



# Wastewater Systems Regionalization – What You Need to Know

- **Water Quality / Stormwater Seminar – 2023**
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# What is Regionalization?

- Regionalization of wastewater collection or treatment systems is the consolidation of multiple service areas (such as subdivisions) into a regional service facility or collection system that serves a large part of the population over a broad geographic area.
- More simply, regionalization is connecting new subdivisions or housing units to an existing wastewater collection system and its associated wastewater treatment plant rather than constructing a new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP).

# Benefits of Regionalization

- Regionalization promotes a long-term solution to wastewater management by consolidating wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal into larger service providers.
- Typically, existing systems with sufficient treatment capacity can offer wastewater treatment and disposal at a lower cost than constructing, operating, and maintaining a stand-alone system.
- Regional systems can distribute costs for capital improvement projects, like upgrades and repairs, over a larger customer base.
- Existing WWTPs certified by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as regional providers may also be eligible for tax exemption.

# Is a Regionalization Analysis Required?

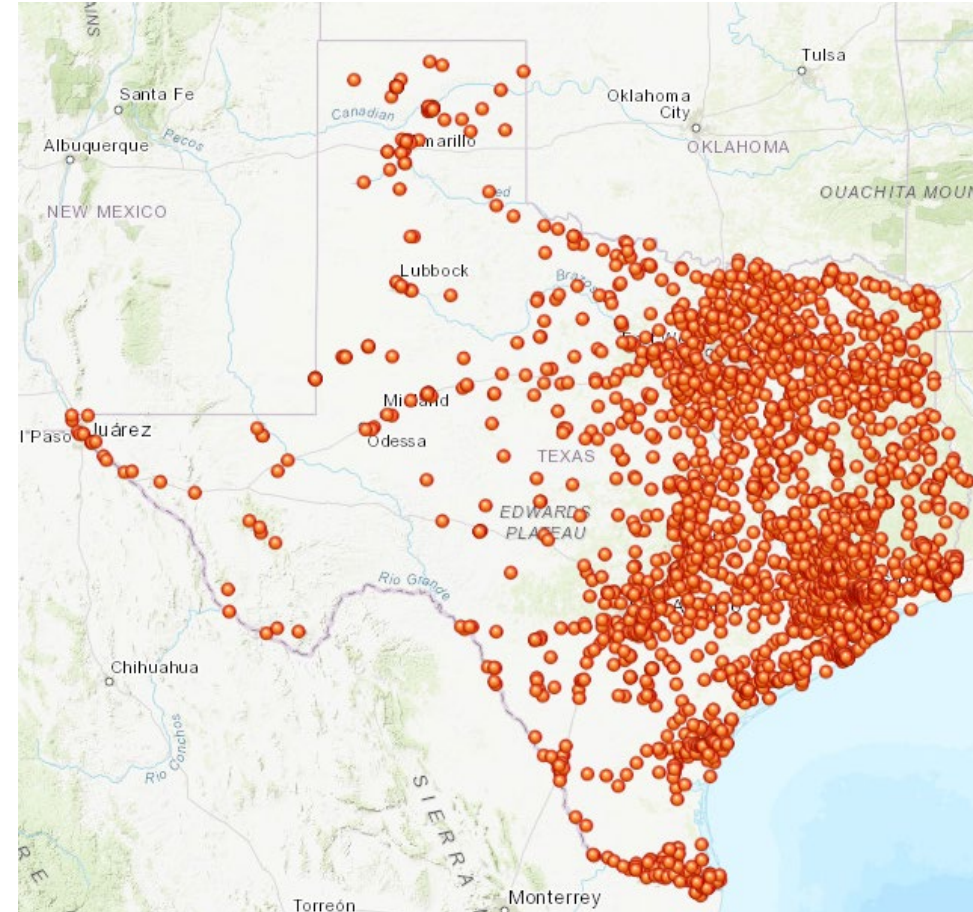
- TCEQ requires owners/operators of proposed new WWTPs to evaluate regionalization and document those efforts before applying to TCEQ for a discharge permit for a new WWTP.
- Applicants for a Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP) are not required to evaluate regionalization.

