

Ballot Question 5: Oak Bluffs Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion Project

What is the purpose of this project?

The Oak Bluffs municipal sewer system and associated wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) were constructed and began operating in 2002 to serve the needs of certain residential, commercial, and minor industrial users located in Oak Bluffs. The WWTF is approaching its design capacity and has very limited capacity for new connections. Additionally, mechanical components of the WWTF are approaching their 20-year design life span.

The State of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requires municipal wastewater facilities to conduct evaluations every five years to monitor the status of equipment and ensure that it is adequate to meet permit requirements, maintain treatment, and continue to protect the public health and environment.

The purpose of this project is to upgrade the existing wastewater treatment facility by:

- Replacing aging equipment, and
- Expanding treatment capacity to address environmental needs in the estuaries and to allow for development for existing users, in accordance with the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning (CWMP) Project.

How much will this project cost?

In the 2022 Spring Town meeting, the town appropriated \$26 million for the wastewater treatment facility upgrade with the intention that half of the project cost be paid by taxpayers and half by users. The Town's share of the annual payment will be funded through a debt exclusion.

The Town has been accepted in a State program which has the potential to allow the Town to receive a near 0% interest loan and up to 39% in principal forgiveness of the total amount borrowed.

Where can I learn more?

This project is part of the Oak Bluffs Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning Project. Copies of public presentations and reports prepared for the project can be found at the Oak Bluffs Wastewater Department website:

<https://www.oakbluffsma.gov/275/Wastewater-Department>