



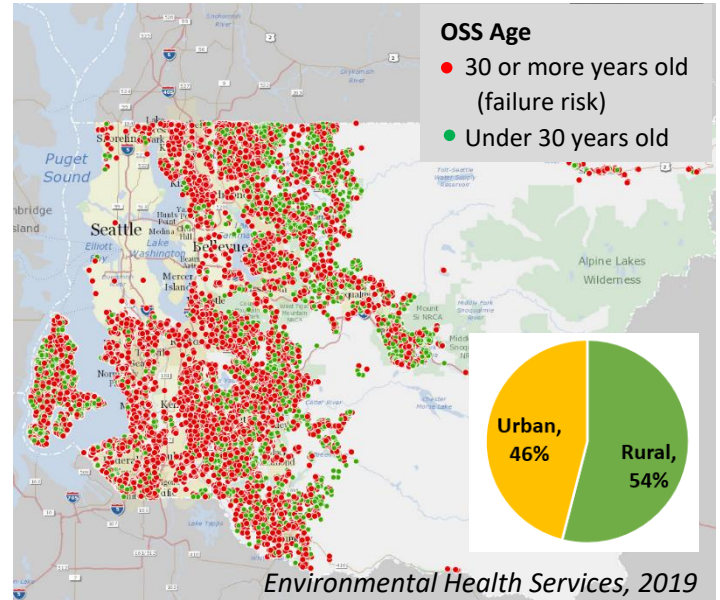
## OVERVIEW

This document provides an outline of the scope and timeline for code changes that Public Health – Seattle & King County (Public Health) will recommend to the King County Board of Health to update Title 13, On-site Sewage System (OSS) codes.

### Background: OSS in King County

Over 84,000 OSS in King County treat approximately 14.7 million gallons of sewage each day, 10% of all the county's sewage. These range from simple systems, with a tank and a drainfield, to advanced technology akin to a mini wastewater treatment plant. OSS protect public health and prevent pollution in Puget Sound and the county's lakes and streams by providing excellent wastewater treatment. However, when OSS fail, families are exposed to raw sewage backing up into their house or yard, often for many months.

Washington State law requires Public Health to make sure that all OSS in King County are designed, installed, and maintained properly to keep people safe from raw sewage. Public Health also certifies over 150 OSS installers, maintainers, and pumpers to ensure their competence and compliance with codes as they provide essential OSS services.



### Overview of code revision process

The Washington State Department of Health (WADOH) sets minimum code requirements the County must follow. WADOH submitted proposed changes to Washington Administrative Code Chapter 246-272A to the Washington State Board of Health (WABOH) in October 2023. We expect the State Board of Health will vote to finalize these changes in March/April 2024.

At that point, the King County Board of Health (KCBOH) will have 12 months to ensure that local code requirements align with the new state codes. In addition to required changes, Public Health will recommend additional code updates informed by community outreach and partner feedback to make language clearer and to address local issues not fully covered by the state regulations. King County's BOH OSS codes were last updated in 2007.

### King County's Goals for code revision process

Public Health aims to have an equitable community engagement process that leads to good outcomes supported by interested and impacted partners. To do this, Public Health will:

- Conduct an equity analysis to ensure benefits for those at highest risk for negative outcomes of failing OSS.
- Provide transparent and timely information to community, property owners, industry, elected officials, governmental entities, and other partners.
- Engage proactively with our partners, including OSS Technical Advisory Committee, and be responsive to feedback received over the past 10 years.
- Ensure that procedures and policies are in place for equitable implementation of revised codes.

## PROPOSED STATE CODE CHANGES

WABOH proposed change	Impact to KCBOH codes
Updates to local management plan content and review process	Local updates needed (more below)
Increased minimum lot size - new development only	Local updates needed (more below)
New requirement for approval procedures for installers, pumpers, maintainers	Local updates needed (more below)
Updates to repair requirements	Codify existing policy
Local health jurisdiction may create remediation policy	No changes needed
Property transfer inspections	No changes needed
Field verification of proprietary products	No changes needed, implementation at state level
New process to address product supply chain issues	No changes needed, implementation at state level

### WABOH draft changes with potential impacts on KCBOH code

- **Update local management plan:** This state-required King County Local Management Plan sets goals and provides direction for managing OSS to prevent illness and water pollution. PHSKC's goal is to update the King County plan to better reflect new information about OSS locations and ages and account for the OSS maintenance needed to protect public health and water quality. Specific updates could include identifying new sensitive areas, where there is a high risk of OSS impacting water quality. Additionally, revisions to the state code will require that the plan be reviewed and, if necessary, updated within two years of adopting the new code and every five years thereafter. The King County Local Management Plan has not been updated for fifteen years.
- **Change OSS design and installation requirements to align with the proposed state codes and reduce barriers to compliance for affordable repairs:** These technical requirements are informed by the science of wastewater treatment, and some local codes are more restrictive than state codes. In the code revision process, Public Health will review all codes to be protective of public health and remove overly prescriptive requirements.
- **Increase minimum lot size requirement to align with proposed WAC:** The minimum lot size needs to be larger to allow for increased stormwater dispersal requirements. This will only apply to new development. Public Health will coordinate with local building departments to ensure consistent requirements.
- **Clarify professional certification standards, review approval process, and establish an oversight/enforcement process to hold industry professionals to a common standard that protects public health and is responsive to customer complaints:** The work of OSS installers, maintainers, and pumpers requires in-depth knowledge of OSS technology, health and safety measures, and code requirements. OSS industry performance is inconsistent and does not always meet requirements, which results in OSS failures and high costs for OSS owners. PHSKC will review local codes to ensure that the approval process for OSS industry professionals meets current needs.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Over the next twelve months, Public Health will review the Washington State code changes, conduct community outreach about proposed changes, and propose revisions to the King County Board of Health OSS codes. We have a legal duty to implement the code update to meet minimum state standards, and we are looking to our partners to help us identify best practices and methods.

The primary forum for engagement will be through the OSS Technical Advisory Committee. The committee meets monthly, and members include OSS industry, Puyallup and Snoqualmie tribes, rural community members, and stormwater/environmental organization representatives.

Working with committee members, we will identify additional formats to talk with other groups. These opportunities will be facilitated by a consultant with experience convening public meetings. We will also post an update on the OSS website with an opportunity for public comment. We will talk with OSS owners in rural and urban areas, OSS industry, realtors and escrow agents, tribes, and others as identified.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

