

# Section 11

## Public Participation

### 11.1 Introduction

This section describes and summarizes the public participation aspect of the facilities planning process. This Wastewater Facilities Plan has been developed to respond to the comments received in the public participation aspect of the project. The WPCA's recommendations in this final draft differ from those previously presented in earlier drafts of the report. As such, many of the public comments received on the earlier drafts are no longer applicable to this report. These instances are noted in the following sub-sections.

### 11.2 Preliminary Public Participation

A series of public meetings were held in July 2000, to introduce the residents of Stonington to the wastewater facilities planning process. Background on the project was reviewed, and goals of the facilities planning process were outlined. A copy of a meeting handout is contained in Appendix E.

### 11.3 Citizen's Advisory Group

A Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) was formed to provide ongoing public participation during development of the draft facilities plan. The CAG was comprised of concerned citizens from throughout Stonington. The CAG attended monthly meetings to offer advice and comment as the planning work proceeded.

### 11.4 Summary of Public Meetings (2/6/2001 and 7/16/2001)

The first public meeting for the project was held on February 6, 2001 to describe the progress to date on the project, and to outline the next steps. The two primary topics of presentation included the sewer needs analysis (which eventually became integral to Section 2 of this report), and flow and load projections (Section 3). A copy of a meeting handout is contained in Appendix E.

A second public meeting was held on Monday, July 16, 2001 at the Police Station in Stonington to discuss the wastewater treatment alternatives evaluation. A copy of a meeting handout is contained in Appendix E. Many of the comments were similar to those received at the subsequent Public Hearing. For simplicity, comments received at the July 16, 2001 meeting are incorporated into the Public Hearing summary (see Section 11.5). A verbatim transcript of the Public Meeting is available for review at the WPCA office in Town Hall.

## 11.5 Summary of Public Hearing (8/20/2001)

A public hearing was held on Monday, August 20, 2001 at Stonington High School. A copy of a meeting handout, which was an Executive Summary of the draft Wastewater Facilities Plan, is contained in Appendix E.

A presentation was made that described the draft facilities plan. Many questions were asked at the conclusion of the presentation. The following is a paraphrased record of the questions and answers from the public hearing. The responses also contain added information not available at the public hearing, including information from the first public meeting on July 16, 2001. A verbatim transcript of the Public Hearing is available for review at the WPCA office in Town Hall.

**Question: Can we have more time beyond the 45-day comment period to absorb the information [in the draft report] and understand it fully?** Answer: The WPCA extended the public comment period to slightly more than 6 months at the request of the public.

**Question: What is the discharged effluent waste load and does it affect Stonington Harbor and the Pawcatuck River?** Answer: The waste load is measured in pounds-per-day of pollutant. An upgrade to the treatment processes will improve the quality of the treated effluent and decrease the amount of pollutants entering these water bodies.

**Question: What is the bacteria level in Stonington Harbor today? Has the bacteria level increased over the past year to two years since Mystic's waste has been brought to Stonington and allowed to discharge? Would an increase in the bacteria level increase odor levels as well?** Answer: The bacteria (coliform bacteria) are treated by disinfection. Bacteria levels that are found in the rivers and harbor are not associated with the disinfection process (chlorination). The state has not identified anywhere in Stonington as being a critical problem that needs to be dealt with from a bacterial standpoint. Any bacteria level in the receiving water is not directly related to odor generation at the treatment plant.

**Question: Are there any charts in the draft report that indicate effluent flow within the Harbor and down the Pawcatuck River and the sort of general tidal effects of that discharge?** Answer: The work that was done within the confines of this study was sampling for dissolved oxygen, temperature, and salinity and trying to model the resulting depletion of the oxygen in the Pawcatuck River and Stonington Harbor. A detailed marine modeling exercise was not included in the project.

**Question: What are closure lines?** Answer: Closure lines are lines drawn on a map that show areas closed to shellfishing due to proximity to wastewater treatment facility outfalls. The Department of Agriculture maintains and updates these maps. The size of the closure areas is dependent on the tidal effects near the outfall. The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture Division, requires a six-hour conditional time of travel. Outfall discharges in areas with faster currents require larger closure

areas, whereas outfall discharges in areas with less tidal action require smaller closure areas.

**Question: Can the Borough outfall be extended out beyond the inner breakwater to improve water quality in the Harbor? What is the primary consideration in not extending the outfall beyond the inner breakwater? Why can't the Pawcatuck outfall be extended further downstream from the constriction near Pawcatuck Rock where there is better flushing in the river?** Answer: Stonington Harbor is protected from the stronger currents and heavier wave action in the Long Island Sound by the inner breakwater. Therefore, the six-hour conditional time of travel is less in the Harbor than it would be if the outfall discharged beyond the inner breakwater. Extending the outfall out further will not only add significant cost to the project, it would also close a larger area to shellfishing and require a new NPDES discharge permit. These reasons also hold true for extending the Pawcatuck outfall. Also, identifying alternate outfall locations was not part of this facilities plan. The study only focused on evaluating the use of the existing permitted harbor and river outfalls. Note that the Shellfishing Commission and the state's Division of Aquaculture are on record as opposing extending the Stonington Harbor outfall beyond the breakwater (see Appendix E).

**Question: Why can't all three existing outfalls be used to discharge treated effluent from a new, single WPCF?** Answer: All three outfalls can be used to discharge treated effluent.

**Question: What are the closure lines for each WPCF? What areas are closed to shellfishing?** Answer: The current closure lines for each of the three existing treatment facilities are shown on maps that can be obtained from the Division of Aquaculture. The areas near each of the three outfalls are permanently closed to shellfishing and are shown on the maps. The closure line maps have been obtained from the state, and are included in Appendix E.

**Question: In the past, there have been discharges in violation of the current permits. If this happens in the future with higher flows to the Borough outfall, the impacts could be devastating to the area? How can these untreated discharges be avoided?** Answer: All treatment facilities in New England are required to have redundancy, which are standby parallel trains of processes that can be utilized if one of the active trains needs to be taken offline. These standby trains are designed to maintain the design flow and achieve the same level of treatment.

**Question: Why aren't the existing WPCF's staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week?** Answer: This is not required by regulation, and is unnecessary as long as the proper alarming and notification systems are in place.

**Question: If effluent from the Pawcatuck River has such a major impact on the health of the Long Island Sound, then why are we only dealing with the effluent from one side of the river and not the other? What is the Town of Westerly's**

**current and future plan for dealing with their outfall?" Which states are included in the Long Island Sound Study?** Answer: Each Town or municipality that discharges treated effluent to the Long Island Sound or a tributary that flows into the Long Island Sound is responsible for meeting nitrogen removal requirements by a certain time period as required in the Long Island Sound Study. The Long Island Sound Study only includes New York and Connecticut. Since the Town of Stonington is currently addressing their current and future wastewater needs, it makes sense to include the nitrogen removal issue in this process. Regardless, the Town of Westerly, RI recently upgraded and is operating its treatment facilities for nitrogen removal.

