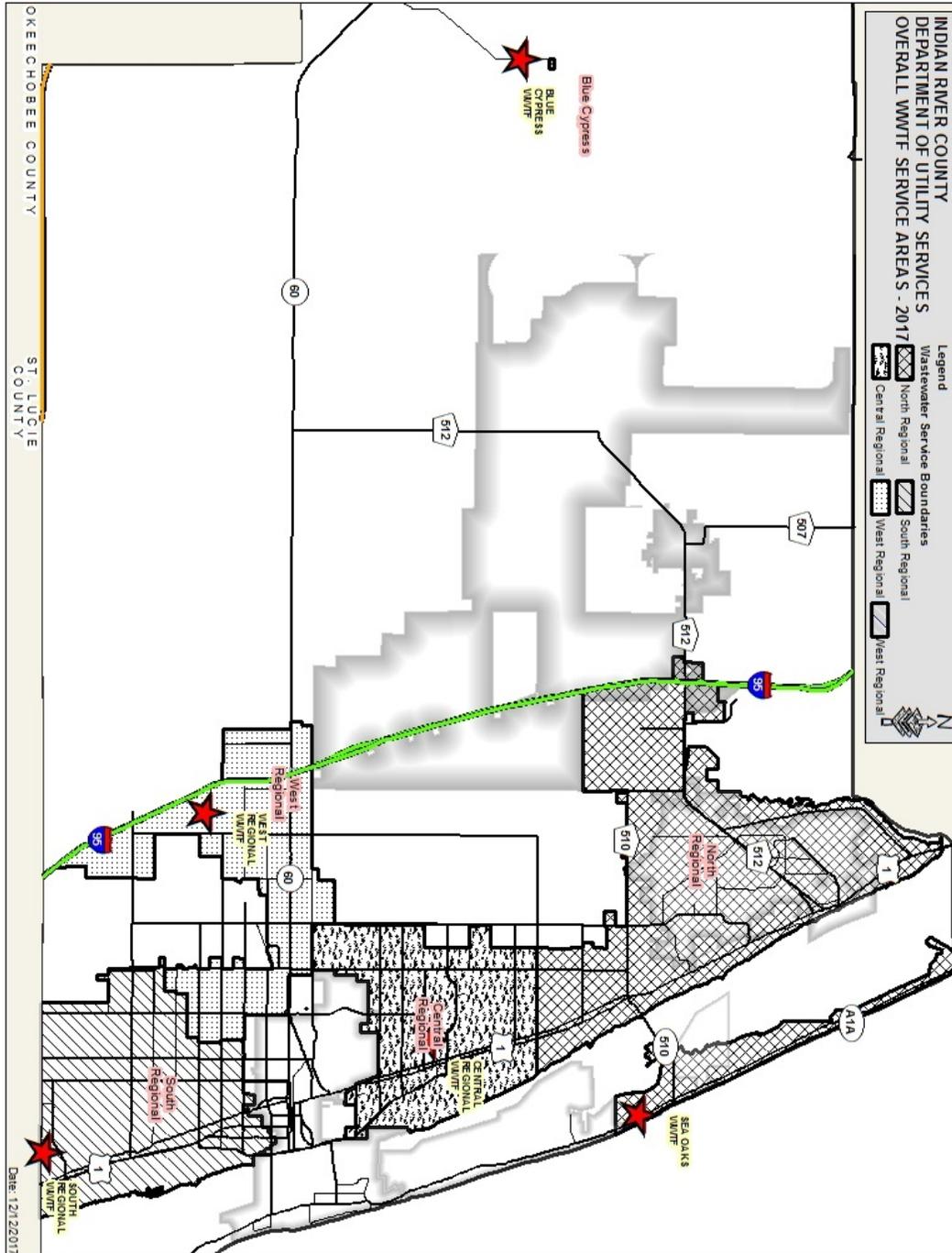
In 1982, county wastewater services expanded when the Utilities Department took over the operation of the Vista Royale and Vista Royale Gardens plants in the southern part of the county. This expansion continued with construction of the West Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant which began operation in 1986. Located south of SR 60 and east of I-95, the West Regional Plant provides wastewater service for the rapidly growing SR 60 Corridor area. In the early 1990's, the County took over the operation and the maintenance of the Blue Cypress Lake Package Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Utilities system expansion continued in the 1990's. In 1990, the county completed construction of the North County Plant. Then, the County acquired the South County Plant from General Development Utilities in 1993. In 1995, the county purchased the City of Sebastian's utilities system.

In 1987, Indian River County adopted a Wastewater Master Plan which has been updated several times since then, most recently in December 2004. That plan identified a system of wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate the anticipated growth of the county. The Master Plan identifies five sewer service areas. Those areas are North, West, Central, South, and City of Vero Beach.

One publicly owned and operated regional wastewater treatment plant exists within each of the five service areas. In addition to public facilities, septic systems and private treatment facilities currently exist and will continue to exist in the county. Table 3.A.1 lists existing wastewater treatment plants in Indian River County with their capacity and service area.

Figure 3.A.1 Indian River County WWTF Service Areas



**TABLE 3.A.1 - SANITARY SEWER FACILITIES IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY\***

FACILITY	PUBLIC OR PRIVATE	OPERATING ENTITY	PACKAGE OR REGIONAL	SERVICE AREA	DESIGN CAPACITY IN GALLONS/DAY
1. North County	public	IRC	regional	North of 77 <sup>th</sup> Street to North County Line & North Barrier Island	850,000
2. Central County	public	IRC	regional	26 <sup>th</sup> Street and Vero Beach City limits to 69 <sup>th</sup> Street	4,000,000
3. West County	public	IRC	regional	South of 26 <sup>th</sup> Street and west of City of Vero Beach	6,000,000
4. S. County	public	IRC	regional	Southeast mainland	2,000,000
5. Vero Beach	public	Vero Beach	regional	Vero Beach, Ind. Riv. Shores, S. Barrier Island	4,500,000
6. Blue Cypress	public	IRC	package	Blue Cypress Improvement Dist.	17,000
7. Sun-Ag MHP	private	Sun-Ag Co.	package	Sun-Ag Mobile Home Park near Fellsmere	50,000
8. Sun-Ag Packing-house	private	Sun-Ag Co.	package	Sun-Ag Packinghouse near Fellsmere	2,500
9. Su-Rene Mobile Home Park	private	Su-Rene	package	Su-Rene Mobile Home Park	5,000
10. Royal Oak Mobile Home Park	private	Royal Oak	package	Royal Oak Mobile Home Park	5,000

\* Excludes private permitted Industrial Waste Water facilities

SOURCE: Indian River County Utilities Department

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

In assessing existing conditions, it is necessary to address the sanitary sewer system on several levels. First, it is necessary to differentiate among the various types of systems in the county. This involves separate consideration of the publicly-owned sewer systems, the privately-owned sewer systems, and individual septic systems. Second, it is necessary to identify individual service areas for both the public system and private systems. Finally, it is necessary to assess each type of system and service area in terms of collection, treatment, and disposal.

### **SANITARY SEWER PROCESS**

Within the county, there are various sanitary sewer systems and service areas. Although specific aspects of the sanitary sewer process vary with the type of system, certain characteristics are the same, regardless of system type.

#### **Collection**

Once wastewater is generated by residences, businesses, industries, and other land uses, it is then conveyed from an individual establishment to a wastewater treatment plant by the collection network. Alternatively, the wastewater may go to an individual septic tank for on-site treatment. Where a centralized system is involved, however, the collection network is generally laid out in a pattern roughly comparable to the branching pattern of a tree. Whereas the smallest sewer pipes connect individual establishments to components of the collection system called trunk mains and interceptors, interceptors and trunk mains connect with and convey wastewater directly to the treatment plant.

#### **Treatment**

After being collected, wastewater is processed by a wastewater treatment plant. Presently, both Indian River County and the City of Vero Beach maintain regional wastewater treatment plants. In addition to those five regional facilities, there are four private package wastewater treatment facilities and the one public package treatment facility (the Blue Cypress Lake wastewater treatment plant) in the county. The existing wastewater treatment plants use a variety of methods to treat wastewater.

Once at the treatment plant, the wastewater is treated to remove solid and organic materials. The level of processing of the wastewater is either primary, secondary, advanced secondary, or tertiary. Overall, the treatment level is based on the treatment method and the proportion of materials removed from the wastewater.

In addition to differences in the methods of treating wastewater, the existing wastewater treatment plants also differ in the capacity of the facilities. Expressed in terms of gallons of wastewater per day, the capacity of a wastewater treatment plant is the number of gallons of wastewater that the plant can treat and dispose of on an average daily basis.

### **By-Product Disposal**

The by-products of the treatment process are effluent, screenings and grit, as well as sludge and septage. Effluent is liquid waste. At county operated wastewater treatment facilities, effluent is usually disposed of through either discharge to a percolation pond, through wetlands, or by reuse. Reuse is an effluent disposal method involving spray irrigation.

Screenings and grit are the accumulated coarse sewage solids retained by the screening process. Screenings and grit are disposed of at the county landfill.

Sludge and septage are the biological organisms that accumulate in the plant. Prior to final disposal, sludge is usually subjected to an additional biological treatment process to remove pathogens. Sludge is then transported to the County's Residual Dewatering Facility (RDF), where along with grease they are subject to a physical dewatering process which facilitates disposal. A screw conveyor is used to transfer the dried cake to a truck for hauling to the landfill for ultimate disposal.

### **PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEM**

The five geographic areas comprising the county public sewer system are: the south regional area, the west regional area, the central regional area, the north regional area, and the City of Vero Beach service area. Within the county system, the south county regional plant is connected to the west county regional plant; the north county regional plant is connected to the central county regional plant; and there is a limited connection between the central regional plant and west regional plant. Because the county's regional wastewater treatment plants are interconnected, there is flexibility as to which plant or plants will need to be expanded to accommodate future demand.

At the county's central plant, the county also treats the City of Fellsmere's sewage for a bulk rate. Currently, the city's average daily sewer flow is about 71,000 gallons per day, with a maximum flow of 100,000 gallons per day.

Besides its regional plants, Indian River County also operates the Blue Cypress Lake package treatment facility.

In 2017, 28,167 (47.24%) of the 59,618 developed residential and commercial parcels within the County's service area were connected to the County's regional sewer system.

