

Why are we talking about Vashon MRA?

Vashon-Maury Island
has a sole-source
aquifer: water is
recycled!

By maintaining
wastewater
infrastructure, we can
protect water quality
and our investment

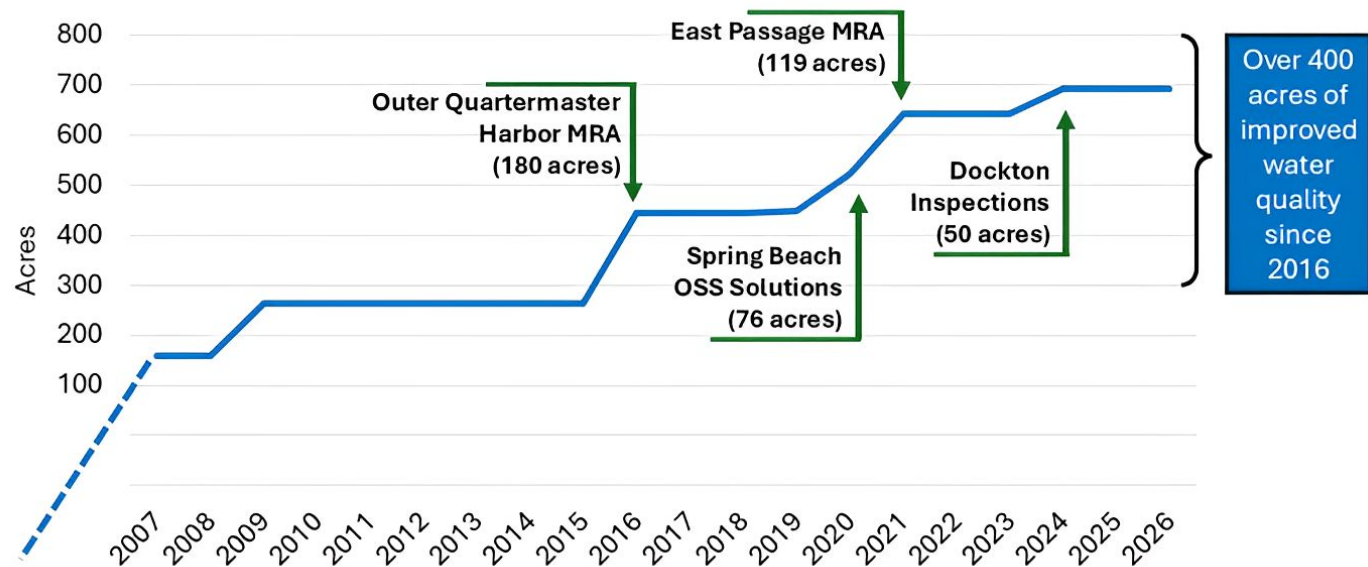
What is an MRA?

- In 2006, Washington law (RCW 70A.110.040) required MRAs where OSS were a significant factor contributing to areas of highest water quality concerns.
- Local health officer may designate additional MRAs as new information becomes available.

