

Mashpee Sewer Project Overview

Our Water Problem

With Mashpee's accelerated population growth over the past 50 years, the quality of its water has significantly deteriorated due to the excessive nutrient pollution from the private cesspools and septic systems that property owners have long relied upon to manage wastewater. Increasingly evident to residents and local authorities over time, the poor water quality has impacted aquatic wildlife habitats, the safe recreational use of water bodies, and threatens the local economy (See Mashpee waters and economy).

The Proposed Solution - The Clean Water Plan (also known as the Comprehensive Watershed Nitrogen Management Plan)

The Town developed its Comprehensive Watershed Nitrogen Management Plan (CWMP) following years of water quality research, debate, leadership, and multi-agency coordination to examine Mashpee's needs. This 25-year plan's implementation schedule will be periodically reviewed and evaluated by the Town. It incorporated both wastewater management components and non-wastewater management components to help achieve its clean water goals.

The Funding

Mashpee's voters unanimously approved to fund Phase 1 of its Sewer Project during its May 2021 Town meeting. This first phase of the project (2023-2024) involves construction of a **Water Resource Recovery Facility** (WRRF) and installation of sewer collection lines along public streets within the **Phase 1 Sewer Service Area**, where residential properties are all considered significant sources of nutrient pollution to the Mashpee River and its embayment watersheds. Property owners are required to connect and are responsible for connection of their residential buildings to the sewer service, for the closure of existing septic/cesspool systems, and for the costs associated with these activities. Loan assistance is available to property owners through Barnstable County and the Town of Mashpee.

Current Activities:

- Phase 1 was presented and \$54 million was approved by Town Meeting vote on May 4, 2021.
- The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) announced that the Town qualified for a subsidized State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan to help pay for its Clean Water Plan.
- The Town has also become eligible in April 2023 for an additional \$12 million estimated loan to pay for Phase 1 of the Plan.
- Department of Wastewater Management was established in October 2021 by Town Meeting vote.
- Contracts awarded by the Town in September 2022 (Contract 1 for WRRF, Contracts 2 & 3 for Sewer Collection Systems North and South).
- Mashpee Sewer Policies, Rules, Regulations were approved by the Sewer Commission on August 25, 2022.

- Sewer betterment units were determined and approved October 2022.
- Collection system excavation/installation began November 2022.
- Ground breaking of WRRF occurred in December 2022.
- Review by the engineering companies is ongoing with periodic reports to the Sewer Commission and Selectboard.

Planning of Future activities

Since the State's 2015 approval of CWMP, the Town recognizes that there are changes to land use conditions and nutrient pollutant flows into water resources. In addition, the Town's non-wastewater Shellfish Aquaculture project's performance is being monitored to determine its effectiveness at reducing nitrogen levels in estuaries. The Town adopted a Nitrogen Control Bylaw in 2016 and a Stormwater Management Program in 2018 to help reduce the amount of excess nitrogen and other pollutants entering its water resources. Continuing and new studies of local water resources are regularly being analyzed by the Town.