**Question: Is it legally possible to discharge the entire Town's treated effluent to the Pawcatuck River?** Answer: This is not currently permitted and likely could not be permitted, due to the existing water quality in the river.

**Question: Where is the sampling point for treated effluent from each of the WPCF's?** Answer: The sampling point is after disinfection and just before discharge from the facility.

**Question: Where is all of the increased flow coming from that is requiring improvements and capacity upgrades?** Answer: The increase in wastewater flows can be attributed to population growth, commercial development, and connection of the sewer needs areas.

**Question: Is there a state imposed deadline for implementing nitrogen removal?** Answer: The state's nitrogen removal program requires that each wastewater treatment facility comply with its nitrogen wasteload allocation, effective on January 1, 2002. Each facility's wasteload allocation will become gradually more stringent until the lower limit is reached in 2014. Facility owners have the option of upgrading their facilities to meet the wasteload allocation or buying "nitrogen credits" to stay in compliance.

**Question: Are we concentrating too much on nitrogen levels? What are the chemicals that can also be discharged into the river?** Answer: The three plants use sodium hypochlorite (essentially high-strength bleach) to disinfect the effluent.

**Question: What is being incorporated into each of the alternatives for odor control? How much weight was given to the fact that Pawcatuck successfully, recently successfully had two suits against the odor control issues there? Did you budget the lawsuits that are coming from the Borough into these numbers? How are other treatment facilities in the state operating without odor problems?** Answer: The WPCA has responded to these questions and has implemented odor control improvements at each of its three plants. These improvements were completed in 2003.

**Question: How many acres are necessary for constructing a new WPCF? Is a waterfront location for a new WPCF preferable?** Answer: Five acres would be an absolute minimum; 10 acres are preferred for the actual plant footprint. More acreage

would provide a larger buffer for neighbors. It is difficult to generalize preferred locations for treatment plants. See Section 7 of this report.

**Question: Has CDM taken into consideration tidal effects/flood elevations on proposed upgrades to the Pawcatuck and Borough WPCFs?** Answer: Any upgrades will need to be elevated above the 100-year floodplain elevation for protection.

**Question: Will the existing fence at the Pawcatuck WPCF need to be moved closer to the property line to accommodate improvements recommended in Alternatives 1 through 4?** Answer: Yes.

**Question: If Alternative 5 is chosen, which proposes building a new WPCF to replace all three existing WPCF's, will this facility be more advanced and efficient in treating wastewater? Which outfall(s) is utilized for the treated effluent under this alternative?** Answer: The technology would not be more advanced per se, though the plant may be more efficient to run. If selected, Alternative 5 envisions all of the effluent to be discharged through the existing Borough outfall, although there would be some flexibility if this disposal option was not approved by the state.

**Question: Has the Town-owned property behind the Stonington police station been considered as a possible site for locating a new WPCF?** Answer: See Section 7.

**Question: How was the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) selected? Why isn't there a representative from the Borough on the CAG, especially since most of the future flows will likely be discharged through the Borough outfall?** Answer: The CAG represented all areas of the town. In response to this and other concerns about the CAG, the WPCA formed a second group, the "Citizens Review Panel," whose report is attached in Appendix E.

**Question: How much time has it taken for CDM to complete the facilities plan?** Answer: To complete the August 2001 draft, it took CDM slightly more than one year.

**Question: What is the process in approving and instituting the facilities plan both on the State level and on the Town level?** Answer: The WPCA will approve and submit the facilities plan to the state for review. The state will review and approve the plan, with comments. After final approval, the plan would become a "blueprint" for the Town to follow over the planning period. The Town will have to approve funding for any improvements prior to implementation.

**Question: Has a study been done on the impact of the Mystic Seaport and the Aquarium, which both have plans for expansion? Financially, are those two organizations paying their fair share of taxes to support the wastewater that is coming from their area, which will expand in the next 20 years?** Answer: The flow projections include an allowance for increased flow from the Seaport and Aquarium.

**Question: Out of the approximate 50-percent response rate to the Sewer Needs Questionnaire, what percentage of the responses came from Mystic, Borough and Pawcatuck?** Answer: The response rates are approximately 17-percent from Mystic, 37-percent from Pawcatuck, and 40-percent from other areas. Approximately 5-percent of the responses did not have an address, so it was impossible to determine which part of town they represented. The downtown Borough is already completely sewerred so questionnaires were not sent to those residents.

**Question: Who will be responsible for paying for either the plant upgrades or building a new WPCF? Will everyone in the Town of Stonington share the cost or will only those people connected to the sewer be responsible?** Answer: The optimal funding mechanism is unknown at this time.

**Question: Is there any limitation on the number of years that the project can be bonded for?** Answer: Projects of this type are typically bonded for either 20-year or 30-year terms.

**Question: Why upgrade the Borough WPCF and make it visually worse than it already is?** Answer: The Borough WPCF will require upgrading within the 20-year planning period in order to achieve the improved level of treatment required. The extent of the upgrade work will only be as needed to handle wastewater that drains from the Borough's collection system (i.e., no diversion from Mystic), and visual impacts will be minimized to the extent possible.

**Question: Is there information readily available this evening on the cost of the expansion at the Borough plant to accomplish [the existing diversion between Mystic and Borough]? (Refers to the completed project that results in a diversion of about 0.28 million gallons of flow per day from the Mystic WPCF to the Borough WPCF)** Answer: The cost of improvements at both the Borough and Mystic plants totaled close to \$2 million. Construction of the diversion pipeline was an additional \$2 million.

**Question: How much time is the Town actually buying in regards to upgrading the facilities rather than constructing a new treatment facility, especially since the diversion pipeline was constructed as a sort of temporary fix to allow the Mystic WPCF to continue operating?** Answer: The WPCA's recommended plan extends the life of the existing facilities another 20 years, and with technology improvements, it is expected that the facilities will function well beyond that.

**Question: If the Pawcatuck WPCF was not originally constructed on Mary Hall Road and a new plant needed to be sited, would this parcel currently be considered as a feasible location for a new WPCF?** Answer: It is difficult to say, with the current level of development in the area. See Section 7 for a detailed description of the factors to be considered in selecting a site.

