

## **Chapter 3**

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# **Public Participation Program**

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### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

An extensive public participation program has been on-going for the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning Study (Study) to insure that the Town's residents, Town leaders and regulatory community are informed and can provide needed input. The last Wastewater Management Plan (July 1988) was not accepted at Town Meeting even though much effort was expended to develop a recommended plan. The current planning effort has been designed with an active public participation program to create a recommended plan that can be accepted at Town Meeting. This Chapter describes the public participation process that has been implemented as part of the project, describes the public participation steps taken during the project, and those still planned.

The public participation program is made up of the following main components.

- Formation of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and regular meetings
- Formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and regular meetings
- Regular presentation of CWMP findings to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners
- Distribution of public education material
- Participation in a formal MEPA/CCC environmental review process

#### 3.2 TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG)

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was established at the beginning of the Study, composed of members of the Town's professional staff to develop a scope of work and provide technical oversight of the project.

This group initially met monthly to discuss the progress of the project and provide review and guidance of the process in advance of presenting information to the CAC, Board of Selectmen and general public. The TAG has also reviewed all preliminary draft text as well as the final draft of the Needs Assessment Report, this report and other related reports including those prepared by the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) and provided comments and clarifications as needed.

Over the last year (since early 2006) the group has meet more frequently, often twice per month as the project has moved into the development of scenarios, and development of an approach for implementation and financing of a recommended plan.

The TAG has been instrumental in presenting the findings of the CWMP process as they are developed, in addition to acting as the point of contact for associated projects including the MEP and others related to the CWMP efforts. The TAG has presented much of the information developed as part of the CWMP to the CAC and Board of Selectmen and other public groups in order to educate the public on the planning process, its findings and possible direction of the project.

### **3.3 CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)**

A Citizens Advisory Committee was also established early to help select a wastewater project consultant, provide representation for all geographic areas of Chatham, provide representation of various groups in Chatham (ex officio members), provide needed decisions during the course of the Study, and advise the Board of Selectmen on the Study.

The CAC like the TAG have met regularly (typically once per month) during the CWMP process, and have been actively involved in the project. The CAC reviewed the final draft of the Needs Assessment Report, this DCWMP/DEIR Document, MEP reports and TMDLs; and has provided many comments and clarifications on the direction of the Study.

The CAC has become very knowledgeable regarding the wastewater and nitrogen loading problems of the Town. Nitrogen loading (from wastewater and non-wastewater sources) to the Town's coastal embayments has been a major focus of the CWMP; much discussion has occurred about nitrogen loading, its sources, methods to quantify the loadings, and methods to

determine the nitrogen assimilative capacity of the embayments and their relations to the TMDLs. The CAC has reviewed the data, calculations and water quality standards presented in the Needs Assessment Report, and MEP reports and associated TMDLs.

The following presentations have been made throughout the project to the CAC and Town, and facilitate questions and understanding of the CWMP process and its findings (most have been on the local cable-access channel). Most of these presentations have also been presented to the Board of Selectmen following TAG and CAC input. The following summary lists most of the presentations made by Stearns & Wheeler and the TAG to the CAC during the project to date:

- November 1999 – Needs Assessment Report
- February 2002 – Calculation Methodology
- November 21, 2002 – Funding Sources and Alternative Approaches for Cost Distribution
- November 25, 2003 - Review of Wastewater and Nutrient Management Projects on Cape Cod
- April 21, 2004 – Project Approach for Alternatives Evaluation and Development of a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report
- August 19, 2004 – Development of Alternative Modeling Scenarios (also presented to Board of Selectmen)
- March 17, 2005 – Project Progress and Possible Project Acceleration
- April 21, 2005 – Build-out Analysis
- October 20, 2005 – Wastewater Flow Considerations For Fiscal Analysis
- December 15, 2005 – Collection System Technologies and Betterment Considerations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)
- January 18, 2006 - Stage Harbor Area Wastewater and Nitrogen Management Evaluations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)
- March 30, 2006 – Cockle Cove Creek Area Wastewater and Nitrogen Management Evaluations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)
- July 20, 2006 - Taylor’s Pond and Red River Area Wastewater and Nitrogen Management Evaluations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)
- October 19, 2006 – Pleasant Bay Watershed Wastewater and Nitrogen Management Evaluations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)

- March 1, 2007 – Summary of Wastewater and Nitrogen Management Evaluations (also presented to the Board of Selectmen)

### **3.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH/EDUCATION**

Many public education efforts beyond the public presentations identified above were undertaken during the CWMP process (several with the assistance of Regina Villa Associates who are a public education specialist and part of the Project Team). These efforts include the following:

- Development of a four-page flier describing the Study (January 1999) which was mailed to all Town property owners (Attached in Appendix I).
- Development of a two-page flier (June 1999) describing the Study and the main findings of the Needs Assessment Report (Attached in Appendix I).
- Development of an up-to-date list of all Town organizations (25) that needed to be informed of the Study. A letter (with a copy of the Needs Assessment Report Executive Summary and the June flier) was sent to each organization describing the Study and offering a CAC and/or TAG member as a speaker at a future meeting of their organization.
- Coordination with local newspaper editors to produce the numerous articles that have appeared in the Cape Cod Chronicle.
- Discussions with many organizations and individuals in Town.
- Participation in a panel discussion at a Friends of Chatham Waterways meeting/presentation held on June 28, 1999.
- Distribution of the June 1999 flier to two meetings of the Summer Residents Advisory Committee.
- Regular updates to summer residents at their yearly Summer Town Meeting.
- Development and distribution of a four-page flier outlining the September 2004 workshops (Attached in Appendix I).
- Held a Series of public workshops (September 2004) at the Chatham Town Hall to present information on various wastewater treatment and recharge technologies, possible scenarios for addressing the Town's needs and the initial information regarding the Massachusetts Estuaries Project.
- Development of a project webpage on the Town's website containing reports, CAC minutes, wastewater related links, contacts, etc.

### 3.5 PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

The Town's participation in CAC meetings, and Board of Selectman's meetings have constituted the majority of the public meetings and hearings held today associated with this project. As stated above, the Town has also held a public workshop in 2004 to present some of the findings of the project to that point.

The Town has also been very active in the MEP process and has held several meetings to discuss and review the findings of the MEP technical reports and TMDLs for several of the Town's watersheds.

The Project has a formal environmental review process as regulated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Public presentations/hearings have been jointly held with the CCC in the past during the public review of both the Environmental Notification Form and the Needs Assessment Report.

The following additional public presentations/hearings are envisioned as this project proceeds:

- Public review of this DCWMP/DEIR proposed in October 2007
- Public review of the FCWMP/FEIR proposed in February 2008
- Public review of the CCC Development of Regional Impact (DRI) approval proposed in April 2008

These meetings and hearings will be televised as the Board of Selectmen and CAC meetings have been in the past.