

MAG 208 WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN
SMALL PLANT REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS
Estimated Time from the Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting
Until Regional Council Approval is Approximately 2 Months

Intent of MAG Small Plant Review and Approval Process

Rather than amend the MAG 208 Plan to include every acceptable new small plant, the communities developed a small plant review and approval process. Using this process, a small wastewater treatment plant not specifically identified in the MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan can be approved as part of the Plan if the facility goes through the Small Plant Review and Approval Process. A small plant is one with an ultimate capacity of 2.0 million gallons per day (mgd) or less, with no discharge. By requiring proposed plants in the area to obtain approval using this formal process, an uncontrolled proliferation of small plants that could cause problems in the future should be prevented. The communities adopted a small plant process goal of allowing the Cities and Towns the maximum level of control in the approval of small plants. A Small Plants Technical Steering Committee was formed in 1982, composed of representatives from the cities, state, county, and homebuilders. This committee, in conjunction with consultants and MAG staff, developed the Small Plant Review and Approval Process.

Small plants specifically identified in the MAG 208 Plan are required to go through the process for a facility expansion, even when the expanded facility would still meet the small plant threshold of 2.0 mgd or less. Plants with an ultimate capacity greater than 2.0 mgd which are not specifically identified in the MAG 208 Plan and plants with a discharge not specifically identified in the MAG 208 Plan would be required to go through a formal 208 analysis and amendment.

Areas of Responsibility

Three areas of responsibility apply in the Small Plant Review and Approval Process. The first is the Municipal Small Plant Planning Area. This is the area identified by the municipality within which the City or Town would have responsibility for the first review and approval of proposed wastewater reclamation facilities. The second is the County Planning Area, in which the County would have the responsibility for deciding which wastewater reclamation facilities were constructed. Between the two areas is a third area. This is the area in the County that is within three miles of a Municipal Small Plant Planning Area. Although this area is within the County's area of responsibility, the County must consider the comments of the nearby City or Town concerning proposed facilities in this three mile area.

1. Proposal Review by Applicable Jurisdiction

- A) Within Municipal Planning Area - The Municipal Small Plant Planning Areas are the same as the MAG Municipal Planning Areas. The Municipal Planning Areas generally correspond to the jurisdictions for which they are named, except that additional lands within their strip annexation boundaries are included to allow municipalities to plan for those unincorporated areas. In the process developed for a proposed facility within a Municipal Small Plant Planning Area, the City or Town works with a developer to come up with a suitable small reclamation facility concept. For the purpose of this process, a Sanitary District is treated in the same fashion as a Municipality.

To be approved for construction, a small wastewater reclamation facility (2.0 mgd ultimate capacity or less) not otherwise mentioned in the MAG 208 Plan but located within a Municipal Small Plant Planning Area must:

1. Have the approval of the municipality in whose planning area it will be located;
2. Not adversely affect the operation or financial structure of existing or proposed wastewater treatment plants;
3. Be consistent with State and County regulations and other requirements; and,
4. Be otherwise consistent with the MAG 208 Plan.

According to the process for approval, the developer submits an engineering report on the proposal to the City. The City reviews the proposal based on guidelines listed in Table 4.52 of the MAG 208 Plan. These guidelines address plant justification which include: Why the Plant is Required; Master Plan Compatibility; Benefits of the Plant; Potential Problems; Financial Aspects; and Plant Operation for Short Term and Long Term.

It is recommended that the City or Town reviewing a proposed development contact any adjacent community if the proposed development is within three miles of the boundary between the two communities. If the City or Town does not have the staff capability to perform this review, the review process would be that for small plants outside a Municipal Planning Area. Should a developer not be able to work out the details of the small plant with the particular City or Town, it would not be able to proceed. If the proposal is consistent with the City's Master Plan, the City sends a letter and summary of the proposal to MAG (copy to developer), indicating the proposal is compatible with the 208 Plan covering the City's Planning Area.

B) Outside of Municipal Planning Area - To be approved for construction, a small wastewater reclamation facility (2.0 mgd ultimate capacity or less) not otherwise mentioned in the MAG 208 Plan, but located outside a Municipal Small Plant Planning Area must:

1. Have the review and comment of any municipality whose Small Plant Planning Area is within three miles of the proposed plant location or service area;
2. Not adversely affect the operation or financial structure of existing or proposed wastewater treatment plants;
3. Be consistent with State and County regulations and other requirements;
4. Be otherwise consistent with the MAG 208 Plan; and,
5. Be evaluated and approved, or modified by Maricopa County Environmental Services Department.

According to the process for approval, the developer submits an engineering report on the proposal to Maricopa County Environmental Services Department and any cities whose Municipal Small Plant Planning Areas are within three miles of the proposed facility's service areas. The involved Cities evaluate the proposal based on technical, planning, and development

criteria listed in Table 4.53 of the MAG 208 Plan. These criteria include: Why is the Small Plant Desired; What is the Anticipated Quality of the Wastewater; How and Why was the Small Plant Design and Capacity Selected; Is the Proposed Plant Compatible with County Adopted Master Plans, Guidelines, etc. for the Area; Can the Proposed Plant be Expanded to Serve a Growing Population; Will the Proposed Plant Adversely Impact Existing or Approved Nearby Land Uses; Will There be a Net Water Saving from Effluent Reuse; Do Nearby Existing or Proposed Land Uses Indicate a Need for a Larger Capacity Sewage Plant than the Proposed Plant; Who will Fund the Construction; Who will Fund Operation and Maintenance Costs; Is There Adequate Financial Security to Assure Continual and Proper Operation and Maintenance; Who will Operate and Maintain the Plant and System; and What are Anticipated Capital and Operation and Maintenance Costs.

The involved Cities send a letter containing their recommendations to MCESD (copies to MAG and developer). MCESD incorporates the Cities' concerns and sends a letter and summary of the proposal to MAG (copies to involved Cities and developers), stating whether the proposal is acceptable to the County. Projects with major problems to the City or Town which could not be resolved would not receive compliance from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

2. Request by Jurisdiction for Small Plant Review and Approval - Once the jurisdiction (MAG member agency) in which the facility would be located has initiated a request to include the new wastewater reclamation facility in the MAG 208 Plan, MAG reviews the proposal for overall 208 Plan conformance to ensure that the Small Plant Process is followed, and to ensure that regional impacts are addressed.
3. MAG Water Quality Advisory Committee -The MAG Water Quality Advisory Committee evaluates the proposal and then makes a recommendation to the MAG Management Committee. The MAG Water Quality Advisory Committee generally meets on an as needed basis.
4. MAG Management Committee - The MAG Management Committee reviews the recommendation from the Water Quality Advisory Committee. The Management Committee then makes a recommendation to the MAG Regional Council. In general, the MAG Management Committee meets on a monthly basis.
5. MAG Regional Council - The MAG Regional Council reviews the recommendation from the Management Committee. The Regional Council then takes official action to approve the Small Plant Review and Approval. The Regional Council is the decision-making body of MAG. In general, the MAG Regional Council meets on a monthly basis.
6. Arizona Department of Environmental Quality - Based on Regional Council action, MAG sends a letter to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and a proposal summary (copies to developer, City and MCESD), stating whether the proposed project is compatible with the overall 208 Plan. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality then submits a letter and proposal summary to MCESD and developer stating whether the proposed project is in conformance with the MAG 208 Plan.
7. Maricopa County Environmental Services Department - Upon receipt of an approval letter from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the developer submits plans and specifications, and a copy of the approved design concept to MCESD for review. MCESD reviews these items based on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Bulletin #11 and County regulations, and issues the Approval to Construct.