



Massachusetts Municipal Association

## MMA BEST PRACTICES SERIES

*Recommendations for Effective Local Government Administration and Management from MMA Policy Committees*

January 2016 • Volume 1 • Number 12

### **MMA Policy Committee on Energy and the Environment**

#### **Best Practice Recommendation: Integrated Water Resources Management Plans**

**BEST PRACTICE:** Develop and maintain an Integrated Water Resources Management Plan (IWRMP) that promotes coordinated development and management of water, wastewater, stormwater, land and related resources. The plan should identify the local authorities responsible for each respective service and identify which permitting, design and future capital improvements should be prioritized and feasibly integrated. IWRMPs can provide a transparent and comprehensive water system investment road map.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's "Guide to Integrated Water Resource Management Planning" clearly outlines the benefits of an IWRMP<sup>1</sup>:

"An Integrated Water Resource Management Plan is a plan that evaluates alternative means for addressing a community's current and future wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater needs and identifies the most economical and environmentally appropriate means of meeting those needs. Integrated Water Resource Management Planning is an integral component of municipal planning. Many municipalities engage in planning to determine future land use patterns, provide educational and economic opportunities for residents, ensure an adequate stock of affordable housing and in general improve the quality of life. The viability of these plans relies on a reliable source of safe drinking water and environmentally protective systems for managing wastewater and stormwater. Preparation of an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan that examines the overall ability of the water resource infrastructure to accommodate anticipated growth is an essential element of any planning effort aimed at shaping the nature and extent of future development. ...

"Preparing one document in response to a number of different regulatory requirements not only saves time and money, but also promotes cooperation and coordination among municipal departments. Indeed, the preparation of an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan requires the participation of the Water Department, Sewer Department, Board of Health, Department of Public Works, Conservation Commission and Planning Department. With municipal departments working together, the community has the opportunity to prepare one plan that prioritizes all its water resource management needs in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to the public health and the environment. Bringing these departments together can save money. As roads are repaved, communities can inspect the water pipes, sewer pipes and storm drains under those roads, remove illicit connections to the sewers and storm drains, repair leaks and make any other necessary repairs. Bringing departments together can also foster solutions that address multiple problems."

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection "Guide to Integrated Water Resource Management Planning":  
[www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/laws/i-thru-z/iwrmp.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/laws/i-thru-z/iwrmp.pdf)

## **Resources**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Integrated Planning for Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater

[www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-municipal-stormwater-and-wastewater](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-municipal-stormwater-and-wastewater)