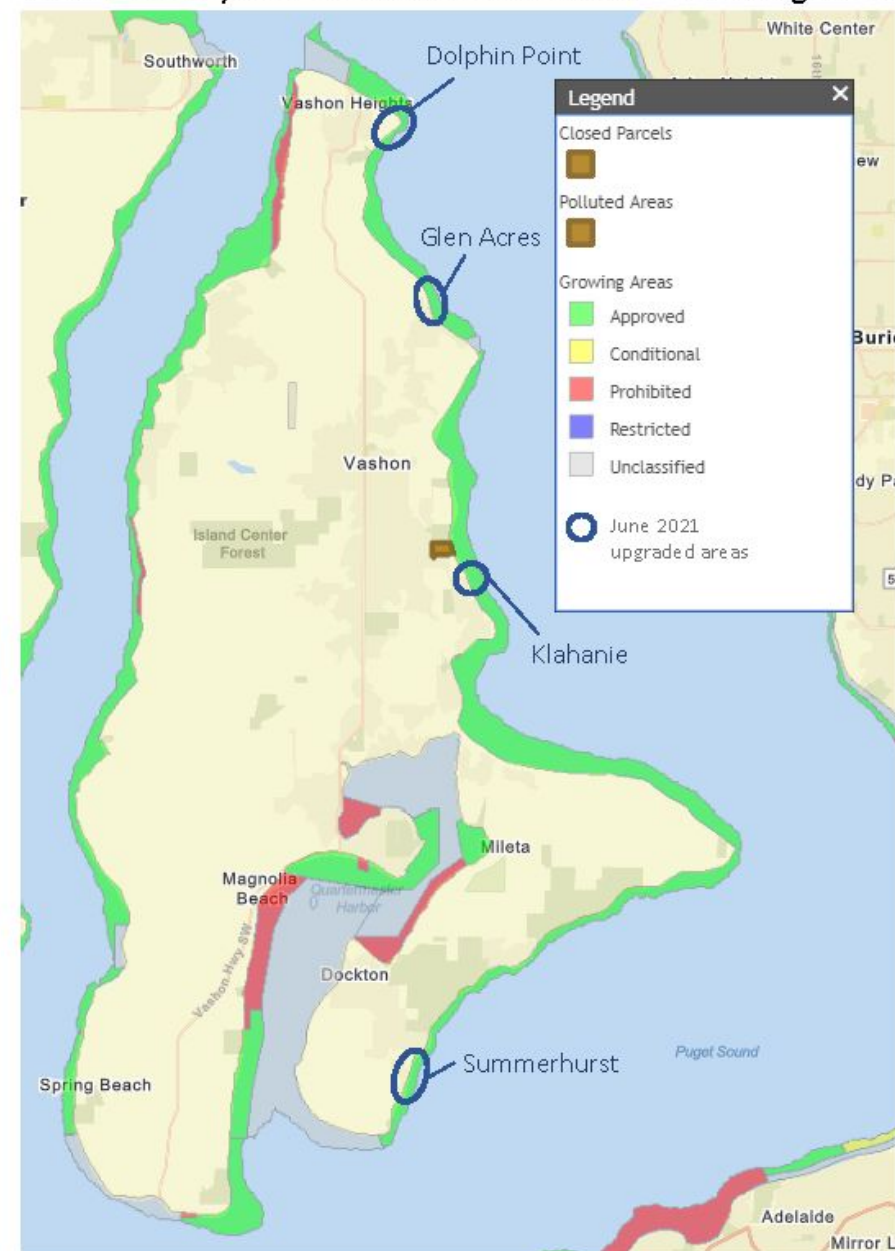


MRA is an effective model for clean water

Water Quality Upgrades from Vashon-Maury Investments



Vashon-Maury Island Commercial Shellfish Harvesting Areas

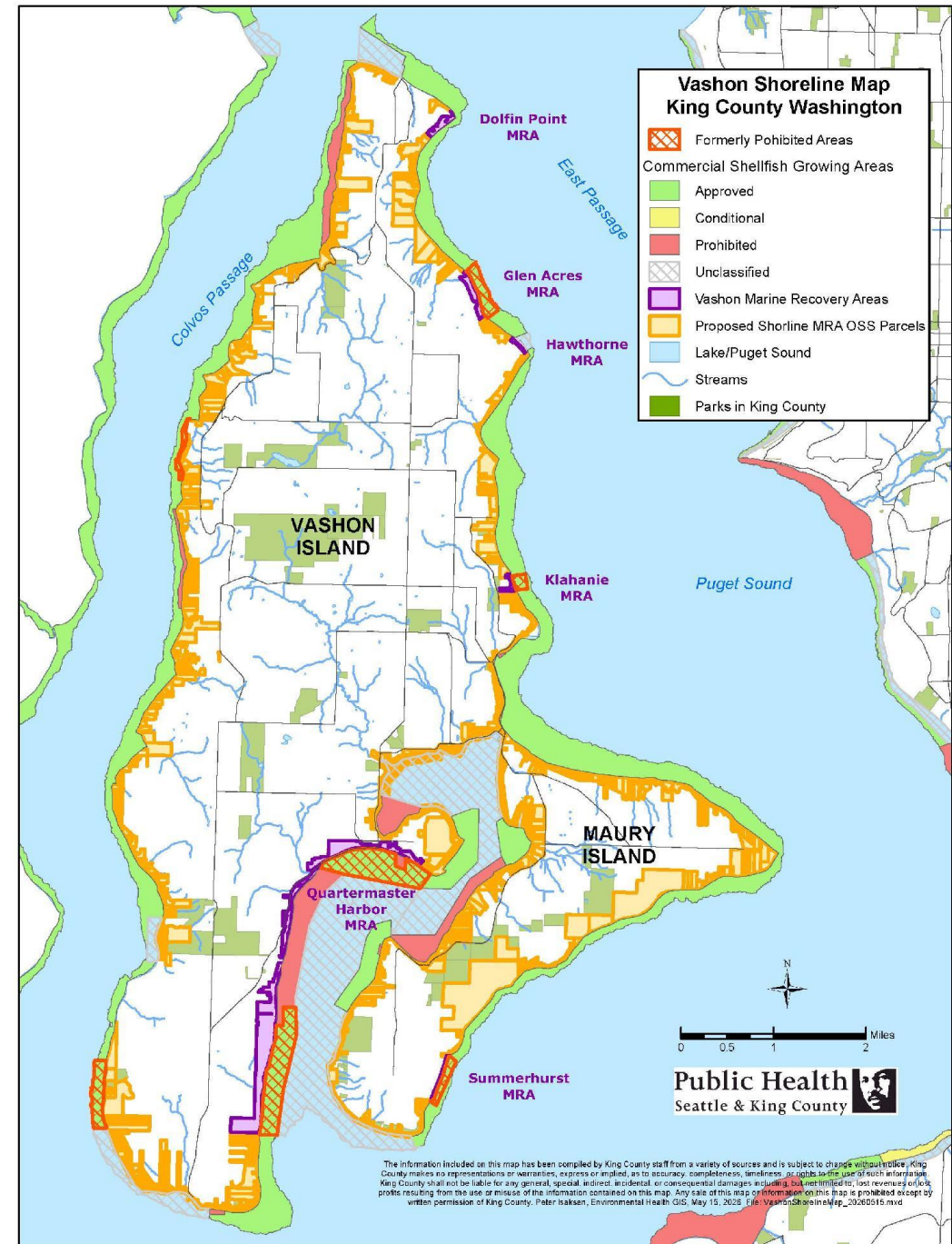


Basemap from WADOH Commercial Shellfish Map Viewer

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MRA expansion proposal

Public Health is proposing to expand the Marine Recovery Area to ALL VMI shoreline properties (1,358).



Why update the MRA?

- State Department of Health: Existing areas that are classified as Prohibited and shoreline Unclassified areas cannot be upgraded without improved septic system maintenance.

**Marine water
quality**

+

**Shoreline
water quality**

+

**Risk of
pollution**



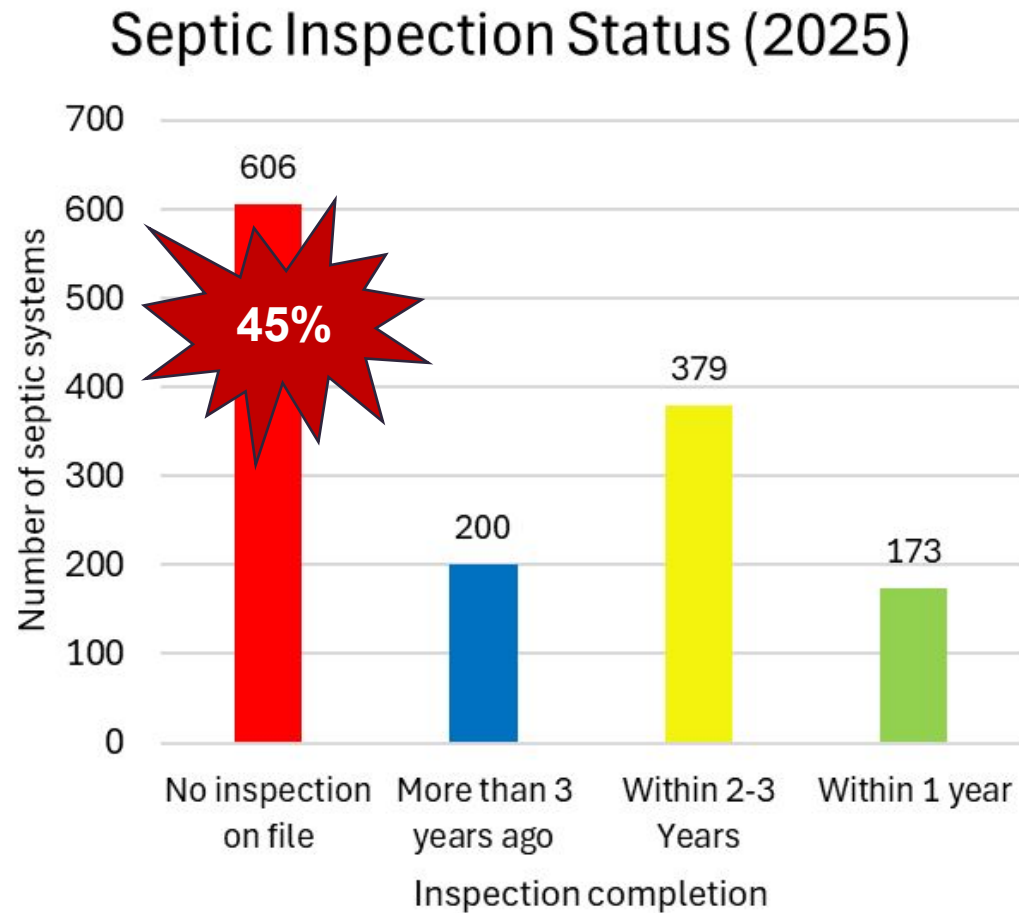
How do failing septic systems impact water flowing onto the shoreline?

