MAY 2009

Town of

Chatham

Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning Project

Chatham's CWMP Moves toward Implementation

Chatham's Draft Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (Draft CWMP) has successfully completed state and Cape Cod Commission (CCC) regional environmental reviews and is now being submitted for final approval. The Town is taking steps to move forward with initial implementation. The first elements will be the upgrade and expansion of the Town's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) and expansion of the existing wastewater collection system. The timing of this initial implementation makes this phase of the project eligible for federal Stimulus funds with the potential to save Chatham residents tens of millions of dollars. This fact sheet summarizes the progress of this wastewater planning process; the proposed initial and long-term implementation plan; and the cost savings that may be realized by moving forward at this time.

The Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP)

Local organizations, state and regional regulatory agencies and the general public gave the Draft CWMP a very successful environmental review and significant support in early 2008. The Final CWMP will be submitted for state and CCC review in June 2009. The main components of the plan include:

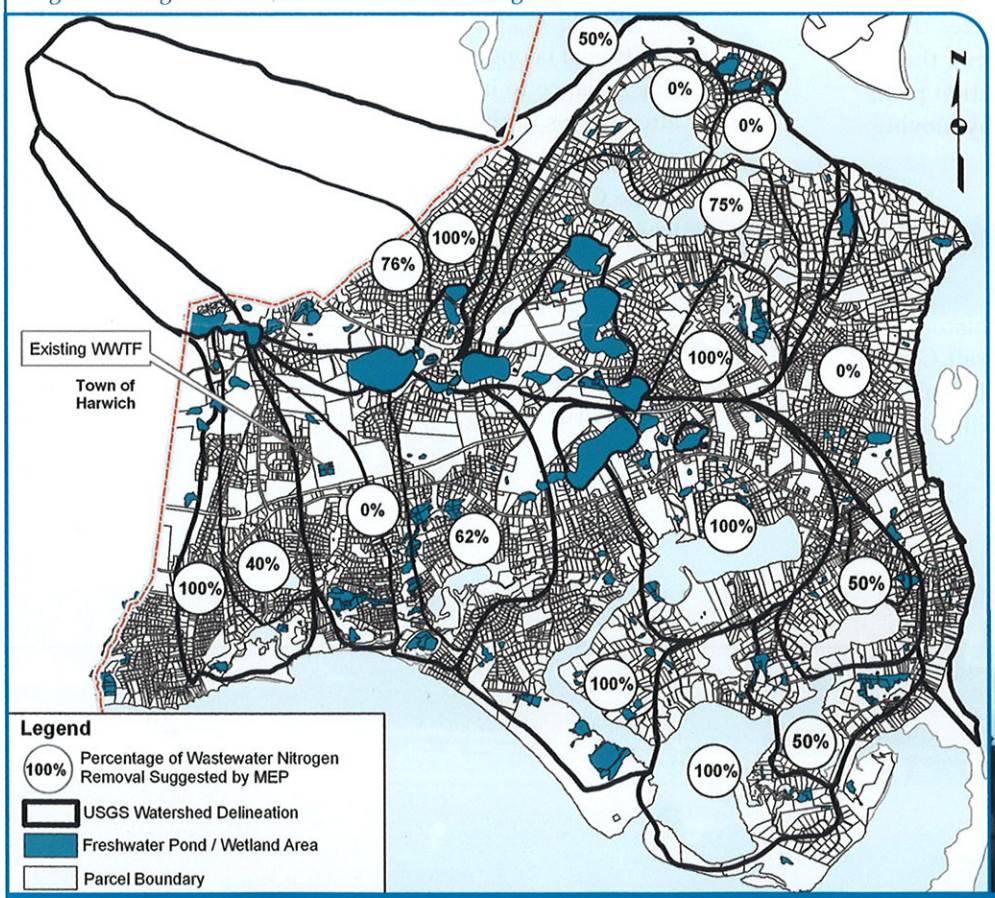
- Phased upgrade and expansion of the Chatham Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). This expansion will be done in a modular approach (two phases) to manage cost and treat the highly variable (seasonal) wastewater flows efficiently;
- Expansion of the sewer collection system over a 30-year period (20 years for the Phase I area to meet nitrogen Total Maximum Daily Load [TMDL] limits, with an additional 10 years to extend sewers to the remaining portions of Town);
- Continued cooperation with Harwich and the Pleasant Bay Alliance to investigate nitrogen management alternatives in the Muddy Creek watersheds;
- Continued discussion with Harwich about the feasibility of the Chatham WWTF providing service as a regional facility;
- Continued stormwater management to deal with contaminants and sediments in road runoff; and
- Public education on proper fertilizer use and how to prevent overuse of fertilizers (a source of nitrogen and phosphorus, which impacts freshwater lakes and ponds).