### **South Regional Sewer Service Area**

The South Regional Sewer Service Area is located in the southeast portion of the mainland and contains the South Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (SRWWTF). The SRWWTF is a 2,000,000 GPD facility which uses biological nutrient removal to provide a tertiary filtration level of treatment. Effluent from the SRWWTF is reused for spray irrigation or discharged into percolation ponds or discharged into the 169 acre man-made wetland on the West Regional WWTF site.

In addition to force mains along US 1, the South Regional Service Area collection system currently extends to the Vero Shores, Garden Grove, and Grove Isle developments, portions of the Vero Beach Highlands residential subdivision, and other subdivisions within the southern portion of the county.

<b>South Regional Plant</b>	
Public or Private	Public
Operating Entity	Indian River County
Geographic service area	South County Area
Design capacity in GPD	2,000,000
Current demand in GPD (2017)	813,000
Level of Service	250 GPD/ERU
Projected facility needs	1,850,000 gal./day 2030
Effluent Disposal Method	Reuse
Effluent Disposal Site	Various
Level of Treatment	Tertiary Filtration
Treatment Method	Biological Nutrient Removal
Screenings/Grit Disposal Site	Landfill
Sludge and Septage Disposal Site	Sludge Facility at Landfill

**West Sewer Service Area**

The West Regional Service Area includes the unincorporated SR 60 corridor area and the area southwest of Vero Beach. Within the West Regional Service Area, there is one wastewater treatment plant. The West Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is located south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street, north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and between 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

This plant, with a 6,000,000 GPD capacity, uses biological nutrient removal to provide a tertiary filtration level of treatment. Presently, effluent from this treatment facility is reused for spray irrigation or discharged into a ±169 acre man-made wetland on the treatment plant site.

The West Regional Service Area force mains extend from the West Regional WWTF along the SR 60 corridor and along 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue from SR 60 to 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Force mains also extend from the West County Plant along 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to the Oslo Road/74<sup>th</sup> Avenue commercial/industrial node and to the SR 60/I-95 commercial/industrial node. The system serves the Heritage Village, Countryside, Cambridge Park, Indian River Estates, Village Green, Vista Plantation, Lake in the Woods, Sixty Oaks, and Rivera Estates residential developments.

<b>West Regional Plant</b>	
Public or Private	Public
Operating Entity	Indian River County
Geographic service area	SR 60 Corridor west of 58 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Design capacity in GPD	6,000,000
Current demand in GPD (2017)	2,214,000
Level of Service	250 GPD/ERU
Projected facility needs	4,850,000 gal./day (2030)
Effluent Disposal Method	Reuse Irrigation/Wetlands Treatment
Effluent Disposal Site	Golf Courses & West Reg. Wetlands
Level of Treatment	Tertiary Filtration
Treatment Method	Biological Nutrient Removal
Screenings/Grit Disposal Site	Landfill
Sludge and Septage Disposal Site	Sludge Facility at Landfill

## **Central Sewer Service Area**

The Central Regional Sewer Service Area includes the portion of the mainland generally bounded by I-95 on the west, 69<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, the Indian River Lagoon on the east, and the City of Vero Beach and 26<sup>th</sup> Street on the south. This plant located north of 49<sup>th</sup> Street, in the unincorporated community of Gifford. The Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is located within the service area.

This plant, with a 4,000,000 GPD capacity, uses contact stabilization and extended aeration to provide a tertiary filtration level of treatment. Presently, effluent from the treatment facility is discharged into percolation ponds or reused for spray irrigation.

Collection lines extend from the plant along 49<sup>th</sup> Street, between 58<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and US 1, along 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 26<sup>th</sup> Street to 65<sup>th</sup> Street, along 53<sup>rd</sup> Street from 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Lateral H canal and along US 1 from 69<sup>th</sup> street to Indian River Memorial Hospital. The system also extends to the Bent Pine and Grand Harbor residential developments, and to much of the Gifford community.

The Central Regional WWTF is presently accepting flow from the North Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, which is temporarily on stand-by. The flow is being transferred from the north facility to the central facility via a 16” transmission force main located along Old Dixie Highway from 77<sup>th</sup> Street to 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, then into the Central Regional WWTF along the Lateral H canal.

<b>Central Regional Plant</b>	
Public or Private	Public
Operating Entity	Indian River County
Geographic service area	Vero Beach City Limits to 69 <sup>th</sup> St.
Design capacity in GPD	4,000,000
Current demand in GPD (2017)	2,253,000
Level of Service	250 GPD/ERU
Projected facility needs	4,250,000 gal./day (2030)
Effluent Disposal Method	Reuse Irrigation/Rib Basin
Effluent Disposal Site	Various Golf Courses
Level of Treatment	Tertiary Treatment
Treatment Method	Contact Stabilization/Extended Aeration
Screenings/Grit Disposal Site	Landfill
Sludge and Septage Disposal Site	Sludge Facility at landfill

### **North Sewer Service Area**

The North Sewer Service Area lies north of 77<sup>th</sup> Street and encompasses the area between I-95 and the Atlantic Ocean. Within this service area, there is one wastewater treatment plant operated by the county. This plant is the North Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF).

The North County Plant is an 850,000 GPD facility which uses an oxidation ditch and extended aeration to provide a tertiary filtration level of treatment. Effluent from the North County Plant is discharged into percolation ponds or reused for spray irrigation.

<b>North Regional Plant</b>	
Public or Private	Public
Operating Entity	Indian River County
Geographic service area	77 <sup>th</sup> Street to North County Line
Design capacity in GPD	850,000
Current demand in GPD (2017)	Flow transferred to Central Regional Plant
Level of Service	250 GPD/ERU
Projected facility needs	2,000,000 gal./day (2030)
Effluent Disposal Method	Percolation Pond/Spray Irrigation
Effluent Disposal Site	Golf Courses
Level of Treatment	Tertiary Filtration
Treatment Method	Oxidation Ditch/Extended Aeration
Screenings/Grit Disposal Site	Landfill
Sludge and Septage Disposal Site	Sludge Facility at landfill

Collection lines extend south from the North County Plant along Old Dixie Highway to 73<sup>rd</sup> Street. From there, the lines extend east into the Copeland's Landing residential development. To the north, lines extend along the US 1 corridor to the county line. A force main runs along CR 512, from US 1 to I-95, and north along Roseland Road from CR 512 to approximately ¼ mile north of Main Street. Another force main extends west along Main Street from US 1 to approximately halfway to Roseland Road. Collection lines, including a force main along the north two miles of Roseland Road, extend to the Roseland area. Collection lines also extend to several residential developments on the north barrier island, including Sea Oaks, Windsor, and the Town of Orchid.

Presently, the North Regional WWTF is temporarily shut down, and the flow is being transferred to the Central Regional WWTF via a 16' force main along Old Dixie Highway from 77<sup>th</sup> Street to 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and then along the Lateral H canal into the Central Regional WWTF.

**City of Vero Beach Sewer Service Area**

The City of Vero Beach sewer service territory encompasses the City of Vero Beach, most of the Town of Indian River Shores (one multiple-family residential complex is excluded), and the portion of the barrier island south of the City of Vero Beach. In addition, it serves some of the unincorporated county area around the city.

The Vero Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant has a design capacity of 4,500,000 GPD. The method of treatment consists of complete mix activated sludge, followed by water reclamation processes that include tertiary filtration and high level disinfection. Most effluent from this plant is used for irrigation by golf courses and residential developments. The remainder is disposed of via deep injection well.

<b>City of Vero Beach Plant</b>	
Public or Private	Public
Operating Entity	City of Vero Beach
Geographic service area	City of Vero Beach; Town of Indian River Shores; South Barrier Island
Design capacity in GPD	4,500,000
Current demand in GPD (2017)	3,500,000
Level of Service	250 GPD/ERU
Projected facility needs	4,000,000 gal./day (2030)
Effluent Disposal Method	Reuse/Deep Injection Well
Effluent Disposal Site	Residential Landscapes/Golf Courses
Level of Treatment	Secondary/High Level Disinfection
Treatment Method	Activated Sludge/Filtration
Screenings/Grit Disposal Site	Landfill
Sludge and Septage Disposal Site	Landfill

Table 3.A.2 summarizes the county regional wastewater treatment system.

**TABLE 3.A.2 - COUNTY REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS**

SERVICE AREA	TREATMENT PLANT	DESIGN CAPACITY IN GPD	2017 DEMAND IN GPD	TYPES OF LAND USES SERVED	TREATMENT METHOD	TREATMENT LEVEL	EFFLUENT DISPOSAL METHOD	PROPORTIONAL ALLOCATION
NORTH	North County	850,000	Flow transferred to Central Plant	residential, commercial, industrial	oxidation ditch and extended aeration	tertiary	percolation pond and spray irrigation	60% Sebastian, 30% IRC, 10% Fellsmere
CENTRAL	Central County	4,000,000	2,253,000 includes flow from north regional	residential, commercial, industrial	contact stabilization and extended aeration	tertiary	percolation pond and spray irrigation	100% IRC
WEST	West County	6,000,000	2,214,000	residential, commercial, industrial	biological nutrient removal	tertiary	spray irrigation and on-site wetland	100% IRC
SOUTH	South County	2,000,000	813,000	residential, commercial, industrial	Biological nutrient removal	tertiary	spray irrigation, percolation pond and West Regional Wetland	100% IRC
VERO BEACH	City of Vero Beach	4,500,000	3,500,000	residential, commercial, industrial	complete mix activated sludge and high level disinfection	tertiary	spray irrigation	65% Vero Bch., 24% IRC, 11% Indian River Shores
TOTAL		17,350,000	8,780,000					

**Finance**

Financially, the Indian River County Utilities Department is an enterprise system. That means that there is no general tax money allocated for the construction or expansion of utility services. Instead, the County Utilities Department's revenue comes from sources such as water sales, meter installation charges, hydrant maintenance tax, sewer service charges, effluent reuse sales, penalties, service charges, capacity charges, and other sources which make the utility department financially self-sufficient.

According to county regulations, most parcels within 200 feet of a county sewer line must connect to the county system. Upon connection, a customer incurs certain charges. Those charges generally cover the costs of capacity producing facility capital improvements. Some charges, however, can be incurred even before connection. Because unused capacity can be reserved for future development, wastewater treatment plants are developed with excess capacity. Since maintaining that excess capacity increases operation and maintenance costs, a monthly base facility charge applies to capacity reserved for future development.