- Manzanita beach #1
 - August 2023: **>2,400 CFU/100 mL**
 - 2024-2026: new septic system installation
 - June 2026: 3 CFU/100 mL
- Manzanita beach #2
 - March 2026: **130,000 CFU/100 mL**
 - May 2026: dye test confirmation that pollution is coming from failing OSS
- Tahlequah
 - April 2026: inspection with dye test confirmed sewage was flowing onto beach

Fecal coliform threshold:
<200 CFU/100 mL
(CFU: colony forming units)



Risk of pollution



45% of shoreline septic systems have no inspection on file.

No inspection data =
Not sure of its
functioning or whether
sewage is leaking into
Puget Sound



Why does a septic inspection matter?

1. Your septic systems are designed to last for decades if properly maintained.
2. Inspection ensures ALL septic components are functioning properly.
3. During the inspection, small problems can be identified and fixed before they “snowball.”



Proposed MRA Requirements

1. Initial MRA Inspection

- OSS location, performance, and treatment level
- Within first 3 years after MRA designation

2. On-going Routine Inspection

#1 - Annual for All
current requirement
\$435/inspection

#2 - Risk-based
evaluation

Different type and frequency
based on risk
\$585/inspection

3. Repairs and replacements if needed

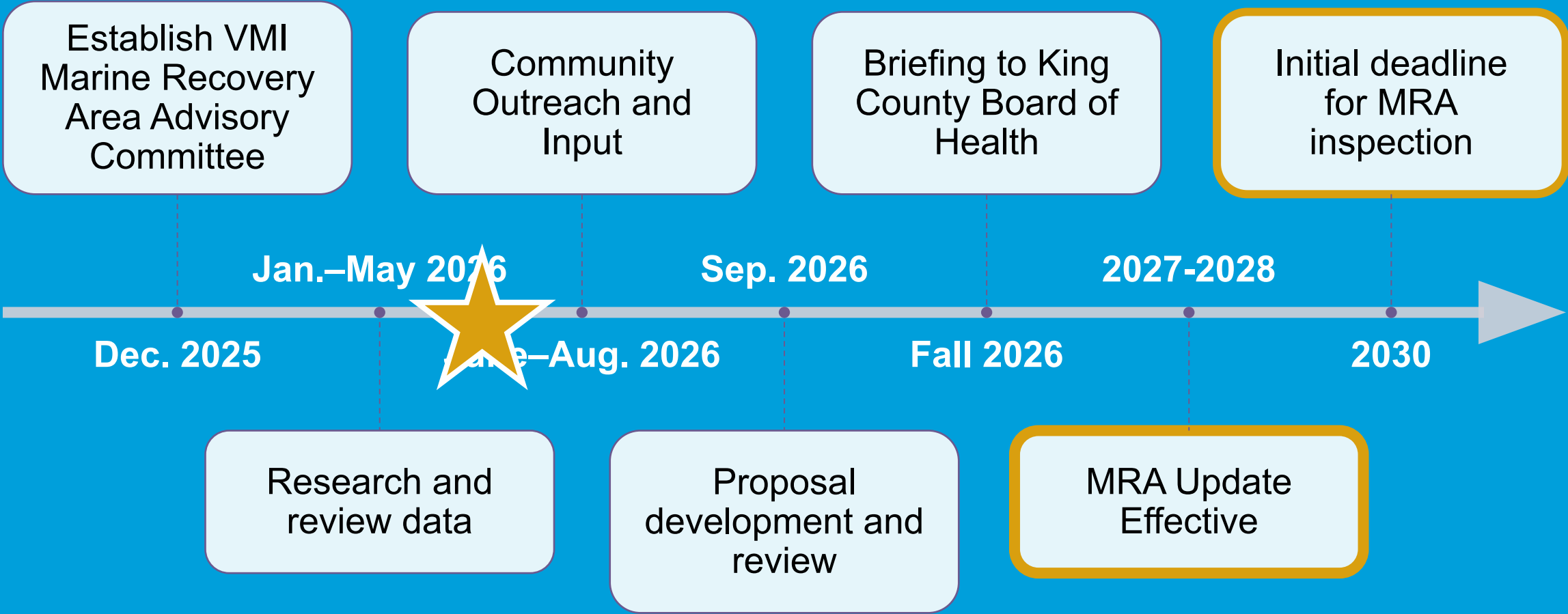


Community Input & Our Response

- Are there enough maintainers to do inspections?
 - Public Health will host industry training
 - Group inspection how-to flyer
 - Delayed implementation
- This will be expensive, especially for people on fixed income.
 - Inspection rebates available – will prioritize low-income property owners
 - Financial assistance for replacements
- Inspection requirements are confusing.
 - Septic Smart campaign over the next year
- Is the pollution really that bad?
 - Implementation will start by focusing on the areas with more issues



Project timeline



Thank you!

