



Indian River County Department of Utility Services » Proposed Mandatory Policy

Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners

October 7, 2025





Purpose of Presentation



Objective: Request Board approval for Mandatory Connection to County sewer service where available or when it becomes available.

Agenda:

- Regulatory drivers
- Current conditions
- Septic-to-Sewer (S2S) Program
- **The Financials:**
 - a) How much does it cost?
 - b) What are property owners' responsibility?
 - c) What can be done to lower the costs?
 - d) What are the options to pay for it?
- Alternative to connection to County sewer





HB1379 (2023)



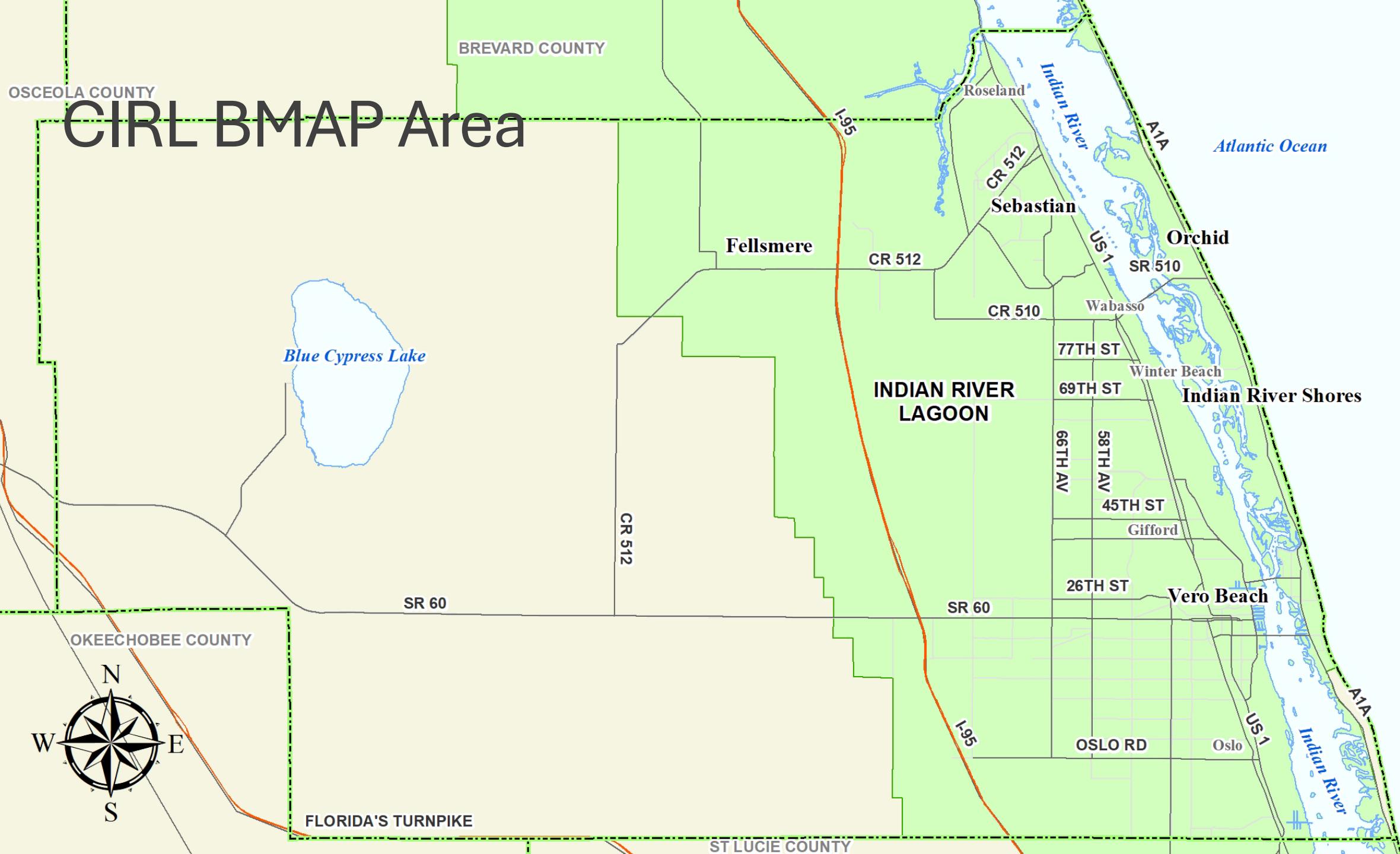
- Prohibits new OSTDS within a BMAP or IRL Protection Program^[1]
- Set key dates:
 - As of **Jan 1, 2024**, new OSTDS must be ENR-OSTDS^[2]
 - By **Feb 2, 2026**, and every two years thereafter, utilities within the BMAP must provide FDEP an inventory of noncompliant properties with existing OTSDS where sewer is available but are not connected^[3]
 - By **Jul 1, 2030**, any property on OSTDS must connect to central sewer, if available, or upgrade to ENR-OSTDS

[1]The majority of IRC is located within a BMAP or IRL Protection Program boundary

[2]~701 new permits issued thru May 2025

[3]Central Indian River Lagoon Basin Management Action Plan







Notification to OSTDS Owners



- No less than 1-year prior to sewer becoming available, owners will be notified of the anticipated availability and requirement to connect.
- Upon notification of sewer becoming available, owners have up to 365 days to connect to the central sewer.
- Provide option to prepay the amortized value of the connection charges in equal monthly installments, without interest, for up to 2 years from initial notification.
- OSTDSs that need repair or modification to function in a sanitary manner, must connect to sewer if available within 90 days of notification.
 - In hardship cases and upon request, a one-time extension up to 90-days may be approved.





Agencies w/ Mandatory Connection



- Other municipalities with Mandatory Connection Policy:
 - Citrus County
 - City of Palm Bay
 - City of Bonita Springs
 - Pasco County
 - Manatee County
 - Nassau County
- All follow HB1379 including:
 - 365 days to connect upon written notice
 - 90 days to connect of OSTDS require repair
 - Mandatory Water Connection (Citrus County)
 - Details of Funding Assistance and/or Rebate





IRC Policy...



Section 201.04. - Sewer connections require county water: If water service is not available, the customer shall install a meter approved by the county on any private potable water supply, and the county shall use the meter reading for purposes of calculating sewer charges.