**Question: Why did the state let the moratorium stay in effect in Mystic for so long? Years ago, if something was done, wouldn't it have been much cheaper to act?**

Answer: The history of the CTDEP's enforcement actions regarding Stonington and decisions made would require a voluminous response, and the response would not have an effect on the present situation.

**Question: What will be the increase in truck traffic and impacts to local streets with the different alternatives? Has anyone prepared a traffic control study to evaluate the possible impacts?** Answer: The Wastewater Facilities Plan includes an evaluation to determine environmental impacts in general. A detailed traffic study is beyond the scope of the Wastewater Facilities Plan.

**Question: How was the non-economic analysis conducted? Who was involved in ranking the alternatives in the economic analysis? Where can the supporting detail be found?** Answer: See the revised Wastewater Facilities Plan.

**Question: "What is the long-term cost to the community and when does it pay for itself?" Did anyone perform a 30-year projection on the present worth costs for Alternative 5?** Answer: See the revised Wastewater Facilities Plan for updated comparisons of capital, O&M and present-worth costs.

**Question: Can the Town provide a list of its other major financial obligations (i.e., bonds) so the citizens can get a better idea of how these options will affect them financially?** Answer: See the revised Section 10, which contains this information.

**Question: Historically, how close have CDM's projected cost estimates been to actual construction costs for similar projects?** Answer: CDM has a good record in this area. The costs presented are considered to be realistic and conservative, and include a contingency to cover cost items that are presently unknown.

## **11.6 Public Comment Period (8/20/2001 – 3/31/2002)**

Due to the considerable public comment received at the Public Hearing, WPCA kept the public comment period open until March 31, 2002. During this period, a Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) was formed to evaluate the draft Wastewater Facilities Plan in detail (see Section 11.8). Also during this period, WPCA received several additional comments in the form of letters and meetings. These comments are described below, in chronological order. Copies of this correspondence are contained in Appendix E.

**Anthony and Julita Inzero, letter dated 8/21/01:** In this letter, Mr. and Mrs. Inzero requested information on the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG), the needs analysis and air quality. WPCA believes that the Wastewater Facilities Plan provides sufficient information on the CAG; especially since the Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) largely superseded the work of the CAG. The Wastewater Facilities Plan also provides significant background on the information collected in for the needs analysis. For the Wastewater Facilities Plan, WPCA did not collect air quality information.

**W.B. Cutler, letter dated 8/22/01:** In this letter, Mr. Cutler comments on three areas: 1) the need for extended public review time; 2) the need for redundancy of the system;

and 3) the need to review technologies. In response to the public's request, an extended hearing period was provided. The design and construction of the selected option will be made with process reliability and redundancy as key considerations. Typical features of the project would include redundant mechanical equipment, protection against the 100-year flood, and emergency backup power. It is not necessary to keep a "mothballed" plant available to re-start. This level of redundancy is not required. Finally, the revised report includes a discussion of treatment technologies, and the expressed intent to review technologies again at the start of the design phase of the project.

**W.B. Cutler, letter dated 8/24/01:** This letter follows up on Mr. Cutler's 8/22/01 letter. In this letter, Mr. Cutler suggests that a task force be impaneled to further evaluate the available technologies and options. He also was critical of the non-economic evaluation contained in the initial draft report. In the extended public comment period, WPCA did sponsor a review panel, the CRP, whose input has substantially impacted the development of the plan. WPCA agreed that the non-economic evaluation was confusing and subjective. The revised Section 7 utilizes a different approach.

**Donald R. Maranell, First Selectman, letter dated 8/28/01:** In this letter, Mr. Maranell advocates that WPCA should not consolidate wastewater treatment operations by closing one or more plants, and should not consolidate wastewater discharges, which would increase flow discharged to one or more receiving waters. These matters are addressed in the revised Section 7. Mr. Maranell also states that the project should be provided with considerable funding from the State and Federal governments, and that Stonington should seek to study the actual impacts that the Town's discharges have on Long Island Sound. WPCA agrees regarding the funding, and will do all it can to gain state and federal participation. Stonington's obligation to meet its nitrogen wasteload allocation is now a formal part of the Town's discharge permit requirements.

**Mary-Preston Morton, letter dated 8/30/01:** In this letter, Ms. Morton asked three questions, relating to what other towns in Stonington's situation have done, and other experiences. Most towns the size of Stonington that have public sewer service utilize one wastewater treatment facility - operating and maintaining three separate plants is highly unusual (perhaps unique) for a town of Stonington's size and population. There is no "perfect" sewer plant. Many plant owners are very pleased and satisfied with their facilities. The Mashantucket Indian Reservation's wastewater treatment plant utilizes a biological process called "sequencing batch reactors", or SBRs. This technology is one of many that can meet the goals of the treatment process, and is evaluated in this facilities plan (see Section 7).

**J.M. Hinchey, letter dated 9/4/01:** In this letter, Mr. Hinchey discusses the need for coordination between Stonington and Westerly, as both towns discharge to the Pawcatuck River. The impacts of both discharges are described in detail in Section 6. WPCA agrees that there was a "disconnect" in the fact that Stonington's Pawcatuck

WPCF discharge must comply with a nitrogen wasteload due to water quality impacts, but the Westerly plant had not (note that in the interim period since the public comment period, the Westerly plant has been upgraded and does provide nitrogen removal). Note that the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island are in the process of determining a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis for the Pawcatuck River; however, the results of this analysis are not yet available.

**The Cusson-Abele Family, letter dated 9/17/01:** In this letter, the Cusson-Abele family describes the reasons why they recommend that WPCA implement Alternative No. 5. The letter also contains four questions which address this topic. WPCA's revised recommendation is to implement Alternative No. 1. Features of this alternative include keeping the Borough WPCF in service, and expand it during the 20-year life of the plan to comply with its discharge requirements. However, this alternative also discontinues the diversion from the Mystic WPCF, minimizing any improvements necessary to the Borough WPCF. In response to the questions in the letter: 1) A survey was not conducted of families living in the areas of the Borough WPCF; rather, the extensive public participation process has allowed WPCA to gain an understanding of all of the issues; 2) No longer relevant with WPCA's revised recommendation; 3) WPCA does have representation from the Borough; and 4) As stated above, impacts to the Borough WPCF will be minimized. The letter also refers to the odor problem at the Borough WPCF. The WPCA implemented a \$2 million odor control program that was substantially complete by summer 2003. This program included covering all of the treatment tankage at the Borough WPCF and treating the captured air through an odor control system.