# Roles in Evaluating Regionalization

- Role of the New Wastewater Systems
  - If you plan to build a new WWTP system, an important part of the planning process includes evaluating the possibility of regionalization (i.e., connecting the new or proposed system to an existing system) versus building a stand-alone system.
- Role of the Existing Wastewater Systems
  - Existing WWTPs should have accessible information on how they can be contacted for purposes of seeking connection to their system and must provide prompt responses to requests for service. They should also encourage regionalization by treating all applicants fairly, charging reasonable application fees, and charging cost-based fees for providing wastewater service to those requesting service.
- Role of TCEQ

# How Do I Evaluate Regionalization?

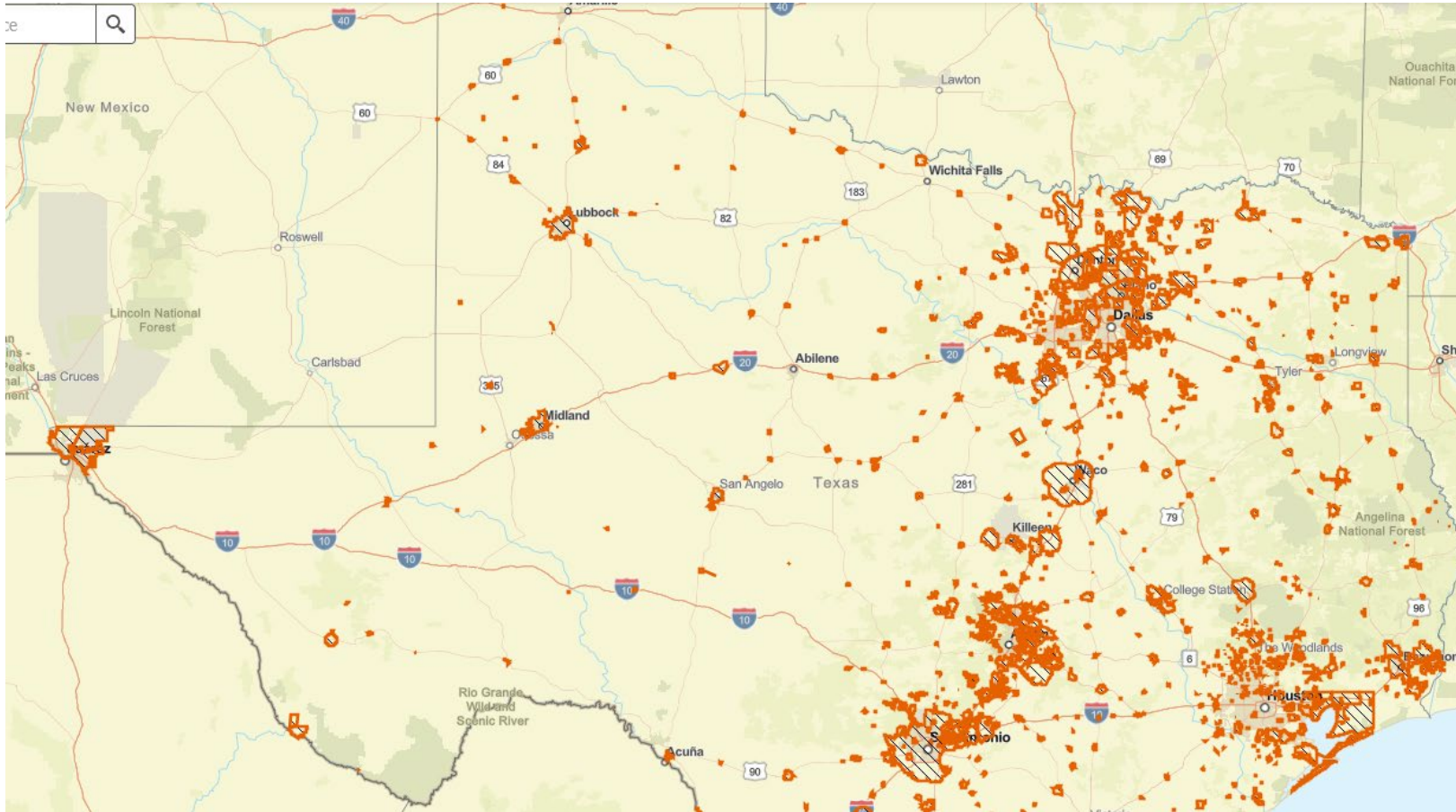
- Perform a search and identify all permitted domestic WWTPs or sanitary sewer collection systems within a three-mile radius of your proposed facility.
- You must also identify if any portion of the service area is within another utility's sewer CCN area.



