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**TO:** Owners of Private Sewerage Systems and Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department  
**SUBJECT:** Request for the Transfer of Private Residential Sewerage Systems to County Ownership

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This letter provides you with information if you are interested in transferring a private sewerage system (private system) to the ownership of Pima County. These frequently asked questions are provided to guide you through the interactive process with the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD).

**What makes a sewerage system private?**

A private system is owned, maintained, and operated by a private entity such as a Home Owner's Association (HOA). The decision to build a private system to collect sewage for a development was made by the developer and approved by the County before the original construction began. There are typically a variety of site specific reasons for this decision. Often a developer elects to build a private system for privacy or because the design would not meet public sewer standards for operation and maintenance.

**What are the steps in the transfer of a private system?**

**Phase I – Initial Assessment**

The owner, or their appointed agent, completes and submits the attached Application for Transfer, including the required documentation to RWRD electronically, by mail, or hand delivery. Signing the application will provide authority for RWRD to access the property and the private sewage system to perform an initial visual inspection. Next, the application is reviewed and RWRD coordinates and performs a cursory visual inspection of the private sewerage system, at no cost to the owner. After RWRD evaluates all available information, a written notification is provided to the owner with the following information:

- observations from the initial visual inspection,
- an opinion of the level of effort required to bring the private system up to current public sewerage system standards,
- a general list of actions required to proceed with the transfer evaluation process, or
- if there are unresolvable conditions, notification by the department that the transfer cannot proceed.

Based on results of the inspection and the opinion of the level of effort, the owner must decide whether or not to proceed to Phase II. All work in the following phases will be solely at the owner's expense.

## **Phase II – Detailed System Assessment**

With the owner’s agreement to proceed, RWRD staff from the Conveyance and Engineering Divisions work directly with the owner to outline a detailed system and condition assessment of the private system. The owner will use this outline to privately contract for necessary professional services such as engineering and surveying, and to acquire the services of a specialized inspection company that conducts video inspections inside the sewer pipes. Findings of the assessments are sent to RWRD where a detailed list of actions is developed. RWRD will share that list and data with the owner. If the owner desires to proceed, this list will become a formal agreement in the next phase and all items must be completed in order for the transfer to occur.

At this time, the owner may want to seek estimates for the cost of work to be done before proceeding. If necessary, the approval of the legal or governing body, which will pay for the improvements, may be required. When the owner is ready, they will contact RWRD to proceed with addressing the action items.

## **Phase III – Required Private System Improvements**

In this phase, the owner will enter into a contract with the County to complete the detailed list of actions, solely at their cost. This agreement will be signed by the owner, and approved by the Board of Supervisors or their designee. If all items are completed, the project will move into Phase IV and the formal transfer paperwork.

The Owner will work with their professionals/contractors to complete the improvements that will enable transfer of the private system. Based on the nature of the improvements, the owner and their professionals/contractors may be required to obtain a construction permit from the Pima County Development Services Department to proceed. During this phase, if necessary, RWRD’s Field Engineering Inspectors will coordinate with the contractor for inspections and documentation of work. Once the private system action items are completed (e.g. repairs approved, as-builts created, easements recorded) the transfer paperwork can begin in the next phase.

## **Phase IV – Private System Transfer**

The RWRD Field Engineering Section contact works with the owner to ensure the required transfer paperwork is submitted to RWRD and approved. The owner will be notified once the sewerage system assets are transferred into County ownership.

### **Once the County has ownership, where will the public system start?**

Each homeowner is still responsible for their individual connection, House Connection Sewer (HCS), up to the point in the roadway where the HCS discharges into the public sewer pipe.

### **How much will this cost the owner/HOA?**

Depending on the improvements required, the cost of bringing a private system up to public standards can be expensive. The major costs are for professional services and contractors who perform the improvements and documentation. RWRD fees are to recover actual costs for time and equipment used.

### **How long will the process take?**

The timeframe for completion of the improvements and transfer can vary based on the owner’s ability to finance the detailed list of actions agreed upon in the contract at the beginning of Phase III.

**Who can I contact at RWRD to answer questions I may have about this application and process?**

The Conveyance Division of RWRD is the primary and first contact. Jaime Rivera, Deputy Director, can be reached by calling (520)724-3400.

**How will RWRD access the system for operation and maintenance once it is transferred to the County?**

Once the private system is transferred to County ownership, RWRD will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the sewerage system. You may occasionally see large vehicles that enter the development to visually inspect, clean, and treat for vectors, if needed. RWRD does not maintain and operate HCSs.

**Is the application available on-line?**

Yes, you can find the Application for Transfer at: <http://webcms.pima.gov/government/wastewaterreclamation>.

**How and where can I submit my Application for Transfer?**

Submittals by e-mail can be sent directly to [Jaime.Rivera@pima.gov](mailto:Jaime.Rivera@pima.gov), Deputy Director of Conveyance Division.

Submittals by mail or hand delivery can be sent or taken to 3355 N. Dodge Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85716.

Sincerely,



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Jackson Jenkins, Director  
Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department