Other charges include the following:

- waste water treatment charges
- volume charges
- customer charges
- connection charges
- meter re-reads and leak inspection charges
- delinquency charges
- general service call charges
- meter calibration charges
- damage repair charges
- engineering services charges
- deposits required upon opening
- charges for transferring or reconnecting a service
- additional charges for complex connections

Some charges, such as connection fees, vary based on meter size or type of commercial use. The Utilities Department may use these revenues to expand facilities or to modify the existing system. These funds can be used for either capital or operating needs.

Another source of revenue, which can be used only to offset a portion of the capital cost of expanding system capacity, is the capacity charge. Capacity charges pay for certain necessary improvements that must be made in order to provide added capacity to meet the needs of new

residents as well as industrial and business establishments anticipated in future years. The remaining capital cost is recouped through monthly charges.

As a payment option for extension of the sewer collection system, the county allows a contribution in aid of construction. After the installation of sewage collection facilities by a developer, title to those facilities is transferred to the county. The referenced facilities may be “on-site” or “off-site.” These options are discussed below.

- **On-Site Facilities**

Each developer is responsible for the design, installation, inspection, and testing of the complete sewage collection system located within the boundaries of the developer’s property.

- **Off-site Facilities**

The location, size or proposed density or intensity of a development project may make service to the property dependent upon the extension of off-site sewage collection facilities. Off-site facilities are those mains, sewage collection lines, sewage force mains, and/or pumping stations adequate in size to transmit sewage collected on the developer’s property to a treatment plant or disposal site.

The county’s policy is to expand its sewer system in an orderly and economical manner. That expansion schedule, however, does not always coincide with a developer’s plans. In cases where the county does not plan to expand its system to serve a project in the timeframe required by a developer, the developer is required to construct or pay the cost of off-site facilities associated with that project when the following conditions exist:

- such an extension would require an extraordinary expenditure by the county for transmission facilities; and
- such expenditure would cost more than the county’s standard capacity charge.

In that event, the county may negotiate an agreement which enumerates the following:

- the county’s responsibility to provide service to the development and possibly reimburse the developer for oversized facilities; and
- the developer’s responsibility to construct and dedicate to the county the off-site facilities (possibly oversized to meet future demands).

**Refundable Advances**

In addition to a contribution in aid of construction of off-site facilities, the county may require a refundable advance by a developer to further temporarily defray the cost of any “off-site” extension of water and/or sewer mains and pumping stations necessary to connect the developer’s property to the county’s water and sewer facilities. This provision recognizes instances in which a developer may be required to advance funds to construct off-site facilities sized in accordance with the County’s Master Plan. All amounts expended by a developer pursuant to such an agreement, over and above the developer’s need for off-site facilities, may be refunded to the developer in accordance with the terms and conditions of a refunding agreement which the county executes with the developer. When the county deems it to be in the best interest of the county utility system, the County may assume a portion of the material cost of such projects. Generally, refund agreements provide for a plan of refund based upon the connection of other properties served by the “off-site” facilities installed by the developer.

**Assessment**

Another funding option available to the county is assessment. With this method, the Board of County Commissioners may assess benefitting property owners a proportional share of the cost of any county project, including utility line extensions. Assessment projects may be initiated by either the Board or property owners. For utility line extensions, main transmission or collection lines (Master Plan lines) are not included in the assessment calculations. Those lines are funded through other sources. Generally, assessments may be financed for up to 10 years, with assessment interest rates set by the Board of County Commissioners in January of each year. Usually, the Board adopts the prime rate.

**PRIVATE SEWER SYSTEMS**

Indian River County has four active private sewer systems, each of which uses package treatment plants. Two of the county’s private plants are operated by the Sun-Ag company. Those plants are located near the City of Fellsmere, outside of the county’s service area. One of those plants serves a mobile home park, while the other serves a packinghouse. Both of those facilities use extended aeration to provide a secondary level of treatment. Effluent at those plants is disposed of through a percolation pond.

The county’s other private systems are located at the Su-Rene mobile home park and Royal Oak mobile home park in the unincorporated county. Those facilities use extended aeration to provide a secondary level of treatment. Effluent at those plants is disposed of through a percolation pond.

## **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

The third type of sanitary sewer system is an onsite sewage and treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) which may be utilized under certain conditions when a private or publicly owned centralized sewer system is unavailable. Septic systems are designed to serve one or a limited number of facilities and are sized based on estimated water use.

Despite major expansion of the wastewater collection network, many developed commercial and residential parcels within the unincorporated portion of the county do not have access to regional wastewater treatment facilities or package treatment plants. For those land uses, wastewater treatment and disposal is provided by septic systems. Based on the Florida Department of Health Waste Water Inventory for 2015, an estimated 45% of the developed commercial and residential parcels in Indian River County are served by public sanitary sewer and an estimated 55% of the remaining developed commercial and residential parcels are served by septic systems. From 2007 through 2016, there were an average of 121 new septic systems constructed annually with steadily increasing numbers from 2013 to 2016. Even so, the average number of new septic systems per year (121) is significantly lower than the 658 new systems per year average for the 1995 – 2006 period. The average number of septic systems repairs per year for the 2007-2016 period was 591. There are commercial and industrial corridors that are served by septic systems such as portions of US Hwy 1, Old Dixie Hwy and Oslo Road. Most of the residential septic systems are concentrated in Roseland, Sebastian, Vero Lake Estates, and south of State Road 60.

A septic system consists of two components. One is the septic tank, while the other is the drainfield. The tank receives sewage from the residence or commercial establishment and provides a period of settling, during which time a significant portion of the solids settle out. The treatment process is accomplished by bacteria that gradually decompose the solids which settle to the bottom of the septic tank. The remaining liquid or effluent is discharged through underground drainage pipes into the drainfield where it percolates into the soil. Once in the soil, microorganisms and filtration treat the liquids. As part of routine maintenance, the accumulated solids should be removed from the septic tank every 3 to 5 years by a licensed contractor. The solids, called septage, are generally transported to the residual dewatering facility next to the county landfill.

Septic systems provide minimal onsite wastewater treatment for residential and commercial developments. Typically, a 3-bedroom residential septic system has a 900- gallon septic tank and 375 square feet of trench drainfield. Commercial septic systems vary depending on estimated water use. Since effluent from septic tanks is discharged to a drainfield where it percolates into the soil, soil permeability and depth to the water table are limiting factors for septic system use. To ensure adequate performance and protection of groundwater quality, elevation of septic system drainfields is often required. All OSTDS (septic system) permitting is done by the Florida Department of Health in Indian River County (DOH-Indian River).

According to the DOH-Indian River it is challenging to permit septic system installations in the county due to several factors including:

- a wet season water table of less than 10 inches as described in the USDA Soil Survey;
- the presence of restrictive low permeable soil strata;
- platted or recorded parcels less than ½ acre; and
- setbacks from surface waters and/or wells.

The areas of the county having “Excessively Drained Soils” and “Moderately Drained Soils” are better suited for septic systems. As shown on Figure 3.E.1 of the Stormwater Management Sub-Element, even these two soil types have limitations with respect to septic system suitability. While moderately drained soils have a severe limitation rating for septic system suitability, excessively drained soils percolate so rapidly that they provide very poor filtration. Septic systems on these soils have a potential for causing groundwater contamination. Areas of excessively drained soils in Indian River County are typically adjacent to waterbodies including canals, St. Sebastian River, and the Indian River Lagoon.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) establishes the rules for septic system permitting. During the wet season, June through October, the water table in much of the county is less than 10 inches below the existing natural grade. Therefore, fill material is often placed on top of existing soil creating a mound to achieve the required 24 inch separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the wet season water table. This fill material, which provides the depth necessary for the proper operation of the septic system, typically contains slightly limited soils that treat effluent discharged into the drainfield.

The DOH has determined that the average life of a residential septic system (including drainfield) is 19 years and that of a commercial system is 10 years. Routine maintenance and proper use can extend the life of a septic system. When septic systems are repaired, the DOH allows for a drainfield replacement according to the rules in place at the time of original construction. Most repairs for parcels developed prior to 1983 are permitted with only a 6 inch separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the wet season water table rather than 24 inches.

In low density areas with adequate soils where septic systems are appropriate, there can still be problems if septic systems are not maintained. Generally, septic tanks need to be pumped every 3 to 5 years. While there are private septic tank service companies which pump septic tanks and haul away septage, it is the septic tank owner who is responsible for initiating maintenance activities. Improperly maintained septic systems can cause a system failure and a sanitary nuisance often requiring a repair of the septic system.

Besides soil and groundwater conditions, adverse impacts may arise due to inadequate separation between septic system drainfields and wells or waterbodies. Without adequate separation, the potential of contamination from septic systems seeping into wells or waterbodies is greatly increased.

The DOH requires a minimum separation of 75 feet between wells and septic systems for parcels recorded or platted after 1972. The DOH requires new construction utilizing a well and septic system to be a minimum of ½ acre (approximately 21,780 square feet). If a lot is served by a public water system, a septic system may be used even if the lot is as small as ¼ acre (approximately 10,890 square feet).

There are many areas of the county in which existing subdivisions contain lots which do not meet the minimum acreage requirements. Nevertheless, parcels recorded or platted prior to 1972 that are smaller than 21,780 and 10,890 square feet are grandfathered in and are being developed and repaired based on lot flow allowances utilizing septic systems. Table 3.A.3 lists subdivisions in the county urban service area that are significantly less than 10,890 square feet or constructed with older block septic tanks posing an increased health risk and/or increased probability of groundwater contamination associated with continued septic system use.

**TABLE 3.A.3 - INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SUBDIVISIONS WITH INCREASED HEALTH RISKS AND/OR INCREASED PROBABILITY OF GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH CONTINUED SEPTIC TANK SYSTEM USE**

1. Oslo Park
2. Paradise Park
3. Stevens Park
4. Durrance Place
5. West Wabasso

*Source: DOH - Indian River*

Besides the above list of subdivisions with increased health risk and potential for localized groundwater contamination, there are subdivisions currently served by septic systems that are located close to the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Sebastian River, or to drainage canals or other streams/surface waters potentially resulting in a disproportionately higher negative impact on Indian River Lagoon water quality. In 2016, county Utilities Services funded a septic to sewer study to identify and rank those platted subdivisions served by septic systems that have a disproportionately higher negative impact on the Indian River Lagoon. The study was performed by Schulke, Bittle and Stoddard, LLC (SBS), was accepted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 10, 2017, and is available online via the county website.