# Table 1. Online resources for identifying and locating nearby wastewater systems.

Provided by	Online Resource	Available Information
PUC	<a href="#">CCN Map Viewer</a>	Find the wastewater service provider for a specific address or property.
TCEQ	<a href="#">Wastewater Outfall Map Viewer</a>	Find the outfall locations of nearby wastewater treatment plants. Clicking on an outfall reveals the name of the permittee as well as an abbreviated version of the permit number.
Counties and Cities	Subdivision plats / property information	Access subdivision plat maps. Information available varies by city/county.

# CCN Map Viewer



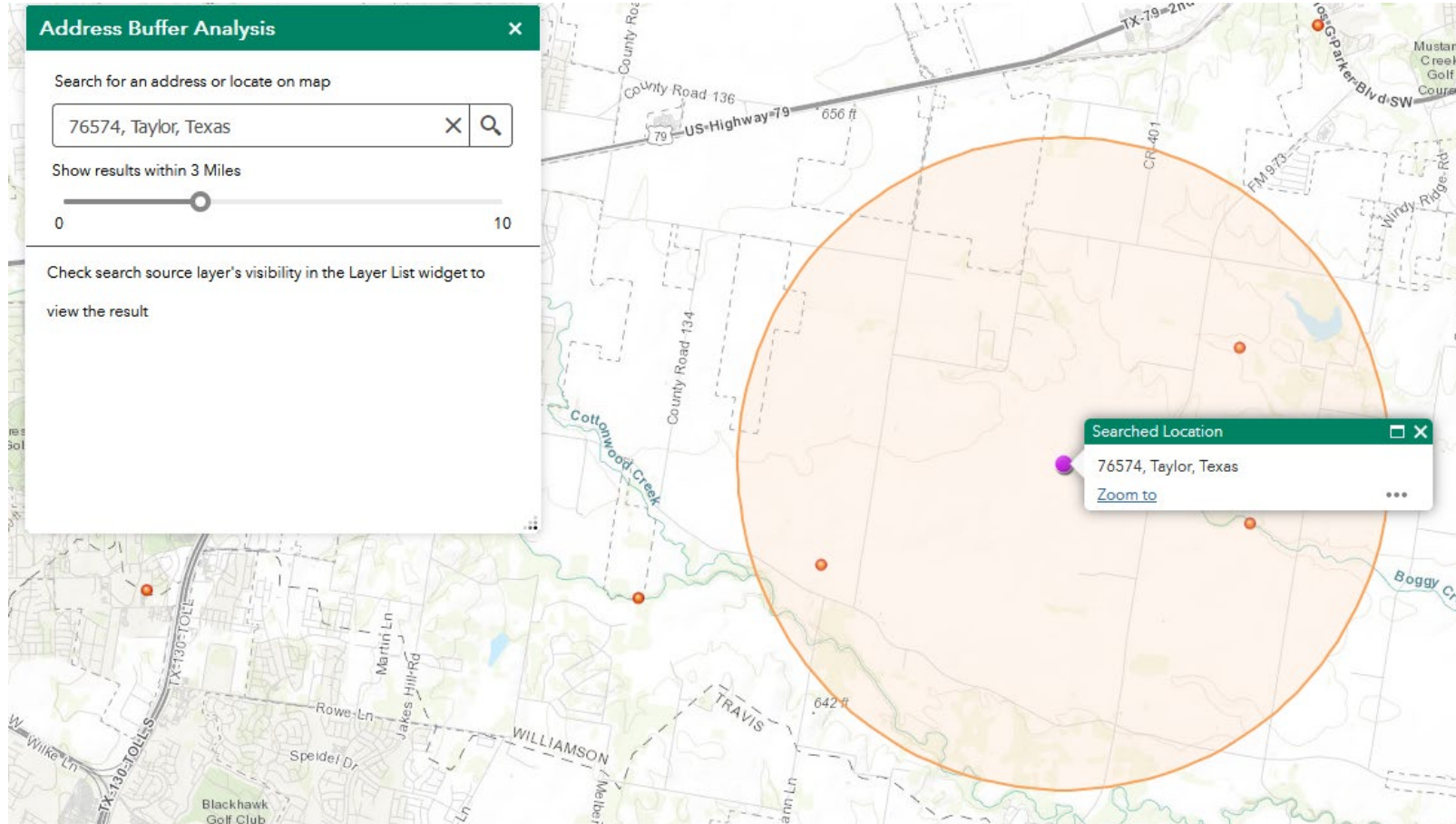
Layer List

Layers

- Water CCN Facility Lines
- Water CCN Service Areas
- Sewer CCN Facility Lines
- Sewer CCN Service Areas
- Counties TxDOT
- House Districts (88th TX Leg.)
- Senate Districts (88th TX Leg.)
- US Congressional Districts (TX)



# Wastewater Outfall Map Viewer



# Requests for Service (1 of 5)

- If your proposed facility is within a three-mile radius of any existing and constructed permitted domestic wastewater system or a portion of your service area is within another utility's sewer CCN area, you must request service from the existing permitted system owner or operator.
- Your request for service must include your proposed facility's capacity, an inquiry for the total cost assessment of connecting to their sewer system and providing sewer services, as well as any additional conditions for receiving service.
- These requests should be mailed via certified mail for effective response documentation.

# Requests for Service (2 of 5)

- You are not required to send correspondence requesting service to owners/operators of unconstructed facilities.
- If a request for service was approved, you must either connect to the system or proceed to Conducting a Financial, Managerial, and Technical Analysis.
- If you have documented one of the following situations:
  - no response received from the permitted system owner or operator within 30 days of the date your request(s) for service was mailed,
  - your request for service was denied, or
  - service(s) offered are based on a special conditions
- Request for a pre-application meeting to assess your options.

# Requests for Service (3 of 5)

- If a request for service was approved but you have reason to believe that connecting to the existing system is unfeasible, cost prohibitive, or otherwise not a viable option, you must provide supporting information with your wastewater discharge permit application.