Section 201.08. - Rates and charge, Subsection K Additional costs for complex connections: If in the event a particular service required by a customer is determined by the department to have a cost which greatly exceeds the average, then such cost of service shall be negotiated between the department and the customer and reduced to a written instrument approved by the customer and the department.

Section 206.xx - Special Assessments: Special assessments against property deemed to be specially benefitted by county improvements shall be assessed upon the property...in proportion to the benefits...to be determined and prorated according...





Service Connection Scenarios



Service Connection Scenarios		
Code	Description	Details
WALE	Water Available, Lateral Exist	Water service is available at the property and the service lateral with meter box is existing
WANL	Water Available, No Lateral	Water service is available at the property and there is no service lateral and meter box existing





Potential Septic Systems in the County





A Key Question...



Q: Is there plant capacity?

- Combined permit capacities: **12.02 MGD Sewer** and **20.44 MGD Water** (AADF)
- **28,374 Sewer** connections require **6,917 Water** reciprocal connections
- Increase* in system loads: **4.74 MGD Sewer** and **1.44 MGD Water**

*Estimated using:

- 8-year AADF 5.26 MGD Sewer and 10.99 MGD Water
- Average accounts 31,557 Sewer and 52,584 Water
- Per account flows 167 gpd Sewer and 209 gpd Water
- Add to current flows, the new loads are **10.00 MGD Sewer** and **12.43 MGD Water**

A: “Theoretically Yes”, however we must consider:

- New growth, annexations, and potential expansion of the USB
- Infrastructure improvements required to distribute the new loads





Septic-to-Sewer Program



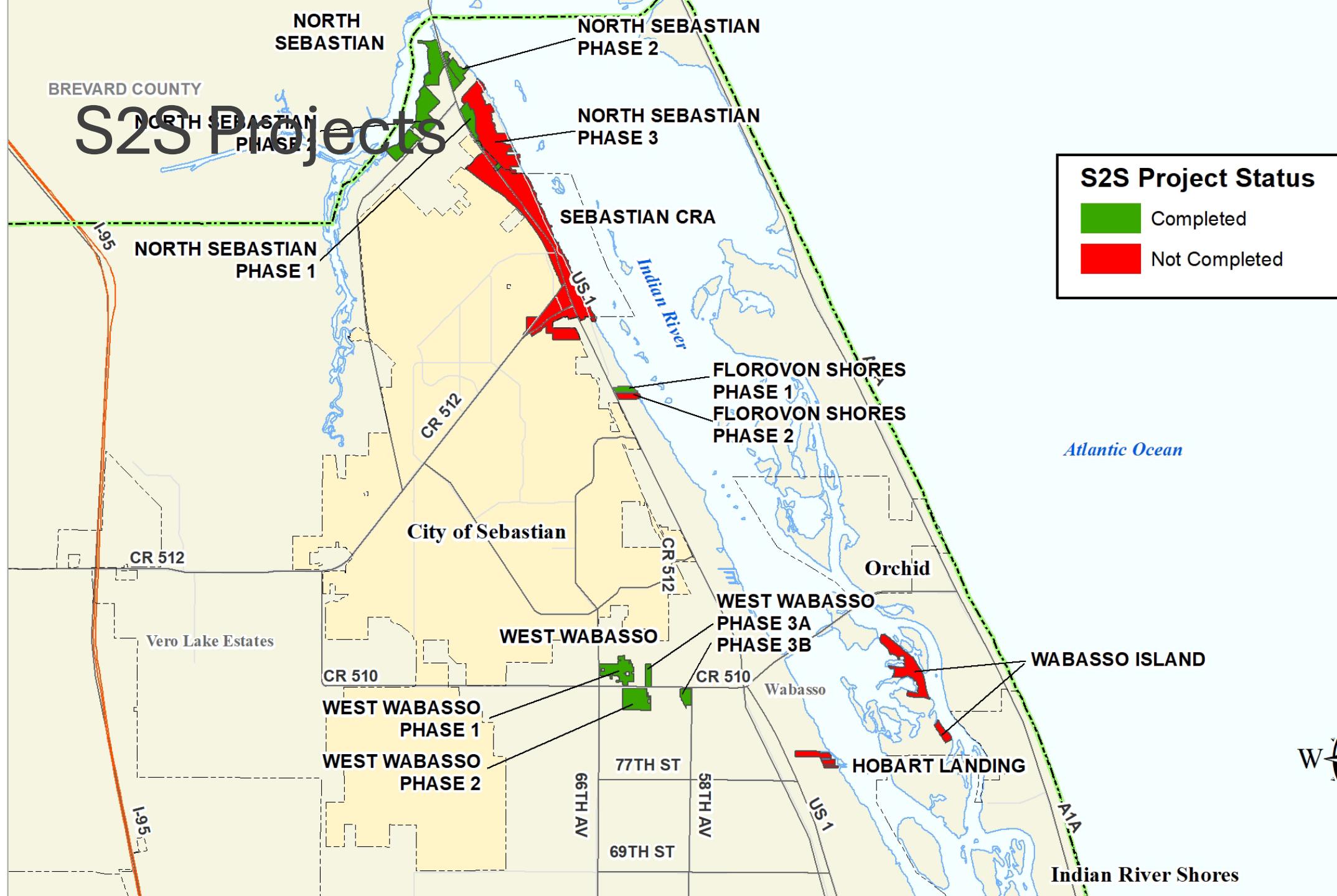
- S2S Program was initiated in late 2010 to early 2011
- Completed the S2S Conversion Evaluation Report in 2017 (Schulke, Bittle and Stoddard)
- The report laid out the top 30 prioritized areas based on:
 - Soil type/condition
 - Proximity to surface water
 - Population density
 - Depth to ground water table
 - Age of existing OSTDSs
- Top areas account for **5,868 OSTDSs** with a potential pollutant reduction of **103,908 lbs./yr**
- Reevaluating priority area under the IWMP (HDR)





BREVARD COUNTY

S2S Projects



S2S Project Status

- Completed (Green)
- Not Completed (Red)

