

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the South Livermore Sewer Expansion project?

The South Livermore Sewer Expansion Project would consist of an amendment to the voter-approved South Livermore Valley Urban Growth Boundary language to allow the extension of sanitary sewer lines to serve residences and wineries located within the South Livermore Valley. The expanded sewer facilities would allow existing and future wineries, visitor serving uses, and residences to connect to the City's wastewater system if those uses are consistent with the planning for the area. Connection to the wastewater system is intended to achieve the vision of the Livermore General Plan, the South Livermore Valley Specific Plan (SLVSP), and the South Livermore Valley Area Plan (SLVAP), to establish and enhance the South Livermore Valley as a premier wine country destination.

## 2. Why do we need a sewer line extension? Can't landowners use septic systems?

Under current county law, new agricultural development cannot build septic systems for wastewater disposal. Landowners can build large wastewater ponds or store wastewater in tanks and have it hauled away for disposal. These systems would likely have negative visual impacts and they are very expensive. For those reasons, and lack of viable alternatives, investment in Livermore Valley wine making is declining.

## 3. Won't this initiative set a troublesome precedent for the City of Livermore's wastewater operations?

No. The City Council made the decision to place this initiative on the ballot after considering the unique circumstances impacting the South Livermore Valley wine region. They recognize the value of protecting groundwater and open space as well as the economic benefits that come to the region from a healthy wine country. This decision does not obligate the city to extend sewer service elsewhere and it does not obligate the city to allow property owners to connect to the sewer system. Other proposals for extending urban services like sewer or water service would require careful consideration by the City Council on a case-by-case basis. The city has extended sewer and water service beyond the Urban Growth Boundary and city limits in the past to protect public health and safety.

## 4. How will the increased volume associated with the expansion of sewer services impact the City of Livermore's existing wastewater treatment facilities?

The City's analysis indicates that the existing sewer system can handle estimated hydraulic flow from South Livermore Valley wine country commercial and residential uses with upgrades to existing sewer pipe under East Ave totaling about 1,000 feet. These upgrades are part of the overall sewer expansion project. Further, based on the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan, the Treatment Plant has capacity to process the additional hydraulic load. However, wastewater resulting from wine production and bottling activities has a higher level of organic material than typical residential sewage. This organic material can impact the treatment processes at the treatment plant. Based on the analysis, small and medium sized wineries contribute relatively low organic load to the system. Large wineries may require some form of pre-treatment, which is the process of removing organic material prior to the wastewater being added to the sewer system. The City will study possible impacts of wine production wastewater further on a case-by-case basis as wineries and other uses request connection to the system. This specific analysis will determine whether and what level of pre-treatment would be required.

## Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

### 5. How will the cost of extending the sewer line be covered?

The cost of construction of the City of Livermore's sewer services into the South Livermore Valley would be primarily paid by an Alameda County grant; the remaining costs are projected to be covered through other state and federal monies.

### 6. How much will the sewer line expansion cost City of Livermore taxpayers?

No City of Livermore taxpayer funds will be used for the construction of the new sewer line, or for individual properties to connect to the line. Ongoing maintenance of the line would be included into the City of Livermore's existing sewer line maintenance costs, which are shared among all users throughout the system (including City of Livermore residents and the new users added through this extension).

### 7. Does this initiative violate South Livermore's Urban Growth Boundary?

No. The extension of sewer services into unincorporated Alameda County does not change the Urban Growth Boundary line or any of the permitted uses outside it. The initiative would allow the city to extend sanitary sewer service to parcels containing residences, wineries, and visitor-serving uses located in South Livermore consistent with the Livermore General Plan, County Area Plan, City Specific Plan, and in conformance with Alameda County Measure D. The Initiative would not change the location of the Urban Growth Boundary.

### 8. Which properties will be able to connect to the new sewer line?

Rural residences, wineries, and visitor-serving uses located in South Livermore will be eligible to connect to the new sewer line.

### 9. Will this initiative lead to more development?

No. Development is already planned for in the county's East County Area Plan and South Livermore Valley Area Plan, and the City's South Livermore Valley Specific Plan. The Initiative does not change the city and county General Plans, Specific Plan, or zoning to allow more development. It allows development that is already permitted under existing planning and zoning designations. However, development that was previously limited by restrictive state and regional ground water regulations may move forward due to the provision of sewer service. All development would also continue to be subject to consistency with Measure D.

### 10. Where is the water going to come from for development in the South Livermore Valley if the sewer extension is approved?

Water supply in the South Livermore Valley is from Zone 7 and Cal Water. These agencies indicate sufficient water supply to support the visitor serving uses, vineyards, and orchards envisioned in the South Livermore Valley Area Plan.

### 11. Will this initiative lead to an increase in unregulated pesticide use in the South Livermore Valley?

No. Extending the sewer will protect groundwater from further contamination. Livermore Valley winegrowers take sustainability seriously and follow all county and state regulations for pesticide application. There are strict requirements set by the State of California that all farmers must follow when it comes to pesticide use. These include reporting pesticide use necessary to keep our vines healthy to both Alameda County and the State of California. This information is available to the public through the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.