

# Town of Acton Sewer District West Acton Continuation



March 14, 2019  
West Acton Sewer Action  
Advisory Committee

Middle Fort Pond Brook Sewer Enterprise  
Paul Campbell, Town Engineer  
Engineering Department



# Presentation Roadmap/Overview

- Introduction: FY20 Budget Request/Town Meeting
- Sewer District History
- West Acton Study Area
  - Sewer Advantages & Challenges
  - Tentative Timeline & Cost Estimates
  - Construction Financing Options
  - Property Owner Costs
  - West Acton Study Update
  - FY20 Budget Request & Additional Information



## Introduction: FY20 Budget Request

- Town Manager's budget for 2019-2020 requests \$225K from sewer enterprise fund for survey, preliminary design, feasibility study for possible sewerage of West Acton
- Budget request recommended by the Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee

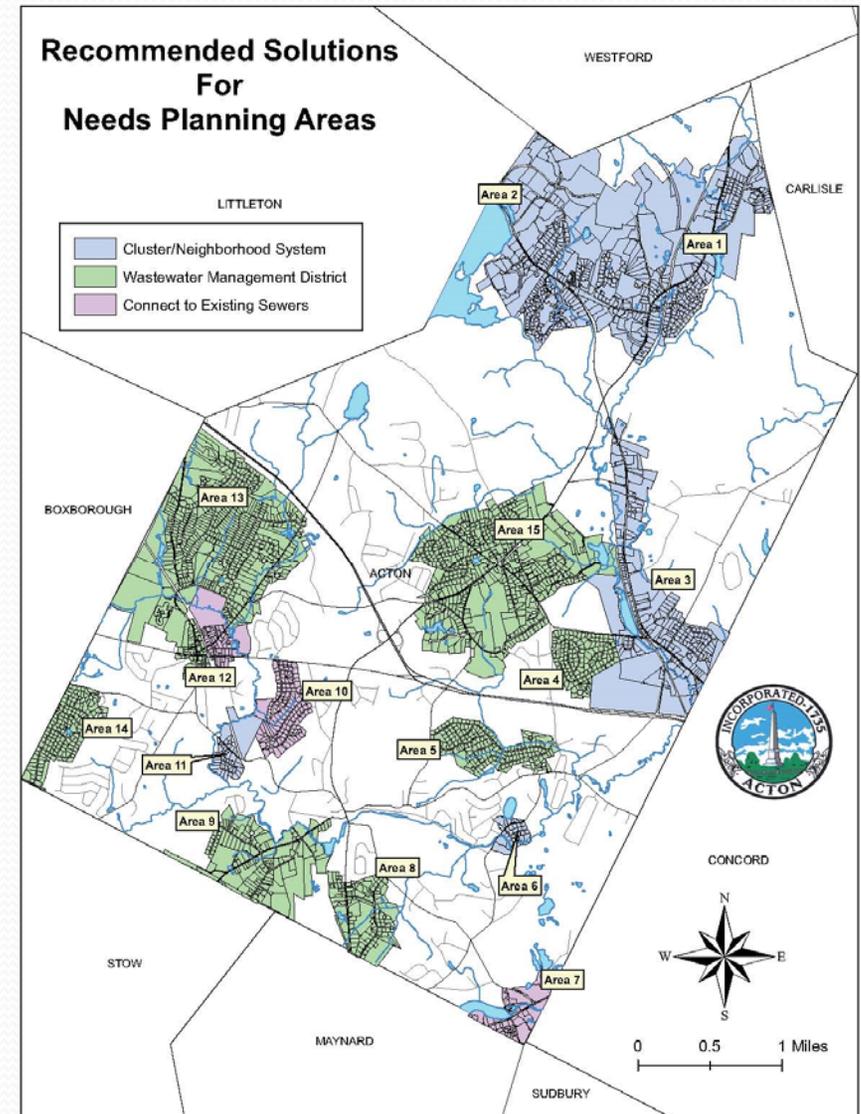
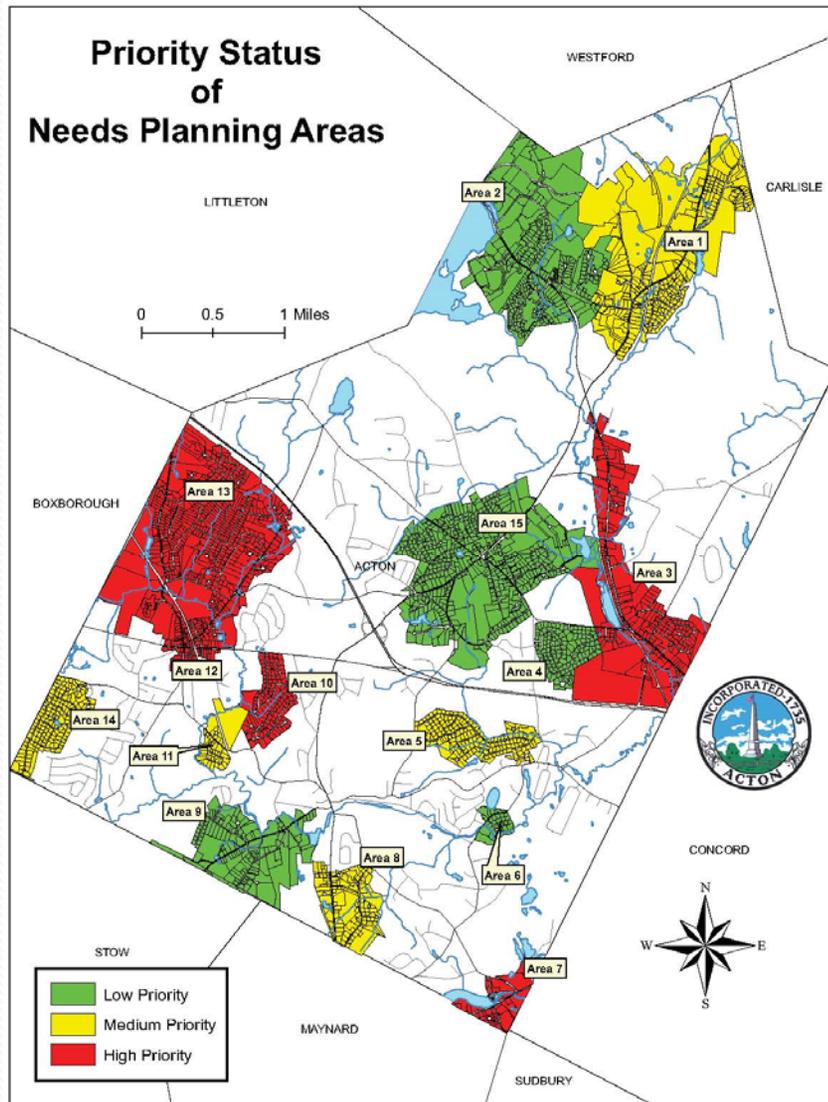
# Sewer District History

