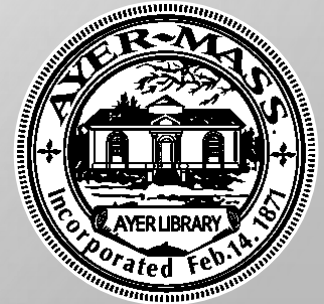


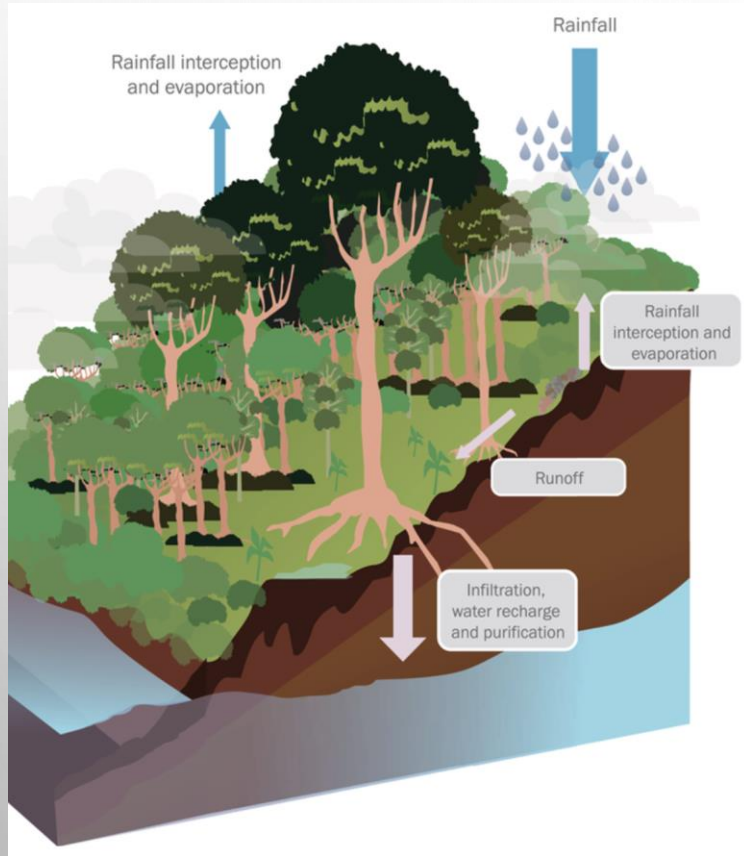
Informational:

## Evaluation of a Stormwater Enterprise Fund

**AYER STORMWATER UTILITY ADVISORY WORKGROUP**



# “Stormwater is just rain, right?”



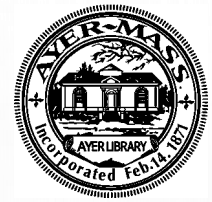
Undeveloped land

vs.



Developed land

# Ayer's Responsibilities



- **REGULATORY**

- Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4): Ayer is regulated by an EPA MS4 permit and must meet specific requirements and goals in its stormwater discharges and program