### **Septic to Sewer Study: Evaluation and Ranking**

The goal of the study was to identify and rank the areas of septic system use having disproportionately higher potential for negative lagoon impact based on various physical and environmental factors, and to determine the feasibility of incorporating septic to sewer conversion mitigation projects into a 10-year Capital Improvements Plan. As part of the study, a specific formula for the utility service area of Indian River County (IRC) was developed and modeled after similar studies performed for Martin County (*Martin County Septic System*

*Evaluation Final Report; CapTec Engineering, Inc.; February 13, 2015*) and Brevard County (*Save Our Lagoon Project Plan for Brevard County, Florida; TetraTech, Inc and CloseWaters LLC; July 28, 2016*). The IRC formula was modified from the formulas used in the Martin and Brevard studies to consider and weigh physical and environmental factors that SBS and IRC staff determined would better represent Indian River County conditions. In the IRC study, the following factors were used in the initial ranking of the three hundred and twenty-five (325) platted subdivisions currently served by septic tanks with respect to potential negative impacts on the lagoon:

- Population Density for Loading Concentrations
- Proximity to Surface Waters
- Location of the Community in Relation to the 100-year Flood Plain – FEMA Flood Plain
- Depth of the Ground Water Table
- Soil Conditions of the Drain Field – Soil Type
- Age of the Surface Water Management System
- Age of the Existing Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS)

Each factor was evaluated for every one of the 325 subdivisions and assigned an index number that generally ranged from 0 to 12, with 0 being the minimum and 12 being the maximum impact. The formula used to determine the ranking was simply the sum of all factor values for that subdivision. The higher the sum (the “score”), the higher the estimated potential negative impact to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). SBS and IRC staff agreed to weight the “Population Density” and “Proximity to Surface Waters” factors in the IRC study, because those two factors are believed to cause a higher negative impact than the other factors.

In the study, the 325 subdivisions served by septic systems were ranked in order where number 1 had the highest negative lagoon impact (89.19) and number 325 had the lowest negative impact (26.97). Once the initial ranking was finalized, an Engineers Opinion of Probable Cost (OPC) was estimated for the top thirty five (35) ranked subdivisions having the highest negative impacts. Those top 35 ranked subdivisions were further evaluated based on the following factors:

1. Aquatic Health - Environmental Impact Evaluation or the Initial Ranking
2. Sewer System Evaluation and Cost Data
3. Total Nitrogen (TN)/Total Phosphorus (TP)
4. Public Health - Based on the availability of potable water

The study evaluated the total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP) that could be removed from the environment by septic to sewer conversion and calculated a cost per pound for TN removal for each of the top 35 ranked subdivisions. TP calculations were removed from the analysis since most technical references and studies show that phosphorus is adequately removed by a properly functioning septic system. Septic to sewer conversion projects for the top 35 subdivisions were then ranked for the highest benefit to cost ratio, with the number 1 ranking providing the greatest benefit compared to the conversion project cost (see Table 3.A.3.1).

**TABLE 3.A.3.1 - INDIAN RIVER COUNTY LIST OF SUBDIVISIONS FOR SEPTIC TO SEWER CONVERSION WITHIN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AND CITY OF SEBASTIAN**

Rank	Subdivision Name	Rank	Subdivision Name	Rank	Subdivision Name
1	Floravon Shores Subdivision	14	Sebastian Highlands Unit 02 Replat PG 2	24	Dales Landing Subdivision Tropic Colony Subdivision
2	Sebastian Highlands Unit 02 Collier	14	Hobart Landing Unit 3	24	<del>Amos (A of E)**</del>
3	Sebastian Highlands Unit 05	16	River Shores Estates Units 1-4	29	Winter Grove Subdivision
4	Hobart Landing Unit 2	17	Pine Tree Park Units 1-4	29	Kanawah Acres
5	Orchid Island No. 2	17	Indian River Heights Units 1-9	31	Tropic Colony Subdivision
5	Sebastian Highlands Unit 04	17	Sebastian Highlands Unit 02 Replat PG 3	32	Halleluiah Acres
7	Orchid Island No. 1	20	Rain Tree Corner Subdivision	33	Little Portion Subdivision Replat OF
8	Sebastian Highlands Unit 01	21	Diana Park Subdivision	34	<i>Sebastian Highlands Unit 02 Replat PG 4*</i>
8	Ambersand Beach Sub No 1 & 2	22	Verona Estates Subdivision	35	<i>Heritage Trace at Hobart*</i>
10	Sebastian Highlands Unit 03	22	Sebastian Highlands Unit 13; Little Portion Subdivision Replat Of		
11	Sebastian Highlands Unit 02	24	Hobart Landing Unit 1		
11	Naranja TR Shellmound Bch Replat of POR	24	Hallmark Ocean Subdivision		
13	Orchid Isle Estates Subdivision	24	Stevens Park Unit 1 & 2		

\* These communities are included in the evaluation due to their proximity to one or more top 30 ranked communities.

\*\* It is recommended that the Amos subdivision not be considered in the capital improvement program. Ranking results are due to an anomaly in the methodology.

## **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

The wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system is regulated by various agencies at all levels of government. Table 3.A.4 shows the state and local agencies involved in wastewater regulation and the types of activities in which they are involved.

### **FEDERAL**

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (PL 92-500) and its amendments through the Clean Water Acts of 1977 (PL 95-217) and 1981 (PL 97-117) are the basis for pollution control regulation in the nation. The goal of these acts is the restoration and/or maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's water. The act established a national policy of implementing areawide wastewater treatment and management programs to ensure adequate control of sources of pollution. Under a provision of PL 92-500, grants are made available to local governments to construct facilities to treat "point sources" of pollution, including effluent from sewage treatment processes. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for implementing the act.

### **STATE**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the agency responsible for ensuring that the State carries out the requirements of PL 92-500. In response to PL 92-500, DEP has adopted Chapters 17-3 and 17-6, FAC. These chapters regulate wastewater facilities which treat flows exceeding 10,000 GPD.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) regulates septic system installations per Section 381.0065 Florida Statutes (FS). The DOH- Indian River locally administers the septic system program for Indian River County. These regulations for septic system permitting are in Chapter 64E-6, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). While 64E-6 FAC does not set the criteria for septic system effluent quality, it does require that septic systems be installed in such a manner that, with reasonable maintenance, they will not create a health hazard or endanger the safety of any domestic water supply.

In addition to regulating wastewater facilities, Sections 381.0065(2)(a) and 381.00655 (FS) also establish criteria for mandatory connections to wastewater systems. Pursuant to those sections, public sanitary sewer is considered available when gravity sewer lines or low-pressure lines are in a right-of-way or easement adjacent to a property or lot, when any use producing more than 1,000 gallons per day has public sewer lines within 50 feet of a property line and has access to the lines via a public right-of-way or easement, when a public sewer line is accessible and within ¼ mile of a proposed residential subdivision of more than 50 lots, when a public sewer line is accessible and within ¼ mile of a proposed commercial subdivision of more than 5 lots, or when a public sewer line is accessible and within ¼ mile of a proposed use in an area zoned or used for an industrial, manufacturing, or equivalent use. When repairs or modifications are needed to a use in an area zoned or used for industrial or manufacturing or its equivalent, that use must also

connect to a wastewater system if that use is within 500 feet of an establishment’s or residences sewer stub-out.

**LOCAL**

In 1984, Indian River County adopted an ordinance that established the utility rate structure and a mandatory hookup policy for both residential and non-residential development. County policy generally states that any development located within 200 feet of a wastewater collection line must connect. In addition to that ordinance, the Utilities Department also has developed and adopted design standards and review procedures to ensure that all connections to the system are compatible with the system’s design.

**TABLE 3.A.4 - REGULATION OF SEWAGE**

Agency	Statutory Authority	Scope	Activity
DEP	Ch 403 FS 17-6 FAC	Responsible for all wastewater treatment plants, and wastewater flows greater than 10,000 GPD. Regulates private wastewater plants.	Permits & inspection of wastewater plants over 10,000 GPD. Regulates private package facilities.
DOH	Ch 381 FS 64E-6 FAC	Responsible for all onsite disposal systems less than 10,000 GPD of domestic wastewater.	Inspects, permits, and enforces all septic systems less than 10,000 GPD. Responds to all public complaints.
County Utilities Dept.	Local Ordinance Home Rule	Responsible for review, construction, and connection to the public wastewater system.	Inspects all work on county public wastewater system.

*Source: Indian River County Utilities Department*

## ANALYSIS

The analysis of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element focuses on the three components of the sanitary sewer system: collection, treatment, and disposal.

### COLLECTION SYSTEM

The principal components of the sanitary sewer collection system are pipes, manholes, and pump stations. Because Indian River County has a relatively new sanitary sewer system, those pipes and pump stations are generally in good condition. Overall, most of the major lines are in place and sized to accommodate future growth.

The county's long range plan for growth and development is reflected in the Future Land Use Element of the comprehensive plan. That element defines where the community will grow and where growth will be limited. As indicated in the Future Land Use Element, the urban service area is the area deemed appropriate for future urban type development. Accordingly, it is within the urban service area that utility lines and other infrastructure components will be available.

Although regional sanitary sewer service should generally be limited to lands within the urban service area, there should be some exceptions. Historically, the county has allowed sites contiguous to the urban service area boundary to connect to the regional sanitary sewer system, and that is appropriate.

There are also other types of development allowed outside the urban service area, where regional sanitary sewer service is appropriate and in some cases necessary. These include clustered development in agricultural planned development projects, new town projects, traditional neighborhood design projects, agricultural businesses, and agricultural industries. For these uses, the county should allow connection to the regional sanitary sewer system or construction of a privately owned system, where connection to the public system is not feasible. In those cases where a privately owned system is allowed, the county should require that a franchise be obtained from the county and that any plants and collection systems be built to county standards and, where deemed appropriate by the county, be dedicated to the county without compensation.

The major collection system issues include service area, system evaluation and maintenance, system expansion related to serving areas presently served by septic tank systems, and system expansion to serve new development.

### Service Area

Vero Beach serves those areas outside its corporate limits based on interlocal agreements with the county and the Town of Indian River Shores. For the unincorporated county, the city water and waste water agreement expired in 2017 and is currently being re-negotiated. For the Town of Indian River Shores, its agreement with the city for water, wastewater, and reuse expired and was renewed in 2012. That agreement is for an initial term of 15 years. Unless Indian River

Shores provides notice of its desire to renegotiate or terminate four years before the expiration of that 15 year period, the agreement will automatically renew for another 15 years.

