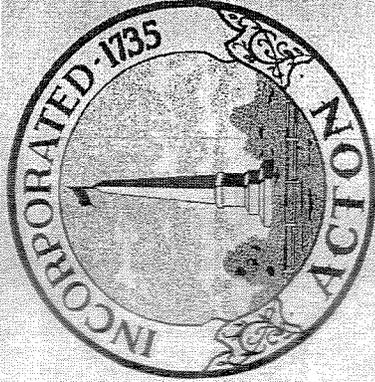


# SEWER ACTION COMMITTEE

## ARTICLE 20

### Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan

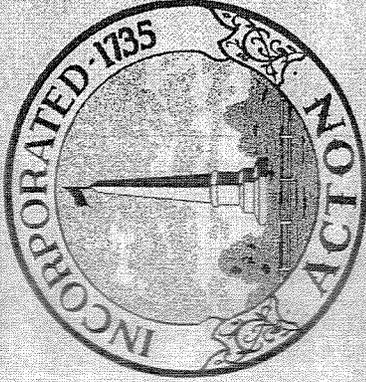




# SEWER ACTION COMMITTEE

## WHAT?

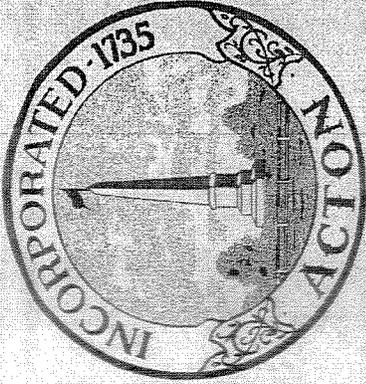
- An assessment of town-wide wastewater management needs to update all related plans to date
- An identification of existing (e.g., West Acton Village/ Indian Village) and potential other problem areas (town-wide) categorized by priority criteria.
- An evaluation of alternative solutions for identified problem areas including technologies and systems, costs and funding, environmental impacts (EIR), management approaches, project delivery systems and institutional arrangements.
- A detailed Management Action Plan/ EIR with recommended actions, costs, and scheduling based on town approved priorities.



# SEWER ACTION COMMITTEE

## WHY?

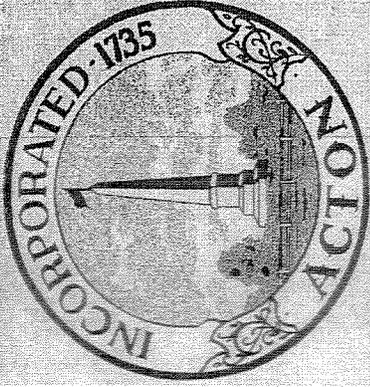
- The Town must obtain a new MEPA certificate to expand the MFPBSD beyond the scope of the existing certificate.
- New environmental laws and regulatory requirements are in affect today that now must be addressed (Water Management Act, Inter-Basin Transfer Act, Rivers Act & the DEP Guidelines for Wastewater Reuse).
- The Town has further wastewater management needs that have not been fully addressed (Increasing septic system failures).



# SEWER ACTION COMMITTEE

## HOW?

- Comprehensively looking at town-wide needs and considering all affected water resources including water supply, wastewater, and storm water management practices, because it is an integrated system. The project will build on the engineering work and planning done to date, and will use a watershed management approach (Assabet River Basin) because water resources do not recognize town borders.

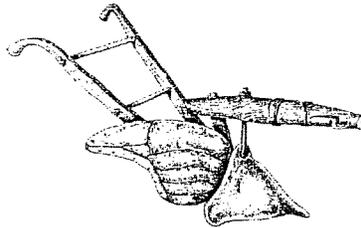


# SEWER ACTION COMMITTEE

## WHEN?

- SRF funding is available (\$500,000) for this project provided that the Town applies prior to October 2000.
- The planning will be performed over a two-year period. The final Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan will incorporate an implementation schedule and plan.

