TORRINGTON POCD

UTILITIES

11

"We have to invest in our infrastructure if we are going to go forward in our city and our state."

Carolyn Maloney

Utility infrastructure refers to services such as

- piped utilities (public water, public sewer, storm drainage and natural gas),
- wired utilities (electric, telephone and cable),
- wireless services, and
- individual services (private septic systems and wells).

Installation of new water main

Sewer inspection (above); Utility line maintenance(below)

On-site Sewerage Disposal

Wastes from homes and businesses are either carried away by public sewers to a municipal treatment plant or discharged into an on-site septic system.

Preventive maintenance and repair of a private septic system is the responsibility of the property owner.

The Permit to Discharge that is issued by the Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) to start using the septic system requires maintenance of the septic tank every 3-5 years.

This periodic maintenance is the best way of avoid a septic system failure.

The Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) has records of most septic systems installed in the past 43 years and we can be helpful in providing information and advice to owners of septic systems and wells.

Soon, the TAHD will be asking for proof that these maintenance procedures were done in conformance with their Permit to Discharge.

Continue to Provide Capacity Management for Municipal Sewer

Torrington has taken a leadership role in managing the Water Pollution Control Facility and system, which is in-line with State goals and policies, by being one of the first Connecticut communities to adopt a Sewer Service Area. The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) has developed policies that limit future users of the system to properties within the Sewer Service Area.

Priorities for the Allocation of Treatment and Collection Capacity

GALLONS PER DAY	PERCENT OF TOTAL CAPACITY	DESCRIPTION
5,500,000	78.6%	Existing development within the Sewer Service Area
1,134,000	16.2%	Potential Future development meeting current zoning and within the Sewer Service Area. Including sub-surface disposal systems within the Sewer Service Area.
150,000	2.1%	Town of Litchfield
77,000	1.1%	Town of Harwinton
140,000	2.0%	Existing development outside the Sewer Service Area that is served by on-site disposal systems.

Continue Policy of Sewer Avoidance

The WPCA has established that sewer avoidance is a desirable policy in rural areas where sewers do not currently exist and has adopted a policy to designate all areas outside the boundaries of the Sewer Service Area as Decentralized Wastewater Management Areas. As a result, the Water Pollution Control Authority will not extend, nor permit the extension of its sanitary sewer infrastructure to serve areas or individual properties outside the boundaries of the Sewer Service Area.

The only exception to this sewer avoidance policy is when municipal sewers are the only means of mitigating water pollution problems caused by the failure of multiple subsurface disposal systems located in the same geographic area and in existence as of March 7, 2005.

New development and construction outside the boundaries of the Sewer Service Area shall not exceed the capacity of the land on which it is located to adequately support a sub-surface disposal system. The WPCA policy relies on inter-agency cooperation, including the Planning and Zoning, Building, and Health departments.

