

Section 2

Public Participation Programs and Coordination with Other Projects

2.1 Introduction

This section summarizes ongoing projects being coordinated with the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, including local initiatives and public participation programs relevant to development of the CWMP. The public participation program includes meetings of the Wastewater Management Subcommittee and Board of Selectmen, and other public presentations and hearings conducted as part of the environmental and community review process.

2.2 Local Initiatives

The Town established the Water Quality Management Task Force - Wastewater Management Subcommittee in 2007 to develop a management strategy for water resources which complements the Town's 5-year *Local Comprehensive Plan*. The Comprehensive Plan has an overarching vision to "have a superlative educational system for our students, ...rewarding activities for our seniors, ...and enhance[d] vitality of our cultural, recreational, and natural assets." The following summarizes the Comprehensive Plan components related to the CWMP initiative and the WMS task to complement the Town's development goals. A copy of the Local Comprehensive Plan can be found at the Town website: http://www.harwich-ma.gov/public_documents/harwichma_planning/

2.2.1 Local Comprehensive Plan – Villages

The Town's most recent Local Comprehensive Plan was adopted on May 3, 2011. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the commercial districts of East Harwich, Harwich Port, and Harwich Center are each undergoing independent plans for development and redevelopment appropriate to the character of these cultural and commercial centers. Such spaces will continue to enhance the pedestrian culture and offer a positive experience for residents and visitors alike. The remaining commercial district abutting Route 28 should be encouraged to maintain its viability while the Town focuses on developing the existing centers and preserving the historic integrity of the area.

East Harwich, an area which has undergone rapid commercial development in the last 20 years, is located within the nitrogen-sensitive Pleasant Bay watershed. Development for this area is particularly focused on a pedestrian environment where new structures are located in the village center, preserving open space without overburdening existing infrastructure. The zoning framework includes increased residential density in the central village with density decreasing in surrounding areas, mixed commercial and residential areas, increased pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks and bike lanes, a variety of housing units, and standard guidelines for site and building design. East Harwich is considered to be a center for year-round residential activity.

Harwich Port, the original economic center of the Town, will undergo development which protects its beaches and harbors along Nantucket Sound while "revitalizing its role as a village center." As with the

eastern village, water quality in Harwich Port is an issue which must be addressed to achieve development goals. Wastewater treatment for this summer activity center is a priority, as local regulations designed to address water quality issues have limited commercial enterprises from expanding services. Residential septic systems, particularly in high-density development areas, are not meeting current local standards. Harwich Port abuts Wychmere and Squatucket Harbors, both of which require significant nitrogen removal based on the MEP studies. Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike paths, are in line to aid with parking constraints along the shore. Remote parking, complemented by shuttle connections, is also being considered for increased beach and waterway access.

Harwich Center houses a majority of historical buildings and municipal services including the Town Hall, Brooks Free Library, Brooks Park, and the Old Colony Bike Trail, along with nearby public schools and the Community Center. As with the other areas, pedestrian infrastructure is encouraged with expanded sidewalks and bikeways in addition to more accessible vehicular transport, parking, and wastewater treatment; however, all improvements are modest in nature and meant to focus primarily on enhancing rather than reconstructing this portion of town.

2.2.2 Water Quality Management Task Force

In response to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Harwich Water Quality Management Task Force (WQMTF) was established to develop a town-wide management plan which addresses current and future surface water quality of the Town's natural assets. In response to the charged responsibilities, the WQMTF established the Wastewater Management Subcommittee to accomplish the following scope of work:

- Define the water quality problem.
- Identify and define levels of acceptable water quality.
- Identify and characterize all potential sources of water quality infringement in each watershed.
- Determine the impact of future growth and development on water quality consistent with the Comprehensive Plan if no action is taken.
- Develop a comprehensive database for water quality management.
- Identify candidate solutions/remedies.
- Develop a cost benefit analysis for candidate solutions.
- Develop educational materials regarding water quality for use by the general public.
- Develop a clear, concise set of goals and objectives for water quality management.
- Develop a CWMP.
- Conduct public hearings on the CWMP.

- Revise the plan based upon public input.
- Submit a completed draft CWMP to the Board of Selectmen including an action plan, timetable, relevant cost estimates and approaches to funding prior to state agency review.