## MUNICIPAL



## QUARTERLY

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3

OCTOBER 2005

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## CALLING 911 IN ACTON

The Acton Public Safety Facility at 371 Main Street has been completed and is now in full operation. The final item to be completed for this project was the integration of separate police and fire dispatch functions into a state of the art combined police and fire dispatch center. This communications center that serves as the heart of the Public Safety Facility is staffed by two public safety dispatchers on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All 911 emergency calls as well as police and fire business calls are received at this center and appropriate emergency units are dispatched immediately. This replaces the older system where 911 calls were received by the Acton Police and if fire or emergency medical units were required the call was then transferred to the fire department. Of special note, and to alleviate any confusion, is the fact that when calling for public safety (police or fire) business the caller will be greeted by a public safety dispatcher answering the phone with the words "Acton Public Safety". The Acton Public Safety Facility consists of facilities for Police Department Operations and Administration, Fire Administration, an Emergency Operations Center and shared conference and training function areas.

All emergency calls should be made to 911 only. Calling any other number may result in a delay in the handling of your call and/or an inability to determine the proper address.

Residents who use new phone technology such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), cable internet and computer phones are reminded to check with their vendor to make sure that a 911 call made from your phone will show the proper address. Also remember that during a power outage your VOIP phones or computer phones may not operate. Please DO NOT call 911 to test your phones.

Robert Craig  
Fire Chief  
978-263-9191

Frank J. Widmayer III  
Chief of Police  
E-911 Municipal Coordinator  
978-263-2911

## STAR PARTY @ NARA PARK

Mark your calendars: a Star Party for Acton is being planned for Friday, November 4, with a cloud date of November 5, at NARA Park. For the past three years, the Outdoor Lighting Education Committee has organized very successful Star Parties for the Acton Fourth-Grade stu-

dents to supplement their Astronomy studies. This November event is meant for the entire town to enjoy, and is sponsored by the Outdoor Lighting Education Committee, the Conservation Commission, Acton Conservation Trust and the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Astronomy Club. Check local newspapers for more details in the weeks to come, and check out [www.actonstarparty.com](http://www.actonstarparty.com) in the near future for information about the objects we will see.

Residents are invited to come to the Star Party to look through telescopes and binoculars, and talk with folks who know and can point out interesting sights that we otherwise would overlook. Did you know that you can see one of our nearest galactic neighbors, the Andromeda Galaxy, with your unaided eye? That is, if you know where to look and what to look for. The Andromeda Galaxy, at a distance of two million light years, is the farthest object that can be seen without optical aid.

Do you have a telescope or binoculars, know a little about astronomy, and would like to share your knowledge with your neighbors? We'd welcome your participation in our Town Star Party! Please call either Steven Feinstein, 978-263-7045 (email [sjf@feinstein.net](mailto:sjf@feinstein.net)), or Bernie Kosicki, 978-263-2812 (email [kosicki@verizon.net](mailto:kosicki@verizon.net)) to find out more. Don't know anything about astronomy but still would like to participate? We have other opportunities to help make this an event that Acton will remember, so please let us know of your interest.

## PLANNING FOR FUTURE WASTEWATER NEEDS

As part of the acceptance of the Middle Fort Pond Brook Sewer Project by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) the Town agreed to undertake a Comprehensive Water Resources Management Planning effort to determine the wastewater disposal needs and analysis for the entire Town, along with the integrated planning necessary to protect Acton's vital liquid resources. At the 2002 Annual Town Meeting, \$500,000 was appropriated for the study. A call went out for residents to volunteer for the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC). This committee, with a cross-section of interests, has been meeting at least four times a year since then.

The CAC and Town Staff chose Woodard & Curran (W&C) to work as consultants on the planning project. Their first task was to have the scope of the study approved by the DEP. The approved scope initially included five phases,

which, thanks to the efforts of the CAC and the project team, have been consolidated into three.

Phase I of the study included the mapping of the Town noting areas of wastewater disposal need. Need is a technical term used to describe lots that "need" a solution other than their current onsite wastewater (septic) system. In many cases this is an area where the soils and drainage are poor, wetlands are close, and there are health concerns about the level of groundwater pollution caused by a conventional septic system. All the needs areas were also inspected after discussions with the CAC members.

A total of 15 needs areas were identified covering an area equal to approximately two-thirds of the town. The CAC then prioritized the needs areas, placing those of greatest need in rank order. The results of these analyses were presented at a public meeting in November of 2004, and published in the document: "Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, June 14, 2004", which is available in the Health Department Office, the Acton Memorial Library or from the Health Department page on the Town of Acton website: [www.acton-ma.gov](http://www.acton-ma.gov).

