

1 **GOAL 1: the County shall ensure safe, effective, and efficient wastewater treatment systems**
2 **that protect the quality of surface water, groundwater, and springsheds are established and**
3 **maintained, and to make centralized wastewater treatment service meeting established level**
4 **of service (LOS) standards available for all new and existing development within the Urban**
5 **Growth Boundary (UGB) and other areas deemed suitable by the County.**

6 **OBJECTIVE 1.1:** The County shall establish level of service (LOS) standards for wastewater service
7 with consideration for the plans and procedures outlined in the Marion County Water and
8 Wastewater Utility Master Plan, as amended, to provide for public safety and their efficient
9 construction, operation, and maintenance in a cost feasible manner which is also consistent with
10 interlocal agreements between Marion County and authorized providers of wastewater and/or
11 water services.

12 **Policy 1.1.1:** The LOS standard of 110 gallons per person per day for residential demand and
13 approximately 2,000 gallons per acre per day for commercial and industrial demand is adopted as the
14 basis for future facility design, determination of facility capacity, and documentation of demand created
15 by new development. This LOS shall be applicable to central sewer facilities and to package treatment
16 plants but shall not apply to individual OSTDS. DRIs and FQDs that demonstrate the suitability of differing
17 LOS standards may be allowed to adhere to the differing standard if approved by the County.

18 **Policy 1.1.2:** The Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan will implement the goals,
19 objectives, and policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan. Projects specified in the Marion County
20 Utility Master Plan are included and reflected, as and when appropriate, in the annual update of the
21 Capital Improvements Element 5-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements.

22 **Policy 1.1.3:** The County shall encourage the construction of sanitary sewer facilities by public or private
23 sources, or jointly, in accordance with the Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan, and
24 the LDC.

25 **Policy 1.1.4:** Development of financing plans for wastewater systems shall promote the use of exactions
26 and user charges to provide for the capital and operating costs of service in order to ensure that the costs
27 of systems are paid for by the persons benefiting from the services provided. Such exactions and user
28 charges shall be based on the proportionate fair share of costs attributable to demand created by users.

29 **Policy 1.1.5:** Priority for hookup to central facilities, when available, shall be given first to wastewater
30 treatment plants which have the immediate or imminent potential for causing public health or pollution
31 problems (including degradation of groundwater, surface water, or springs/springsheds within the SPZ),
32 second to treatment plants that are failing or using rapid rate land application, third to developments with
33 urban densities served by OSTDS, fourth to treatment plants which are functioning near their capacity,
34 and fifth to new development; however this prioritization shall not preclude or prevent a 'lower priority'
35 from connection due to any failure to connect a 'higher priority'.

36 **Policy 1.1.6:** Criteria shall be established as a part of the Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility
37 Master Plan and LDC to monitor the design and operations of private utilities, including potential
38 enforcement criteria and guidelines, and establish criteria to coordinate the extension of, and/or increase
39 the capacity of, sanitary sewer facilities, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

1 **OBJECTIVE 1.2:** For the provision of wastewater systems and the consolidation of private
2 systems, the County will consider provisions set forth in the following series of reports; associated
3 reports and/or documents; and amendments and/or revisions thereof:

- 4 a. Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan, as amended;
- 5 b. Marion County Water Resource Assessment and Management Study (WRAMS), as
6 amended; and
- 7 c. Marion County Water Supply Plan, as amended.

8 The County shall also, where economically feasible, prevent fragmentation and differing qualities
9 of service.

10 **Policy 1.2.1:** Within the UGB, all new development approval requests (CPAs, rezonings, site plans, etc.)
11 will require proof that central sanitary sewer and water service from a County approved provider is or will
12 be available. Approved providers in the UGB are MCUD, the cities of Ocala, Belleview or Dunnellon, and
13 private utilities authorized by the County within its service area.

14 **Policy 1.2.2:** For existing package treatment plants located within Environmentally Sensitive Overlay
15 Zones (ESOZs) of the County, a determination, based on Florida Department of Environmental Protection
16 (FDEP) regulations, shall be made to determine whether Tertiary Treatment or connection to a centralized
17 system is required. The County may periodically review the operation of package sewage treatment plants
18 within the ESOZ and report results to the Board of County Commissioners.

19 **Policy 1.2.4:** Existing or interim package sewage treatment plants shall be required to treat wastewater
20 to a standard no less than that established pursuant to Florida Department of Environmental Protection
21 regulations concerning Minimum Treatment Standards (62-600.420, F.A.C., as amended). The County shall
22 maintain LDCs which specify when existing sewer facilities located within the SPZ, including package
23 sewage treatment plants and cluster community treatment systems, shall either upgrade to meet current
24 treatment and disposal standards established by the County, or connect to a centralized wastewater
25 treatment facility.

26 **Policy 1.2.5:** Interim or package sewage treatment systems that meet current treatment and disposal
27 standards established by the County may be approved, but they shall be required to set in place a plan for
28 connection to a central system when such becomes available and has the capacity.