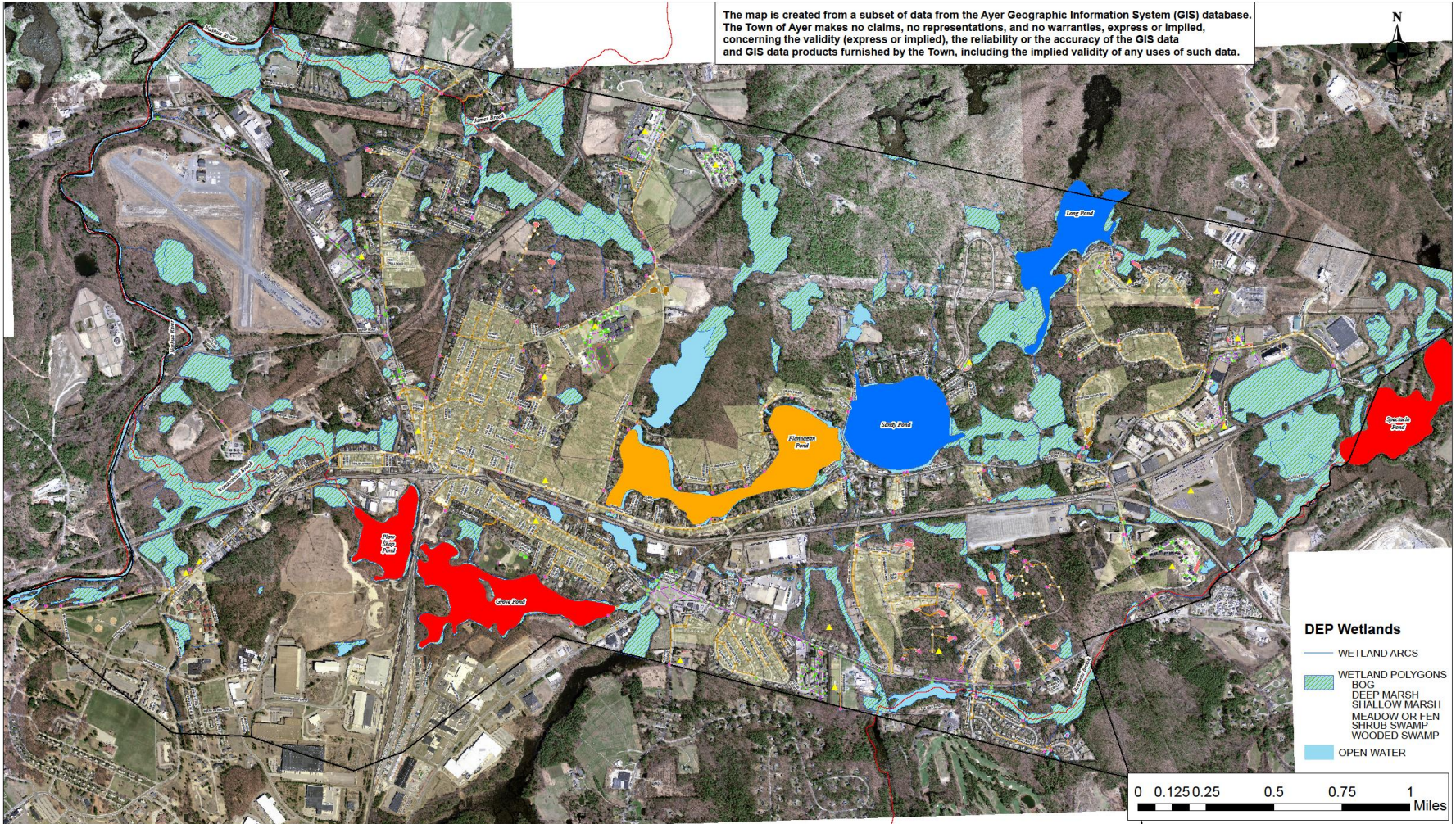
- **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- 22 miles of drainage pipe
- 1,082 catch basins
- 373 drain manholes
- 143 outfalls
- 84 culverts (totaling approximately 1 mile in length)
- 14 natural drainage conveyances
- 21 mapped treatment units and detention basins

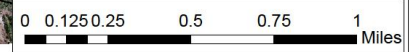
# Ayer's Responsibilities



The map is created from a subset of data from the Ayer Geographic Information System (GIS) database. The Town of Ayer makes no claims, no representations, and no warranties, express or implied, concerning the validity (express or implied), the reliability or the accuracy of the GIS data and GIS data products furnished by the Town, including the implied validity of any uses of such data.