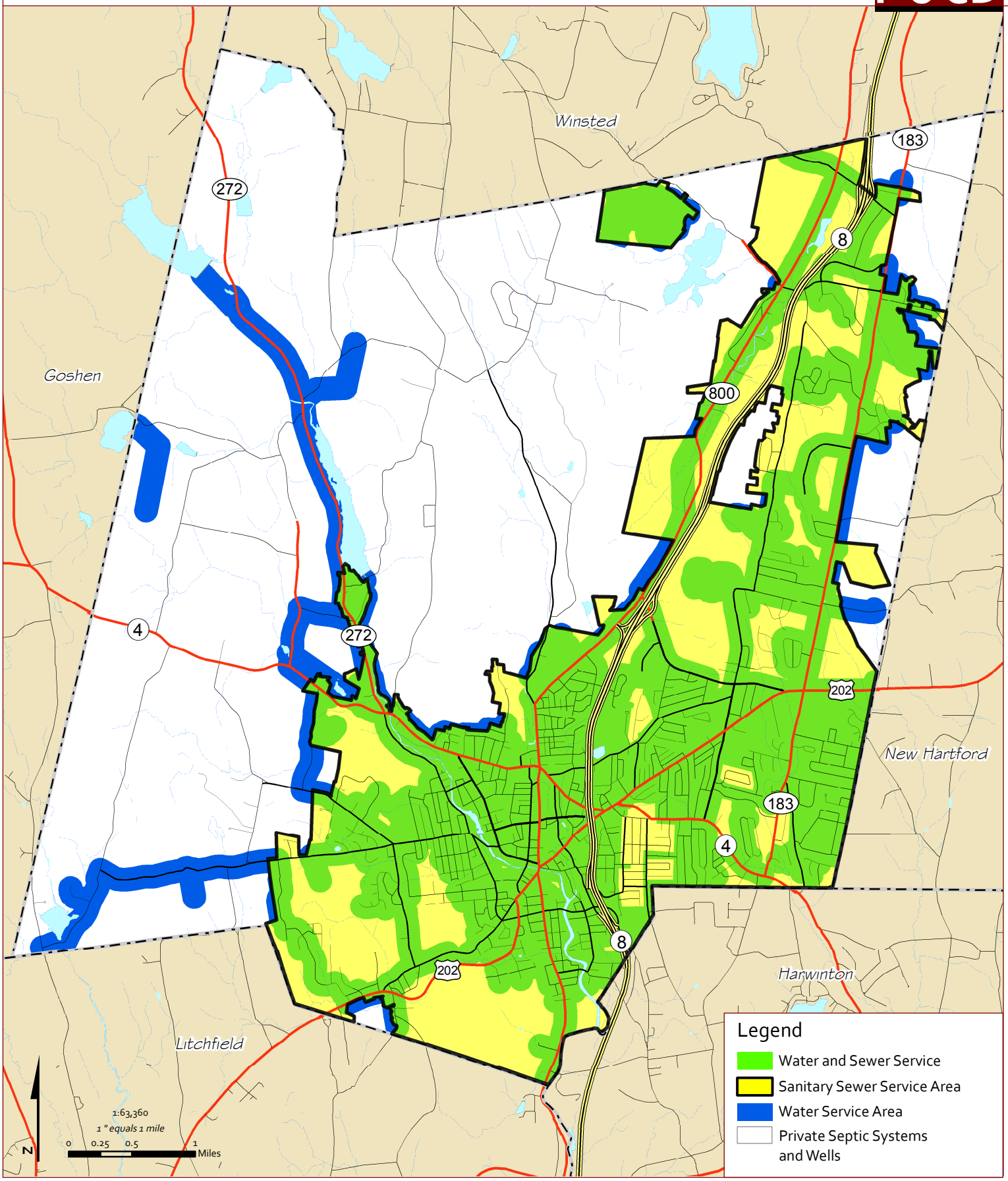
Future Needs

Long-term needs include modifications and upgrades of wastewater pumping stations and the wastewater treatment facility. In addition, some of the public sewer pipes are over 100 years old and replacement will be necessary. The City should continue to develop a plan and approach to implement this action.

Elimination of inverted siphons where possible, long term elimination of sewers that cross or are laid in river and streambeds should be considered.

UTILITIES -- WATER AND SEWER

TORRINGTON POCD



Torrington Area Health District

350 Main Street

The Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) was the second health district formed in Connecticut.

Initially, the TAHD was needed to enforce State regulations dealing with septic systems, wells, food inspections, and other environmental health mandates.

Today, the health district is a wide-ranging agency addressing traditional public health responsibilities as well as collaborating with many other Federal, State and local organizations on emerging issues.

www.tahd.org

Stormwater Utility

A stormwater utility is a special fee-based program established to generate revenue specifically for stormwater management.

Stormwater utilities typically fund:

- maintenance of the storm drain system,
- development of drainage plans,
- flood control measures, and
- water quality programs.

Septic Systems

While the majority of the developed area in Torrington is served by public sewers, there are still areas that will continue to rely on individual septic systems. One of the biggest issues with un-sewered areas can be the lack of maintenance of septic systems.

Torrington, and the Torrington Area Health District, should consider adopting a septic management ordinance that helps to ensure that septic systems in the community are maintained on a regular basis. This ordinance might help educate people who move to Torrington but have had little experience managing a septic system. This will help protect water quality.

Properties with septic systems would be notified every three years that their septic system should be pumped. Properties that do not get pumped (tracked by septic pumping records at the sewage treatment plant) would be inspected and targeted for enforcement. Septic pumping companies could also report on the overall condition of the tank and the septic field.

Stormwater Management

Storm drainage historically has been an issue that communities have not focused on. This tends to be the largest infrastructure element that does not have a good management plan in place. With changes to state and federal laws, towns and cities are now being required to manage the drainage infrastructure more carefully.

Torrington maintains a number of pipes and catch basins that have been designed to "catch and convey" the water from a problem area to a wetland or watercourse. As in most communities, the stormwater management goal has been to move water from one area to another to reduce localized flooding.

Torrington should continue to map the stormwater collection system and identify areas where improvements can be made to enhance water quality and reduce flooding. Techniques such as green infrastructure and low impact development should also be utilized when conditions are appropriate.

In addition, Torrington should investigate the feasibility of a user-based stormwater utility to create a fair way to pay for stormwater services and system improvements. Connecticut's Municipal Stormwater Authority Pilot Program, established in 2007 by Public Act 07-154, should be reviewed after the pilot city's programs have been established to see if a future program is appropriate for the City of Torrington.

Utility Strategies

	TASK
11-1	Continue the policy of sewer avoidance in rural areas
11-2	Address long-term sewer and Water Pollution Control Authority needs
11-3	Consider adopting a septic management ordinance
11-4	Continue to map the stormwater collection system
11-5	Make improvements to the stormwater system to reduce flooding and improve water quality
11-6	Apply low impact development techniques to the stormwater system
11-7	Investigate the feasibility of creating a user-fee based stormwater utility