Currently, the Indian River County water and waste water service area is comprised of the following:

- Majority of unincorporated Indian River County
- City of Sebastian
- Town of Orchid

### **System Evaluation and Maintenance**

The sanitary sewer collection system is evaluated with each application for new development, and as each package treatment plant is decommissioned. That evaluation is done using a computer modeling program, known as the “WaterCad” model that evaluates several factors, including pipe capacity, lift station capacity, horse power requirements for pumps, and hydraulic pump pressure. In contrast to the City of Vero Beach, which is largely built-out and has provided utility service for many decades, sewer service is still relatively new to the rapidly growing unincorporated county. Consequently, the county’s collection system is constantly evaluated.

Within the county’s service area, the major collection system problem is low velocity in force mains. In particular, the 24 inch, 20 inch, and 12 inch force mains in the US 1 corridor have low velocities even at peak flows. The low velocity is caused by oversized lines and a lack of wastewater generated. Where the velocity is less than 2 feet/second, solids will settle in pipelines. Settled solids decrease hydraulic capacity.

Another problem occurs when a mass of accumulated solids become “unsettled” and reaches a treatment plant in an unexpectedly large concentration. In the past, this situation has resulted in sewage spills. While increased pipeline maintenance is necessary to prevent a reoccurrence of such spills, the recent installation of numerous automatic air release valves has corrected the problem by relieving gases that were preventing the normal flow of sewage through influent pipes. In the future, the county’s policy should be to continue to install automatic air release valves in all new lines.

### **Service to New Development**

Through the Utilities Department Wastewater Master Plan, the county has identified main lines that must be installed along major corridors. Unlike other collection lines, “Master Plan” lines usually do not connect directly to a wastewater generator. While master plan lines are paid for by the Utilities Department with revenue from capacity charges and other sources, non-master plan lines are paid from other sources.

Besides capital improvements programming and the assessment process, another way to expand the collection system is through the platting and site plan approval requirements of new development. For example, current comprehensive plan policies and land development regulations mandate that each new subdivision within the Urban Service Area connect to the centralized wastewater service system, if the proposed subdivision meets either of the following criteria.

- It is within one-quarter of a mile of existing wastewater lines; or
- It contains 25 or more lots

For non-residential projects, only those located more than ¼ mile from the existing system and generating less than 2000 gallons per day are not required to connect to the regional system. Even non-residential projects meeting those requirements must connect if the system expands to within ¼ mile of the project.

Those requirements need to be maintained to ensure that expansion of the regional sanitary sewer system occurs and to ensure that the costs of that expansion are paid by the beneficiaries of the expansion. Even when a development project does not meet the above criteria, the project must connect to the regional sanitary sewer system if the project is deemed unacceptable for septic tank system use due to increased health and groundwater contamination risks.

There are several reasons for requiring nearly all new development to connect to the regional system. Those reasons are listed below.

- Regional systems are less likely to fail.
- Regional systems are better regulated and inspected.
- Regional systems provide a higher level of treatment. That higher level of treatment allows the effluent to be reused, rather than injected into the ground where the effluent increases the risk of groundwater contamination.
- Regional systems are economically more efficient to build and operate, but only if all new development connects to the system.

### **Septic Systems**

Between 2007 and 2016, 1,217 new septic systems (average of 121 per year) were permitted. Additionally, during that time period 5,919 septic systems were repaired typically requiring a drainfield replacement.

Generally, septic systems are a potential source of groundwater and surface water contamination, especially in areas where they are densely concentrated, the water table is high, and waterbody setbacks are less than 75 feet. According to the DOH-Indian River, there have been cases of

wells and surface waters being contaminated from septic system discharges. As indicated in Table 3.A.5, septic system effluent is of poor quality by today’s wastewater treatment standards. Consequently, effluent discharges can cause detrimental increases in nitrogen, chloride, sodium, other ions, total dissolved solids, and the microbiological levels of the local groundwater.

**TABLE 3.A.5 - TYPICAL CONCENTRATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTEWATER, SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT EFFLUENT**

PARAMETER	CONCENTRATION		
	HOUSEHOLD WASTEWATER	SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT	WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (Max Day)
Biochemical Oxygen Demand, 5-day (BOD <sub>5</sub> ), mg/1	430	150	20
Total Suspended Solids, mg/1	370	50	20
Fecal Coliform (per 100ml)	7.5 X10 <sup>5</sup>	5X10 <sup>5</sup>	200
Total Nitrogen, mg/1	84	30	12
Ammonia Nitrogen, mg/1	64	25	N/A
Total Phosphorus, mg/1	61	12	1.5

Source: Indian River County Wastewater Master Plan

Generally, the current system of septic system maintenance is acceptable, particularly for newer septic tanks meeting current regulations. For older septic systems, however, lack of maintenance can be a problem, and there is no program requiring regular maintenance of these septic systems. According to DOH-Indian River, a required septic tank maintenance program could reduce septic system failures and associated adverse impacts; however, such a program would be costly and difficult to implement. In the future, the focus of the county and the DOH-Indian River should be on providing public education programs on the proper use, inspection, and maintenance of septic tanks.

Several features inherent to the operation of septic systems make them prone to contaminating groundwater without any visual indication. For example, septic systems that are undersized or not pumped every 3-5 years can accumulate sludge and scum, resulting in a poorer quality effluent. When high groundwater conditions (within 2 feet from the bottom of the drainfield)

exist, additional fill is needed. Once a septic system is installed and buried, these and other operating problems cannot be recognized until the entire system fails and raw (untreated) sewage backs up into the house plumbing or seeps above ground. Thus, a septic system that appears to be functioning properly may, in reality, be providing very poor “treatment”. This problem is more likely to occur in areas of higher residential density where parcels are less than ¼ acre, in areas with a high concentration of commercial/industrial use, and areas with construction that predates 1983.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey most of Indian River County’s soil has severe limitations for the use of septic systems. Combined with the county’s high wet season water table, this creates a high potential for groundwater and surface water contamination problems.

Since 1983, for new construction, the DOH has required that the bottom of drainfields be at least 24 inches above the wet season water table. To meet this requirement, typically slightly limited soil may be added to the site creating a mound. Also, a 75 foot separation requirement must be met between wells and/or waterbodies and septic systems. When parcels platted or recorded after 1972 meet minimum lot size requirements, and the above conditions, septic system performance is considered adequate for developments within the county.

Another issue with septic systems is the possibility of septage effluent from a septic system entering waterbodies in the county. This problem must be examined carefully, especially on the barrier island, in areas near the Indian River Lagoon, in areas near the St. Sebastian River, and in areas adjacent to canals, lakes or wetlands.

To summarize, the problems with septic systems are listed below:

- Physical limitations existing in Indian River County
  - A high water table of less than 10 inches as described in the USDA Soil Survey is found in almost all areas of the county, especially during the wet season June through October.
  - Ninety-three percent of the county’s soil is considered to have restrictive low permeable soil strata not suitable for septic system installations
- Health and safety
  - Poor quality of septic system effluent compared to wastewater treatment plant effluent.
  - Potential for groundwater contamination and spread of communicable disease.
  - Cost and insufficiency of monitoring process.
  - Inappropriate septage disposal.

- Environmental Consideration
  - Groundwater contamination.
  - Waterbody contamination.

For those reasons, there is a need to expand the regional wastewater treatment system to areas where existing or future land uses, soil and groundwater conditions, proximity to surface water bodies, and/or lot size make continued use of septic systems unacceptable due to increased health and groundwater contamination risks.

The county should allow the voluntary expansion of the regional sanitary sewer system to existing developments within the urban service area. Additionally, the county must determine under what conditions to impose retrofitting on existing development especially areas that impact the Indian River Lagoon and areas significantly less than ¼ acre in size. Some parcels recorded or platted prior to 1972 are only 0.11 acres making it difficult to repair septic systems to code. As indicated in the finance section of this element, a major portion of the cost of service expansion to existing subdivisions is funded through assessments. In the past, some residents have objected to the costs of such assessments, often citing an inability to pay.

The county must establish criteria to differentiate between areas where retrofitting is required. Because of the cost of retrofitting projects within the urban service area the most appropriate criteria to use to identify areas to retrofit are increased health risks and increased groundwater and/or surface water contamination risks. When any of the following conditions exist and the DOH-Indian River verifies that the health and groundwater contamination risks cannot be sufficiently reduced by any means other than connecting to the regional system, retrofitting must occur.

- Areas with small lot sizes less than ¼ acre especially those constructed prior to 1983. Residential subdivisions that meet those criteria are identified in Table 3.A.3.
- Areas with intense land uses. Intense land uses means commercial, industrial or equivalent uses or residential uses greater than 6 units/acre.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas. This means areas within 500 feet of aquifer recharge zones, as identified in the Aquifer Recharge Sub-Element of this plan; within 500 feet of any public water supply well; within 500 feet of the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Sebastian River, or any body of water that drains into them.
- As identified in the 2017 Septic to Sewer Study: Evaluation and Ranking by Utilities.
- Areas identified by the DOH-Indian River as potential threats to public health.

- New developments on oceanfront and riverfront lots

For planning purposes, a history of septic system repairs is defined as follows:

For subdivisions of 10 or fewer lots, this means 20% failures in five years. For subdivisions of 11 to 75 lots, this means 10% failures in five years. For subdivisions of more than 75 lots, this means 2% failures in five years.

Methods that allow for a higher level of effluent treatment and reduction of contamination include: installation of a “performance based system”, providing a 24 inch separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the wet season water table, and providing at least a 75 foot setback between septic systems and wells and/or surface waterbodies. Generally, the most effective and efficient way to correct the wastewater problem of those subdivisions is to connect them to the regional system

### **TREATMENT**

In addition to septic systems, public and private treatment plants provide wastewater treatment within the county. In Indian River County, large regional public treatment plants now predominate. Consequently, major treatment issues in the county relate primarily to ensuring sufficient capacity (either on-site or off-site) to accommodate projected growth.

If wastewater demand were allowed to exceed the county’s treatment capacity, untreated sewage would have to be discharged. That would result in health hazards and environmental degradation of surface water bodies. To prevent such an occurrence, the county must continue its policy of approving new development only when sufficient capacity will be available. In this regard, the county’s computerized concurrency management system and its capital improvements plan ensure that capacity will be available to serve new development concurrent with demand.