**1945 – 1995:** Recurring efforts, progress toward sewerage in Acton

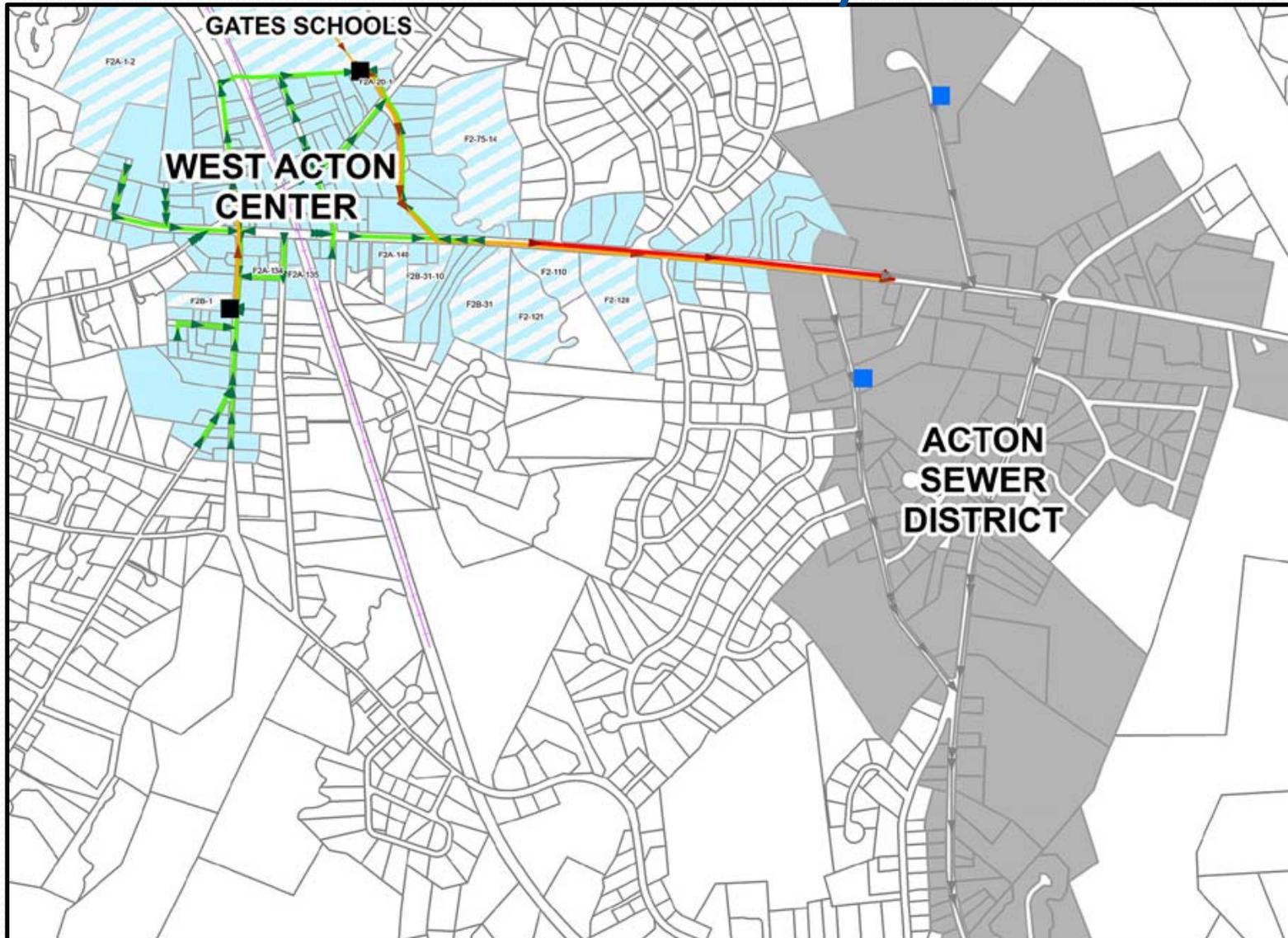
**1996 – 2006:**

- AB High School campus under MA Department of Environmental Protection consent decree
- Annual Town Meeting approval of sewerage in Kelley's Corner, South Acton
- MA-DEP requires and approves Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan (CWRMP), identifying future potential sewerage areas

# Sewer District History: What is the CWRMP?



# West Acton Study Area



# Project Area





# Sewering Advantages & Challenges

## **Advantages**

- Convenient, reliable
- Attractive option for properties with older/non-standard septic systems, or for smaller properties
- Environmental protection
- Economic sustainability, Acton 2020 goal
- Potential wastewater alternative for Gates twin-school project

## **Challenges**

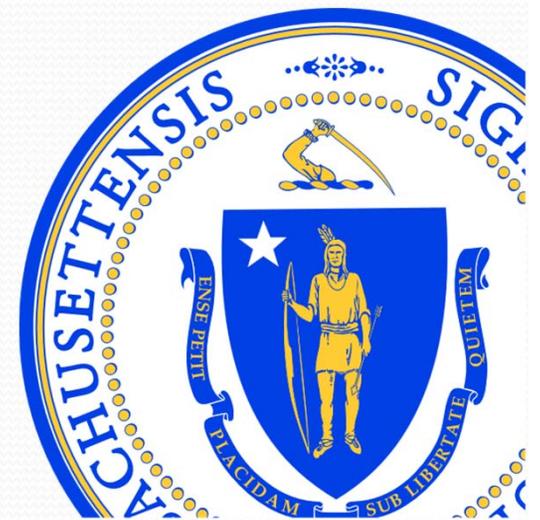
- Cost
- Project timing & area constraints