**We value your input:
Take the survey**

Meagan Jackson (mejackson@kingcounty.gov)



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MRA requirement exemption

Public Health reviews MRA exemption applications for properties that meet the criteria:

- Initial MRA inspection shows no deficiencies
- Septic system has record drawing (“as-built”)
- Septic system is located in an area where impact to beach is unlikely

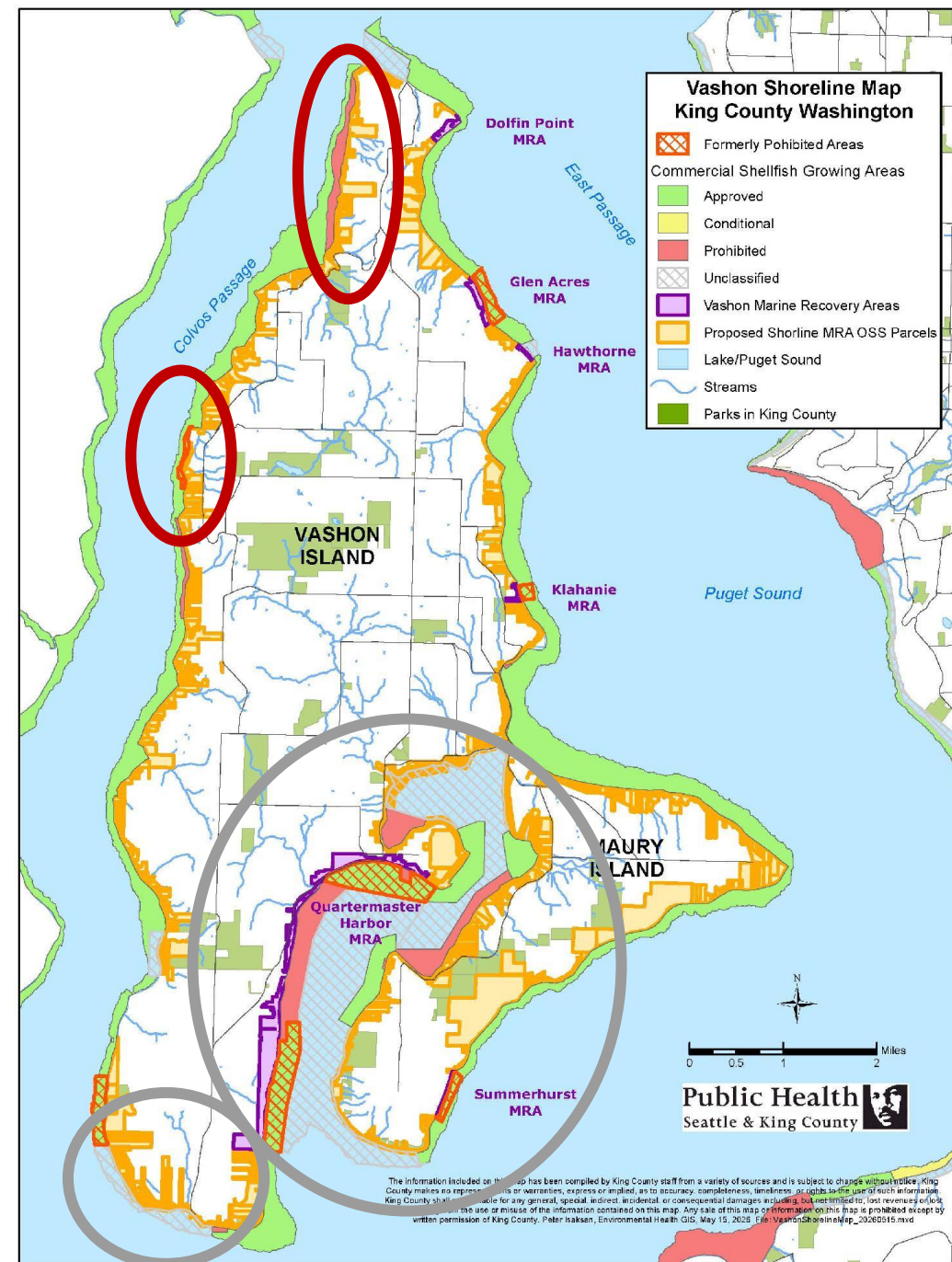
The property will still be within the MRA.

- Regular inspection is still a state requirement but will not be enforced.



Recent survey data

- State Department of Health (2019): Existing areas that are classified as Prohibited and shoreline Unclassified areas cannot be upgraded without improved septic system maintenance.
 - **“Prohibited”** areas are expanded or remaining in Colvos Passage
 - **“Unclassified”** areas still remain in Quatermaster Harbor
 - Potential risk exists along shoreline from lack of OSS maintenance

