

## Department of Safety and Inspections

### Ordinance Amendment:

Update Saint Paul Code of Ordinance Chapter 50 - Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems ordinance to be compliant with Minnesota Statute 115.55.

### Background:

Minnesota State law and Saint Paul Ordinance regulate the placement, type, permissibility, capacity, and maintenance of sub-surface treatment systems (SSTSs).

Within Saint Paul, the geography of one area (Highwood) contributes to the current existence of SSTSs. The number of systems continues to decline as city sewer and water is extended into these areas and existing SSTS systems have aged to the point of needing replacement.

In 2008, the MPCA required all counties to update their SSTS laws within a twenty four (24) month period to be compliant with state statute. All responsible municipalities were required to update their SSTS laws within a twelve (12) month period after the adoption of the counties' laws.

Since the reduction of DSI staff, due to the State takeover of Environmental Health responsibilities, the City's SSTS program has been minimally staffed and complaint driven.

Over the past year, the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI):

- Brought all SSTSs in Saint Paul into compliance with City Ordinance and State Law.
- Worked with the MPCA and the City Attorney's Office to draft updated ordinance language, which aligns with State law.

### Recommendation:

Adopt Ordinance as amended. This includes:

- Small housekeeping changes; e.g.
  - Correct the septic tank sizing/liquid capacities.
  - Reduce replacement times in cases of:
    - Threats to groundwater
    - Imminent threat to public health or safety

But give the Building Official discretion to extend deadlines.
- One substantial change.
  - Change represents:
    - Alignment with state and regional standards.
    - Appreciation for the types of SSTS systems currently allowed by law.
      - Cesspools and Seepage and Leaching pits no longer allowed.
    - DSI staffing levels.
  - The change is:
    - Require SSTS systems to be inspected and pumped every 3 years instead of the current every 2 year requirement.