# Tentative Timeline & Cost Estimates

- 2019 Town Meeting: Authorization for \$225K to cover survey & preliminary design
- Future Town Meeting: Request for full design & construction funds.
- Design phase: 1-2 years
- Construction phase: 2+ years
- Estimated Cost: \$12-14 M
  - Single-family betterment: \$27-35,000
- Preliminary design work will refine cost estimates

# Construction Financing Options

- State Revolving Fund
  - West Acton is priority project
- Municipal Borrowing, Other Sources
  - For ineligible costs such



# Property-Owner Costs

- Betterment Cost: Portion of total project cost
  - Payable over 30-years at same interest rate as Town, or
  - Payable up-front, -0- interest
  - Typically transferable to next owner
- User Fees: For use of sewer system if owner connects
  - Based on average water usage in winter
  - More users → lower user fees
- Connection Costs: One-time costs when the owner connects
  - Town Fee: For inspection, recordkeeping, other administrative
  - Connection Cost: Owner responsibility to hire a contractor to do sewer connection.

# Septic System vs. Sewer Costs, Residential

## **Septic**

- Maintenance – min cost for a functioning system
- Construction - highest cost for replacements
- Design - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for replacements
- Permits—low (functioning system) higher(replacements)

## **Sewer**

- Betterment - highest cost (min for functioning systems)
- Connection – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest at time of connection
- Monthly Use Fee - ongoing cost at time of connection
- Permits - one time cost (low) at time of connection

***Many of these cost vary with the location of your property and water use. See handout for a range of estimates***

# Property-Owner Costs: Calculation of Betterment

- Betterment formulae in local bylaw, Chapter D
- Residential:
  - SF home = 1 sewer betterment unit (SBU)
  - Multi-family unit, < 3 BR = 2/3 SBU
  - Business: Based on square footage of property
- Public entity: No betterment or other payment unless connects. In lieu of betterment charge, “avoided costs,” that is, cost of installing septic system.
- Illustration: See next slide

# Property-Owner Costs: Calculation of Betterment (cont'd)

## Illustration:

Total Cost of Project: \$100

Subtract:

Public entity payments: “avoided costs,” road repaving, etc. ( 25)  
\$ 75

Divide by total SBUs: 15

**Cost per SBU: \$ 5**

# West Acton Proposal Update

- Current status
- Next steps
- Impact of AB school building project
- Need for sewerage & alternatives to sewerage
- Is connection to sewerage required?
- Comparison of sewer and septic costs

# FY20 Budget Request

\$ 225K from Sewer Enterprise Fund for cost of survey, preliminary design, feasibility study:

- Will provide more information for public to decide whether to proceed with project
- Will keep sewerage proposal in line with anticipated schedule for new twin-school building at Gates School site:
  - Gates site recommendation in January 2019
  - School project to be completed by Fall 2022
  - Sewerage will remain an option for Gates site: cost = “avoided costs” = cost of septic system or treatment plant
  - Minimal construction coordination necessary between the projects if both proceed

**Construction funding will require a future Town Meeting vote**

# Additional Information/Questions?

- Engineering Department at 978-929-6630
- West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee webpage at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/605/West-Acton-Sewer-Action-Advisory-Committ>
- This presentation and additional information available at <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-10826>
- Video tour of Acton Wastewater Treatment Plant available at <http://actontv.org/on-demand/post-video/wastewater-treatment-facility-tour>



# Economic Sustainability

- “West Acton [is] a district where zoning specifically promotes and encourages the kind of vibrant mix of uses that a sewer [would] enable” – Mathias Rosenfeld, West Acton Villageworks
- “Town sewer in West Acton would give us an opportunity to grow our business in new ways” – Chris Powell, Orange Door Kitchen
- “There is a lot of momentum and excitement in West Acton, but in order for it to reach its potential as a vibrant, walkable commercial district, and attract more high quality businesses, we need sewer services.” – Lucy Goldstein, Wellness at Villageworks



# Acton 2020 Goals

- **Goal 1 – Preserve & Enhance Town Character**
  - Preserve and enhance key [town] centers (Objective 1.2)
- **Goal 2 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability**
  - Protect the quality and quantity of Acton’s water (Objective 2.1)

- **Action Item 2.1.2.1: West Acton Village sewers**

*Consider extension of sewer and/or advanced package wastewater treatment in West Acton Village to serve redevelopment of the commercial area north of Massachusetts Ave and also to serve existing high priority neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan*



Thank You!