### **Public Treatment Plants**

Besides producing high quality effluent, all public treatment plants currently have more than enough capacity to accommodate existing demand. The following sections discuss the county’s future wastewater treatment needs and alternatives to meet those needs.

## Projection of Future Demand

### Assumptions

The comprehensive planning process is an opportunity for the county to complete an assessment of its long range sanitary sewer needs. Such a needs assessment must consist of an analysis that is more than a straight line linear projection. Future projections should utilize certain assumptions based on past trends, present conditions, and future desires. The main assumptions utilized in the sanitary sewer needs assessment are as follows:

- The county will be the primary provider of sanitary sewer collection, treatment, and disposal;
- The City of Vero Beach will continue to serve the City of Vero Beach, the Town of Indian River Shores and a portion of the unincorporated county; and
- 90% to 95% of future new development will connect to the regional sewer system.

The county will continue to maintain these policies and evaluate the feasibility of regional system versus package treatment plants for the above referenced type of developments.

The existing conditions section of this sub-element provides a discussion of the existing capacity of centralized wastewater treatment facilities, with an emphasis on the county system. That discussion addresses the supply side of the wastewater treatment system. This section considers the demand side.

The information for this section is based on the permanent and functional population projections contained in the Introductory Element and on the projected land use patterns contained in the Future Land Use Element. That information is also consistent with the county utilities master plan. To develop these projections, the county used data such as historic growth, population estimates, number and type of dwelling units, and developed commercial/industrial acreage.

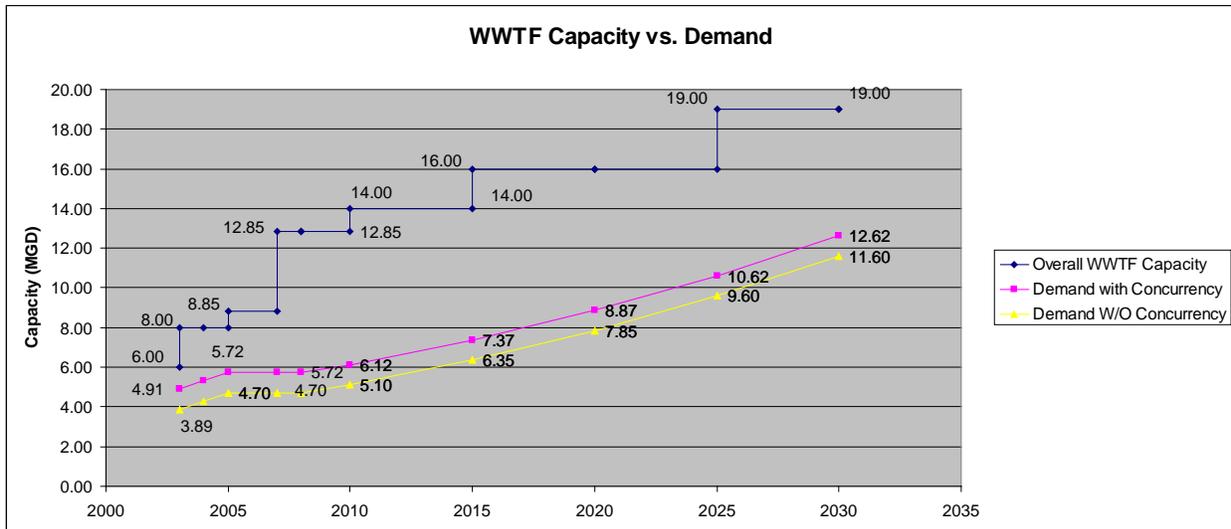
As with other facility analyses, planning for wastewater treatment facility expansion requires a rational approach to projecting growth over a finite planning period. Past experience has shown that using the historic growth of existing facilities in conjunction with population projections is the most accurate method of projecting wastewater generation rates for future treatment facility expansions.

### Capital Improvements

According to the county sanitary sewer master plan, the total design capacity of the county sanitary sewer system in 2030 is projected to be 19 million gallons per day (MGD), while total

demand is projected to be about 12.62 million gallons per day (MGD). This information is shown in the graph below. Because all of the plants in the county system are interconnected, there is flexibility as to which plant or plants will be expanded to accommodate future demand.

**Figure 3.A.2 WWTF Capacity vs. Demand**



To ensure sufficient capacity through 2030, the county should take the following steps:

- Begin planning and preliminary design for expansion when a plant’s Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 5 years;
- Prepare plans and specifications for expansion when a plant’s Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 4 years;
- Submit a complete construction permit application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for expansion when a plant’s Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 3 years; and
- Submit an application for an operation permit for the expanded facility to DEP when a plant’s Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 6 months.

Taking these steps within the referenced timeframes will ensure that the county has sufficient time to design, permit, and construct needed plant capacity. At the same time, these timeframes decrease the chances that plants will have many years of unused capacity.

A list of sanitary sewer capital improvements is provided in the Capital Improvements Element (CIE) of the county's comprehensive plan. Since the county's CIE must be updated annually, projects completed will be dropped from the list of capital improvements and new projects will be added as needed.

Within the county, a number of existing residential developments are not connected to the county sanitary sewer system. If all unserved developments were connected to the regional sanitary sewer system, there would be significant additional wastewater treatment demand. For a number of reasons, however, most unserved developments will never connect to the regional system.

In many cases, septic systems are adequate to accommodate individual single family houses, and there is no need to retrofit existing subdivisions with sanitary sewer lines. Where subdivisions are served by a centralized potable water system, there are seldom problems caused by lots having individual septic systems. Given the high cost of retrofitting existing subdivisions with sanitary sewer lines and given the limited benefits of connecting, it is unlikely that many existing subdivisions will be retrofitted with sewers in the future.

There are, however, some circumstances where connecting existing subdivisions to the sanitary sewer system would be beneficial. Those circumstances mostly relate to a subdivision's proximity to a waterbody. Because septic systems can leach pollutants and those pollutants can impact the ocean, the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Sebastian River, or other surface water bodies, the county has an interest in promoting the connection of waterfront subdivisions to the sanitary sewer system.

In the future, the county should continue to offer its assessment program that provides sanitary sewer to those neighborhoods where individuals benefiting from the connection to the sanitary sewer system pay for the cost of service expansion.

### **Wastewater Needs and Land Use**

With the 1990 adoption of the comprehensive plan, the county established its urban service area. The intent of the comprehensive plan is to direct most growth into that area and to provide urban type services to development in the urban service area.

Since adoption of the 1990 comprehensive plan, the regional wastewater collection system has been extended to all commercial/industrial areas in the county, including the three I-95 commercial/industrial nodes. As a result of that expansion, the development potential of land within the urban service area has greatly increased for both residential and commercial/industrial projects.

Although the regional sanitary sewer system service area has been greatly expanded, there are still several areas such as Oslo Park, Vero Lake Estates, Paradise Park and other areas which are

not yet served. In the future, the county should evaluate whether or not unserved areas should be connected to the regional sanitary sewer system.

### **Private Treatment Plants**

As indicated in the background section of this Sub-Element, the reason that the county started direct provision of wastewater treatment services was due to problems at private package treatment facilities. In many cases, the problems with private plants were due to the operational aspects of the plant, rather than with the plant itself. Because of those problems and their environmental impacts, the County Utilities Department has decommissioned all but four private plants. Customers formerly served by private plants that have been decommissioned have been connected to the county system.

To avoid a repeat of past problems, to ensure the financial viability of the regional system, and to discourage urban sprawl, new package treatment plants are generally prohibited within the urban service area. Consistent with the provisions of the Future Land Use Element of this plan, package treatment plants or connection to the regional system may be allowed outside of the urban service area to serve development projects that meet the following specific criteria:

- clustering of residential development within agricultural areas;
- clustering of residential development within privately owned upland conservation areas;
- clustering development within mixed use districts; or
- traditional neighborhood design communities.
- agricultural businesses and industries (including biofuel facilities)

In the future, the county will continue to maintain and enforce the above referenced policies.

### **EFFLUENT DISPOSAL**

Another wastewater treatment issue concerns long range plans for effluent disposal. With respect to effluent disposal, the county has several alternatives. Those alternatives include requiring new commercial and/or residential development to use reuse water, retrofitting existing development to use reuse water, or creating wetlands with reuse water.

While retrofitting existing development is, by a large margin, the most expensive of these options, requiring that new development accommodate reuse water is somewhat less expensive. In fact, new commercial areas are currently required to accommodate reuse lines. Even some single-family and multiple-family residential developers, although not required to, have chosen to incur the extra expense of building their projects to accommodate reuse water.

Currently, reuse through spray irrigation is the county's primary effluent disposal method. This method is consistent with the county's emphasis to conserve potable water. For that reason, the County Utilities Department is planning to modify the county's sanitary sewer system connection regulations to require that all new subdivisions of 25 or more lots within one-quarter of a mile of an existing re-use line connect to the re-use line for irrigation purposes.

Perhaps the most successful and efficient effluent reuse method currently used by the county is at the West County Plant. At that site, a ±165 acre man-made wetland has been created and maintained with effluent from the plant. Besides the creation of habitat for many species of plants and animals, the benefits of that method of effluent disposal include greatly decreased operating costs.

Although the wetland at the West County Plant is adjacent to the plant, such man-made wetlands are not required to be located near a treatment plant. If not located near a plant, however, they must be located near a reuse water transmission line.

Because the long term benefit of developing such wetlands may outweigh the initial land acquisition and construction costs, the county should begin studying the feasibility of developing additional wetlands.

### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

Currently, the county's sanitary sewer system is meeting the needs of the community. There is, however, a need to expand the regional wastewater treatment system. That expansion is needed to meet the demand of projected population growth through 2030, and is currently planned to occur with incremental plant expansions.

While the county's wastewater system works well, septic systems are still an issue. In the future, the county needs to ensure that even fewer new units use septic systems, while also connecting existing septic systems users to the regional system where problems exist. To address the thousands of existing septic systems, the county and Health Department need to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a mandatory septic system maintenance system.

Although the county has successfully extended sewer lines within the urban service area, the county needs to continue to expand its collection system to serve the entire urban service area. Along with that, the county needs to expand its reuse system.

## GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### GOAL

Indian River County shall have an efficient system of sanitary sewer disposal that prevents degradation of existing resources, promotes orderly growth and development, and meets existing and projected demands.

### OBJECTIVE 1      Service Concurrent with Development

Through the time horizon of the plan, there will be sufficient capacity in the regional sanitary sewer system to accommodate all new development within the urban service area.

POLICY 1.1: New development within the unincorporated portion of Indian River County shall be approved only when capacity is available, either on-site or off-site, to provide needed sanitary sewer service.

POLICY 1.2: The DEP, on an annual basis, shall inspect all private wastewater treatment plants in Indian River County.

POLICY 1.3: The county hereby adopts a sanitary sewer level of service standard of 250 gallons per day per equivalent residential unit with a peak monthly flow factor of 1.25. That standard shall be utilized for determining the availability of facility capacity and the demand generated by a development.

POLICY 1.4: Through its computerized permit tracking and its concurrency management system, the county shall continue to implement procedures to update facility demand and capacity information as development orders and permits are issued.

POLICY 1.5: The Planning Division, on an as needed basis, shall provide summary reports containing capacity and demand information for each public wastewater treatment plant within the county service area.

POLICY 1.6: Consistent with the county's water and wastewater connection matrix, the county shall continue to allow the use of septic tank systems in rural areas for single-family units and for domestic waste disposal by small retail establishments. The use of septic systems must be approved by the Health Department and be consistent with Rule 64E-6, FAC.

**OBJECTIVE 2      Regional System Expansion/Correction of Deficiencies**

By 2025, at least 60% of all existing units in the county's service area will be connected to the county's regional sanitary sewer system. This will be an increase from 52.7% in 2017.

POLICY 2.1: The county shall continue to offer the utility assessment program to areas with septic systems within the County Utilities Department service area.

POLICY 2.2: The county shall continue to offer up to 10 year financing for all utility assessments.

POLICY 2.3: The county shall give priority for the provision of public sanitary sewer services to the subdivisions on the list of subdivisions as identified in Table 3.A.3 designated as requiring sanitary sewer service due to public health threats by DOH.

POLICY 2.4: The county shall provide public sanitary sewer service to areas where the lack of such service is determined to be a public health threat and shall initiate sewer projects where feasible to serve subdivisions served by septic systems and identified in Table 3.A.3.1 as posing a disproportionately high potential negative impact on Indian River Lagoon water quality. The county shall recover costs through those connecting to the system and directly benefitting from the improvement.

POLICY 2.5: Consistent with its interlocal agreements with the City of Sebastian and the Town of Orchid, the county shall provide sanitary sewer services to those municipalities.

POLICY 2.6: By 2018, the county shall perform a financial analysis for septic to sewer conversion projects. Based on that analysis and available funding a specific list of subdivisions to be connected to public sanitary sewer system by certain dates will be identified.

POLICY 2.7: By 2028, the county shall provide sanitary sewer service to at least five (5) subdivisions identified in Table 3.A.3.1 as posing a disproportionately high potential negative impact on Indian River Lagoon water quality. The county shall recover costs through those connecting to the system and directly benefitting from the improvement.

**OBJECTIVE 3      Surface Water and Groundwater Quality**

Through the time horizon of the plan, the county will have no instances of sanitary sewer facilities contaminating surface water or groundwater resources.

POLICY 3.1: The DOH-Indian River shall conduct annual inspections of septic systems that are associated with heavy commercial, industrial, and manufacturing or equivalent uses. The results of these inspections may be used in conjunction with other items in prioritizing sanitary sewer service expansion.

POLICY 3.2: The county shall regularly monitor all centralized sanitary sewer facilities to ensure that they do not contaminate surface water or groundwater resources.

POLICY 3.3: To ensure that hazardous waste is not discharged into ground or surface water, the DOH-Indian River shall require samplings of onsite sewage systems for businesses which have been identified as hazardous waste generators suspected of illegal discharges. Violators shall be prosecuted according to federal, state and/or local regulations.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4      Water Conservation**

Through the time horizon of the plan, 100% of the wastewater effluent produced by the county centralized sanitary sewer facilities will be reused.

POLICY 4.1: The county shall continue to reuse wastewater by spray irrigation, with percolation ponds and wetlands as back-up.

POLICY 4.2: The county shall encourage large volume irrigation users, such as developments with golf courses, to use reuse water for spray irrigation.

POLICY 4.3: The county shall continue to enforce Land Development Regulations that require developments that use treated wastewater for spray irrigation to construct and dedicate to the county the effluent transmission lines needed to transport the effluent to the development.

POLICY 4.4: The county shall require all new subdivisions or residential projects of 25 or more lots/units within one-quarter of a mile of an existing re-use line to connect to the re-use line when capacity exists.

#### **OBJECTIVE 5      Capital Improvements**

By 2022, the county will have completed the sanitary sewer improvements listed in the county's 5 year Capital Improvements Program in order to maximize the use of existing facilities and discourage urban sprawl (current Five Year Capital Improvements Plan is in the Capital Improvements Element of the comprehensive plan).

POLICY 5.1: In conformance with the review process for the Capital Improvements Element, the county shall maintain a five-year schedule of capital improvement needs for public facilities.

POLICY 5.2: Proposed capital improvement projects shall be evaluated and ranked according to the following three priority level guidelines:

- Level One - whether the project is needed to protect public health and safety, to fulfill the county's legal commitment to provide facilities and services, or to preserve or achieve full use of existing facilities.
- Level Two - whether the project increases efficiency of use of existing facilities, prevents or reduces future improvement costs, provides service to developed areas lacking full service or promotes in-fill development.
- Level Three - whether the project represents a logical extension of facilities and services within the urban service area.

POLICY 5.3: In order to guarantee provision of more than the minimum level of service, the county shall take the following steps:

- begin planning and preliminary design for expansion when a plant's Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 5 years;
- prepare plans and specifications for expansion when a plant's Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 4 years;
- submit a complete construction permit application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for expansion when a plant's Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 3 years; and
- submit an application for an operation permit for the expanded facility to DEP when a plant's Average Daily Demand is projected to equal or exceed its capacity within 6 months.

POLICY 5.4: The county shall treat sanitary sewer provision as an enterprise system which is financially self-supporting.

POLICY 5.5: The County Utilities Department shall fund sanitary sewer capital improvements and expansions through user fees, capacity charges, developer's agreements, assessments and other appropriate fees and funding mechanisms.

POLICY 5.6: The county shall identify and pursue opportunities for state and federal funding for the improvement and expansion of utility services including septic to sewer conversion projects and sewer connections.

POLICY 5.7: All improvements, replacement, expansion, or increase in capacity of county facilities shall be consistent with adopted level of service standards for facilities.

POLICY 5.8: Consistent with the policies of the Future Land Use Element of this plan, provision of centralized sanitary sewer service shall be limited to the following areas:

- Areas within the Urban Service Area;
- Areas where the county has legal commitments to provide facilities and services as of the date of adoption of this plan;
- Areas outside of the Urban Service Area where at least a portion of the site is contiguous to an Urban Service Area boundary as depicted on the Official Future Land Use Map or where located no more than 500 feet from an existing sanitary sewer line that is part of the county sanitary sewer system, or where an approved place of worship or camp/retreat use existed on January 1, 2016 and is approved for water and/or sewer service by Utility Services in conjunction with a utility construction/connection permit filed with Utility Services on or before June 30, 2016. These areas are subject to the following provisions:
  - The maximum density of such land shall be as shown on the Future Land Use Map, and the provision of centralized sanitary sewer service shall not be justification for an increase in maximum density; and
  - Any and all costs associated with connecting a property to the sanitary sewer system, including costs associated with survey, design, permitting, line extensions, construction, pumps and lift stations, restoration, inspections, and certification, shall be borne by the owner of the property.
- Development projects located outside of the Urban Service Area that meet the criteria of the policies of the Future Land Use Element for:
  - clustering of residential development within agricultural;
  - clustering of residential development within privately owned upland conservation areas;
  - clustered development within mixed use districts;

- traditional neighborhood design communities;
  - public facilities such as public schools; and
  - agricultural businesses and industries (including biofuel facilities)
- Areas where, consistent with Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element Policy 2.4, the lack of centralized sanitary sewer service is determined to be a public health threat.

POLICY 5.9: The county shall install automatic air release valves in all new sewer lines.

### **OBJECTIVE 6      Package Treatment Plants**

Through the time horizon of the plan, there shall be no instances of package treatment plant failures, or illegal or unsafe package treatment plant discharges.

POLICY 6.1: The county shall limit the use of package wastewater treatment systems to areas that meet the following criteria governing connection to the county sanitary sewer system:

- Development served by existing package treatment plants may continue to treat their sewage in that manner until centralized service becomes available. At that time, all development within ¼ mile of a county sewer line shall be connected to the county system. Development whose sewage treatment systems causes a public health problem must connect to the regional system regardless of the distance to sewer lines.
- Package treatment plants shall be allowed in areas of development outside of the Urban Service Area when such development meets the criteria of policies of the Future Land Use Element for:
  - clustering of residential development within agricultural areas;
  - clustering of residential development within privately owned upland conservation areas;
  - clustering development within mixed use districts;
  - tradition neighborhood design communities; or
  - agricultural businesses and industries (including biofuel facilities)

POLICY 6.2: The county shall ensure that, prior to the issuance of development orders or permits, the applicant has demonstrated that the project complies with applicable federal, state, and local permit requirements for package treatment plants.

POLICY 6.3: The county shall require that issuance of permits for replacement or expansion of existing package treatment plants be conditioned upon compliance with the most updated version of DEP regulatory requirements and Federal and State water quality standards as identified in the “Regulatory Framework” section of the sub-element.

POLICY 6.4: To ensure proper maintenance and operation, the DEP shall inspect all package treatment plants on an annual basis.

POLICY 6.5: The county shall require all new package wastewater treatment plants to be built according to current federal, state, and county requirements. In addition to obtaining a county permit demonstrating compliance with county regulations, any developer building and operating a package wastewater treatment plant must obtain a state permit demonstrating compliance with state and federal regulations. Those regulations include but are not limited to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (PL 92-500) and its amendments through the Clean Water Acts of 1977 (PL 95-217) and 1981 (PL 97-117), Chapters 381 and 403 of the Florida Statutes, and Rules 17-3 and 17-6 of the Florida Administrative Code. Both state and county permits are required for the construction of a plant, and for any future expansion or modification of a plant.