**Dr. Bruce MacKinnon, list of questions delivered 9/25/01:** Brief responses to Dr. MacKinnon's list of questions are as follows:

1. WPCA believes that the recommended Alternative No. 1 is the best alternative to minimize impacts to the three sites. There will be less effluent discharged through the Borough WPCF outfall.
2. See WPCA's revised recommendations.
3. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7.
4. See WPCA's revised recommendations.
5. See Section 11.7 of this report.
6. The nitrogen wasteload allocations indicate the required reductions in nitrogen discharges - the nitrogen is being discharged now. Even in the options where all of the town's wastewater is discharged through one outfall (in Stonington Harbor), the future load would be less than in the past, because of the higher degree of treatment.

7. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7.
8. See the revised facilities plan, Section 7. The technology in place at the Mashantucket reservation is evaluated in that section.
9. See the revised facilities plan, Section 7.
10. The Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) did have Borough representation. The CRP that has studied the report since the public hearing had extensive Borough representation, and the WPCA Board has Borough representation.
11. See the revised facilities plan, Section 7.
12. Of the three existing outfall locations, the Stonington Harbor is the most suitable receiving water. See Section 6.
13. There will be no double assessments.

**Alisa Storrow, list of questions delivered 9/25/01:** Brief responses to Ms. Storrow's list of questions are as follows:

1. As described in Section 7, WPCA has investigated Alternative No. 5 and is convinced of its feasibility. There is sufficient acreage available at the preferred site for future expansion if necessary. The land is town-owned, so the cost of the land is not considered.
2. The WPCA implemented a \$2 million odor control program that was substantially complete by summer 2003. This program included covering all of the treatment tankage at the Borough WPCF and treating the captured air through an odor control system.
3. There are many "excellent" wastewater treatment plants. WPCA would prefer not to judge one as being better than another without fully understanding the history, goals, and site-specific requirements of each.
4. Many plants in Connecticut have already upgraded, or are in the process of upgrading, their facilities to meet the nitrogen limits imposed by the state. The larger plants have tended to upgrade earlier in the process, and the smaller plants later. Many plant owners are presently using the nitrogen trading program to achieve compliance, as WPCA currently does.
5. The outfall pipe was discovered to be broken during a dive undertaken to verify the outfall configuration on April 30, 2001. The outfall was repaired in May 2005.
6. WPCA is aware that Stonington Harbor has been dye-tested twice, once in 1981, and once in 1991. Copies of both studies are available at the WPCA office in Town

Hall. Because of the highly technical nature of the studies and reports, it is difficult to paraphrase the results.

7. This question is somewhat open-ended, and WPCA is not clear on the intent of the question. Discharges from all WPCF's are controlled through their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. In addition, CTDEP has established nitrogen wasteload limits for all 79 WPCFs in Connecticut under the *General Permit for Nitrogen Discharges*. Refer to Section 1 of the Wastewater Facilities Plan for additional information.
8. WPCA is unaware of an absolute, universal limit on the length of an outfall pipe. Regarding the outfall from the Stonington Borough WPCF, the overall impact of the outfall within the harbor is less than if it was beyond the breakwater, due to the extent of the shellfish beds.

**Lance Stewart, letter dated 10/5/01:** In this letter, Mr. Stewart recommends that WPCA implement Alternative No. 1, as the "ecologically responsible course", based on concerns of impacts on water quality in the Pawcatuck River and Stonington Harbor, should the existing discharges from those locations increase. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7. The letter also contains four questions, which are addressed in Section 6 of this revised draft report, or in Section 11.7.

**Paul D. Maugle, Mohegan Tribe, letter dated 10/26/01:** In this letter, Dr. Maugle states the Mohegan Tribe's opposition to increasing the existing treated effluent flow into Stonington Harbor, because of potential impacts on the Tribe's aquaculture concerns. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7.

**Donald L. Murphy, Chairman, Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission, letter dated 12/13/01:** In this letter, Mr. Murphy and the Shellfish Commission identify several concerns and questions, and requested a meeting among the Commission, the Department of Aquaculture, WPCA and CDM regarding impacts on the Town's shellfishing resources. This meeting was held on January 29, 2002.

**John D. Daly, Latimer Point Condominium Association, letter dated 1/24/02:** Mr. Daly addresses the Latimer Point Condominium Association's special circumstance regarding sewage disposal and the restrictions currently in place on constructing improvements. WPCA is requested to work with DEP regarding modification of the current restriction. Addressing this issue is beyond the scope of the Facilities Plan, but including this letter in Appendix E will serve to express this concern to DEP.

**Agenda of Shellfishing Resources Impacts Workshop, 1/29/02:** This meeting was held to address many of the comments and questions from the Shellfish Commission, and Department of Agriculture and other concerns.

**Timothy Rollins, Purity Processed Shellfish, letter dated 2/4/02:** In this letter, Mr. Rollins states his objection to extending the existing Stonington Harbor outfall beyond the breakwater. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7.

**Donald L. Murphy, Chairman, Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission, letter dated 2/21/02:** In this letter, Mr. Murphy and the Shellfish Commission comment on several of the wastewater treatment alternatives and their potential impacts. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7. In the letter, Mr. Murphy and the Shellfish Commission recommend that WPCA adopt either Alternative No. 1 or No. 1A, as having the least potential negative impact to the Commission's goal of managing and improving access to shellfish resources.

**James S. Citak, Connecticut Division of Aquaculture, letter dated 2/21/02:** In this letter, Mr. Citak described the Division's comments and concerns with each of the alternatives described in the draft Facilities Plan. This topic was addressed in depth throughout the comment period, as further documented in Section 11.7.

**The Speziali Family, letter received 5/15/02:** In this letter, the Speziali family urged WPCA to adopt the alternative that results in a new, Town-wide wastewater treatment facility.

## 11.7 Impacts on Shellfish Resources

As summarized in Section 11.6, WPCA received significant comment regarding the recommended alternative's impact on the Town's shellfish resources. The draft report presented in August 2001 recommended Alternative No. 2 as described in Section 7. This alternative would involve closing the Mystic WPCF, and diverting all of the flow originating in the Mystic drainage basins to the Borough WPCF for treatment and discharge to the existing outfall in Stonington Harbor.

The bottom-line concern of all commenting parties is that the chosen alternative should not negatively impact the existing shellfish resources or industry surrounding them. In a meeting attended by the Shellfish Commission, the Division of Aquaculture, WPCA and CDM, the Division of Aquaculture indicated that an increase in flow to the Stonington Harbor outfall would increase the size of the restricted zone. This is a negative impact that shellfishing concerns want to avoid.