The Phase I sewer expansion covers approximately two-thirds of the Town that needs sewers to meet the nitrogen target limits (TMDLs). The Phase I upgrade of the WWTF will be sized for the wastewater flows from the whole Phase I sewer area and is designed to meet the most stringent nitrogen removal targets in the state. It will also be designed to accommodate the future Phase II expansion.

The Initial Implementation and Proposed Timing

The federal Stimulus program has created a unique opportunity to implement a large portion of the Phase I plan using federal and state funding. The initial implementation will include the complete Phase I upgrade of the WWTF and construction of the major sewer infrastructure along most of Route 28, forming the "backbone" for the further expansion of the sewer system. This "backbone" will include seven new pumping stations and over 10 miles of collection system pipes. The sewer expansion targets the area of Town where 100 percent wastewater nitrogen removal is needed to meet the nitrogen TMDLs; see Figure 1 below for details. It minimizes neighborhood construction impacts by focusing on the Route 28 corridor. Concentrating on this corridor also allows the project to be coordinated with Mass Highway's plan to reconstruct Route 28. See Figure 2 on page 3. Construction of this project would begin in Spring 2010.

Figure 1. Target reductions in wastewater nitrogen.



Reducing the Financial Burden on the Citizens of Chatham

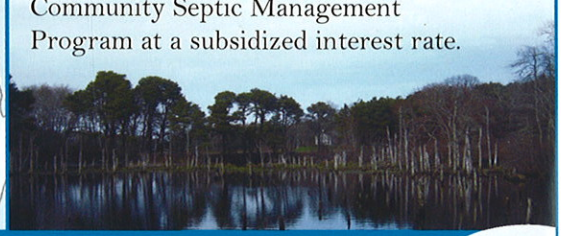
The Town of Chatham has developed a long-standing consensus on the environmental importance and economic advantages of its wastewater management plan. Residents will have the opportunity to consider the project's fiscal implications at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2009.

The full project cost is estimated to be $300 million. For the past decade, the Town has diligently made efforts to reduce the fiscal impact of a project with such a significant cost to taxpayers.

The funds required to build a municipal wastewater treatment/collection system are typically borrowed by a town by issuing municipal bonds and repaying bond holders over a period of time, up to 50 years. Spreading payments over a long period helps reduce their fiscal impact. Federal/state funding allows eligible costs to be borrowed at 2% interest rates. The Legislature has enacted a bill, sponsored by Senator Robert O'Leary, that will enable Chatham to borrow funds at a 0% rate. This reduced borrowing cost makes Chatham's project even less costly.

The Town has already secured federal funds, including a grant/loan package totaling $2.4 million from USDA, for the project. This funding package is expected to increase with an infusion of additional federal funds. The project is also on the 2009 State Revolving Fund (SRF) list for $55.5 million. The Town has accelerated the project by a year with the expectation that $5 to 20 million of the SRF assistance may be granted through federal Stimulus funds. In the future, the use of the Chatham treatment plant as a regional facility could provide additional funding to offset the project's costs to Chatham taxpayers.