The project team, consisting of Acton Health Department staff: Director Doug Halley and Environmental Health Specialist Brent Reagor, and Woodard & Curran consultants developed a list of four possible solutions for the needs areas. The solutions are:

1. Connecting to the existing sewer system;
2. Construction of a new sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant in another section of Town;
3. Clustering of homes and neighborhoods into smaller "satellite" systems with smaller scale wastewater treatment facilities; and
4. The establishment of wastewater management districts---these districts would be distinct areas of the community where additional levels of regulatory management would be placed on onsite wastewater systems currently installed.

During the summer of 2005, the CAC has worked with the project team to rank, in order of preference (1-4), the solutions for each of the 15 needs areas identified. This is the first step in Phase II of the project, which will conclude with a report detailing the preferred solutions for the 15 needs areas, and a basic analysis of the obstacles that must be overcome to implement each of the solutions. It is hoped that this phase will finish with a public meeting before the end of the calendar year to present the results. Specifics of this public meeting will be announced later in the fall.

Phase III will be the production of the final report, with guidelines and schedules for the implementation of the solutions for each of the needs areas. When this report is complete, it will be presented at a public meeting during the late winter of 2006 followed by a presentation at the Annual Town Meeting in April.

If you have any questions regarding the Comprehensive

Water Resources Management Plan or the Citizen's Advisory Committee, please contact Doug Halley or Brent Reagor at the **Acton Health Department at 978-264-9634**.

## HOW TO PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT

The National Crime Prevention Council reports that identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. Most of us do not realize how often our everyday actions put us at risk for identity theft. The numbers are staggering and enough to cause concern for any individual.

Here are some tips to prevent identity theft:

- Don't put outgoing mail, especially bill payments, in unlocked mailboxes.
- Drop your mail off at the US Postal Service mailboxes.
- Don't put mail in an unsecured outgoing mail station at work.
- Don't write your account number on the outside of an envelope containing a bill payment.
- Have the post office hold your mail for you when you are out of town or have a trusted neighbor pick it up daily.
- Make sure no one is standing behind you when you use the ATM. He or she may use a cell phone with a camera to try to photograph your card number and pin number. Always shield your card and the screen.
- Pay your bills online, but only through a secure site.
- Don't give out your credit card number on the Internet unless the site is an encrypted secure site whose identity you are certain of.

For more information, brochures and other resources you can visit [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org) or [www.weprevent.org](http://www.weprevent.org). Victims of identity theft can call the Identity Theft Toll-Free Hotline established by the **Federal Trade Commission at 877-IDTHEFT**.

## GETTING READY TO RETIRE?

Are you contemplating retirement in the not too distant future? The Acton-Boxborough United Way has funded a four-part evening series through the Friends of the Acton Council on Aging entitled "*Getting Ready to Retire*". The programs will cover everything from *Pensions, Investments and Social Security through Long Term Health Care, Health Insurance, Getting Your Legal Affairs in Order, Housing Options, Taxation and its ramifications to Healthy Life Styles, Keeping Mentally Active and Community Volunteer Opportunities* all presented by professionals in these areas. These programs will be held at the Acton Senior Center, 50 Audubon Drive, Acton, MA on Tuesday September 27, October 11, 18, and 25 from 7 to 9 PM. The programs are open to anyone in the area considering retirement and light refreshments will be served; this is not limited to Acton residents.

Please call the **Acton Council on Aging at 978-264-9643 to reserve your seat for this free and informative series.**

## NEWS FROM MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Library is offering Library and Computer Skills Clinics Monday evenings at 7 and Thursday mornings at 10. These small, informal sessions are geared to a broad range of needs, including finding library materials and placing reserves, using email or business databases, doing job searches or researching a topic on the Internet. Signing up at the Reference Desk (978 264-9641 x281) on the second floor will assure a space, but drop-ins are accepted when space is available.

### Save These Dates:

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 7:30 PM, "Digging the Big Dig: Boston Archaeology from Island to Underground" This slide presentation by Archaeologist Marty Dudek of John Milner Associates covers several of the major archaeological projects undertaken as part of the Big Dig, including an ancient campsite on Spectacle Island, colonial backyards and outhouses near Hay Market and a nineteenth century glass factory in South Boston.

Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7:30 PM, "Native American Life 3,000-5,000 Years Ago: Reflections on Flagg Swamp Rockshelter, Marlborough". Dr. Shirley Blancke of the Concord Museum discusses how unusually well-preserved animal and plant remains at Flagg Swamp Rockshelter, upriver from the Pine Hawk site in Acton, make it one of the most important archaeological sites in this area. Dug 25 years ago, recent analysis has added focus to previous understanding and suggested the possibility of bear ritualism.

The programs are free and sponsored by the Friends of the Acton Libraries and the Friends of Pine Hawk.

Friday through Sunday, Oct. 28 - 30 Friends of the Acton Libraries' Fall Book Sale. The Preview Sale for Friends members and Acton Memorial Library Foundation donors is Friday night Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 9. The Book Sale is open to the general public Saturday 9 to 4. Sunday is 'Give Away Day' from 2 to 4 in the afternoon.

To qualify for admittance to the Preview Sale, donations to the Acton Memorial Library Foundation must have been made after May 1st but prior to Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>.

The sale will feature thousands of used hard-covers and paperbacks for children and adults; there are also a limited number of audiovisual items.

The Friends of the Acton Libraries support the Memorial Library, West Acton Citizens Library, and the elementary, junior high, and high school libraries.

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ACTON

The Boston Globe

## Outlook grim on waste water

### Official says septic systems deficient

By Sally Heaney, Globe Correspondent | November 21, 2004

At least two-thirds of Acton will need new ways of handling waste water in the next 20 years because home septic systems and small neighborhood treatment plants are not doing the job adequately or will fail in the future, a town Health Department official said last week.

For more than one-third of the town, a solution is needed immediately. In these high-priority areas, there are high numbers of septic system failures and poor conditions for building systems that meet state and local regulations, Brent Reagor, environmental health specialist in the Health Department, said in an interview last week.

Reagor spoke Tuesday night at a public meeting where officials unveiled the first phase of the town's Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. Fewer than 20 people were in the audience.

The plan is required by an agreement Acton struck with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office several years ago when the town obtained a permit to build its only municipal waste-water treatment plant, according to Dan Garson, a consultant with Woodard and Curran. The plant, which serves 9 percent of the town, discharges the treated waste water into the Assabet River.

A number of other towns, including Concord, have been required by the state to prepare similar plans laying out how waste water will be handled in the future.

The state required the management plans because it wants Acton and other towns to find more environmentally friendly ways to dispose of waste water. The state wants towns to do a better job of treating the waste water and then keep it local, if possible, to recharge the ground water. While the state sees faulty septic systems as a problem, sending sewage to central treatment plants, then down rivers -- which are already stressed by pollutants -- and out to sea is not seen as the ideal solution.

Jane Ceraso, environmental manager for the Acton Water District, said that looking at water management in a comprehensive fashion is a good idea. "This process is long overdue," she said. "We don't have great aquifers, and we don't have great waste-water disposal systems in Acton."

In Phase 1 of Acton's planning process, a citizens advisory committee worked with town staff and consultant Woodard and Curran to rank the needs in 15 areas throughout town as high, medium, or low. The factors that led to an area being ranked as high on the scale include poor soil that does not properly treat the waste water; dense development; nearby wetlands or flood plains; small yards; and high ground water.

"There are lots where it is physically impossible to build a compliant [septic] system," Reagor said.

The next step will be to match the possible solutions identified by the team with the areas. Reagor said the goal is to present researched, recommended solutions for all the high-priority areas to the public by the end of 2005. Preliminary work on potential solutions for the medium- and low-priority areas also will be presented.

How soon any of the solutions will be implemented "depends on the voters of Acton," Reagor said. "Any progress forward is going to require funding."

Possible solutions include expanding the existing sewer system and building new treatment facilities for

neighborhoods.

The team identified four potential locations for new treatment facilities: two off High Street near the existing treatment plant on Adams Street, another near the intersection of Wetherbee Street and Route 2, and the fourth near Quarry Road north of NARA Park.

The team concluded that, in some areas, the only environmentally and politically feasible solution may be keeping the home-based septic systems but improving them, perhaps by making them larger, Reagor said.

Resident Terra Friedrichs expressed concern at the meeting improved waste-water treatment would foster increased development in town. Health director Doug Halley said the town is looking at how to meet existing needs, but he couldn't say more growth wouldn't occur as a result of improved treatment capabilities.