Atlantic Ocean

Indian River Shores



General Order of Priority

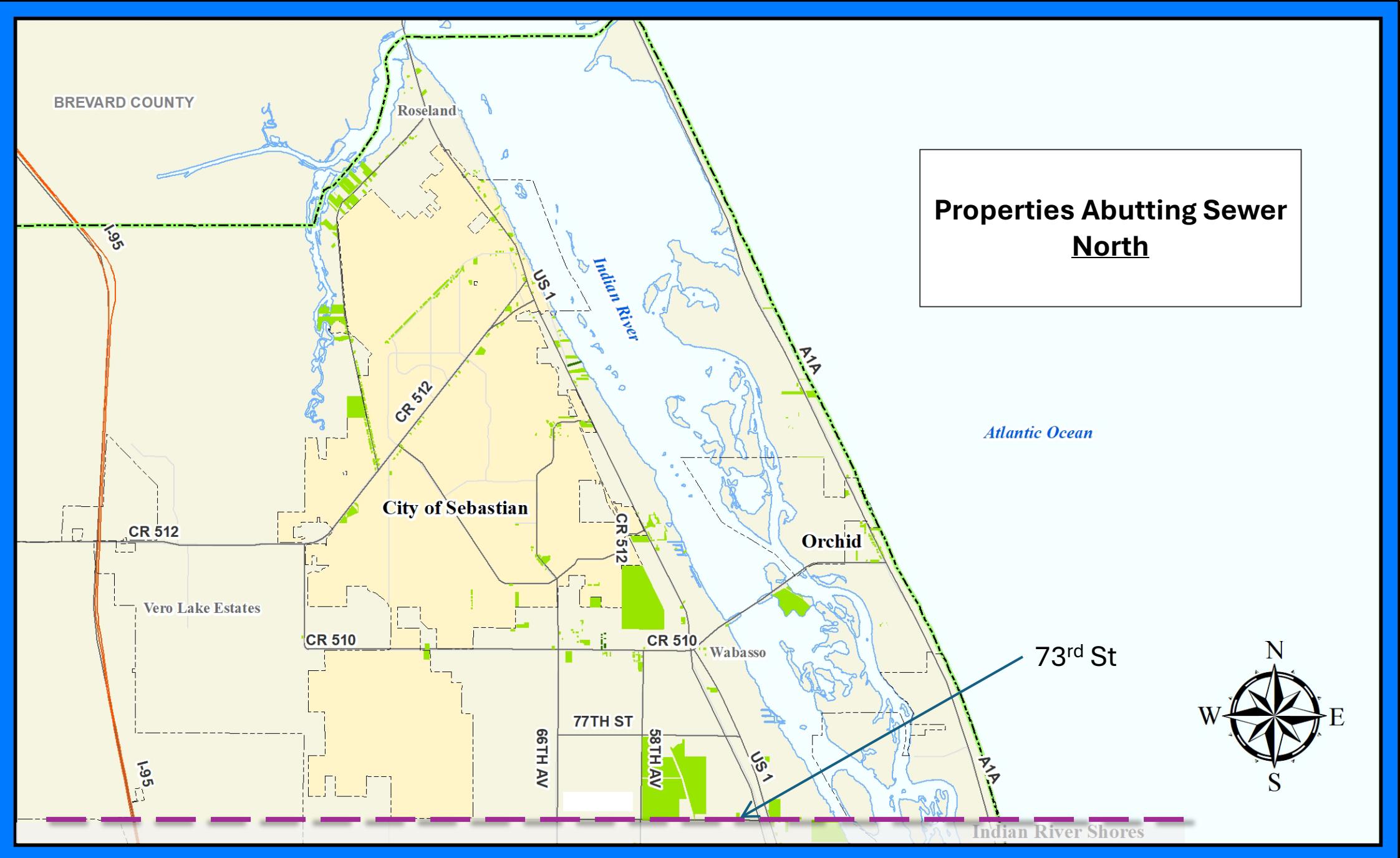
Priority	Water Code	Sewer Code	Total
1		SALE	15
2	WAE	SANL (Grav or FM <4")	567
		SANL (FM ≥6")	1,286
3	WANL	SALE	2
4	WANL	SANL	743
5	WNA	SANL	162
6	WAE	SNA	19,589
7	WANL	SNA	1,136
8	WNA	SNA	4,874

