



Why Do We Have a Sewer Fee?

Recently, the Town of Enfield looked for an equitable means to pay for necessary operations and improvements to its sewer system. The Town decided to implement a sewer fee. Previously, the Town funded its sewer program through a portion of the local property tax.

The Town recognized the need to spend significant money on sewer improvements in the near-term because of the age of its system and the need to comply with regulatory demands. By making a change to the current funding structure, residents and businesses are charged directly for sewer use. This provides a more stable system to finance short and long-term maintenance and improvement projects, brings the Town in line with funding structures used by a majority of communities in Connecticut and nationwide, and

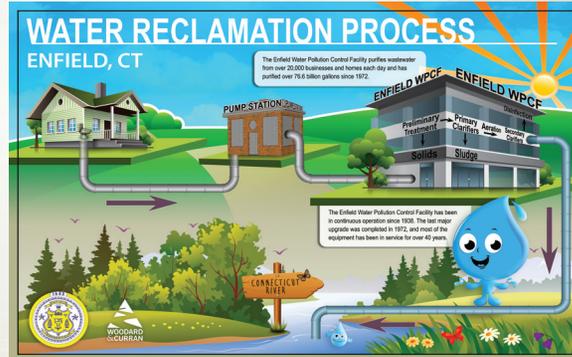
offers a more fair method of paying for sewer improvements. Households that conserve water pay less than high-volume sewer users.

This change is more attractive to residents as well as the commercial and industrial community, and it provides the Town with additional external funding resources not available to municipalities that use property tax-based funding systems.

Changing the funding method will provide additional benefits. Rates can be locked in for three to five years to allow residents and businesses to plan accordingly. No property tax increase is needed to fund wastewater system improvements. Using this new funding system, a 10-year capital improvement plan can be implemented, providing a sustainable future for the Town of Enfield's wastewater needs. ■

Water Pollution Control

The origins of water pollution control in Enfield began in the 1930s when portions of the sewer collection system were installed. The Enfield Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) was originally constructed as a primary treatment facility in 1938. The next major sewer development occurred in 1967 with the codification of a Town ordinance (Chapter 86 of the Enfield Town Code) establishing a Water Pollution Control Authority in accordance with Chapter 103 of the Connecticut General statutes. A short time later in 1972, secondary treatment at the Enfield Water Pollution Control Facility was added to comply with the provisions of the Connecticut Clean Water Act of 1967 and subsequent Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, which called for elimination of all polluted discharges to the nation's waters and mandated planning, regulation, and enforcement.



Today, sanitary wastewater is collected from residential, commercial and industrial users throughout the Town serving about 95% of the Town's approximately 45,000 residents as well as the Enfield and Somers Correctional Institutions. Enfield is responsible for maintaining the 10 million gallon per day WPCF, the sanitary sewer system comprising 250 miles of sewer pipe, and 16 pump stations.

On Tuesday, October 22, 2013 the Enfield town council unanimously voted to implement a new sewer usage fee starting January 2014 that will charge residents and businesses based on water consumption. The intent of this new sewer use fee is to independently fund current sewer facilities operations and a capital improvement plan. This is a very significant milestone for the Town which now has a sustainable path for funding their sewer program. ■

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www.enfield-ct.gov/317/Water-Pollution-Control

The Town Council and Town Manager Set Enfield Wastewater Action Plan in Motion

As municipal sewer utility operators, we work hard to make sure the sewer system works well and is maintained for decades to come. Our mission is to protect public health and the environment for our communities by providing high-quality wastewater-treatment services in an effective, efficient, and responsive manner. In this newsletter, we would like to share details about the investment Enfield's residents have made in the critical, and complicated sewer system that serves over 20,000 homes and businesses each day.

Enfield's 13 sewer utility employees maintain 250 miles of sewer line, 16 pump stations and a 10 million gallon per day capacity Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF), which has been in continuous operation since 1938. The Town completed the last major upgrade of the facility in 1972, and most of the equipment at the facility has been in service for over 40 years. During that time, the facility has treated more than 77 billion gallons of wastewater.

Investments in wastewater infrastructure in the United States are not adequate. The federal government no longer provides substantial grant funding for infrastructure projects. Wastewater treatment is highly regulated, and communities must meet state and federal water quality standards. New treatment standards have been established since Enfield's last major facility upgrade in 1972. The standards protect the environment and public health, but meeting the standards with a treatment system that is beyond its useful life is becoming increasingly difficult.

There has been no capital allocation for repairs to the WPCF in Enfield since 2004. Repairs have been minor short-term solutions to keep the system running. In addition, emergency repairs can cost two to three times more than planned improvements.

In 2012, leaders in the Town of Enfield recognized that they were facing the challenge of renewing the wastewater treatment system during a difficult economic time. The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection had put the Town on notice that certain violations would need to be addressed to avoid fines and improvements were needed to address new permit conditions. In addition, the treatment facility was experiencing failures of its decades-old equipment.

Town leadership solicited help through an engineering evalua-



If you would like to learn more, plant tours are available by contacting Kevin Shlatz.

tion to better understand the renewal costs we are facing. The Town hired Woodard & Curran (a consulting firm with an office in Enfield) to evaluate the capital investment needed at the WPCF and in the collection system. The report determined that \$36 million was needed to get the plant into compliance.

Woodard & Curran and the Town of Enfield developed a capital improvement plan and sewer rate study to identify wastewater collection and treatment needs for the next ten years. The capital improvement plan prioritizes repairs and upgrades and proposes balanced spending over a reasonable timeframe. Sewer fees will not be the only resource available to finance these repairs and upgrades. The plan outlines cost-saving strategies and options for securing state Clean Water Fund grants and low-interest loans to help defray the costs of capital improvement projects.

There is a sound plan in place to upgrade and maintain Enfield's wastewater treatment needs now and in the future. This project will be brought to referendum. ■

Wastewater Appreciation Day

May 20, 2015

Open house at the WPCF
90 Parsons Road, Enfield