Areas identified as high priority are not concentrated in any particular part of town. The largest area has 548 parcels, including the Indian Village subdivision. The others are along both sides of Great Road in East Acton from Route 27 to the Concord town line; the Spencer Road, Tuttle Drive, Dover Heights area; West Acton Center; and the Powdermill Plaza area along Route 62.

Areas with medium-priority needs include North Acton Village near NARA Park; the Robbins Park neighborhood; Brucewood Estates; the Nash Road and Downey Road neighborhood off Central Street; and the Flagg Hill and Forest Glenn area.

The areas identified as low-priority are near Great Road and the Littleton line; Acton Center; the Brookside Village neighborhood off Parker Street; southern Main Street near the Maynard line; and the area near Stow Street and Billings Street. ■

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## **Planning our Water Future: Acton's CWRMP**

Acton is in the process of completing a Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Report (CWRMP/EIR). This Plan is intended to be a comprehensive look at the management of all water resources in Acton. A major component of the plan will examine the wastewater disposal needs and solutions for the entire Town. With only a small portion of town covered by the Middle Fort Pond Sewer District, development creating more demand on our water resources, and many septic systems in need of major upgrades to meet Title Five specifications, this comprehensive look at water planning is timely. Wastewater disposal is not the only focus of the plan, it will also take into account other water resource issues such as: drinking water quantity and quality, stormwater management, surface and ground water quality, and the integration of all aspects of water resource management. Jane Ceraso, the Acton Water District's Environmental Manager, is a member of the CWRMP Citizen's Advisory Committee, which is working with Acton's Health Department and the project engineers, Woodard and Curran.

Phase One of the CWRMP has now been completed. It included identification of the greatest waste water "needs areas" in town and potential solutions for those areas. In addition to the existing sewer system, sites have been selected for the potential to treat and dispose of treated water. The plan will now investigate those sites and evaluate alternative collection and treatment technologies, and the feasibility of various solutions. It is expected that a public meeting will be scheduled in 2005 to discuss these potential solutions.

For more information, contact Jane Ceraso, Acton Water District, at (978) 263-9107 or Brent Reagor, Acton Health Department, at (978) 264-9634.

*Acton Water District Newsletter*

IS EXPANSION OF SEWERS A SOLUTION TO ACTON'S  
WASTEWATER DISPOSAL PROBLEMS?

WHAT IS THE 20 YEAR PLAN FOR PROTECTING ACTON'S  
WATER RESOURCES?

ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS, AND MANY MORE AT:

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>  
7:00 PM

FAULKNER ROOM (ROOM 204)  
ACTON TOWN HALL

For more information, contact the Health Department at (978) 264-9634

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For more information, contact the Health Department at (978) 264-9634

## SUMMARY

The 2000 Town Meeting voted to fund a comprehensive town-wide needs assessment, considering all affected water resources; including water supply, wastewater and storm-water management practices. For the past five years the Town's consultant, Woodard and Curran, working with the Health Department analyzed the historic and current water resource conditions within the Town; developed an analysis that identified areas in the town that presented an environmental risk to water resources that must be addressed; and made recommendations on solutions that addressed each specific need.

As part of that study a Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed consisting of a cross-section of Town residents and Board members. Throughout the study, this group was relied upon to guide, advice, and troubleshoot the findings of the report. In addition, during the process, several public hearings were held and comments from the public were incorporated into the report.

The Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan report is available at the Memorial Library, Health Department and on the Town of Acton Web Site. It has major recommendations which will form a framework for decisions on water resources for the next twenty years. Acceptance of the report at this Town Meeting provides guidance to the Town in attaining goals that protect Acton's water resources. Each recommendation will be brought to future Town Meetings for approval.

To the Editor,

On March 16, 2006, the Acton Citizens Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan will present their findings to the public. The Citizens Committee has been meeting since April 2002 after Town Meeting voted \$500,000 to fund a comprehensive study of Acton's water resources' problems, needs, and possible solutions. With the help of consultants Woodard & Curran, the entire Town was mapped to locate those areas that presented an environmental risk to water resources. These areas of need and information about the solutions available to address those needs were presented at public meetings on November 16, 2004 and December 8, 2005.

Building upon the previous public meetings, this meeting will present the final draft of the Acton Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Report, which presents a "Framework for the Future"; a framework which sets forth the foundation for the next 20 years of protecting Acton's vital resources – our drinking water, our streams, our ponds, and our wetlands. This presentation will serve as a prelude to the 2006 Annual Town Meeting, where the citizens of Acton will be asked to accept the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Report which will provide guidance for future water resource decisions in Acton.