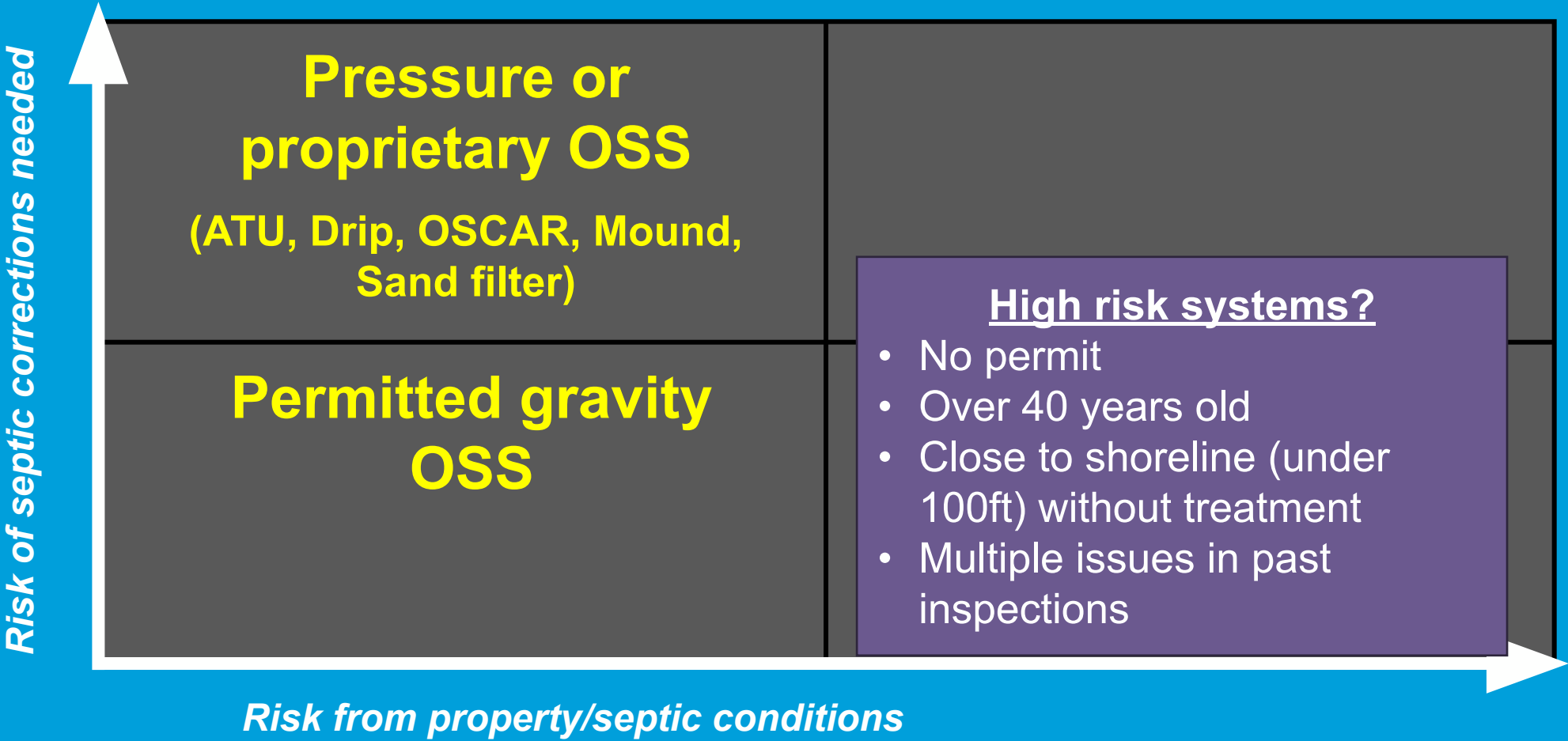


How do failing septic systems impact water flowing onto the shoreline?

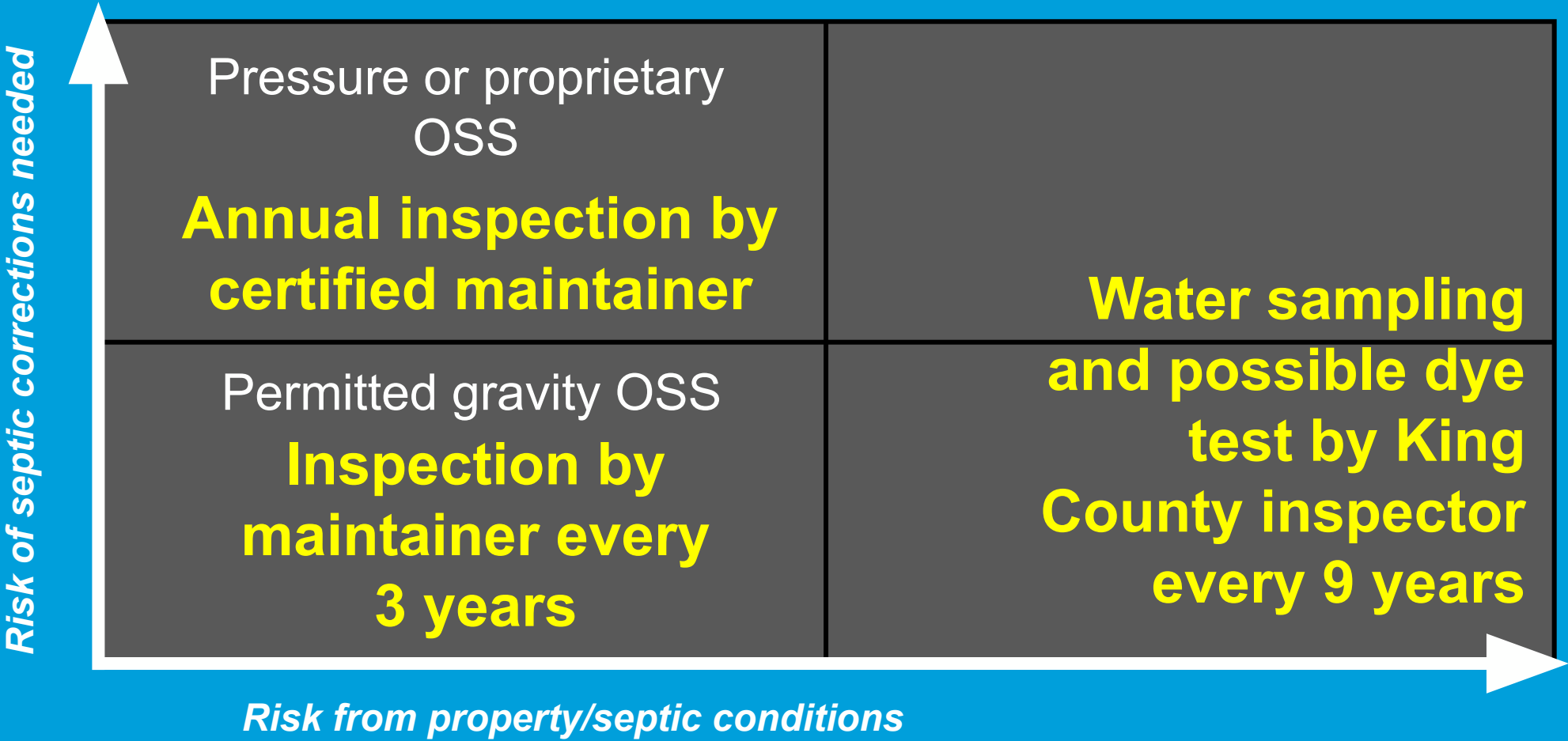
	2014, Quartermaster Harbor	2018, QMH, East Passage MRAs, Dockton	2023, Colvos Passage	2025, Manzanita Beach
Number of failed septic systems 	11 failed	7 failed	11 failed	4 failed
Drainages with high bacteria due to failing OSS 	7 sites	1 sites	1 sites	2 sites