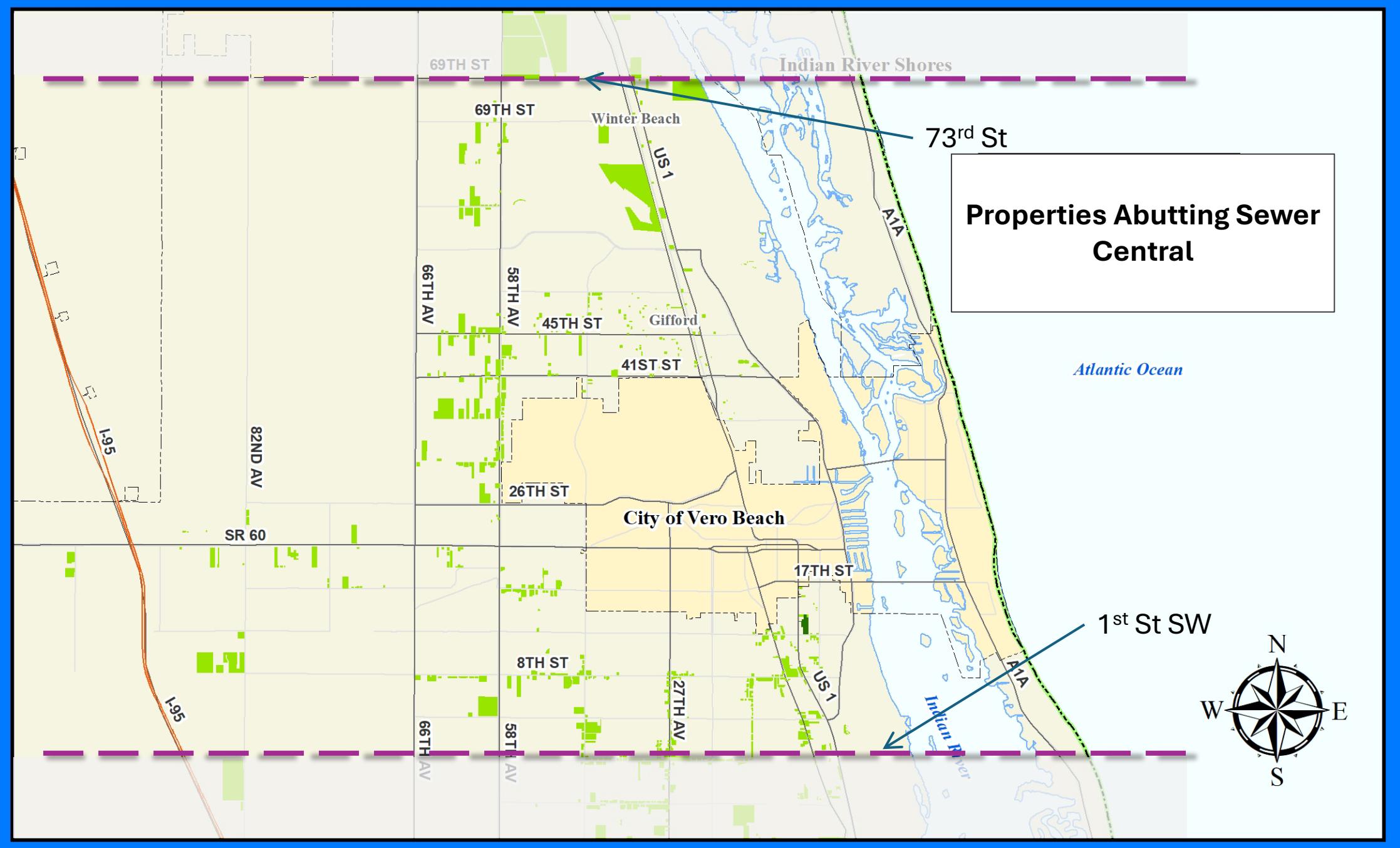
“Quick Wins” 582

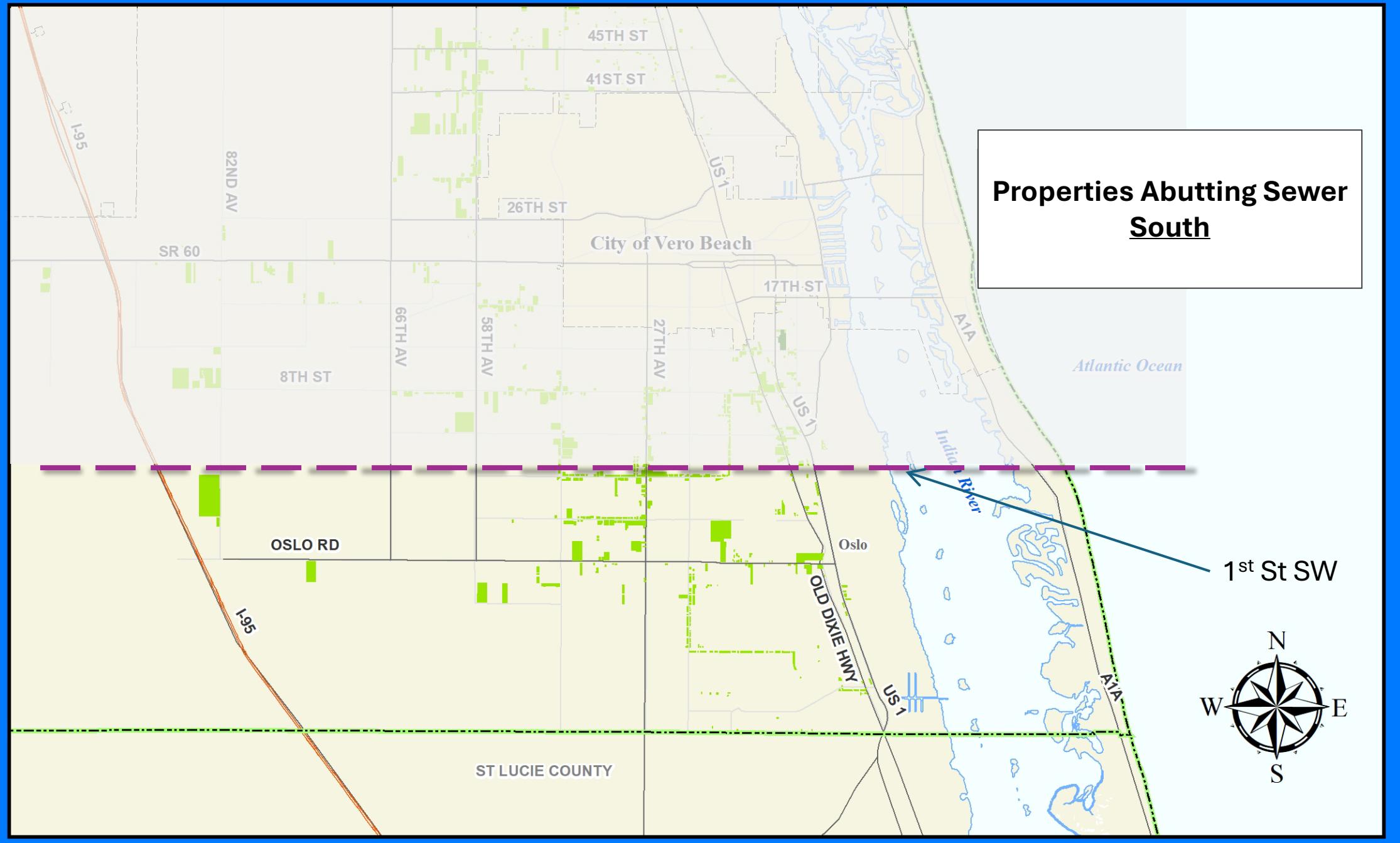
Existing
Infrastructure
~2,613

New
Infrastructure
~25,761



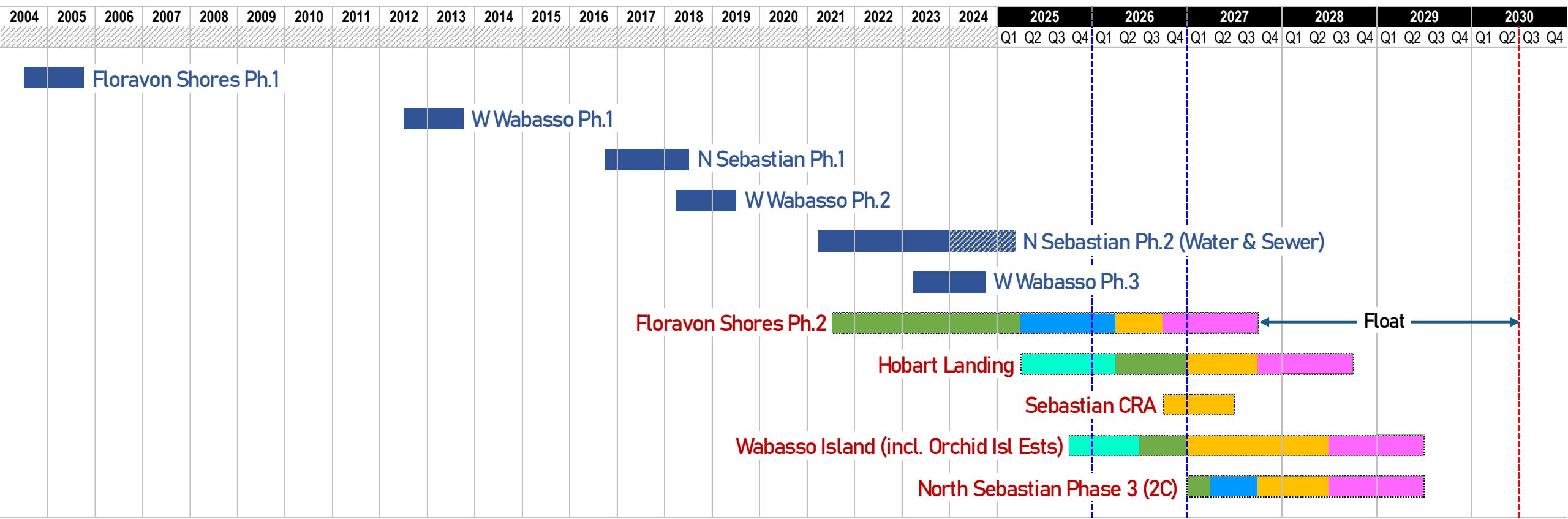








S2S Timeline, Past and Current





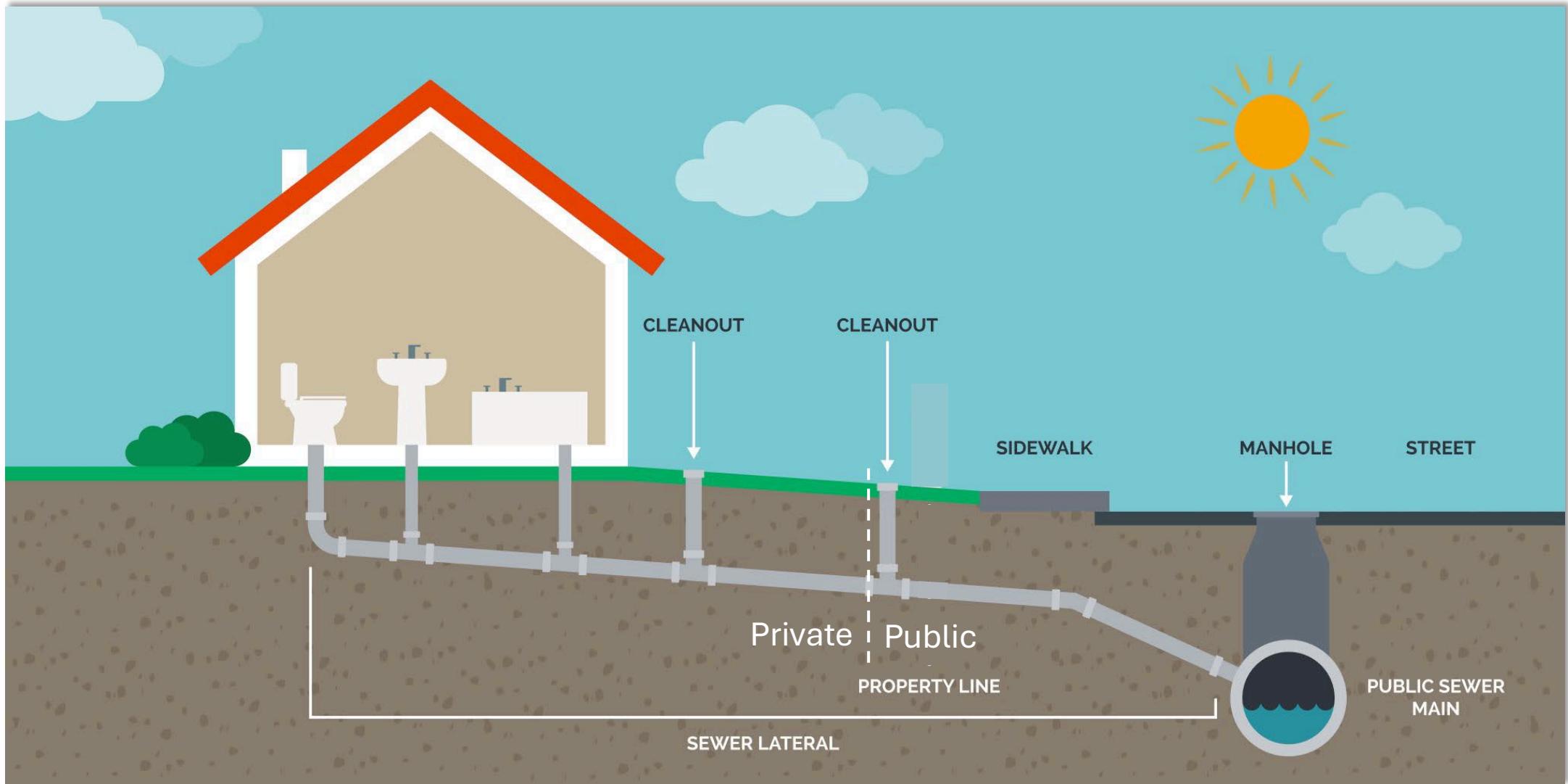