Copies of the plan are available in the Memorial Library, the Acton Health Department, and on the Town of Acton website for those who wish to review them.

The meeting will be held on March 16, 2006 in the Francis Faulkner Room (Room 204) of the Acton Town Hall and will start at 7PM

If you have any questions about the report or the meeting, please call the Acton Health Department at 978-264-9634.

Sincerely,

The Acton Citizens Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Public Education Subcommittee





35 New England Business Center  
Suite 180  
Andover, Massachusetts 01810

Tel. 978-557-8150  
Fax: 978-557-7948  
mail@woodardcurran.com  
http://www.woodardcurran.com

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MEETING DATE: December 8, 2005

REFERENCE: Acton CWRMP  
Public Information Meeting

DISTRIBUTION: CAC  
Town of Acton Health Department  
Woodard & Curran  
Posting on Town website

Submitted by: Robert Rafferty, P.E.

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The following meeting minutes have been interpreted to the best of the writer's understanding with respect to topics discussed. A copy of these minutes has been sent to the attendees for their review and information. Additions and/or corrections are invited and will be made a matter of record. Mail, email, or fax additions/corrections to Woodard & Curran, Inc. Andover Massachusetts, Attn: Bob Rafferty. [brafferty@woodardcurran.com](mailto:brafferty@woodardcurran.com)

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**ATTACHED ITEMS**

Agenda  
Presentation Handouts  
    Where are We Now?  
    What are the Priorities?  
    Where did the Priorities Come From?

**AGENDA ITEMS**

***Welcome and Introductions:***

Doug Halley led the introductions of the CAC and provided a background on the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Process (CWRMP) process. The project is the result of a special procedure agreed to by the Department of Environmental Protection and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (DEP/MEPA) to conduct planning related to the wastewater needs of Acton and the construction of the Middle Fort Pond Brook sewer project.

The town received a petition signed by 115 residents interested in sewer service in the Spencer/Tuttle/Flint neighborhood. This area is part of the analysis to be presented at this meeting.

**PRESENTATIONS**

(This discussion is a summary of the presentations. Refer to the attached presentations for specifics)

***Needs and Solutions:***

Brent Reagor (Assistant Health Director) presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the history of the needs and solutions analyses. The presentation included a summary of needs criteria, possible solutions, priority rankings, and action items for the next steps. The CWRMP Phase 2 report is nearly complete, with feedback from this public meeting to be included in the report. The CAC volunteers have

been involved for a long time and they have the knowledge of the process as well as ownership of the results. The CWRMP will be submitted to the DEP and MEPA in the form of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF). The report will also be submitted to Town Meeting for approval.

The CAC and Project Team identified 15 areas as having need for alternative wastewater disposal solutions for various reasons. The areas were divided into high, medium, and low priorities. The CAC evaluated each needs areas, ranked the possible solutions, and selected a preferred solution for each area. The high priority areas were also ranked to set the priority for action.

Specific points not on the presentation slides include:

- Brent presented an overview of the current wastewater disposal systems in Acton. Approximately 10% (727) of the town's parcels are located in watershed protection zones – many of the parcels have septic systems.
- A series of maps are on display that show the CWRMP process, from determining needs areas to the final planning areas, and a map showing areas proposed to be connected to the Middle Fort Pond Brook sewer system.
- The wastewater solutions are limited by disposal capacity since available land suitable for receiving water is scarce.
- Major obstacles to construction of infrastructure include Route 2 and railroad tracks. Though not impossible to cross with pipelines, these features can greatly increase complexity and cost. Therefore, the West Acton needs area was split into two segments divided by the railroad right of way.

***What are the Priorities?***

Lauren Rosenzweig (Board of Selectmen representative on the CAC) presented a discussion on the recommended ranking of solutions, including structural and non-structural criteria.

The priority rankings are:

1. Powdermill Plaza
2. West Acton Center (east)
3. Spencer/Tuttle/Flint
4. West Acton Center (west)
5. East Acton Village / Route 2A Corridor
6. Indian Village

The Town had the foresight during the planning for the Middle Fort Pond Brook sewer to design capacity in the system for expansion. There is 49,000 gallons per day of disposal capacity in the existing system, which will not serve all of the needs areas.