Risk-based evaluations



Risk-based evaluations



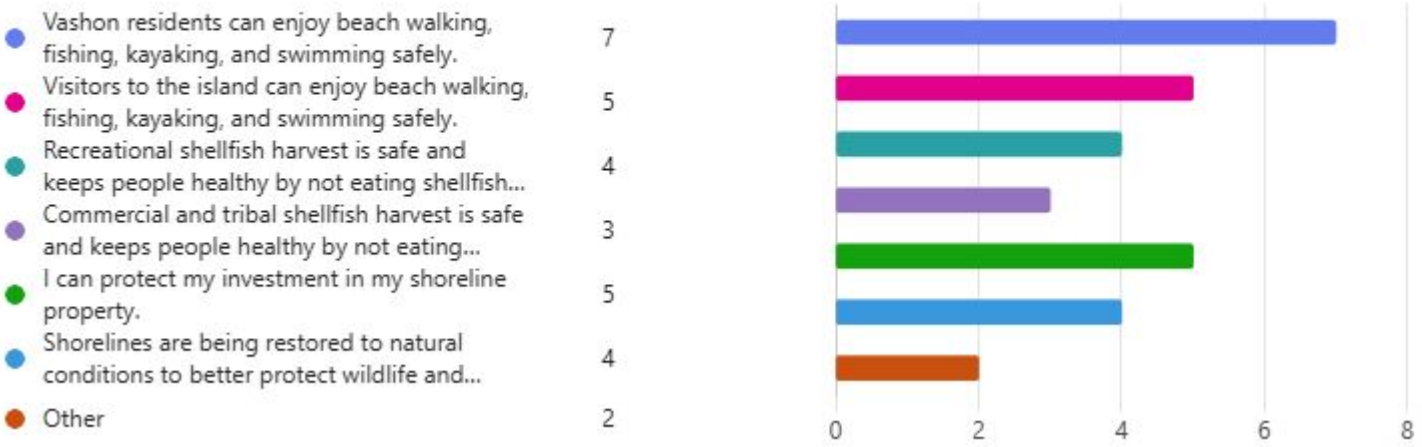


"Since the change to the combined approach of **enforcement and monetary motivation** had been initiated in June 2022, the percentage of properties with an inspected OSS increased to 97% (113 inspections of 117 total properties with OSS)."



1. What is important to you about Vashon-Maury shorelines? (select all that apply)

More details



2. Which of the following sources of fecal pollution (pollution from poop) are you most concerned about on Vashon shorelines?

More details

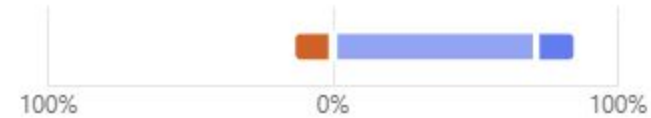


5. Public Health is proposing to expand the current Marine Recovery Areas (MRAs) to include all shoreline properties. To what degree would this change impact you?

[More details](#)

● No impact at all ● Small impact to me ● Significant impact to me ● Very significant impact to me

To what degree would this change impact you?

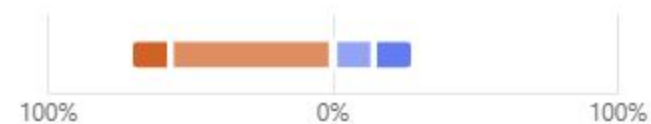


6. How challenging do you think it would be for you to have your septic system inspected every 1-3 years? The inspection usually costs \$400-500.

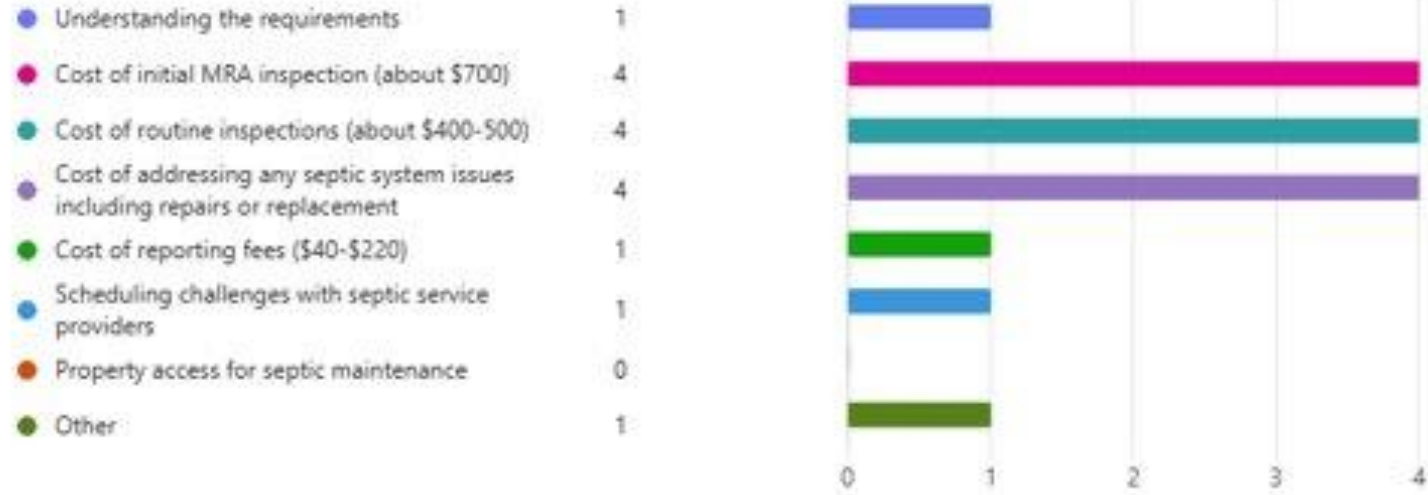
[More details](#)

● Not challenging at all ● Somewhat challenging ● Very challenging ● Extremely challenging

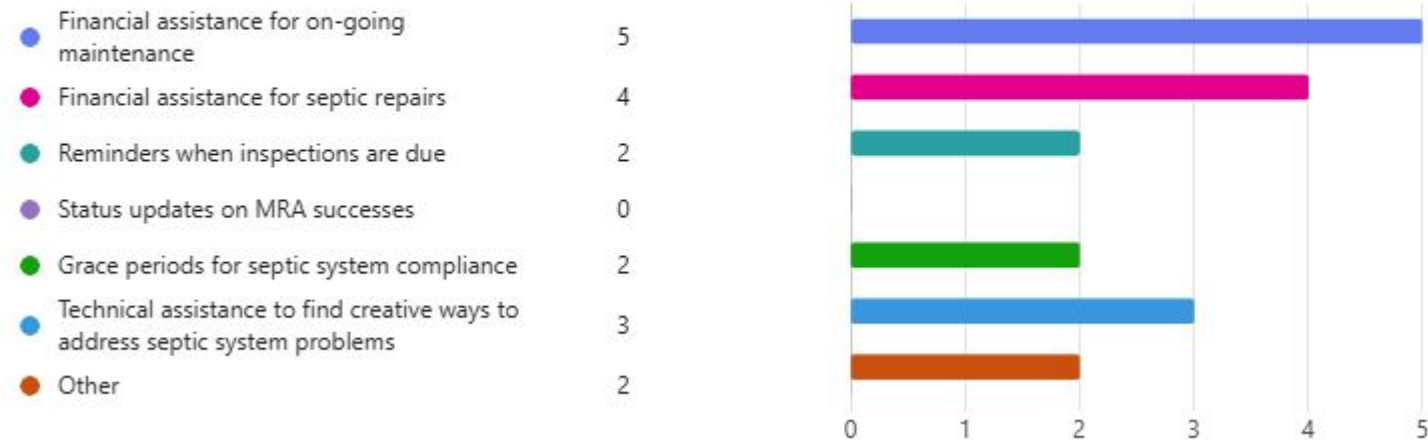
How challenging would this requirement be?