Cost Elements



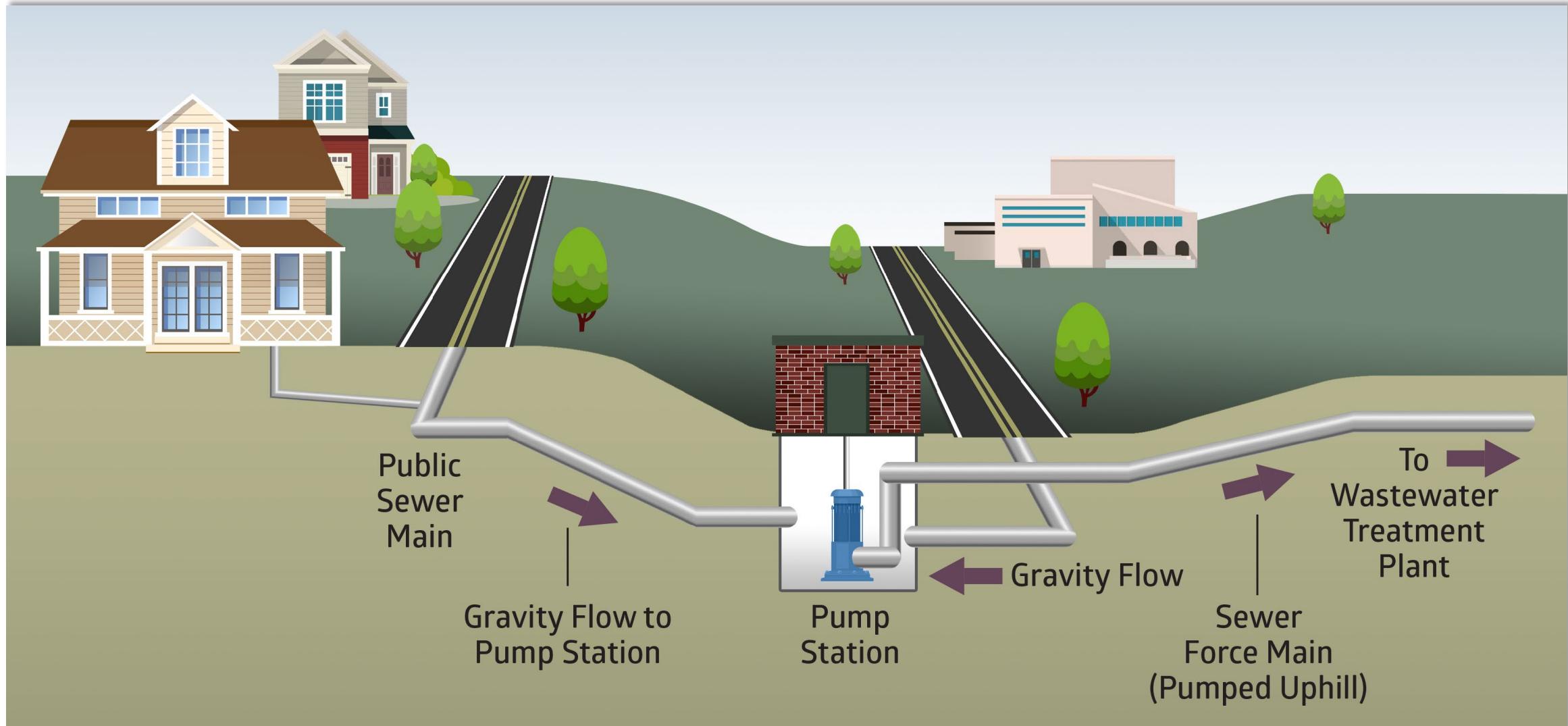
- **Public Infrastructure**
 - Mains
 - Laterals
 - Lift station
- **Private Side Connection**
 - Permitting
 - Equipment (pump and controller)
 - Labor & Material
 - Installation (plumbing and electrical)