- DEP Wetlands**
- WETLAND ARCS
  - WETLAND POLYGONS
    - BOG
    - DEEP MARSH
    - SHALLOW MARSH
    - MEADOW OR FEN
    - SHRUB SWAMP
    - WOODED SWAMP
  - OPEN WATER



**TOWN OF AYER, MASSACHUSETTS  
STORMWATER MS4 MAP**

November 2020



**Legend**

- Catch Basin (Private Owner)
- Culvert (Private Owner)
- Manhole (Private Owner)
- Outfall (Private Owner)
- Vortex (Private Owner)
- Catch Basin
- Culvert Inlet/Outlet
- Manhole
- Outfall
- Vortex
- Culvert
- Drain Pipe (Private Owner)
- Drain Pipe
- Open Channel Conveyance
- ▲ Private BMP Steward
- Stormwater Basin (Publicly Owned or Maintained)
- Stormwater Basin (Privately Owned or Maintained)
- Town Owned Bioretention/Rain Gardens
- Initial Catchment Delineations

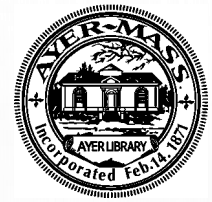
**Impaired Waters (303d Category)**

- 2-Attaining Some Uses; Other Uses Not Assessed
- 3-No Uses Assessed
- 4A-Impaired-TMDL is Completed
- 4C-Impairment Not Caused by a Pollutant
- 5-Impaired-TMDL Required

**Impaired Rivers (303d Category)**

- 2-Attaining Some Uses; Other Uses Not Assessed
- 3-No Uses Assessed
- 4A-Impaired-TMDL is Completed
- 4C-Impairment Not Caused by a Pollutant
- 5-Impaired-TMDL Required

# MS4 Program Overview



SINCE 2003, AYER'S MS4 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM HAS INCLUDED:

1. Public education and outreach
2. Illicit discharge detection & elimination (i.e., water quality testing of the drain to find pollution)
3. Local oversight of construction sites
4. Local permitting for new development and redevelopment to control stormwater runoff
5. Good housekeeping and pollution prevention in municipal operations (e.g., system inspection and maintenance, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning)



My Clean Water Act



# What We've Been Doing So Far



- **HISTORIC FUNDING APPROACH**

- The Town has historically maintained its stormwater system by allocating funds in the Town's General Fund (i.e., tax base)

- **HISTORIC MAINTENANCE APPROACH**

- The Town's approach has been reactive, repairing infrastructure when it becomes a problem
- The Town's record information of its stormwater system is poor



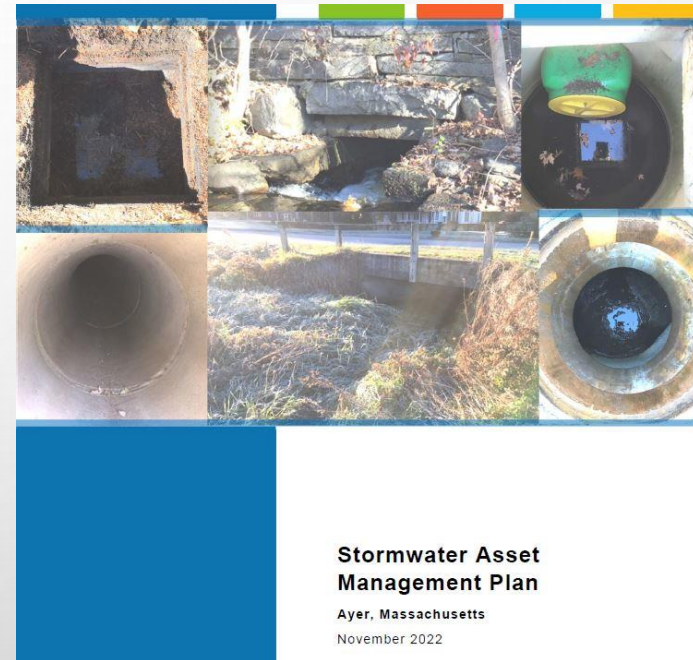
**Figure 3-7** Example of a RCP in Excellent Condition (Left) and CMP in Poor Condition (Right)

