



## What We Heard

On July 18, 2013 the Nashua Regional Planning Commission hosted a Regional Water Infrastructure Workshop to gather community input regarding the current state of and future needs related to water infrastructure in the region. Members of the public were invited, as well as planners, planning board members, developers, conservation commission members, and other interested individuals and organizations. Participants were divided into three breakout groups where they focused on major issues related to water infrastructure including public investment for drinking, storm and wastewater; regulations; and public education and outreach. Don Ware, chief operating officer of Pennichuck Water Works presented on watershed issues and the importance of preserving land for water quality. Jim Taylor, superintendent of the Merrimack Waste Water Treatment Plant, highlighted wastewater processing for large industrial users. Sarah Marchant, community development director for the Town of Amherst, described the consolidation of water protection ordinances in that community. Participants then brainstormed and identified *what worked* in the region, *what needed improvement*, and *regional needs* related to each topic area. Staff facilitators noted this input in writing as well as in a shared spreadsheet through.



**From the top:** Don Ware, Pennichuck Water Works; Jim Taylor, Merrimack Waste Water Treatment; Sarah Marchant, Town of Amherst

### *In a Nutshell*



Across all breakout groups, several dominant issues emerged. Participants expressed satisfaction with the region’s current water supply and noted that water conservation is increasing. The workshop participants expressed appreciation for the region’s commitment to storm water education. Participants also noted many areas of concern, including a lack of funding for maintenance of aging water infrastructure, public antipathy regarding water services and several unmet sewer needs in many communities. Several participants noted more water-related education is needed for all ages, including for public and elected officials, water conservation for quality and reduced usage, public storm water education, opportunities for funding and municipal collaboration. Participants noted that guidance is needed for many towns in addressing MS4 permits and noted that NRPC can serve as a vital resource in facilitating collaboration across municipalities and coordinating storm water public education strategies.

### Public Investment

Workshop participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of public investments in drinking, storm and waste water, as well as regional infrastructure needs.

#### What Works:

- Good water infrastructure and aquifer mapping
- Water resources and infrastructure are strong
- Good regulations to protect water resources
- We have local control over water resources
- EPA consent decree program works
- Region has relatively low population, good residential conservation

#### What Needs Improvement:

- All water infrastructure is aging
- Lack of funding for infrastructure replacement
- Confusion on MS4 permit requirements
- Cost of water and sewer is not adequate
- Water infrastructure issues often a low priority
- Contaminated sites from past industrial development along rivers
- Competing water demands and needs
- Regulations are more narrative at the expense of science

## Public Investment, continued

### Regional Needs:

- Funding
- Coordinated regional water resource planning for towns
- Coordination for local projects
- Sewer in more areas
- More public education
- Better inventory of existing infrastructure
- Water infrastructure fee structure based on characteristics of property

## Regulation

Workshop participants discussed strengths and weakness of current water protection regulations.

### What Works:

- Groundwater ordinances are generally effective
- Many existing resources and examples of good regulations
- We have healthy relationships with regulatory agencies
- The goals in the new MS4 permit are good
- Lots of new stormwater opportunities
- Good land use regulations
- Recycling programs help keep waterways clear of debris
- Education may work better than enforcement
- Wellhead Protection Areas are working in Pelham

### What Needs Improvement:

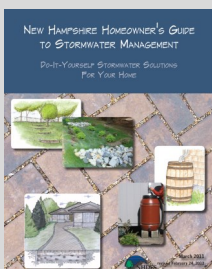
- Current regulations seem to encourage sprawl
- Lack of economic incentives for collaboration
- Developers are unfamiliar with and reluctant to use new low impact development technologies
- Cost of new MS4 permit is high
- Local regulations are unsupportive of sewer
- Examples to encourage consistency between towns
- Opposition to collaboration- towns want to make the choice that is most appropriate for their community
- Local regulations conflict with Shoreland Protection Act
- Implementation of water targets lag because of lack of awareness or prioritization
- Regulations don't capture existing single family lots
- More staff to enforce regulations

### Regional Needs:

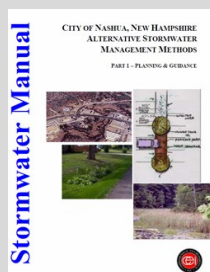
- Redevelopment regulations maybe antiquated for new technologies
- Extend aquifer protection regionally
- Curriculum for 4th and 8th graders
- Calculate maintenance costs for short term and long term needs
- Education on MS4 permit requirements
- Higher density versus large lot zoning, what's better?
- Encourage low impact development and best management practices
- Case study examples and regulation models to encourage consistency between towns
- Create opportunity for other towns to implement pre-treatment systems

## Stormwater Manuals

### Stormwater Booklet (NH DES)



### Nashua Stormwater Manual



### Low Impact Development Guide (NRPC)



Workshop participants received a list of resources for water infrastructure, including links to three storm water manuals. The NH DES Storm water Booklet provides examples of different storm water installations homeowners can choose from for their property. The Nashua Storm water Manual has two parts. The first section discusses what storm water is, where it comes from and problems associated. The second section reviews some LID techniques for managing stormwater. The NRPC LID Guide gives a brief overview of some LID techniques and discusses maintenance required for each.

## Public Education

Workshop participants discussed strengths and weakness of regional outreach and educational efforts.

### What Works:

- Storm water is part of school curriculum
- Rural character is being maintained
- UNH Storm water Center is helpful
- BMP awareness
- Videos on wastewater treatment, tours at treatment facilities

### What Needs Improvement:

- Services are taken for granted by public
- Hard to reach general population
- Educating people on what not to put down the drain
- People don't know who to call to get information
- Marketing efforts are not optimal

### Regional Needs:

- More regional coordination
- Guidance for dealing with DES, MS4 and federal agencies
- Focus on watersheds not on town boundaries
- Good and timely data
- Charge more for water in proportion to value
- Creating a partnership with public health community for private well testing
- Emphasize emergency preparedness
- Promote use of gray water
- Post appropriate water usage for residential including lawn care and fertilizer use

- Next generation is educating older folks on resource conservation
- Painting where storm drains go to
- Enforcement process is a good opportunity for regular education
- Educating at the source like boat launches

- People don't know what's bad
- Creating incentives for LID
- Economic development creates competing interests
- Need more communication across RPC's, towns and watersheds
- Lack of visibility when compared to schools or services for discretionary spending

## Missed the Workshop?

*Don't worry, there are still opportunities to lend your voice to the regional discussion on issues relating to water infrastructure. You can highlight your favorite regional destinations on an interactive map and sound off on what you like, or dislike, about our water in regards to public investment for drinking, storm or waste water, regulations and public outreach and education. Visit [granitstatefuture.org/regions/Nashua-region](http://granitstatefuture.org/regions/Nashua-region). We look forward to your input!*

## How can NRPC help?

*Attendees were asked how the Nashua Regional Planning Commission could best aid communities with water infrastructure and permitting efforts.*

- Continue to host regional workshops
- Target senior champions in communities who have influence and visibility
- Be a clearinghouse for information and data resources
- Analyze and facilitate planning for integrated modeling of data
- Work with schools
- Create education materials for elected officials and public
- Update Nashua's stormwater manual as a resource for all communities in the region
- Serve as a one stop-shop for source water protection plans, grants and other sources of technical assistance for towns
- Collaboration and facilitation of MS4 permit needs

