

Town of Chatham Wastewater Project

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the project be paid for?

The public portions of the project, new wastewater treatment facility, pump stations and sewer mains, will be paid for on the tax rate.

Will there be betterments?

No, the Board of Selectmen voted that all public project costs will be paid for on the tax rate.

Is the Town seeking state or federal money to reduce the impact on the Chatham taxpayer?

Yes, the Town is aggressively seeking grants and low interest loans from state and federal sources. To date the Town has received a combination grant and low-interest loan from the USDA Rural Development Program to offset costs for the new wastewater treatment facility. The Town has also received a commitment from the State Revolving Fund for low interest (2%) loans for construction of the collection system and pumping stations, and the Town is working to receive these loans at 0%. The Initial Implementation Phase of the project is also eligible for federal Stimulus funds that will reduce the amount needed to be borrowed from the SRF.

What part of the project is the Town paying for?

The Town is paying for the new wastewater treatment facility, pump stations, sewer mains and the section of sewer main (“stub”) up to the property line.

What is the homeowner responsible for?

The homeowner is responsible for making the connection between the home and the stub at the property line, including engineering and permitting costs. Homeowners can investigate joining with their neighbors to hire engineers/contractors as a way to reduce costs.

What will it cost me as a homeowner to connect?

This is difficult to say as every circumstance is different based on factors such as: distance of the home to the street, elevation of the home relative to the street sewer, landscaping, location of current septic system, basement plumbing configuration, engineering, permitting, etc. It has been estimated that average connection costs will range from \$3,000-10,000.

Are there ways to help me pay for my connection?

Yes, Barnstable County manages the Community Septic System Loan Program which provides low interest loans to eligible property owners that can be used for sewer connections. More information is available at (508) 375-6877; applications are available from the town's Department of Health & Environment. In addition, eligible property owners may be able to obtain a state income tax credit for sewer connections.

Will I be required to connect my house to the sewer?

Yes, connection will be mandatory in order to meet the water quality standards (TMDLs) under the state and federal Clean Water Acts.

Will the homeowner have input into the location of the connection between the sewer and the home?

Yes, during construction of the sewer mains the engineer and contractor will work with homeowners to determine the appropriate location of the stub.

When will I have to connect?

Individual home connections can not begin until completion of construction of the new wastewater treatment facility and sewer mains and their approval by MA DEP, connections will most likely occur starting in late 2012.

How long will I have to connect?

Most likely a minimum of one year will be provided for a homeowner to make the connection following an order from the Board of Health.

Once my house is connected to the sewer what will the ongoing costs be?

There will be an ongoing sewer use fee based on water use for the property. This fee is billed quarterly, same as water use and will appear on the same bill.

I'm on a private well, if I connect to sewer how will I be billed?

A water meter will be installed on the building's plumbing to determine the sewer charge (there will be no water charge).

Are there ways to reduce the ongoing costs for sewer service?

Yes. Practicing water conservation will reduce your water use and therefore both water and sewer bills. If you have an irrigation system consider installing a separate meter so you won't be charged a sewer fee for water used for irrigation.

I just recently installed/paid for a new septic system, will I still have to connect?

Yes. However, the Board of Health will review each situation on a case-by-case basis to determine the granting of extensions to the time to connect.

My septic system needs to be replaced, what happens?

The Board of Health will review the situation on a case-by-case basis taking into account the reason why the system needs to be replaced and the period of time before sewer will be available to serve the location.

How long will the project take?

Construction of the new wastewater treatment plant is expected to take 24 months. Construction of the pump stations and sewer mains in the Initial Implementation Area are expected to take 24 months overall with work stoppages during the summer season and will be constructed concurrently with the new treatment facility.

What will happen to my existing septic system?

The existing septic system can be abandoned in place in accordance with Title 5 regulations (310 CMR 15.354). This usually involves pumping the septic tank, punching holes in the bottom, and filling it with sand. In some cases the tank may be removed if it is in the way of making the connection to the sewer.

Will sewers be installed on private roads?

Yes. The residents along private roads will be contacted to grant the town authorization to install sewers in private roads.

I live on a private road; will the road be restored following construction?

Yes. Private roads will be restored to a condition equal to or better than the pre-construction condition.

What is the "Initial Implementation" phase?

This phase of the project, funded at the May 2009 Annual Town Meeting, includes construction of the new wastewater treatment facility, 5 pump stations, and construction of sewers along the following roads: Main St. (Route 28) between Crowell Road and Beacon Hill, George Ryder Road, Barn Hill Road, Meadow View Road, Meadow View Road South, Meadow View Road Extension, Horse Shoe Lane, Vineyard Ave between Route 28 and Meadow View Road, Summer Hill Lane, Marcus Lane, Plum Daffy Lane, and Whitley's Way. This phase of the project is expected to begin construction in spring 2010.

Will work take place during the summer season?

Work in roadways or other areas that would impact traffic will be suspended for the summer season. MassDOT (formerly MassHighway) has placed restrictions on when work on Route 28 may occur. Work on the wastewater treatment facility will occur year-round. Work on pump stations that would impact abutters would be suspended for the summer season.