The Wastewater Management Subcommittee was tasked with developing this CWMP in a manner that incorporates future development strategies, addresses current water quality concerns, meets state-mandated TMDLs, and balances the wastewater needs of the community with financially feasible solutions. Community meetings and coordination with the Board of Selectmen have helped to ensure that the process achieves the most appropriate solution for the residents of Harwich.

The HWQTF also established three other subcommittees: the Sampling Subcommittee, the Pond Subcommittee, and the Website/Report Subcommittee. The Sampling Subcommittee's sampling program was established to monitor water quality in surface water resources throughout the town, including those undergoing MEP study along with several freshwater ponds, during warm-weather months. This subcommittee is staffed with trained volunteers led by Heinz Proft of the Harwich Natural Resources office. The following data is obtained during sample events:

- in-situ measurements, including pH, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity;
- nutrient levels, including chlorophyll, nitrogen, and phosphorus; and
- physical characteristics and observations including weather conditions.

Sampling events occur six times over the course of the summer. Nutrient samples and any other parameters which require laboratory analysis are delivered to the SMAST laboratory or the Barnstable County Health Laboratory.

The Pond Subcommittee has coordinated detailed review of annual pond water quality data to assess the condition of freshwater ponds in Harwich. This information is discussed in detail in Section 5 of this report. The Website/Report Subcommittee coordinates the dissemination of the reports and data of the WQMTF for the purposes of public outreach and education, ensuring that pertinent materials are readily available to all interested parties.

2.2.3 Citizens Advisory Committee

In addition to the WQMTF, a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been established to provide information exchange between the residents and the Wastewater Management Subcommittee. The Citizens Advisory Committee was also established to help ensure that the right plan for Harwich is formulated and brought forward as the best option for the town.

2.2.4 Wastewater Implementation Advisory Committee

A Wastewater Implementation Advisory Committee (WIAC) was formed to supplement the WMS and CAC but specifically to help develop cost recovery model to help implement the recommended program.

2.3 Public Presentations and Hearings

The WQMTF and WMS have continued to engage the public throughout the development of this CWMP. Public participation in the CWMP development has primarily been through the Town's Board of Selectmen meetings, WMS meetings open to the public, and other community meetings.

CDM Smith has worked with the WMS through a series of monthly meetings to complete this CWMP. All of the WMS meetings were open to the public and meeting minutes are published on the Town's website. The committee has reviewed each section of this report and developed informed decisions to best meet Harwich's needs.

The following is a summary of all meetings which have been held on this CWMP to date:

- The WMS has held approximately forty monthly project status meetings since August 2007; these meetings were open to the public and meeting times and agendas were advertised and posted on the Town's website. All of the meeting minutes were posted with the town clerk throughout the project. Minutes from 2010, 2011 and 2012 are posted on the Town's website at:
http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Agendas/HarwichMA_WaterQualityMin/
- Five community meetings have been held to help develop this Draft CWMP/EENF on the following dates:
 - September 27, 2007. CWMP Community Meeting No. 1. Topics included: the need for a citizens advisory committee, what is a comprehensive wastewater management plan, description of the planning process, project schedule, and opportunities for public input
 - January 10, 2008. CWMP Community Meeting No. 2. Topics included: an update on the town-wide Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan and the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP).
 - This community meeting included a presentation by Dr. Brian Howes from the School of Marine Science and Technology titled Estuaries in the Town of Harwich: Present Health and Steps toward Restoration.
 - March 27, 2008. CWMP Community Meeting No. 3. Topics included: an existing conditions report along with preliminary wastewater findings based on projected growth in the area.
 - April 21, 2011. CWMP Community Meeting No. 4. Topics included: present and discuss site screening process for effluent recharge sites, sites identified, and next steps in site selection.
 - March 29, 2012. CWMP Community Meeting No. 5. Topic included: three options to be evaluated for wastewater treatment. One option will be selected to meet the overall wastewater needs of the community.

Information from these public presentations can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the Town's website at:

<http://www.hwqtf.com/Updated%20FAQs.pdf>

As the CWMP project progresses through the review of this CWMP and development of the EIR, the Town will continue to solicit public input and provide outreach and educational opportunities to ensure that the final recommended program for wastewater management addresses the needs of the community.

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