 - Septic tank pump-out and abandonment
 - Property restoration
- **Customer Service Charges**
 - Impact fee
 - Account deposit
 - Meter charge (water)
 - Account setup



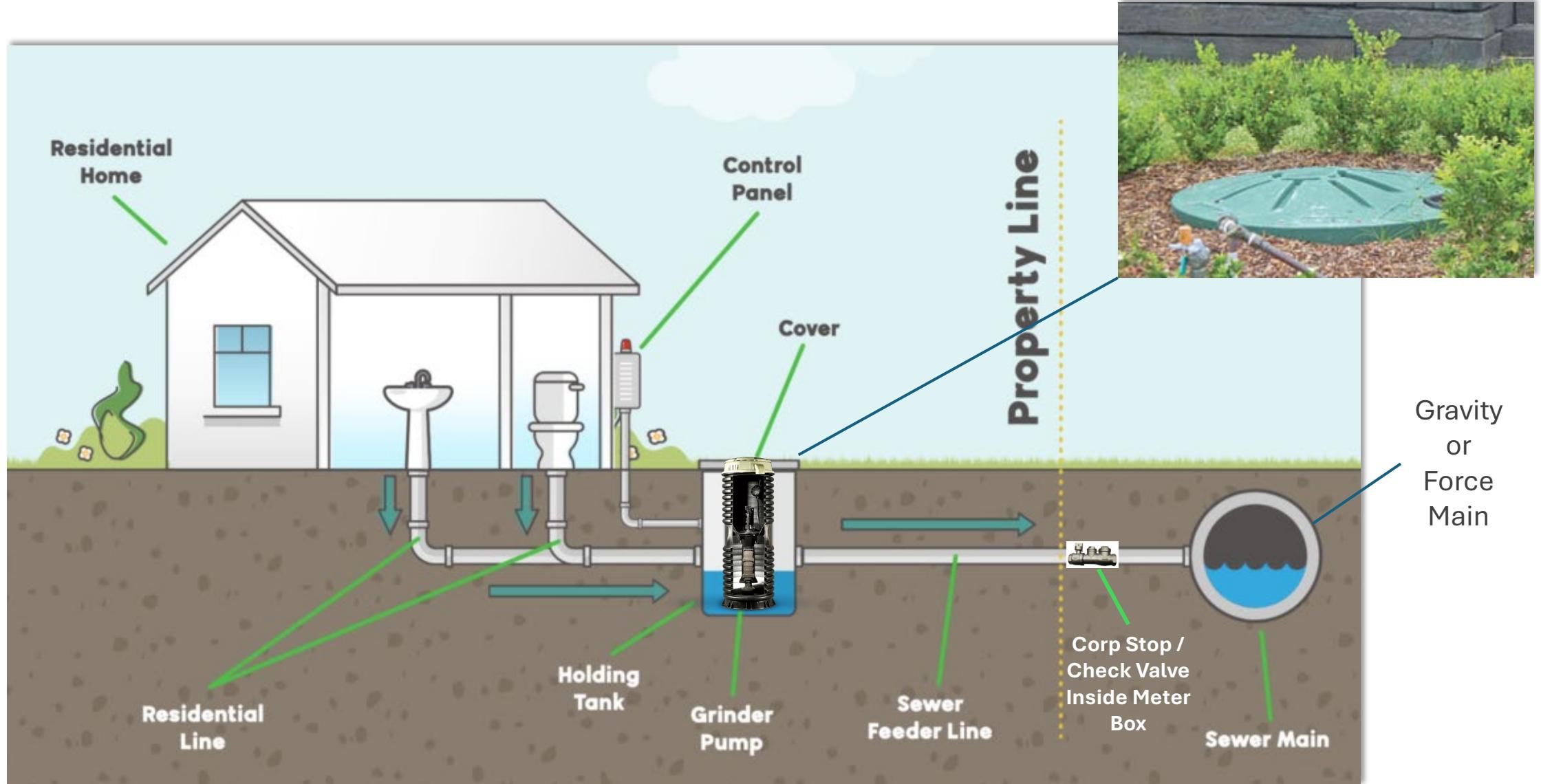
Private Side vs. Public Side (Gravity)



