

The Stormwater By-Law Review Working Group was formed to evaluate Needham’s current Stormwater By-Law and recommend updates to improve its clarity, effectiveness, fairness, and alignment with evolving environmental standards, including NPDES requirements. The group includes ten members: residents, Select Board members, Town staff from Engineering, Conservation, and Building, and a construction and real estate professional.

Key Issues

- Limited scope
- Enforcement and accountability
- Triggers for review
- Clarity and organization
- Design and submission guidance
- Need for greater regulatory flexibility

Areas for Improvement

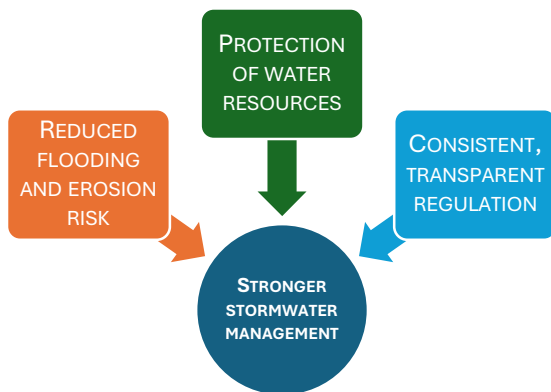
- Structure and organization of By-Law to address quantity in addition to quality
- Increase infiltration requirement (from 1.0" to 1.5")
- Define thresholds for land disturbance activities (e.g., grading)
- Enhance triggers for applicability

Step 1: Assess the existing by-law for clarity, completeness, ease of administration, regulatory compliance, and consistency with other communities.

Step 2: Identify gaps in processes, policies, and language to improve compliance, implementation, and public understanding.

Step 3: Propose updates to address gaps, strengthen stormwater quantity and quality provisions, and align with current and anticipated regulations.

Anticipated Benefits



The recommendations aim to strengthen local resilience, support responsible development, and reflects current standards and community priorities.

Potential Changes

Impacts

Infiltration

Increase of infiltration from 1" to 1.5" may raise construction and/or planning costs.

Proposed Construction Plan

Proposed construction plans must provide calculations of water flow, provide design and soil suitability for drainage changes in grade and detailed infiltration infrastructure information as applicable.

Applicability

Activities not involving construction, such as grading or land clearing that meet or exceed stated thresholds will be subject to stormwater review, approval and mitigation through a Street Permit.

Potential Changes

Impacts

Recordkeeping

Calculations

Soil Testing

Property owners who are required to install infiltration will be responsible to file notice at the Registry of Deeds that infiltration units are present and provide the O&M plans specific to the unit(s) to inform subsequent owners. Projects must utilize the approved calculation methods and limits stated, unless otherwise approved by the Town of Needham. Soil testing, for suitability of infiltration, results will be provided by an applicant at the time of submission prior to permit review and approval.

Purpose

- Expanded scope to include stormwater quantity.
- Increased focus on groundwater recharge and long-term environmental resilience.

Definitions

- Expanded terminology for consistency and compliance.
- Improved language for terms that limited clarity, enforceability, and adaptability.

Administration

- Modernized framework supports more consistent enforcement, easier compliance for applicants, and smoother coordination among Town departments.

Applicability

- Closing gaps around non-building construction activities and clarifying triggers for review and permitting.
- Alignment with MS4 and DEP guidance.

IDDE

- Strengthens the Town's ability to detect, prevent, and respond to illicit discharges, aligning with EPA MS4 permit standards and best practices.

Emergency Suspension

- Aligned with designated authority and emergency response roles.
- Relocated to Authority section for logical positioning and flow.

Stormwater Management and Erosion Control

- Increases infiltration standards.
- Improves transparency and consistency in plan review and enforcement.