7. What would be most challenging for you in meeting the MRA inspection requirements? Please choose up to 2 answers. MRA inspection requirements include completing initial MRA inspection within the first 3 years after the proposal is implemented; continuing to have your septic system inspected every 1-3 years after that. [More details](#)



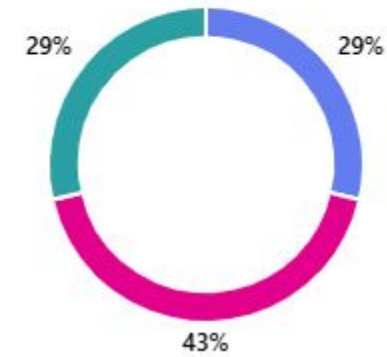
8. How do you think Public Health can help address these challenges? [More details](#)

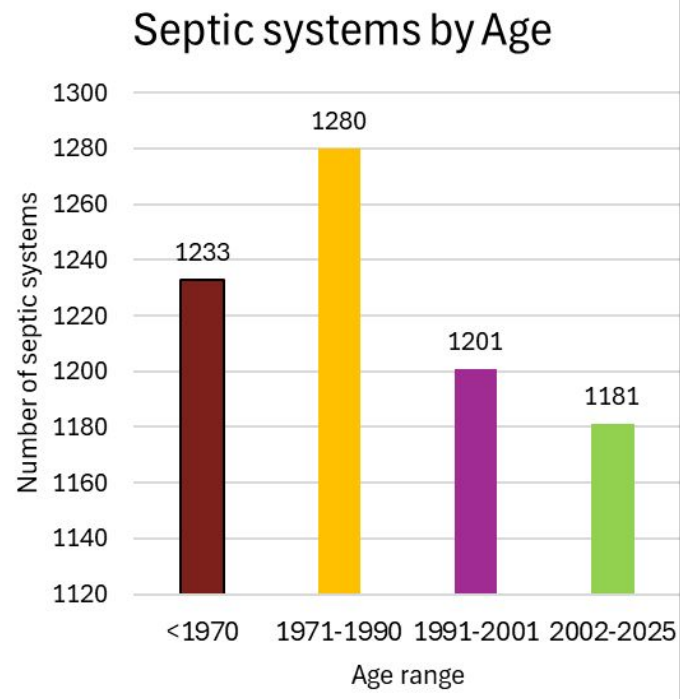
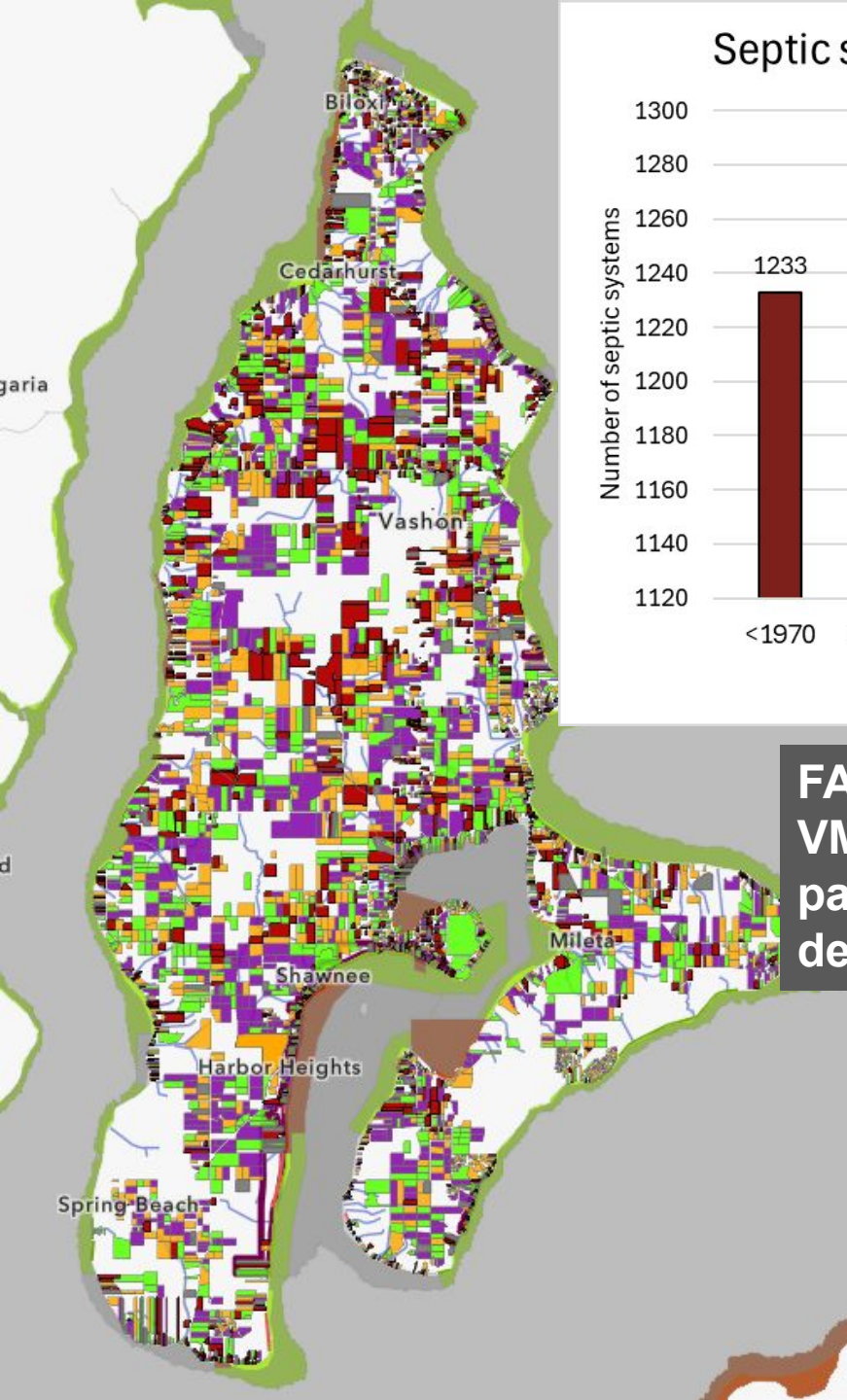