The wastewater plan proposes to connect all Chatham properties to a Town sewer over the next 20-30 years. Each homeowner, when connected, would incur a sewer utility cost of $30-40 per month on average. Each property owner would also incur a one-time connection cost averaging between $3,000-10,000, depending upon the distance of their home/business from the street. This connection cost can be borrowed for up to 20 years from the Barnstable County Community Septic Management Program at a subsidized interest rate.



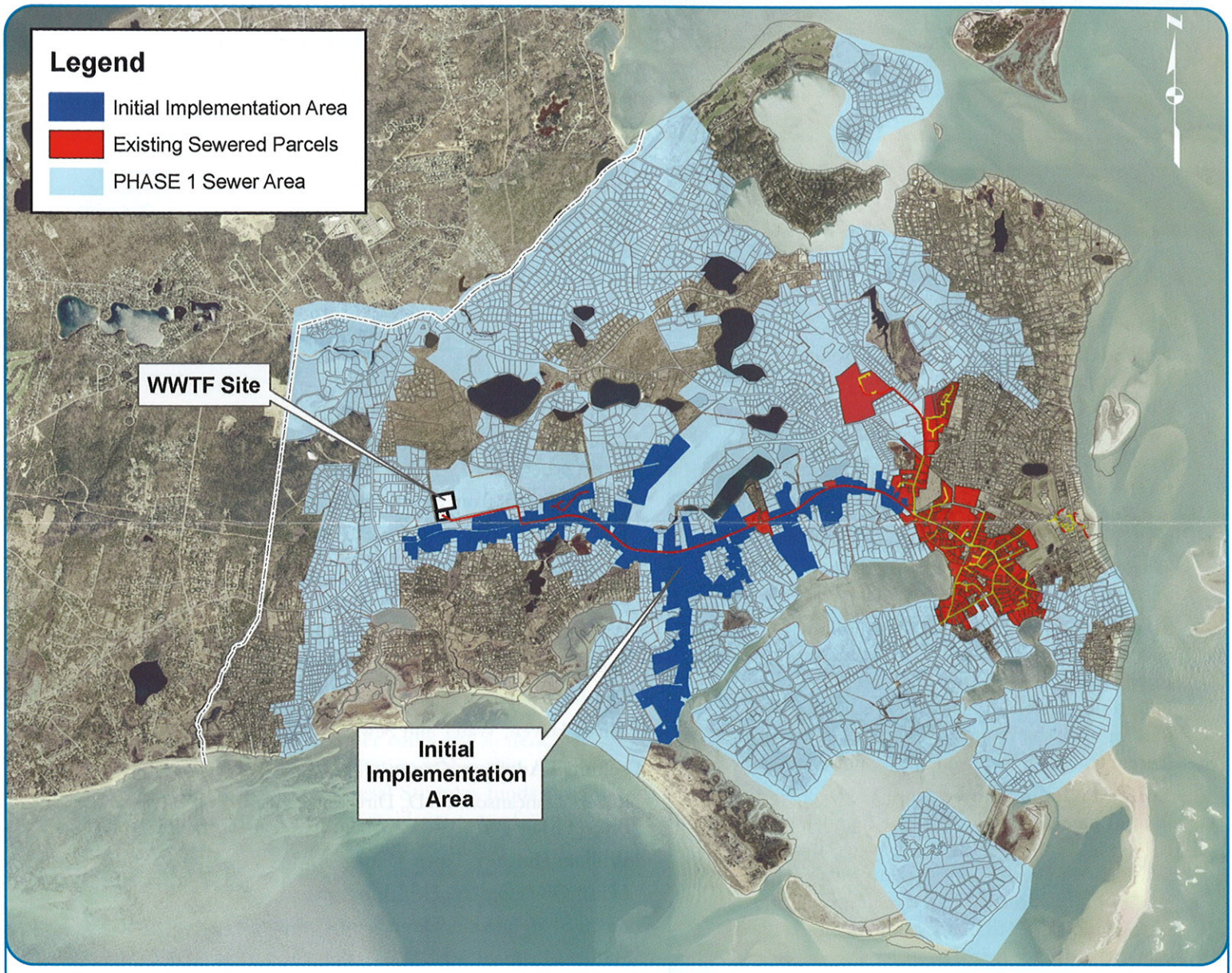


Figure 2. The blue shaded areas on the map show the Phase 1 area for sewering. The dark blue sections will be implemented first.