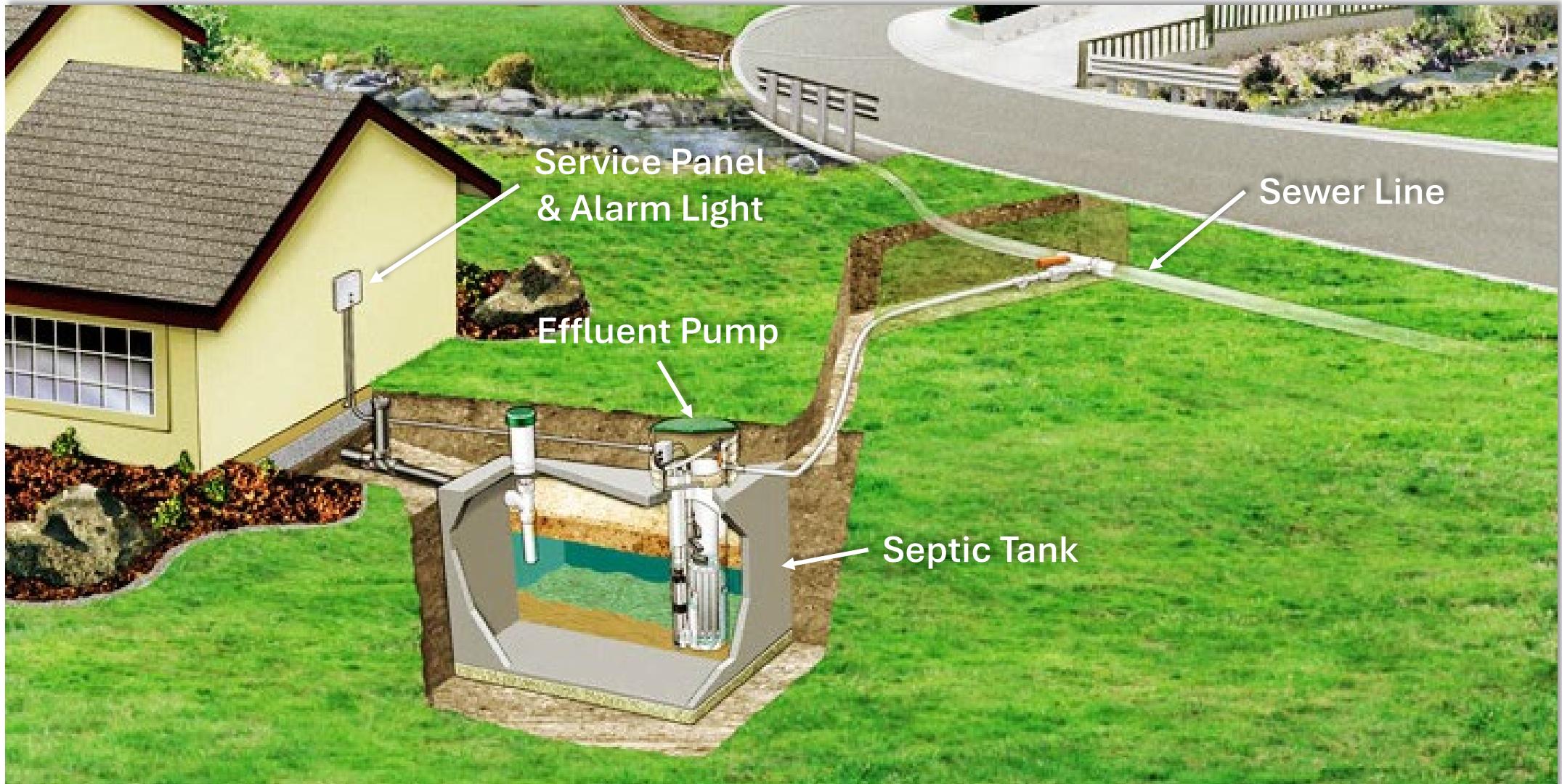
Gravity Sewer to Force Main



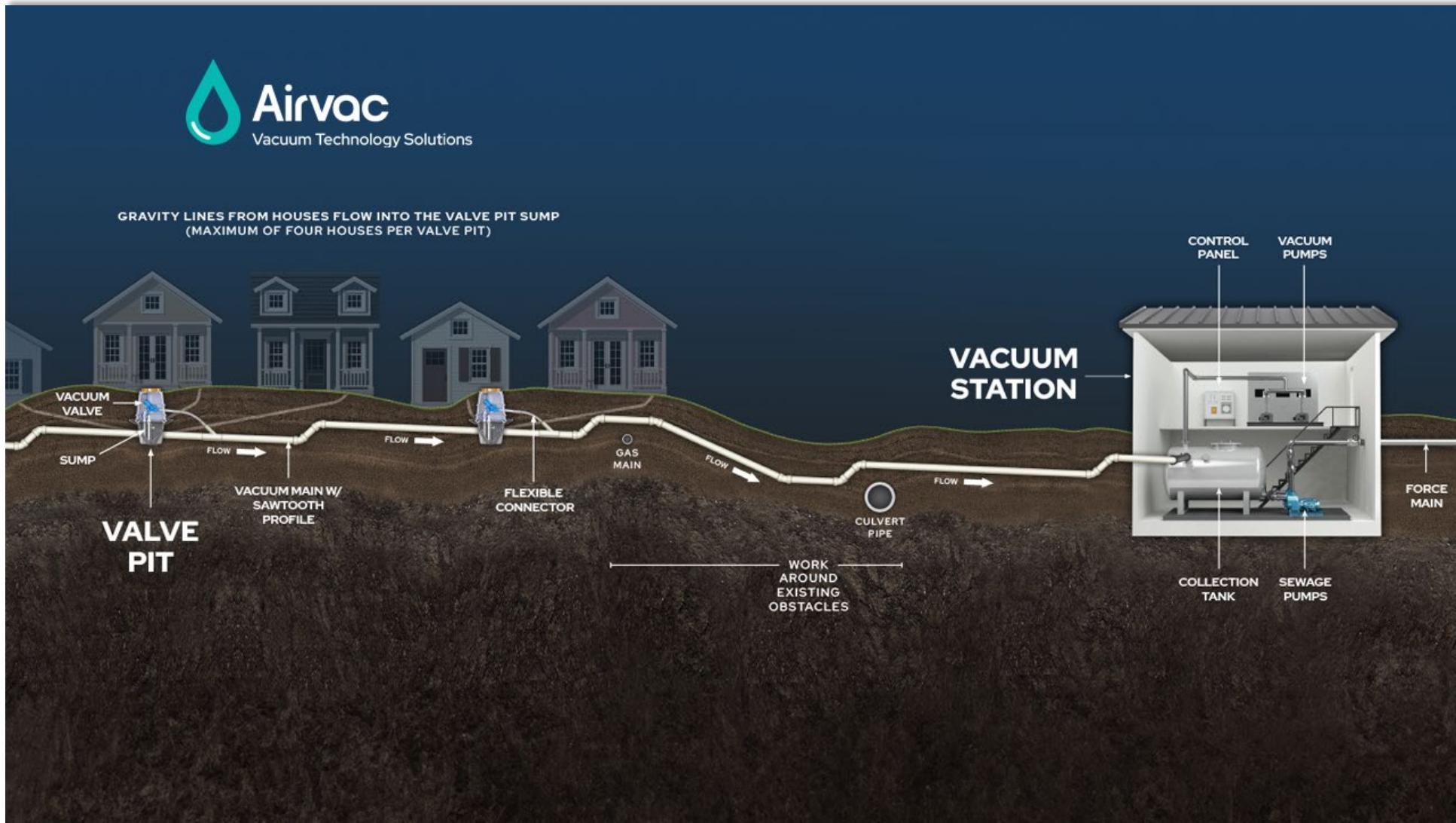
Customer Connection w/ Grinder Pump



Customer Connection w/ STEP System



Vacuum Sewer System



Sewer Installations







What can be done to lower costs?



1. Suspend “no sewer without water” policy under the S2S Program
2. Waive “service extension & connection” charges where sewer is available to existing structures
3. Waive “assessments” of IRC costs (what grants doesn’t cover) to build new sewer infrastructure
4. Waive select “permit fees” for septic conversions
5. Other IRCDUS proposed actions:
 - a. Shortlist/pre-qualify Plumbing Contractors w/ pre-negotiated unit labor costs
 - b. Leverage IRC’s buying power/tax-exempt status to procure equipment under piggyback contracts
 - c. Utility inspectors perform inspections of private connections*



*Inspections follow requirements of CH 62-6 FAC





What are the options to pay for it?



Program	Infrastructure	Private Side	Impact Fee	Other Costs	Comments
CWC S2S Grants	N/A	✓			Income eligible
SIG Grants			✓		Specific areas
CDBG Grant ^[1]					
SHIP Loan ^[2]			✓	✓	Income eligible; up to \$20,000
IRCDUS Finance			✓		5 years

Notes:

1. IRCDUS will apply for CDBG grants upon NOA. The anticipated timeline is 2 years for funds to become available.
2. SHIP currently has a 2- to 3-year backlog of applications.

Contact for more info:

ANGELA DAVIS-GREEN or **JUDY LIVINGSTON**
adavisgreen@eocofirc.net | jlivingston@eocofirc.net
 Economic Opportunities Council (EOC) of Indian River County, Inc.
 2455 St Lucie Ave | Vero Beach, FL 32960
 (772) 562-4177 | <https://eocofirc.net/>





FDEP-Approved ENR-OSTDS Option

- N-Reducing Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU)
 - Certified to NSF International Standard NSF-245