Service to the West Acton Center (west) area will be limited because of the capacity limits. The East Acton Village / Route 2A Corridor area has limited disposal options because the Wetherbee Street parcel, initially identified for potential dispersal site, has a deeded conservation restriction.

### ***Where did the Priorities Come From?***

Nancy Tavernier presented a discussion of the CAC's role and the process by which the priorities were set. The CAC was formed in 2000 to include a cross-section of the town citizens, or stakeholders, to provide opinions and views and act as a sounding board. The CAC has no official voting or decision-making powers. Town Meeting is the final decision maker.

Nancy reviewed the needs criteria selected by the Project Team and CAC. Economics also factored in the criteria review.

Available capacity is limited to 49,000 gpd. The wastewater flow from the original sewer district was 500,000 gpd shortly before the scheduled Town Meeting vote on the Middle Fort Pond Brook sewer system. However, DEP only allowed half (250,000 gpd) of the capacity because of concerns with breakout from the disposal fields. This resulted in the existing configuration of the sewer system. DEP has allowed an additional 49,000 gpd to be discharged at the disposal field. The recommended priorities reflect this limited capacity. The CAC discussed concerns related to the best use of the capacity, the cost-effectiveness, and the methods of paying for a new sewer project.

Estimated flows from the high priority needs targeted for connection to the sewer are:

- Powdermill Plaza – 5,000 gpd
- West Acton Center (east) – 20,000 gpd (with schools included)
- Spencer/Tuttle/Flint – 17,000 gpd
- West Acton Center (west) – 17,000 gpd

The total of 59,000 gpd exceeds the available capacity. The schools are driving the direction of the pipe. The town needs data from the school property, such as an engineering study to determine if an onsite solution is feasible at the schools. If it is feasible, then additional properties in West Acton could be connected to the sewer.

Many people called members of the CAC with creative and thoughtful ideas. Many residents who were part of the original sewer district expressed interest in being connected to the sewer system.

### ***Question & Answer Session***

Question and answer sessions are notated as follows: (Q = Question from Attendees; A = Answer from Project Team/CAC; C = Comment from Attendees; R = Response from Project Team/CAC)

- C: The Wetherbee parcel that is identified as a potential dispersal location for East Acton has a deeded conservation restriction that states that the parcel will revert to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts if the land is not used for conservation. The State is interested in preserving agricultural soils, so if the soils are removed or altered for wastewater disposal then the Town may not be preserving these soils. Article 97 of the State Constitution requires an act of the legislature (both houses) and a Town Meeting vote to transfer the use of the parcel.
- A: The Town shares the same concerns. The deed restrictions have not been reviewed in depth but before any additional work is done on the parcel we get State approval. The town does not want to risk losing the land.

- Q: Residents in the Spencer/Tuttle/Flint neighborhood petitioned for connection to the sewer. Many are installing expensive onsite systems, groundwater is high, and some pump the septic tank every 3 months. Can the schedule be expedited so that the Town votes in April to appropriate money for the sewer?
- A: The first step is to accept the report because Town Meeting voted to fund the study. Then the public review period and state approval process has to be completed before moving forward. Bonding, design, etc all take time.
- C: The whole neighborhood is under a swamp, some people are digging up their entire yards for septic systems, every house in the neighborhood is polluting the water. The Town approved installing systems in all these areas and now people are having problems with them. Only recently did a delay occur in the proposed schedule.
- R: The CAC is sympathetic and wants to move as quickly as possible to solve the problems but as a practical matter, public projects take time. To be realistic, the earliest that a funding vote could be taken is fall 2006.
- Q: In East Acton, sewerage along Route 2A may result in the type of growth that does not support the village plan. The scale is counter to the village plan. Can the recommendation be scaled down to address the village area only?
- A: The Health Department was involved with the village planning effort. Cluster (small shared or neighborhood) systems are the preferred solution at this time, mainly because the restrictions on the Wetherbee parcel restrict the probability of a larger system. Clusters may be the only (or best) solution that is implementable and feasible.
- C: It would be better to do as little, not as much, as possible.
- Q: What is the cost to tie in versus the cost not to tie in? Some people have already spent \$20,000 to \$30,000 for a new septic system.
- A: For the Phase 1 project, properties with frontage along the sewer had a betterment of approximately \$12,500, which could be repaid over 30 years. This is paid whether or not the property connects to the system. Add \$3,000 to \$4,000 for the service connection contractor and user charges. User charges are paid monthly; betterments are paid quarterly. New construction project estimates will be completed prior to Town Meeting.
- Q: Was any engineering done on areas adjacent to the sewer system as part of the Phase 1 sewer project?
- A: Some investigations were done in these areas, but no design work was conducted.
- Q: Are betterments transferable to a new property owner?
- A: Yes, but the mortgage company decides this issue. Often, it depends on the amount of the down payment.
- Q: The Town should vote to serve the Spencer/Tuttle/Flint neighborhood, which obviously needs sewer, but not West Acton. West Acton Center may need more study because the preliminary data does not make a convincing argument for sewerage. West Acton could hold Spencer/Tuttle/Flint hostage if West Acton residents resist sewerage at Town Meeting. The Town should address smart growth in West Acton Center and conduct an onsite financial analysis to compare to the cost of sewerage prior to going to Town Meeting.