POLICY 6.6: At the time the county approves any new package treatment plants, the county will require, that at the time deemed appropriate by the county, the package treatment plant and associated sewer collection system shall be dedicated to the county for operation and maintenance without compensation.

POLICY 6.7: The county shall continue to enforce ordinances requiring pre-treatment of commercial and industrial waste before discharge into the county system.

POLICY 6.8: The county shall require all future connections to the regional sanitary sewer system to be consistent with the attached water and wastewater connection matrix.

## **OBJECTIVE 7      Septic Systems**

By 2020, the number of new septic systems permitted annually will not exceed 200.

POLICY 7.1: The county shall limit the use of septic systems to areas that meet the following criteria governing connection to the county sanitary sewer system:

- Commercial/industrial uses and residential subdivisions identified in Table 3.A.3 may continue to treat their sewage with existing septic systems until centralized sewer service lines are extended to within ¼ mile of the site. At that time, all residential units in those subdivisions and all commercial/industrial uses shall be

connected to the county system. Developments whose sewage treatment systems cause a public health problem must connect to the regional system regardless of the distance to sewer lines.

- Use of septic systems for new development shall be prohibited unless:
  - such development meets the criteria set on the water and wastewater connection matrix; or
  - such development consists of clustered residential development within privately owned upland conservation (C-3) areas. Even under those circumstances, no individual septic systems may be associated with individual residential units. If located outside of any conservation designated areas or areas that are environmentally sensitive or significant, however, centralized community septic systems may be provided to each pod of clustered residential development.
  - Septic systems shall be allowed in areas of development outside of the Urban Service Area when such development meets the criteria of policies of the Future Land Use Element for:
    - clustered residential development within agricultural planned development projects;
    - clustered development within new town projects;
    - traditional neighborhood design communities; and
    - agricultural businesses and industries (including biofuel facilities)

**POLICY 7.2:** The county shall ensure that, prior to the issuance of development orders or permits for projects to be served by septic systems, the applicant has demonstrated that the project complies with Florida Department of Health (DOH) regulations Section 381.0065 FS and Chapter 64E-6, FAC, permit requirements for septic systems.

**POLICY 7.3:** The county in coordination with and through the DOH-Indian River, shall require that issuance of permits for repair or replacement of existing septic systems be conditioned upon compliance with DOH regulations Section 381.0065 FS and Chapter 64E-6, FAC, permit requirements for septic systems.

**POLICY 7.4:** The county, in coordination with and through the DOH-Indian River, shall establish public education programs on the proper use, inspection requirements, maintenance, and abandonment of septic systems. The septic system abandonment process shall be based on current state and local regulations.

POLICY 7.5: Consistent with Section 381.00651 FS and in coordination with and through the DOH-Indian River, the County shall encourage a voluntary opt-in provision for septic system maintenance and encourage contractors that provide septic maintenance to document information.

POLICY 7.6: The County, in coordination with and through the DOH-Indian River, shall encourage all septic systems including repairs and modifications to meet a 24 inch separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the wet season water table and meet 75 foot setbacks from surface waterbodies and wells.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

An important part of any plan is its implementation. Implementation involves execution of the plan's policies. It involves taking actions and achieving results.

For the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element, implementation involves various activities. While some of these actions will be ongoing, others are activities that will be taken by certain points in time. For each policy in this element, Table 3.A.6 identifies the type of action required, the responsible entity for taking the action, the timing, and whether or not the policy necessitates a capital expenditure.

To implement the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element, several different types of actions must be taken. These include: expansion of plant capacity, extension of the collection network, enforcement of land development regulations and ordinances, execution of interlocal agreements, coordination, and preparation of studies and evaluation and monitoring reports.

Overall plan implementation responsibility will rest with the planning department. Besides its responsibilities as identified in Table 3.A.6, the planning department has the additional responsibility of ensuring that other entities discharge their responsibilities. This will entail notifying other applicable departments of capital expenditures to be included in their budgets, notifying other departments and groups of actions that must be taken, and assisting other departments and agencies in their plan implementation responsibilities.

**TABLE 3.A.6 - SANITARY SEWER SUB-ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

POLICY#	TYPE OF ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	CAPITAL EXPEND.
1.1	Land Development Regulations	Planning	Ongoing	NO
1.2	Monitoring Procedures	DEP	Ongoing	NO
1.3	Land Development Regulations	Planning	Ongoing	NO
1.4	Monitoring Procedures	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
1.5	Summary Reports	Planning	As Needed	NO
1.6	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
2.1	Service Provision	Utilities	Ongoing	YES
2.2	Service Provision	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
2.3	Evaluation Process/ Service Provision	Utilities/DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	YES
2.4	Evaluation Process/ Service Provision	Utilities/DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	YES
2.5	Coordination	Utilities/BCC	Ongoing	NO
2.6	Septic to Sewer Study	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
2.7	New Service to Existing Subdivisions on Septic Systems	Utilities	Ongoing	YES
3.1	Annual Inspections	DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
3.2	Monitoring Procedures	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
3.3	Monitoring Procedures	DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
4.1	Reuse Water by Spray Irrigation	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
4.2	Land Development Regulations	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
4.3	Land Development Regulations	Utilities	Ongoing	NO

**Comprehensive Plan**

**Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element**

POLICY#	TYPE OF ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING	CAPITAL EXPEND.
4.4	Land Development Regulations	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
5.1	CIP Maintenance	Finance/Utilities	Ongoing	NO
5.2	CIP Evaluation & Prioritization	Finance/Utilities	Ongoing	NO
5.3	Capacity Monitoring & Plant Expansion	Utilities	Ongoing	YES
5.4	Land Development Regulations	Finance/Utilities	Ongoing	NO
5.5	Land Development Regulations	Utilities	Ongoing	YES
5.6	Funding Mechanism	Utilities/Finance	Ongoing	NO
5.7	Improvement/ Replacement/Expansion	Utilities	Ongoing	YES
5.8	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
5.9	Installation of Air Release Valves	Utilities	Ongoing	Yes
6.1	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
6.2	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
6.3	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning/ DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
6.4	Plant Inspections	DEP	Ongoing	NO
6.5	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
6.6	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
6.7	Land Development Regulations	Utilities	Ongoing	NO
6.8	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO
7.1	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning	Ongoing	NO

**Comprehensive Plan****Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element**

<b>POLICY#</b>	<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>TIMING</b>	<b>CAPITAL EXPEND.</b>
7.2	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning/ DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
7.3	Land Development Regulations	Utilities/Planning/ DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
7.4	Public Education Program	Utilities/ DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
7.5	Septic Maintenance and Reporting	DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO
7.6	Septic System Improvements	DOH - INDIAN RIVER	Ongoing	NO

## EVALUATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

To be effective, a plan must not only provide a means for implementation; it must also provide a mechanism for assessing the plan's effectiveness. Generally a plan's effectiveness can be judged by the degree to which the plan's objectives have been met. Since objectives are measurable and have specific timeframes, the plan's objectives are the benchmarks used as a basis to evaluate the plan.

Table 3.A.7 identifies each of the objectives of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element. It also identifies the measures to be used to evaluate progress in achieving these objectives. Most of these measures are quantitative. Besides the measures, Table 3.A.7 also identifies timeframes associated with meeting the objectives.

The utilities department staff will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element. This will involve collection of data and compilation of information regarding facility capacity, expansion, and new development permitted. This will be done on a regular basis. As part of the county's concurrency management system, the county will continually monitor facility capacity to ensure that wastewater level-of-service standards will be maintained.

While monitoring will occur on a continual basis, formal evaluation of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element will occur every five years in conjunction with the formal evaluation and appraisal of the entire comprehensive plan. Besides assessing progress, the evaluation and appraisal process will also be used to determine whether the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element objectives should be modified or expanded. In this way the monitoring and evaluation of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element will not only provide a means of determining the degree of success of the plan's implementation; it will also provide a mechanism for evaluating needed changes to the plan element.

**TABLE 3.A.7 - SANITARY SEWER SUB-ELEMENT EVALUATION MATRIX**

OBJECTIVE #	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
1	Availability of Sufficient Capacity	Through the time horizon of the plan
2	% connected to regional system	By 2020
3	# of instances of sanitary sewer facilities contaminating surface water or groundwater resources	Through the time horizon of the plan
4	% of wastewater effluent reused	Through the time horizon of the plan
5	Completed improvements	Through the time horizon of the plan
6	# of package treatment plant failures and # of illegal or unsafe package treatment plant discharges	Through the time horizon of the plan
7	# of new septic systems permitted annually	By 2020

**TABLE 3.A.8 - WATER & WASTEWATER CONNECTION MATRIX FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT**

	Inside of the Urban Service Area	
	Connect	Not Connect
<b>Single Family:</b>		
Within 200' of system	X	
Outside of 200' of system		X**
<b>Residential Projects:</b> Subdivision, multi-family, site plan, PD, DRI		
Within ¼ mile of the system		
25 units or more	X	
Less than 25 units	X	
Outside of ¼ mile of system		
25 units or more	X	
Less than 25 units		X**
<b>Non-Residential Projects:</b> Subdivision, site plan, PD, DRI		
Within ¼ mile of system		
2,000 gallons daily flow or more*	X	
Less than 2,000 gallons daily flow*	X	
Outside of ¼ mile of system		
2,000 gallons daily flow or more*	X	
Less than 2,000 gallons daily flow*		X**

\* Daily flow refers to water consumption or sewer generation.

\*\*The applicant for any development project, where such project will not connect to a centralized system, must sign a developer's agreement with the Indian River County Utilities Department to operate on a private system with a commitment to connect to the regional system when service is available. These agreements shall be conditioned upon demonstration of compliance with applicable federal, state, and local permit requirements. When using a private system or on-site facilities, the developer must construct a dry line or wet line at the time of construction, if required by the Utilities Department. The final determination for the type of

non-residential establishment which can utilize a private system shall be made by the Utilities Department, Community Development Department, and DOH – Indian River.

**System Availability:** A system is considered available when a collection or distribution line exists in a public easement or right-of-way.

**Distance Determination:** Distance determinations are made from the nearest point of the project (area of development) to the public facility directly through public easements or public rights-of-way.

F:\Community Development\Comprehensive Plan Elements\2030 supplements for 2030 comp plan\Supplement #16\9 Chapter 3A Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element cleaned up version for supplement #16.doc