To address this issue, CDM's project water quality specialist conducted an analysis of the impacts of increasing flow to the Stonington Harbor outfall. This analysis is documented in a memorandum dated February 18, 2002 by Bernadette Kolb (contained in Appendix E). The analysis finds that increasing the volume of discharge should not have a significant impact on coliform concentrations at the restricted/open shellfish boundary, and thus the existing boundary can remain as-is (no expansion). The volume of the potential discharge is relatively small compared to the tidal flushing of Stonington Harbor, and dilution analysis suggests that as the effluent

plume travels away from the point of discharge, the differences of initial dilution diminish (as would be expected).

As of the publication of this revised draft Facilities Plan, technical agreement has not been reached among all parties. WPCA expects discussions may continue as DEP reviews the draft report. WPCA also notes that the revised recommendation contained in this draft renders many of these concerns moot.

## 11.8 Citizen's Review Panel

A second group of concerned citizen's, the Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) was formed subsequent to the August 20, 2001 Public Hearing. The purposes of the CRP were to assess and evaluate the draft Facilities Plan, and to develop conclusions and recommendations to WPCA. The full body of the CRP's final report is contained in Appendix E. WPCA has responded to the CRP report in the body of the revised Facilities Plan, either by providing more information, or by incorporating the recommendations.

The CRP's closing recommendations, as contained in the CRP report, are summarized as follows, with WPCA's responses:

**Immediate implementation of odor control at the three existing WPCFs.** WPCA agreed and implemented \$2 million of capital improvements, which was on-line by summer 2003.

**Continue to evaluate the Symbio™ process, and incorporate the process into the Facilities Plan if it proves successful.** WPCA agreed, and has continued to operate and evaluate the Symbio™ process at the Borough WPCF. It has not proven effective year-round, after five years of operation. Though not recommended for implementation in Section 7, if performance improves, WPCA will re-evaluate the process.

**Remove the 200,000 gpd reserve for North Stonington.** WPCA agreed, and the revised draft Facilities Plan reflects this change.

**Re-evaluate and significantly reduce the scope of the sewer needs portion of the Facilities Plan.** WPCA agreed, and the revised draft Facilities Plan reflects this change.

**Continue to use some combination of the existing outfalls, and correct any problems with existing diffusers.** WPCA agreed, and the revised draft Facilities Plan reflects this change. The Borough outfall was repaired in May 2005.

**Utilize the flow projections contained in the CRP report.** The flow projections have been revised in the Facilities Plan. WPCA's revised flow projections are not in exact agreement with the CRP, but stem from many of the same assumptions and concepts, with which WPCA agreed.

**Adopt Alternative G as the treatment plant option.** WPCA disagreed that Alternative G is the best long-term solution for the Town, although the recommended Alternative No. 1 is similar in many ways. See Section 7.

**Institute a new public hearing process if the previous recommendation (Alternative No. 2) is changed.** WPCA agreed and a new Public Hearing was held.

## **11.9 Summary of Public Hearing (2/5/2005)**

A public hearing was held on Wednesday, February 2, 2005 at the Mystic Middle School. A copy of a meeting handout, which was an Executive Summary of the revised draft Wastewater Facilities Plan, is contained in Appendix E.

A presentation was made that described the revised draft facilities plan. Many questions were asked at the conclusion of the presentation. The following is a paraphrased record of the questions and answers at the public hearing. A verbatim transcript of the Public Hearing is available for review at the WPCA office in Town Hall.

It should be noted that the revised facilities plan presented at the February 2, 2005 hearing included the recommendation that the Town proceed with Alternative No. 5. Alternative No. 5 involves construction and operation of a new treatment plant at a town-owned site near Pumping Station No. 2 with the treated effluent discharged via the existing Stonington Borough treatment plant outfall in Stonington Harbor. Many of the questions and comments were related to that recommendation, which the WPCA subsequently withdrew. The WPCA has considered this input while re-evaluating the options. WPCA has revised its recommendation to Alternative No. 1, which renders many of these questions and comments moot.

**Question: Was the presence of encephalitis mosquitoes considered in the selection of the preferred site for the new treatment plant? What about the school children that will be in the vicinity? Were the picnic/recreational areas considered?** Answer: Yes.

**Question: Why is it not possible to pump all of Pawcatuck's wastewater to Groton, but it is possible to pump it all to the Borough area?** Answer: The limit on flow to Groton is not pumping capacity – it is possible to pump all of the flow to Groton. The constraint is treatment capacity at Groton. The Groton plant does not have sufficient capacity to handle all of the wastewater generated within Stonington.

**Question: The recommended alternative will result in a BOD load increase by a factor of 11 to Stonington Harbor, and a nitrogen increase of 3.8 times existing.** Answer: Alternative No. 5 involves an increase in effluent flow discharged to Stonington Harbor, but due to the higher degree of treatment, the overall impact of BOD and nitrogen loading would be less. Please refer to Section 6 for details of this analysis, and Table 6-4 for a summary of the existing equivalent BOD load compared

to Water Quality Scenario No. 5. Please note that Alternative No. 5 is no longer the recommended alternative.

**Question: Please address the increased discharge to Stonington Harbor from the recommended alternative, and the impact that may have on heavy metals and the fishing industry.** Answer: Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Question: Please indicate which of the WPCA Board supports Alternative 5.** Answer: At the time of the hearing, the entire Authority supported Alternative 5. Note that the WPCA has since withdrawn that recommendation.

**Question: Please provide more information on the decision-making process behind not selecting the Groton alternative, and comment on the economics of that option, which the report indicates are comparable with Alternative 5.** Answer: At the time of the hearing, the decision to not select the Groton alternative was based on economics. Implementation of the Groton alternative required that Stonington fund significant infrastructure improvements within Groton to support the flow transfer, as well as to continue to operate the Pawcatuck plant and an equalization facility at the Mystic WPCF site. Note that since the hearing, Stonington has received a formal correspondence from Groton that eliminates the Groton alternative from consideration. This letter is included in Appendix F.

**Question: The report notes that loads cannot be increased to the Mystic River, in order to maintain its high quality, designated use, etc. This same sentiment can be made for Stonington Harbor and the Pawcatuck River, and there needs to be a better solution than discharging all of the Town's effluent into Stonington Harbor.** Answer: Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Question: Please confirm the Pawcatuck WPCF's capacity and current operating flow, compare that to the other facilities.** Answer: The Pawcatuck plant's permitted capacity is 1.3 mgd, and it is operating at approximately 50% of that flow. It should be noted that there is a difference between permitted flow and its actual functional capacity. The Mystic and Borough WPCFs are both stressed to near their functional capacity.

**Question: The economic impact of the recommended plan is high and funding will be a problem, considering the Town's other costs, including the recent \$40 million high school project.** Answer: Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Question: It is surprising that the Town is looking to add sewers, as the report indicates.** Answer: It is not WPCA's policy to seek to extend sewers. The report identifies areas where on-site systems are potential problems, and WPCA must plan on the possibility of eventually sewerage those areas in order to solve those potential environmental problems.