 - Retrofit typically involves replacement of tank and drain-field
 - Requires a maintenance contract and operating permit from DOH
 - Contractors must be manufacturer certified and registered with DOH
 - Lead time currently ~2 weeks; expected 6-10 weeks or higher as deadline looms
 - Supplier in short demand; cost will go up as demand increase
- Cost Estimates
 - Total Installed Cost (TIC)
 - New Construction - \$12,500 to \$20,000
 - Retrofit Residential - \$15,000 to \$25,000
 - Annual Inspection & Service
 - \$1,200 to \$2,000 (repairs extra)
 - Power is required



Recommendations Recap



- 1) Adopt a mandatory connection policy in compliance SB 1632
- 2) Support negotiated costs under special circumstances (201-08K)
- 3) Offer a grace period for new homes built with ENR-OSTDS
- 4) Approve a flat rate or tiered billing in lieu of metering private water supply (201.04)
- 5) Waive assessments of property owners the infrastructure costs not covered by grants
- 6) Reassess the use of OST to offset eligible Customer Service charge(s)
- 7) Waive or reduce IRC permit fees applicable to Water and Sewer connections
- 8) Endorse and promote third-party financing programs
- 9) Authorize the Dept of Utility Services to development of its own financing options
- 10) Authorize sending out Water and Sewer Mandatory Connection Notices (MCN)
- 11) Authorize lessening key provisions of County administered funding assistance



Thank You! Questions?



SEAN LIESKE
Director of Utilities

1801 27th Street | Vero Beach, FL 32960

772.226.1835
slieske@indianriver.gov

 Department of Utility Services



HOWARD G. RICHARDS, P.E.
Utilities Capital Projects Manager

1801 27th Street | Vero Beach, FL 32960

772.226.1821
hrichards@indianriver.gov

 Department of Utility Services