29 **Policy 1.2.6:** Septic systems or Onsite Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS) shall adhere to all
30 applicable Sanitary Sewer Element policy and LDC requirements, including requirements to connect to
31 larger sanitary sewer facilities when they become available. Septic systems shall not be exempt from
32 requirements to connect to larger sanitary facilities based on their lower cost.

33 **Policy 1.2.7:** The County shall, as part of its water and wastewater master planning program and water
34 supply plan implement and adopt a water and wastewater service area map series. The map series shall,
35 at minimum, show location and extent of the following: existing infrastructure and service areas,
36 proposed new facilities and service areas that will result from approved development projects, planned

1 service areas consistent with the CIE Schedule, and other projected long-term service area boundaries, as
2 appropriate.

3 **Policy 1.2.8:** Periodic reports concerning the Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan,
4 WRAMS, and Water Supply Plan shall be prepared to provide recommendations to the Board of County
5 Commissioners regarding the scope of subject programs, including, but not limited to: impacts of
6 proposed land use amendments on future sewer capacity and availability; the size of facilities to be
7 regulated; administrative organization; administrative procedures; program costs; funding options; and
8 standards that regulate design, construction, operation and maintenance.

9 **Policy 1.2.9:** The County shall periodically review the financial feasibility of connecting OSTDS and/or
10 package sewage treatment plants to centralized sanitary sewer systems as opportunities arise in the
11 County due to growth and expansion of urban services, such as implementing an UGB or similar urban
12 area development boundary or other opportunities.

13 **Policy 1.2.10:** The Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan, WRAMS and Water Supply
14 Plan shall implement conservation, reuse/reclaimed water, and other alternative, practices and measures
15 that will assist in insuring that an adequate quantity and quality of water is available to maintain the
16 current population and allow for continued growth within the County.

17 **Policy 1.2.11:** The County shall implement and maintain a Water Supply Plan, as amended, consistent with
18 Florida Statutes.

19 **OBJECTIVE 1.3:** The County may allow new package sewage treatment plants in areas that meet
20 the requirements established in the LDC. Existing package treatment plants may continue to
21 operate in all areas as long as they meet FDEP treatment and disposal standards and treatment
22 and disposal standards established by the County for ESOZ and SPZ.

23 **Policy 1.3.1:** The County's Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan shall analyze, investigate and
24 evaluate alternative collection and transmission system configurations for centralized treatment facilities
25 to implement the Comprehensive Plan and discourage urban sprawl.

26 **Policy 1.3.2:** The County will allow continued operation of package treatment plants in all areas as long
27 as they meet FDEP treatment and disposal standards and treatment and disposal standards established
28 by the County for ESOZ and SPZ. Construction or expansion of new facilities will be required to adhere to
29 the regulations in the LDC.

30 **OBJECTIVE 1.4:** The County shall regulate land use, through its Comprehensive Plan and the LDC,
31 to achieve a development pattern that provides a clear separation of urban and rural areas in
32 terms of densities and intensities of use and provision of infrastructure. Centralized sanitary
33 sewer facilities will be available to existing and new development in order to achieve a
34 development pattern consistent with the provision of adequate wastewater treatment facilities
35 and thereby meet future needs and discourage sprawl, consistent with the element.

36 **Policy 1.4.1:** For all development within the UGB or with an Urban Area designation, connection to
37 centralized wastewater facilities is required as detailed in the LDC. For clustered developments in Rural

1 Land, connection to centralized wastewater facilities, rather than septic tanks, shall be encouraged when
2 feasible. Otherwise, septic tanks may be allowed provided soils and environmental conditions meet LDC
3 requirements and standards established by the Marion County Department of Health.

4 **Policy 1.4.2:** Development in ESOZ DRIs and FQDs may be required to use either package wastewater
5 treatment systems, or alternative systems that produce a comparable effluent quality, are built to county
6 specification, and meet the LOS standards established in Policy 1.1.1 until a centralized system is available.

7 **Policy 1.4.3:** The LDC shall provide for issuance of development permits within the identified wastewater
8 service areas consistent with the following guidelines:

9 a. The type, density, location and intensity of the proposed development shall determine the type
10 of wastewater treatment system to be utilized;

11 b. The location of the proposed development represents a logical extension of existing development
12 patterns, and will not promote, urban sprawl;

13 c. Where public wastewater treatment facilities are required, they shall be available concurrent with
14 the impacts of development. Facilities which meet county specifications and the level of service
15 standards for the service area will be provided by the developer in the interim and will be
16 connected to central facilities when they become available; and

17 d. The proposed facilities are consistent with DEP.

18 **Policy 1.4.4:** Wastewater facilities to be provided by the developer shall be guaranteed in an enforceable
19 development agreement.

20 **Policy 1.4.5:** The County shall monitor development in wastewater planning areas to facilitate scheduling
21 for construction of facilities as part of the annual CIE Schedule.

22 **Policy 1.4.6:** On a periodic basis, the Utilities Department shall evaluate the status of development within
23 the wastewater planning areas and make recommendations regarding the need to initiate an update of
24 the Marion County Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan.

25 **Policy 1.4.7:** Connection to an existing central sewer facility and/or construction of a new facility is
26 required for development on land with an urban designation or within the UGB and shall be consistent
27 with criteria in the LDCs.