**Question: The Town should implement the “best” solution, not necessarily the most cost-effective.** Answer: Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Question: Implementation of Alternative No. 5 will require a permit from the Inlands and Wetlands Commission.** Answer: The WPCA expects to apply for any and all permits that may be required.

**Question: Were the costs for demolition of the existing plants included in the cost figures presented?** Answer: Yes.

**Question: What would be done if the Eastern Ribbon snake is located at the proposed new plant site? What about archeological/historical value? Light pollution? What about odor control at the new site?** Answer: Each has been considered and will be addressed as part of the design and permitting processes. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Question: The Chairman of the Stonington Harbor Management Commission invited a representative from WPCA to attend its next meeting.** Answer: None.

**Question: Alternative 5 is not the best alternative due to 1) financial impacts and 2) the impact of discharging all of the Town’s effluent to Stonington Harbor.** Answer: Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Question: Do the O&M costs in the report include the costs of financing the project? If not, how can the comparison not consider this, because it adds more cost to the selected, highest capital-cost alternative?** Answer: The O&M costs presented at the hearing did not include the financing cost. Though it is understood that it costs more to finance a higher capital cost project, assigning a precise figure to the financing cost is not possible at this time, because of the many unknowns associated with the overall implementation schedule, and borrowing costs at the time funding is needed. Nonetheless, the WPCA is aware of this aspect of implementation of each alternative. It should also be noted that the overall alternative project costs presented do include a contingency (as a percentage) that is meant to approximate “soft” costs, such as legal, administrative, etc. costs that are a part of implementation of this type of project. The same percentage contingency is applied to all alternatives, so therefore the highest cost alternatives are assigned larger contingencies.

**Question: The recommended alternative does not consider any increase in traffic and its impacts on the school.** Answer: The traffic volume associated with a treatment facility is negligible.

**Question: Discharging all of the Town’s flow to Stonington Harbor is strongly objectionable. It is suggested that WPCA revisit the Groton alternative, and please consider photo-remediation as an alternative disposal option.** Answer: The Groton alternative is not a feasible option, and WPCA has received a letter to that effect from

Groton (see Appendix F). Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Question: Please clarify the statement that the Symbio process has not proven satisfactory.** Answer: The Symbio process was put into place at the Stonington Borough WPCF on a trial basis to see if it would allow the plant to achieve an effluent total nitrogen concentration of 10 mg/L or less, and it has not been able to do so. The success of the process depends on very tight control of oxygen levels within the aeration basins, and it just has not proven the ability to provide that level of control.

**Question: It seems that the fundamental problem regarding capacity is the Mystic WPCF. The Pawcatuck WPCF is OK; the Borough WPCF, without the diversion, would be OK, and Mystic is overloaded. It makes sense to implement a variation of the Groton alternative whereby only the Mystic flow is pumped to Groton. Has that been evaluated?** Answer: When looking at the variations of the Groton alternative, the seemingly most cost-effective option was to pump flow from both the Mystic and Borough WPCFs to Groton, and the option suggested in this question had not been developed. However, the Groton alternative is no longer a feasible option, and WPCA has received a letter to that effect from Groton (see Appendix F).

**Question: Please provide clarification of the recommended plan for the sewer needs areas. How many areas will be addressed, and at what cost?** Answer: Refer to Sections 2 and 10 of the report.

**Question: Is at least a portion of the site recommended for the new treatment plant designated for conservation?** Answer: This is a question for the Town as a whole to decide.

**Question: Can nitrogen be filtered out of the effluent?** Answer: The vast majority of nitrogen loading to treatment plants is in soluble form, so it cannot be filtered. The best, proven, most cost-effective means for removing nitrogen is to use a biological process to convert it into nitrogen gas, for subsequent release to the atmosphere.

**Question: Is the value of the abandoned sites for the recommended alternative considered in the cost analysis?** Answer: No.

## **11.10 Public Comment Period (2/5/2005 - 4/15/2005)**

During the subsequent open comment period after the hearing, WPCA received several additional comments in the form of letters and at meetings. These comments are described below, in chronological order. Though the public comment period was "officially" closed on April 15, 2005, WPCA continued to accept comments for an extended period afterwards. Copies of this correspondence are contained in Appendix E.

A petition, signed by 21 residents of Stonington, was submitted to WPCA no later than February 4, 2005. The signatories “[disapprove] of the consolidation of the three water treatment plants in Stonington and discharge of the effluent in Stonington Harbor, as proposed by the Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority.” In addition, a collection of 20 e-mails was submitted to WPCA from 2/14/2005 through 2/22/05 endorsing this opinion. The organized group that submitted these, and other comments during the open comment period, is known as the *Better Solution* Task Force. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**James M. Spellman, letter dated February 4, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Spellman reviewed a history of wastewater planning in Stonington, and expressed opposition to making a drastic change in the overall treatment philosophy that Alternative No. 5 would represent. He also expressed doubt that discharging all of the Town’s effluent to Stonington Harbor could be approved. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Emily Lynch, letter dated February 6, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Lynch expressed opposition to discharging all of the Town’s effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Dale D. Brummond Sr., letter dated February 16, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Brummond asked that the three receiving waters (Mystic River, Stonington Harbor and Pawcatuck River) be professionally compared regarding ability to flush/assimilate effluent discharge, and that the results be published.

**Glenn J. Frishman., letter dated February 18, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Frishman, as the Chairman of the Board of Finance for the Town of Stonington indicated that the Board of Finance could not support the recommended alternative No. 5 due to the financial impact of implementing the alternative. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Arthur Medeiros, letter dated February 18, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Medeiros, on behalf of the Southern New England Fisherman’s & Lobsterman’s Association, expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically the discharge of all the Town’s effluent into Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA’s revised recommendations.

**Charles C. Beebe Jr., email dated February 21, 2005:** in this email Mr. Beebe endorsed the recommendation to implement Alternative No. 5.

**Peter Vermilya, letter dated February 21, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Vermilya, on behalf of the Stonington Harbor Management Commission (SHMC), expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically the discharge of all of the Town’s effluent into Stonington Harbor. The letter also indicated that the SHMC must be notified at least 35 days prior to commencement of a public hearing on matters concerning

development of the harbor, and that no such prior notice was provided. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Gail Shea, letter dated February 22, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Shea expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, and suggests that a plan to keep the three existing plants in operation was preferred, and that additional Groton options should be evaluated. In the letter Ms. Shea also expressed opposition to the draft facilities plan recommendations to provide sewers to entire neighborhoods where only one or two properties are truly in need of a resolution to problems. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations. Regarding the sewerage of "needs areas", as described in the draft wastewater facilities plan: the plan identified areas within the Town that have exhibited wastewater disposal issues, and for which it is proper for WPCA to plan on the possibility of providing service at some point in the 20-year life of the plan. WPCA may use discretion over the next 20 years on when and how to resolve any wastewater problem areas as they develop, worsen, or improve.