# What We've Been Doing So Far

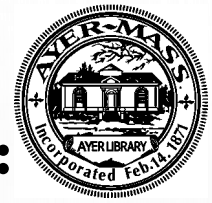


- **RECENT EVENTS**

- 2021-2022: Stormwater Asset Management Plan developed
  - Plan includes evaluation of a portion of the stormwater system to understand what is present
  - Plan provides an asset management-based approach (i.e., criticality) to proactively maintain the stormwater system
- EPA mandates more stringent MS4 Permit in 2016, another expected within a year
- Select Board and Town Meeting authorize funding to evaluate a Stormwater Enterprise Fund (aka “Utility” Fund)



# Why Now?



## Risks are growing fast:

- Anticipating impacts of climate change
- Preserving homes and businesses
- Maintaining transportation and transit
- Ensuring economic continuity
- Escalating infrastructure repairs
  - Culverts must be fixed or replaced



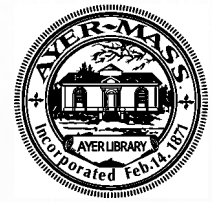
October 2023 floods devastated central MA



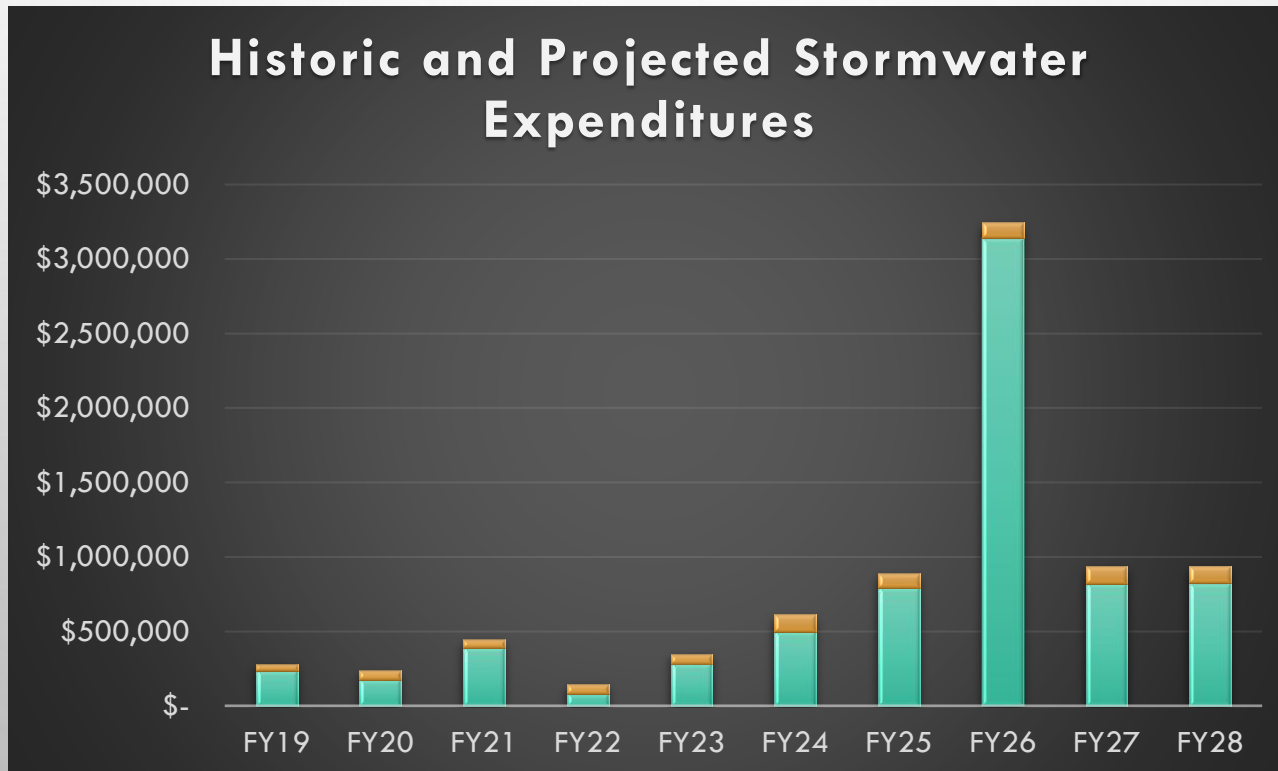
*Culvert: Groton School Road over James Brook  
Estimated Replacement Cost \$3.0M*