9. Which of the following options for evaluating shoreline septic systems do you prefer?

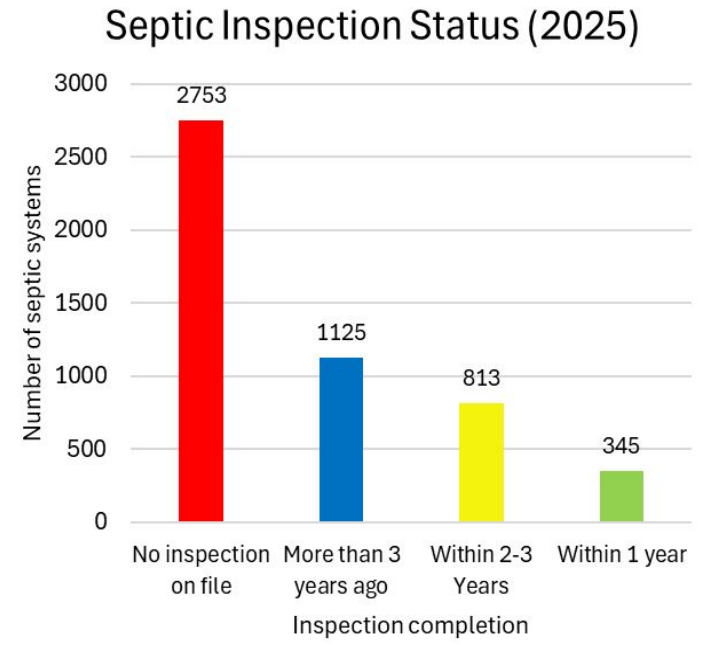
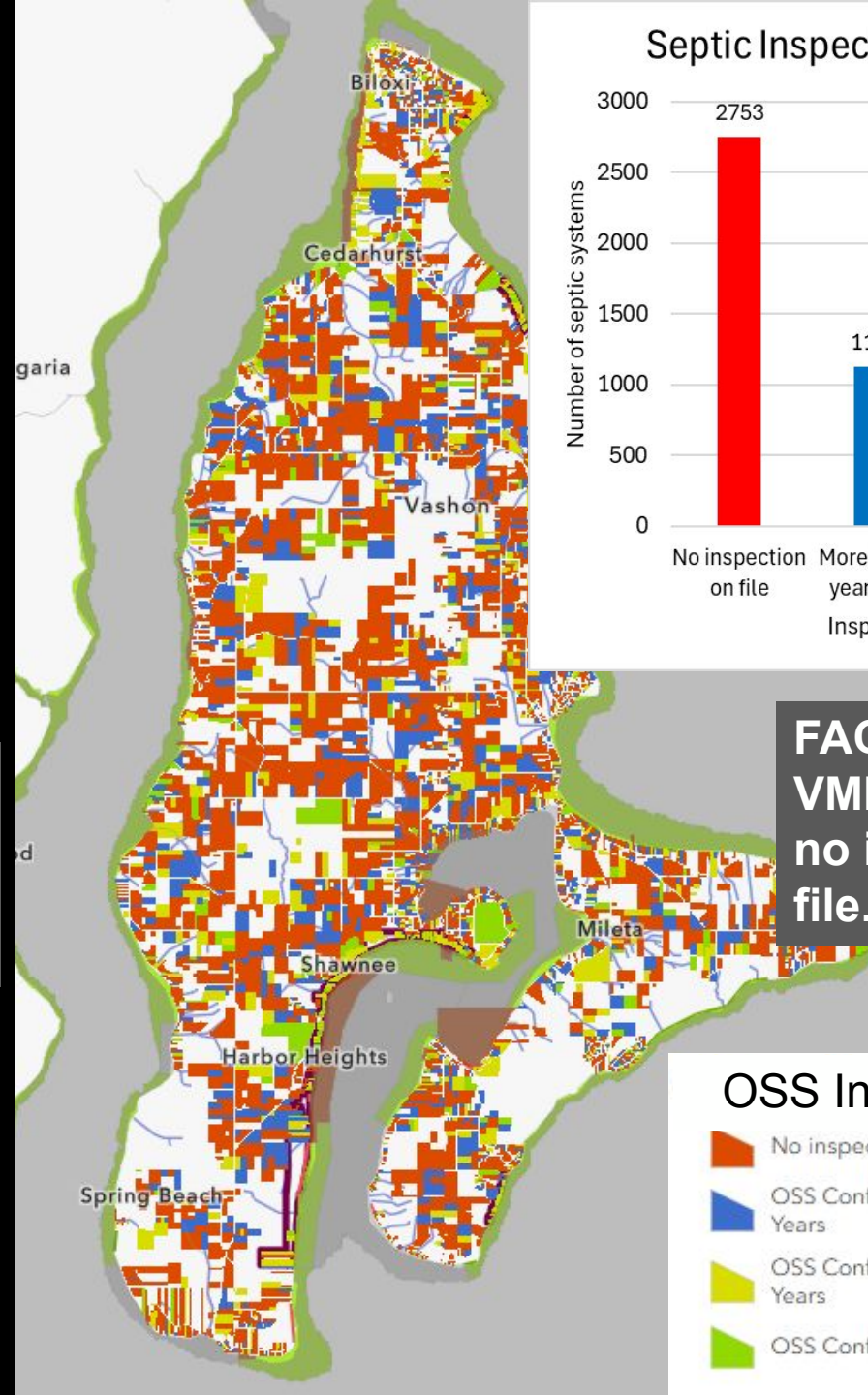
[More details](#)

- Option 1: Keep current MRA inspection requirements. All septic systems in the MRA have to be inspected... 2
- Option 2: Change MRA inspection requirements based on risk to water quality. An inspection by a... 3
- Other: If you think a different option would work better, please specify below. 2





FACT 1: 50% of VMI septs are past expected design (+35 years).



FACT 2 : 55% of VMI septs have no inspection on file.

