



April 7, 2022

TO: LOCSD Board of Directors

FROM: Ron Munds, General Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 5C – 04/07/2022 Board Meeting

Receive a Report Regarding the Estimated Water Use of Guesthouses in the District's Water Service Area.

DESCRIPTION

With the continuing drought and the uncertainties of the Los Osos Groundwater Basin resiliency to long term drought, there has been community concerns regarding new development, primarily, about adding guesthouses to existing properties and their impacts on water supply. The following report attempts to add context to this very important issue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the report and presentation.

DISCUSSION

Background

The District is in Stage III of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan which provides guidance to the Board on certain water use restrictions. One of the restrictions, which the Board has approved, is to not provide Will-Serve letters to vacant properties or install new water meters until drought conditions ease. This is also consistent with Condition 6 of the wastewater project's conditions of approval related to water supply availability and development on vacant lots within the Prohibition Zone. The District has provided "Continue to Serve" letters to existing customers that want to remodel or make additions to their residences.

Guesthouse Water Use Estimations

With the continuing drought and the uncertainties of the Los Osos Groundwater Basin resiliency to long term drought, there has been community concerns regarding new development, primarily, about adding guesthouses to existing properties and their impacts on water supply. This report attempts to provide context and data to this important issue but purposely does not draw conclusions since more study would be required to verify and quantify the effects of adding guesthouses to existing properties.

SLO County Guesthouse Regulations

Guesthouses/Home Office: A guesthouse (sleeping/home office facilities without indoor connection to the living area of a principal residence) may be established as a use accessory to a residence as follows:

- A guesthouse may contain living area, a maximum of two bedrooms and one bathroom. A living area may include a wet bar, but such facility shall be limited to a single sink and an under-counter refrigerator, and shall not be located in a separate room. A guesthouse shall not be designed to contain or accommodate cooking or laundry facilities, and shall not be used for residential occupancy independent from the principal residence or as a dwelling unit for rental.

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- A home office may contain the same facilities as a guesthouse. This includes the restriction on containing or designing to accommodate cooking or laundry facilities separate from the principal residence. The home office shall not be used for residential occupation independent from the principal residence or as a dwelling unit for rental.
- A guesthouse/home office shall not be allowed on any site containing a secondary dwelling established pursuant to Section 23.08.169 of this title.
- A guesthouse/home office in the Residential Multi-Family land use category shall satisfy the residential density provisions of Section 23.04.084 (Multi-Family Dwellings).
- A guesthouse/home office shall not be provided an electric meter separate from the principal residence.
- The maximum floor area allowed for a guesthouse is 40 percent of the habitable floor area of the main residence, up to a maximum of 600 square feet.

Guesthouse Water Use Estimates

The information in the table below is taken from 2013 Water and Wastewater Development Impact Fee Study for the City of San Luis Obispo. The purpose of the data was to compare small residential dwelling unit water use to a single-family residential unit to establish the equivalency factor for their fee schedule. The analysis used water billing data for studio apartments that were 450 sq. ft. or less but can be applied to any size dwelling unit for a matter of comparison. Though studio apartments have kitchens and are typically occupied full-time, the water use would be close (probably more) to what one would expect a guesthouse to use.

Table 1

2013 City of SLO Studio Apt. Water Use Analysis - 450 sq.ft.			
Results:			
3.13	gallons per sq. ft./month		
1,409.64	gallons per 450 sq ft studio per month		
0.05	AF per year		
Data developed for a Water Impact Fee analysis			
Based on actual billing data in 2013			

Applying the 3.13 gallons/sq. ft./month to the square footage of the completed guesthouse units, the following table estimates what the annual water use would be in acre feet per year. As can be seen in Table 2, there is a conservative estimate of 0.348-acre feet of water use from these units.

Table 2

Actual County Permits Records			
Finalized Guesthouse (water use factor of 3.13 gal/sq.ft./month)			
Location	Square Feet	Estimated Water Use	
1	592	0.068	
2	548	0.063	
3	572	0.066	
4	228	0.026	
5	250	0.029	
6	485	0.056	
7			
8	347	0.040	
Total	3,022	0.348	AFY
One permit info did not separate out the Guesthouse square footage/not included			

Table 3 looks at the eight permitted guesthouse's that have had their permits finalized since 2017 and their water use before and after completion. Since utility billing information is considered confidential under California Government Code, the water use data and location of the guesthouses has been omitted in order to protect the water customer's confidentiality.

Table 3

Location	Water Demand/After		Acct. Change
	Gallons (difference pre & post completion)	Acre Feet	
1	(8,976)	-0.028	Yes
2	4,488	0.014	No
3	17,952	0.055	No
4	17,952	0.055	Yes
5	(22,440)	-0.069	Yes
6	(26,928)	-0.083	No
7	22,440	0.069	Yes
8	4,488	0.014	No
Bi-monthly Total	8,976	0.028	
Annual Total	53,856	0.165	
Net change w/ no change in occp.		0.000	
Net change w/ change in occp.		0.165	

It is important to put these numbers in perspective when looking at the overall water use in the District's water service area. Table 4 summarizes the water use within the District during the same time period, 2017 to 2021 and the percentage of the guesthouse water use as compared to water production.

Table 4

LOCS D Water Production vs. Estimate Water Use			
Year	Acre Feet	% of Total	Water Factor
2017	570	0.029%	0.061%
2018	522	0.032%	0.067%
2019	506	0.033%	0.069%
2020	527	0.031%	0.066%
2021	502	0.033%	0.069%
% of Total = Percent of production of 0.165 AFY (net increase from water billing records)			
Water Factor = Percent of production of 0.348 AFY (using City of SLO water use factor)			
Production is for a calendar year			

The Table 5 converts the above information into gallons and provides the per capita rates which accordingly fluctuates according to water production. The guesthouse water use rate assumes the water use rate from Table 3 that all eight guesthouses completed in 2017 which is not the case.

Table 5

LOCS D Production & Gallons Percapita Per Day (GPCD)							
Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Acre Feet	502	527	506	522	570	519	506
Gallons	163,577,202	171,723,477	164,880,606	170,094,222	185,735,070	169,116,669	164,880,606
Guesthouse*	53,856	53,856	53,856	53,856	53,856		
Overall GPCD	63.2	66.4	63.7	65.8	71.8	65.4	63.7
Res. GPCD	59.7	62.6	60.1	62.0	67.7	61.7	60.1
*Assumes 53,856 gallons for all guesthouses built between 2017 and 2021							

Summary

In summary, there are many variables, such as a customer change, drought conditions, an increase or decrease to the number of family members, landscape changes, that may affect water use. The purpose of compiling the data is to try to bring perspective to the estimated impacts of guesthouses on water supply. As stated, it is merely a comparison of water use before and after the date the permits were finalized. Any further conclusions would need further analysis to understand if any other events or changes influenced water use on a property.