# Revenue Projections



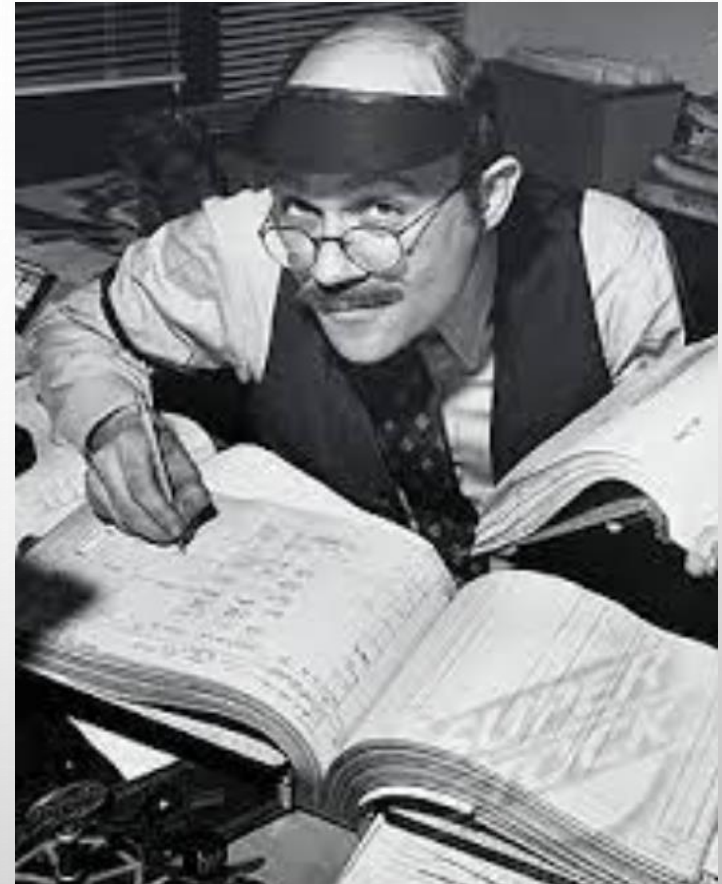
- Current budget (5-year average) = \$355,000/yr
- Next Five Years: significant increase in Capital and Operating
  - Additional work needed to “right size” the program and revenue needs based on program goals



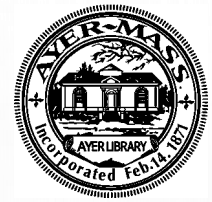


# What are Ayer's options?

- Continue Funding through the General Fund (i.e., tax base)
- Create an independent Enterprise Fund, similar to water and sewer utilities