**Edward P. Dear, letter date unknown:** in this letter Mr. Dear indicated his opposition to the recommended Alternative No. 5 due primarily to the financial impact of implementing the alternative. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Jon F. Dodd, letter dated March 1, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Dodd expressed opposition to discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Mary C. Motherway, letter dated March 2, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Motherway expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both the construction of a new facility and of discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Ms. Motherway advocated upgrading all three existing plants, that WPCA further investigate Groton options, and that land disposal be investigated. Regarding the selection of Alternative No. 5, please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations. Groton options have been determined to be not viable (refer to the April 19, 2006 letter from Groton contained in Appendix F). Detailed investigation of land disposal options for treated effluent is not within the scope of the wastewater facilities planning effort.

**Dora Hill, letter dated March 3 2005:** in this letter Ms. Hill asked if the increase in sewer user fee projected in Section 10 of the draft plan would begin immediately upon an approved referendum to fund the project, and what would the fee be? WPCA responded to Ms. Hill's letter, and this response is included in Appendix E. Regarding the amount of any increase, this revised draft facilities plan has updated figures in Section 10.

**William S. Brown, letter dated March 4, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Brown, First Selectman, on behalf of the Stonington Board of Selectmen, expressed unanimous opposition to Alternative No. 5, and recommended that WPCA continue to seek a solution that would be acceptable to the Town's residents. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Stonington Harbor Yacht Club, resolution dated March 5, 2005:** in this resolution the Stonington Harbor Yacht Club, expressed unanimous opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Donald L. Murphy, letter dated March 6, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Murphy, on behalf of the Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission, expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, and endorsed Alternative No. 1 as the most tenable option. Many of the specific technical issues described in this letter are discussed in Section 11.7. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Peter F. Moore, email dated March 6, 2005:** in this letter the Mr. Moore expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both the construction of a new facility and of discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Helen W. Brewster, letter dated March 7, 2005:** in this letter the Ms. Brewster expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both the construction of a new facility and of discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Geoffrey Little, email dated March 7, 2005:** in this letter the Mr. Little expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both the construction of a new facility and of discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Patricia Dumke Thomas, email dated March 8, 2005:** in this letter the Ms. Thomas expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Wendy Lehman Lash, letter dated March 8, 2005:** in this letter the Ms. Lash expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. The letter recommends further evaluation of the "Groton alternative", and of land disposal of effluent. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations. Groton options have been determined to be not viable (refer to the April 19, 2006 letter from Groton contained in Appendix F). Detailed investigation of land disposal options for treated effluent is not within the scope of the wastewater facilities planning effort.

**Walter C. Johnsen, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter to the First Selectman, William S. Brown, and copied to WPCA, Mr. Johnsen endorses the opposition to Alternative No. 5. The letter also lists several issues at the existing treatment plants as concerns, and asked the Selectmen to direct WPCA to resolve these issues.

**Nenaude de Kay, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter Ms. de Kay expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. The letter recommends further evaluation of the "Groton

alternative", or upgrading the three existing plants. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Mike Laptew, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Laptew expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor, due to its impact on eel grass beds. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Ann G. Moore, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Moore expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. The letter recommends further evaluation of land disposal of effluent. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations. Detailed investigation of land disposal options for treated effluent is not within the scope of the wastewater facilities planning effort.

**Marjorie Berthasavage, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Berthasavage expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. The letter recommends upgrading the three existing treatment plants. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Willis Arndt, letter dated March 9, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Arndt expressed strong concern with the facilities planning work done, the approach taken, and the recommendations presented, and asked if the Town wouldn't be better served if the existing WPCA members were replaced.

**Andrew C. Wormser, letter dated March 10, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Wormser expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**William S. Brown, letter dated March 11, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Brown, First Selectman, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, forwarded a record of comments received at the March 9, 2005 Selectmen's meeting. An excerpt of the meeting minutes indicates that 15 people spoke to express opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**F. W. Richard, DDS, letter dated March 14, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Richard expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**James Larkin, letter dated March 14, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Larkin expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Harrison and Ellen Buxton, letter dated March 14, 2005:** in this letter the Buxtons expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. The letter recommends further evaluation of the "Groton alternative", and of land disposal of effluent. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations. Groton options have been determined to be not viable (refer to the April 19, 2006 letter from Groton contained in Appendix F). Detailed investigation of land disposal options for treated effluent is not within the scope of the wastewater facilities planning effort.

**Anya Larkin, letter dated March 14, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Larkin expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, both construction of a new facility and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Elizabeth Bartholet, letter dated March 16, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Bartholet expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Sarah and Bob Langman, letter dated March 17, 2005:** in this letter the Langmans expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, in terms of construction of a new facility, discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor and cost. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Margaret Field, email dated March 18, 2005:** in this email Ms. Field expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, in terms of construction of a new facility, and discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Candace D. Sanford letter dated March 19, 2005:** in this letter Ms. Sanford expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, in terms of construction of a new facility, discharging the entire Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor and cost. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**J. Stewart and Mary T. McClendon, letter dated March 20, 2005:** in this letter the McClendons expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, in terms of construction of a new facility, discharging the entire Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor and cost. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Charles and Ann Buffum, letter dated March 24, 2005:** in this letter the Buffums expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically the discharge of the entire Town's effluent into Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Marcia and John Fix, letter received March 25, 2005:** in this letter Mr. and Mrs. Fix expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Jesse S. Diggs, letter dated March 25, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Diggs endorses the opposition to Alternative No. 5, and recommends that WPCA recommend Alternative G, or a variant thereof. WPCA recommends Alternative No. 1 for the reasons indicated in Section 7.

**Willis Arndt, letter dated March 29, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Arndt expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Capt. Bruce S. Anderson, letter dated April 3, 2005:** in this letter Capt. Anderson expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**J. William W. Harsch, Esq., letter dated April 8, 2005:** in this letter, Mr. Harsch indicated that the *Better Solution* Task Force will be submitting written comments, and asked that WPCA accept comments received after April 15, 2005, the original date set to close the open comment period. WPCA accepted materials submitted after April 15, 2005.

