

9.3. Private wastewater treatment facilities

The PAG 208 Plan discourages private wastewater treatment facilities. All private facilities are considered to be inconsistent with the 208 Plan unless specified otherwise in the 208 Plan or in an approved 208 Plan Amendment.

In rare cases, a very small, isolated private wastewater treatment facility could be deemed “not inconsistent” with PAG’s 208 Plan under the following conditions:

- no sewer service from the Designated Management Agency will likely be available within 10 years, and the Designated Management Agency declines (in writing) to provide service to the area that the private facility would serve;
- there are adequate assurances that the facility will connect to the public conveyance and treatment system at such time that service by a Designated Management Agency becomes available (the DMA will determine what is required to demonstrate “adequate assurance”);
- the facility owner and operator demonstrate, to the satisfaction of ADEQ, PDEQ, the DMA, the water provider and the local jurisdiction where the facility would be located, the financial and technical capability to operate the facility for the entire time that the facility will be needed;
- there will be no discharge to any waters of the United States;
- the facility will not exceed 0.02 MGD capacity;
- the facility will not receive any commercial or industrial waste;
- neither the facility nor the conveyance lines to the facility will interfere with future plans for regional sewer service to the area or to adjacent or upstream areas;
- the facility will not interfere with water providers’ plans for providing water or reclaimed water to the site or to surrounding areas;
- the jurisdiction in which the facility will be located supports the construction of the facility, and none of the other PAG member jurisdictions objects to the facility’s construction;
- the water provider whose service area includes the proposed facility location does not object to construction of the facility;
- it is demonstrated that the facility will not cause any water quality or odor impacts to surrounding areas; and
- all property owners within ½ mile of the proposed facility location are notified of the proposal, and none of the property owners within ½ mile object to the proposal within 30 days of being notified.

9.7. ON-SITE SYSTEMS

On-site domestic wastewater treatment systems (e.g., septic tanks) are one of several accepted ways of managing water quality in Pima County. However, installation and use of on-site systems where connection to a Designated Management Agency’s wastewater conveyance system is technically and economically feasible would be inconsistent with the 208 Plan. Existing subdivisions relying on septic tanks for wastewater treatment are encouraged to connect to the Designated Management Agency’s conveyance and treatment system when it becomes accessible.

9.8. CONVERSION OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS TO ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

Some public facilities such as schools and parks use septic tanks to treat wastewater because sewer service is not available. Proposals to change the wastewater service for these facilities from a septic tank to an on-site wastewater treatment facility will normally require a 208 Plan Amendment. However, such a conversion could be deemed consistent with the 208 Plan provided that it represents a net environmental benefit, the local jurisdiction does not object, and the facility does not serve any off-site areas. In addition, the facility would be expected to connect to the Designated Management Agency’s conveyance and treatment system as soon as service becomes available.

10.6. FINANCING OPTIONS

When evaluating proposals for new wastewater treatment facilities, PAG will adhere to the following policies, established in the 1985 update to the 208 Plan, which relate to economics, financing and cost effectiveness:

- A permanent facility will only be constructed if it is functionally and environmentally sound and is the most cost-effective alternative (to the public) for relief of deficiencies of conveyance system capacity.
- Temporary treatment facilities are prohibited unless needed because of lack of planned service to the area and a temporary plant is the most environmentally and economically beneficial (to the public) way of providing wastewater treatment or effluent reuse.
- Private treatment plants are prohibited unless the private facility is the most cost-effective to the public in the long term.
- All wastewater treatment plants must be based on a cost-effective analysis that substantiates the plant as the most viable method of serving the area in both the long and short term. A financing method must be provided, including local user fees if applicable.
- All temporary plants must have a plan for transition to a permanent method of wastewater treatment, including financing arrangements that will not adversely affect the public. These arrangements must include payment of sewage connection fees.