# Advantages of an Enterprise Fund

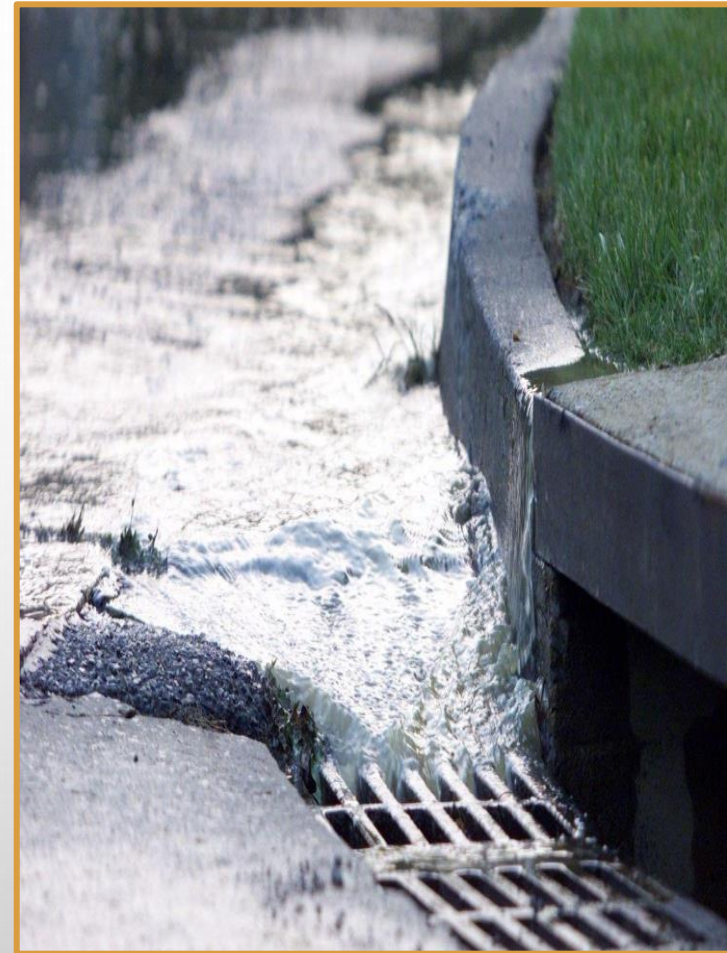


## SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM FUNDING TO MEET PROGRAM GOALS

- **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**
  - Replacement value of Ayer's drainage system is over \$90 Million
- **SMALL MS4 GENERAL PERMIT**
  - Expect more stringent requirements in the new Permit, expected for public comment this year