**Thomas Bragdon, letter dated April 12, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Bragdon, on behalf of the Stonington Small Boat Association, expressed the Association's unanimous opposition to Alternative No. 5. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**William Hargreaves, letter dated April 14, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Hargreaves, on behalf of the Stonington Village Improvement Association (SVIA), expressed opposition to Alternative No. 5, specifically discharging all of the Town's effluent to Stonington Harbor. SVIA advocates reducing, or even eliminating, effluent discharge to Stonington Harbor. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**J. William W. Harsch, Esq., letter dated April 15, 2005:** In this letter Mr. Harsch is generally critical of the recommendation to proceed with Alternative No. 5. The letter states that the alternatives evaluation did not consider several key factors, including the environmental impact to Stonington Harbor, impacts to several aspects of the community, odors, and aesthetics, and the financial impact of the project. The letter references previous dye studies in Stonington Harbor that indicated that the Harbor is poorly flushed, and recent data indicating that the nitrogen level in Stonington Harbor is high. The letter was also critical in general of the ongoing operation of the treatment plants and the WPCA's handling of the public comment process, and concluded by urging WPCA to withdraw its recommendation to implement Alternative No. 5. The WPCA has withdrawn its recommendation. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**J. William W. Harsch, Esq., letter dated May 16, 2005:** In this letter, Mr. Harsch followed up on his previous correspondence, and this letter contains the technical

comments on the draft wastewater facilities plan. The letter reaffirms the *Better Solution* Task Force's opposition to Alternative No. 5, and restates its concern that the WPCA select a plan that considers prior environmental studies, and impacts of the plan to the community in terms of odor, aesthetics, fisheries, etc. Attached to the letter are copies of the following: *Investigation on Nitrogen Distribution and Loading in Stonington Harbor, Preliminary Report, April 15, 2002*; and *Comments Submitted by Penny Vlahos to the Stonington Harbor Commission, February 14, 2005*. Please refer to Section 7 and WPCA's revised recommendations.

**Ed Hart, letter dated December 27, 2005:** in this letter Mr. Hart asked WPCA to consider six issues, the first three of which are related to completion and funding of the wastewater facilities plan effort. Following are WPCA's responses the first three of Mr. Hart's suggestions:

1. WPCA has discussed the "unofficial" facilities plan sections (Sections 1-6 and partial Section 7, essentially stopping short of a treatment recommendation) that were submitted in June 2005 with CTDEP. As of September 2006, the CTDEP has not reviewed the draft plan sections and WPCA has been given no timetable for this review.
2. The facilities plan work is ongoing, with plans for submittal of a final draft plan to CTDEP in January 2007.
3. WPCA has discussed funding with CTDEP and to date CTDEP has not committed any further funding to the project.

**Willis Arndt, letter dated March 28, 2006:** in this letter Mr. Arndt asked WPCA, when reevaluating the alternatives, to commit to doing everything possible to eliminate the discharge of effluent into Stonington Harbor, the Mystic River and the Pawcatuck River and any waters without excellent flushing action.

**Jack Gorby, presentation to WPCA, April 25, 2006:** Mr. Gorby made a presentation at the WPCA regular monthly meeting, at which he encouraged WPCA to evaluate a technology option offered by Global Water Group, as an option while revising the wastewater facilities plan. WPCA agreed, and contacted Global Water as part of the evaluation, and considered the viability of package-type treatment systems.

**Willis Arndt, letter dated October 24, 2006:** In this letter, Mr. Arndt asked that WPCA conduct a formal analysis of the feasibility, and pros-and-cons of extending the existing Borough WPCF outfall to a point beyond the outer breakwater. A formal, detailed study of this issue is not within the scope of the facilities planning effort.

### **11.11 Summary of Public Hearing (11/8/2006)**

A public hearing was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2006 at the Mystic Middle School. A copy of a meeting handout, which was a summary of the revised draft Wastewater Facilities Plan, is contained in Appendix E.

A presentation was made that described the revised draft facilities plan. Several questions were asked at the conclusion of the presentation. The following is a paraphrased record of the questions and answers at the public hearing. A verbatim transcript of the Public Hearing is available for review at the WPCA office in Town Hall.

**Question: The presentation and draft plan indicate two options for sewerage the needs areas, one for just the critical areas, one for both the critical and high-priority areas. Which is WPCA recommending?** Answer: The two options presented are meant to convey the potential economic impacts of implementing those improvements. WPCA is not recommending either option. As part of the facilities planning process, WPCA is required to identify potential problem areas, and to plan for fixing them. The facilities plan report is the written documentation of WPCA meeting this requirement. However, as documented in the report, WPCA has the responsibility to continuously review the sewer needs of the Town, and to respond as public health issues as necessary and as budgetary constraints allow.

**Question: The methodology used to recommend sewerage of the needs areas is flawed, in that it compares the cost of installing sewers to those areas to the cost of installing separate on-site fixes to every lot within the area, when in reality only a small number of lots within the area need fixes. This skews the economic comparison toward sewerage vs. on-lot systems.** Answer: This comment assumes that the small number of identified problem lots are the only lots within that identified needs area that have or will have problems. The questionnaire, which resulted in a small number of confirmed problems, must be considered as only one source of information. The extent of each sewer needs area was determined by analysis of many factors, including, but not limited to, soils, depth of groundwater, proximity to water supplies, lot size, questionnaire responses, etc. Based on a Town-wide review, these areas had higher instances of failure and/or potential for failure.

**Question: The cost estimates presented appear to be too high, when compared to previous work done by WPCA in recent years.** Answer: At this planning stage of the project, the cost estimates are developed to the best extent possible based on the level of detail known, and then a contingency appropriate to that level of detail is included. The cost estimates are not intended to be the "low bid" received during construction, but are figures that the Town should use for planning purposes. We have seen from neighboring communities the difficulties that can develop when the initial project cost estimates were low, resulting in insufficient appropriations to complete the project.

**Question: The presented project schedule shows that the Mystic improvements are not planned for completion until 2012, and the Borough improvements until 2015. For environmental quality reasons, this schedule should be accelerated.** Answer: WPCA understands this comment, and agrees that these improvements should be a priority for the Town. This must be considered together with the overall financial and debt situation in the Town.

**Question: Are the existing facilities in danger of failure in the period between now and the construction of the recommended improvements?** Answer: No, the existing plants are not in imminent danger of failing. The older the plants get, the more certain aspects of the facilities need maintenance and repair.

### **11.12 Public Comment Period (11/8/2006 - 12/8/2006)**

During the subsequent open comment period after the hearing, WPCA received no additional comments.