- Supporting information can include an evaluation of the financial, managerial, and technical aspects of your proposed facility and the existing system.
- These factors for consideration are not exhaustive. TCEQ staff may consider other factors not mentioned above, as appropriate.

# Requests for Service (4 of 5)

- Financial:
  - Evaluation of the cost-benefit analysis of regionalization compared to the construction, maintenance, and operation of your stand-alone system. TCEQ recommends that the cost-benefit analysis be prepared by a professional engineer licensed to practice in Texas.
  - Evaluate the affordability of rates proposed by a regional or areawide system compared to the projected rates of your stand-alone system.
  - Consider other financial factors specific to your case (i.e., projected development schedule, costs of obtaining easements, etc.).

# Requests for Service (5 of 5)

- Technical:
  - Feasibility of connecting with another collection system.
  - Feasibility of obtaining easements (e.g., collection system is across a waterbody, another utility's CCN area must be crossed, etc.)
  - The existing facility's capacity to accommodate the projected increase in flow from your development.
- Managerial:
  - The existing facility's compliance history is in good standing.
  - The operation and maintenance of the existing facility is dependable.

# Justification of Permit (1 of 2)

- Provide a justification for the proposed flows.
- Provide an anticipated construction start date and operation schedule for each phase being proposed.
- If construction is dependent upon housing or commercial development, provide information from the developer such as the size of the development (number of lots), the date construction on the development is scheduled to begin, and the anticipated growth rate of the development (number of houses per month or year).

# Justification of Permit (2 of 2)

- Attach population estimates or projections used to derive the flow estimates and anticipated growth rates for developments.
- Provide the source and basis upon which population figures were derived (census or other methodology).
- Provide population projections at the end of the design life of the treatment facility and the source and basis upon which population figures were derived.



# What's Next?

- Guidance Document is under RG-632
- Posted on the TCEQ Website
- Regionalization website to be updated
- Future Application updates

# Questions?

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