## BENEFITS OF A STORMWATER ENTERPRISE FUND

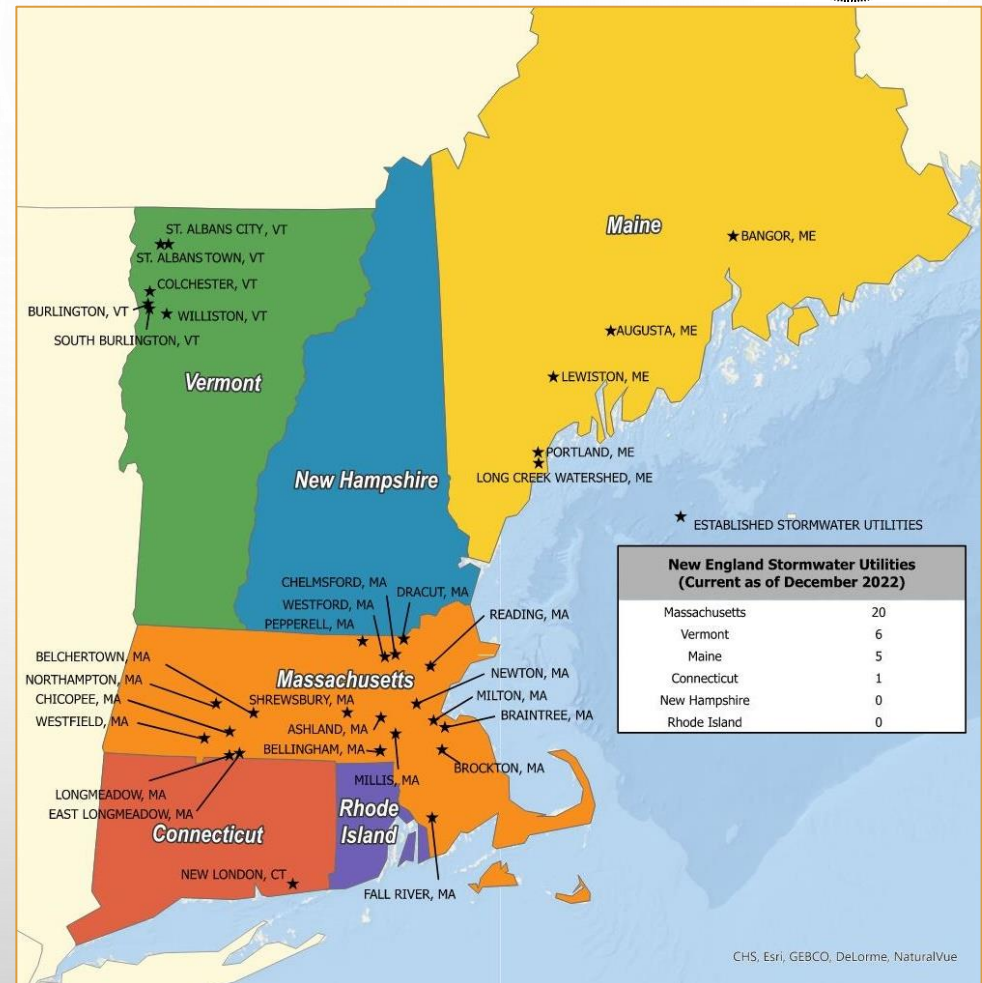
- **Stable:** Dedicated revenue source for financial sustainability
- **Equitable & Fair:** Based on stormwater impact vs. property value (taxes). Can include tax-exempt properties.
- **Flexible:** Utility can pay for all aspects of the program
- **Credit Policy:** Ability to provide a financial incentive for stormwater improvements on private property



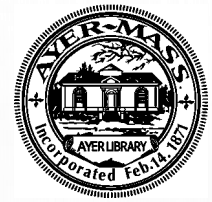
# Regional Stormwater Utilities



- Not a New Concept: ~2,000 stormwater utilities in the U.S.
- 20+ in MA as of December 2022
- Must be a clear nexus among Program Cost of Service, User Fees, and Customer Benefits
- Impervious area is the most commonly used method to assess stormwater fees in the U.S.



# Next Steps and Timeline



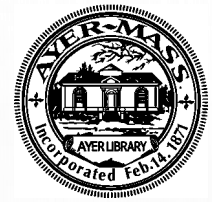
- ✓ • **CONVENE AN ADVISORY WORKGROUP**
- **REFINE BUDGET PROJECTIONS**
- **PRESENT RATE STRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES FOR DISCUSSION**
- **TOWN COUNSEL GUIDANCE**
  - Bylaws, regulations & Town Warrant
- **OUTREACH PLAN & SCHEDULE**
  - Develop & distribute educational materials
  - Stakeholder workshop
  - Additional meetings with the Select Board
- **CONSIDERATION: FALL TOWN MEETING 2024**
- **DEVELOP CREDIT POLICY & ABATEMENT**

Learn more at our website:

<https://www.ayer.ma.us/storm-water-utility-advisory-workgroup>



# Additional Information



- **The Workgroup is meeting monthly in hybrid format open to the public**
- **Additional information, including FAQs, can be found on the WORKGROUP'S WEBSITE: <https://www.ayer.ma.us/storm-water-utility-advisory-workgroup>**



- **Please join us on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM at the Ayer Library for a presentation related to the importance of stormwater by Stefanie Covino of the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative!**

# Contact



- **Questions for the Workgroup can be sent to Dan Van Schalkwyk:**

Dan Van Schalkwyk, P.E.

DPW Director

[dvanschalkwyk@ayer.ma.us](mailto:dvanschalkwyk@ayer.ma.us)

978-772-8240