Conservative fiscal planning has kept Chatham's tax rate low relative to other communities. The total value of properties in Chatham is very high. The Board of Selectmen has chosen to pay for this project's costs entirely through property taxes, which further reduces cost to the average taxpayer. No project betterment costs will be assessed. Funding the project will impact the tax rate. The table below shows the amount by which the property tax is expected to increase for the average taxpayer whose home is valued at $600,000 assuming federal Stimulus funds.

The Town has made and will continue to make every effort to make this environmentally necessary project affordable for its taxpayers.

	W/Out Stimulus Year/Month	W/Stimulus Year/Month
FY12	$0/$0	$102/$8.50
FY13	$138/$11.50	$114/$9.50
FY14	$204/$17.00	$198/$16.50
FY15	$264/$22.00	$198/$16.50
FY16	$228/$19.00	$162/$13.50
FY17	$276/$23.00	$210/$17.50

Information and application materials for financial assistance to pay for sewer hook-ups through the Community Septic Management Program are available at www.barnstablecountyhealth.org/CommSepticLoan/communityseptic.htm or by calling (508) 375-6877. Applications can also be obtained at the Town of Chatham Department of Health and Environment.

Understanding the Terms

Common terms and definitions

Federal Stimulus: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, an effort to jumpstart our economy and create jobs. This federal program provides funding for additional spending at all levels of government. Massachusetts expects to receive $134 million for wastewater treatment projects with the funds to be allocated through the SRF. The USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal loan and grant program will receive $3.7 billion nationwide.

State Revolving Fund (SRF): A funding program jointly administered by the Department of Environmental Protection and the MA Water Pollution Abatement Trust to provide low-cost funding to assist municipalities in complying with federal and state water quality requirements.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL): Nitrogen limit as determined by Mass DEP and approved by EPA. This is the quantity of nitrogen that can be assimilated by an estuary without causing water quality impacts related to nutrient enrichment. The nitrogen loadings to many of Chatham's estuaries currently exceed their TMDLs.

Watershed: The land area that contributes surface or ground water recharge to a water body such as an estuary, pond or lake.

People to Contact if You Have Questions

The planning effort has a **Citizens Advisory Committee** (CAC) that was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to provide Town-wide citizen representation and input to this planning effort. They include:

Fred Jensen, Chairman, from Central Chatham, fredjensen@comcast.net

Philip Christophe, Vice-chairman, from West Chatham

Didi Lovett, from Sears Point

David MacAdam, from Old Village

John Randall, from North Chatham

John Payson, At Large

Charles Pollard, from sewered area

John Raye, M.D., from Morris Island, Stage Island & Little Beach

Burton Segall, from South Chatham

Scott Tappan, from Stage Neck

Ex Officio Members:

Mike Berg, Chamber of Commerce

William Schweizer, Conservation Foundation

Ted Lucas, Shellfish Advisory Committee

Charles Bartlett, Friends of Chatham Waterways

Alfred Haven, Water and Sewer Advisory Board

Technical Advisory Group:

Robert Duncanson, Ph.D., Director of Health and Environment, Project Manager, 508-945-5165, rduncanson@chatham-ma.gov

William Hinchey, Town Manager

Judith Giorgio, R.S., Health Agent

Kevin S. McDonald, Director of Community Development

William Redfield, P.E., Water and Sewer Department Manager

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