28 **Policy 1.4.8:** Following the implementation of applicable Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) (e.g.,
29 Silver Springs, Rainbow Springs, etc.), the County shall identify existing subdivisions that utilize individual
30 well and septic systems, primarily located within the UGB, that have either current access to centralized
31 water and wastewater facilities or future access to improvements that are programmed for the first two
32 years of the CIE Schedule. The County will then initiate a pilot study using selected subdivisions to compare
33 costs of providing centralized services with individual service, payment method preferences, pollution
34 reduction, effectiveness of incentive programs and educational programs, and other factors to be
35 included in the project design.

1 **OBJECTIVE 1.5:** The County shall continue to coordinate and provide mechanisms through which
2 municipalities and private utilities may provide and extend wastewater treatment facilities to
3 areas currently within the unincorporated areas of the County that have been identified in the
4 Comprehensive Plan as appropriate for centralized systems.

5 **Policy 1.5.1:** For areas currently within the unincorporated portions of the County which are proposed to
6 be served by municipal facilities, the County shall coordinate with the appropriate municipality to ensure
7 that the LDC and wastewater facility existing capacity and expansion plans for the area are consistent.

8 **Policy 1.5.2:** Interlocal agreements will be sought with the cities of Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon to
9 include, among other things, delineation of specific future service area boundaries, schedules for facility
10 provision, and mechanisms for coordination of development review and approval, to ensure that
11 adequate infrastructure capacity will be available to serve development in service areas.

12 **Policy 1.5.3:** Private utility systems which have sufficient sewage treatment capacity may provide services
13 to contiguous and adjacent development within the unincorporated areas of the County when consistent
14 with the Comprehensive Plan and Water and Wastewater Utility Master Plan and approved by the County.

15 **Policy 1.5.4:** Franchise agreements with such private utility systems shall include, among other things,
16 delineation of specific future service area boundaries, schedules for facility provision, and mechanisms to
17 ensure that adequate capacity will be available to serve development in the service areas.

18 **OBJECTIVE 1.6:** To help prevent the further degradation of groundwater and springsheds within
19 the SPZ, and allow for adequate water supply in the future, new and expanding wastewater
20 facilities shall be designed to maximize reuse and conservation and minimize the discharge of
21 nitrogen and other pollutants to groundwater.

22 **Policy 1.6.1:** The County shall develop and adopt regulations that establish standards for new and
23 expanding facilities that dispose of effluent through public access reuse systems that offset groundwater
24 withdrawals and potable water use, and that limit the use of rapid-rate land application systems for back-
25 up purposes only in the Primary SPZ. Restricted public access irrigation in the Primary SPZ, and restricted
26 public access slow and rapid rate land application systems in the Secondary SPZ may be allowed where
27 higher treatment standards are met, consistent with the LDC. The regulations shall also include specific
28 requirements for certain types of new development to install reuse lines, and to utilize reuse water when
29 available, based on project size, type, location and other relevant factors. High priority shall be given to
30 new development where reuse water will offset the use of fresh potable water and fertilizers in the SPZ.

31 **Policy 1.6.2:** The County shall require all wastewater treatment facilities in the SPZ to conduct rigorous
32 background and ongoing groundwater monitoring, and to develop and implement remediation plans
33 when chemical and organic compounds associated with wastewater concentrations, including but not
34 limited to nitrogen, rise above background levels as a result of facility activities.

35 **Policy 1.6.3:** The County shall encourage reuse of water to reduce the quantity of pollutants from entering
36 the County's groundwater and springsheds; Marion County shall encourage the water conservation to
37 maintain a sustainable community and allow for future growth to occur through water conservation and
38 discourage the use of potable water for irrigation when reclaimed water is available.

1 **OBJECTIVE 1.7:** To minimize degradation of groundwater and springsheds where centralized
2 sewer is not available or required, the use of private OSTDS shall be allowed, consistent with this
3 and other policies of the Comprehensive Plan and applicable LDCs. In addition, other types of
4 treatments systems that improve the quality of water that is released from the wastewater
5 system are encouraged to be used for irrigation and other beneficial uses to reduce groundwater
6 pollution and reduce overall need for additional water supply usage. These systems shall be
7 designed and maintained in a manner that minimizes degradation of groundwater within
8 springsheds and encourages water reuse for irrigation purposes or other beneficial uses.

9 **Policy 1.7.1:** New OSTDS within the SPZ shall comply with the requirements of the FLUE and the LDC.
10 OSTDS meeting higher discharge standards may be required, where and when determined necessary by
11 the FDOH and/or the County within the SPZ as detailed in the LDC.

12 **Policy 1.7.2:** All new and existing conventional and enhanced OSTDS may be subject to routine inspection
13 and maintenance through programs established by the FDOH. For enhanced systems, maintenance
14 agreements with a certified maintenance entity shall be required in addition to operation permits, in
15 accordance with current FDOH and/or County rules, whichever is most restrictive.

16 **Policy 1.7.3:** Community cluster treatment systems which provide reuse in addition to high levels of
17 nitrogen reduction shall be preferred and utilized whenever feasible in multiple unit developments.