

Municipal Water System (MWS) Plan for Eastham Frequently Asked Questions Part II: System and Operations

The System Plan:

Warrant Article #7 for Town Meeting, May 6, 2013, proposes a town wide system that will service every road, public and private, with curb stop boxes placed at the road on all property lines, able to serve each property who's owner opts to tie in at the onset or in the future. If approved and funded, bid will go out for installation. Once awarded, funds will be secured through bonding and installation will begin with Phase I in 2014, and continue through Phase VI ending in 2026 (each Phase taking 2 years). Installation will be timed for minimal disruption during the summer. Individual property owners will be responsible for getting a contractor and plumber to complete installation from the property line/road into the house (Town will provide meter).

When would the system be installed in specific areas of town, and when would my home have access to municipal water?

See website for Phase I-VI locations and timing; Phase I is the backbone covering Route 6, main roads, landfill area, and fire hydrants to benefit 75% of residents (increasing to 90% in Phase II), whether hooked up to MWS or not.

How do we know a MWS will supply enough water in all seasons?

Three wells and two water storage tanks will be used for town water. The wells have been pump-tested to ensure needs would be met, even during heavy usage.

If my well or wells in my neighborhood had a major problem before our street's Phase installation, could we get access sooner?

Yes. Once Phase I is completed, the timing of other Phases or portions of Phases could be adjusted based on any major problem with water in a part of town.

Would residents on private roads face any difference in access, use, or benefits of town water compared with residents on public roads?

Town must secure construction/maintenance easements for private roads and return them to pre-install condition. Otherwise, residents will be treated equally.

Where will the water tanks be located, and what design?

One water tower will be located north of Railroad Ave in District G; the other in District H, within the CCNS. Tank locations are selected to minimize visual impact while supplying adequate pressure. The towers will be about 120' tall, with the most practical design the steel water tank in Wellfleet (golf ball on "T").

If my property has fronts on more than one road, can I tie in on the one of my choice or just the one of my formal address?

You may connect wherever you have legal frontage.

What ensures that water pumped through a Town System from the same aquifer as supplies private wells would be any safer?

See response to this question under "Why Water" – Part I.

What will be added/ what treatment will there be for Town Water?

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Treatment will comply with state regulations. Adjusting pH (our aquifer water is more acidic than state allows) is the only treatment currently needed. Chlorine for bacteria treatment, required in towns drawing water from open rivers, would not be currently needed for Eastham water. Chlorine would only be added in small amounts to ensure that water in storage tanks and lines remain bacteria free. Chlorine cleaning of storage tanks may be needed at times, but the tank being treated would be taken off-line to do this. Addition of optional things such as fluoride would have to be approved by Town Meeting vote.

Why not address wastewater at the same time as drinking water?

To address the Massachusetts Estuary Program, current proposals focus on ways to improve marine water quality and dependent fisheries (e.g., shellfish). The plan would be to only sewer lots contributing to Rock Harbor, Town Cove, and Nauset watersheds. The cost of this sewerage is expected to be more expensive than town wide water, which is needed primarily to ensure safe drinking water for human health. We are continuing to study and develop a wastewater plan.

If a MWS is installed, can we continue to use our well and not tie in at all, or tie in (now or later), but use well water for some purposes?

Yes. You are not required to connect to town water. If you connect, you may still use your well for lawn watering etc. If you want to use both town and well water, piping must be separate so well water won't mix back into the town water supply.

Can a residence use existing well piping to connect to TW?

There are ways to control pressure coming in from MWS into your home, but higher pressure pipes are generally required for the public water system compared with well water. Check with your contracted plumber and/or the Town plumbing inspector regarding your individual circumstance, as you will need to have the appropriate equipment for safe connection and use.

How will contracted installation project be managed?

The Town will procure a Clerk of the Works and Owners Project Manager Services as required now by law, though a bid process for these services.

Who will set the rules and regulations for the System?

MWS rules and regulations will be adopted by a Board of Water Commissioners in strict conformance with state standards, which include inducements for water conservation. High quality regulations developed by other towns will serve as the basis for a draft to be developed by the town's engineering consultant.

Will Eastham create a Water Department to manage the system?

No. Specialized expertise is required, and Town will contract out for services to include administration, operations, billing, meter reading, and repairs.