- C: (Conservation Commission member) The Conservation Commission was very cautious prior to granting permission to install test wells on the Wetherbee parcel. The Conservation Commission is not comfortable with using conservation land for wastewater disposal. This may be a good cause, but if this cause is justification there may be many other good causes that could alter conservation land. Do not underestimate the fill-in development that may occur. Many properties previously thought of as undevelopable are being developed because the economics justify it.  
To address the comment that town-approved systems are causing problems now: the town had different bylaws and regulations when the systems were approved. The bylaws are better now. For example, beavers have been causing flooding. The Conservation Commission extended the setback for structures from wetlands from 25 feet to 75 feet. This may cause an economic strain but flooding caused by beavers may not raise the groundwater under a disposal field.
- C: Think about financing, whether the costs are borne by the general taxpayer or funded entirely from the sewer area. The town's financing model for the Phase 1 sewer is a one of a kind compromise. The town raised the funds through residents in the sewer district, plus the general taxpayer funded the municipal properties in the district. The town raised money through estimated betterments, but final betterments are determined at the end of the project. This was a tightrope and the town was very close to not making it at times, but it worked and was a good compromise.
- C: Residents of the Spencer/Tuttle/Flint had a show of hands in support of sewerage the neighborhood. The majority of those in attendance raised their hands.
- Q: The town has 60% of the original discharge capacity allowed by the state. Is there any chance to get more?
- A: The town got the recent 49,000 gpd increase by showing that the disposal beds could adequately accept the flow. But the best chance to get more properties connected is through water conservation.
- Q: How were the estimates of flow derived?
- A: Water use records were used. Recognizing the water use does not always equal wastewater use, only winter water usage was used to remove lawn watering from the analysis.
- Q: What are the next steps?
- A: Finalize the report for CAC review; submit for public comment and work with DEP at the same time, and submit the CWRMP/EIR to Town Meeting for approval. It is up to the town to accept it or not.
- Q: What can we do as a group to counter naysayers?
- A: Talk to your elected officials about issues such as financing; attend Town Meeting; convince your neighbors to be involved.
- C: Use of the Wetherbee parcel is counter to the Open Space and Recreation Plan because the parcel is contiguous to two parcels with prioritized preservation, meaning the town has prioritized the parcels for purchase if they are put up for sale. Using the Wetherbee parcel for disposal may result in development of the other two parcels.

***Wrap-up***

Doug Halley closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and reiterating that involvement of citizens is an important component of the planning process.



**Town of Acton.**  
**Public Information Meeting**  
Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan  
Phase II  
Thursday, December 8, 2005  
Room 204  
Acton Town Hall  
7:00pm

**Moderator:** Doug Halley, Public Health Director

**Meeting Goals:**

Present the results of Phase II:

- Solutions selected for the "Needs Areas"
- Priority Ranking of Needs Areas and Solutions

Receive input from the citizens of Acton

**Agenda:**

- |                                       |                   |            |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| • Welcome                             | Doug Halley       | 5 minutes  |
| • Needs and solutions                 | Brent Reagor      | 15 Minutes |
| • What are the Priorities?            | Lauren Rosenzweig | 15 Minutes |
| • Where did the Priorities come from? | Nancy Tavernier   | 15 Minutes |
| • Questions and Answers               | Doug Halley       | 45 Minutes |
| • Wrap-up                             | Doug Halley       | 5 Minutes  |

# Sign In Sheet

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