



2024 Expanded Sewer Connection Moratorium

FAQ

Subsequent to a public hearing on the matter in March 2024, the Utilities Trustees of Northport Village Corporation passed an expanded moratorium for Calendar Year 2024 that prohibits permits to be processed or approved for new connections to the sewer system in order to provide time for the Village to study increased load on the sewer system. The text of the Moratorium can be found attached in Exhibit A.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Moratorium?

A moratorium is a “stop” on certain development activities.

2. What areas of the Village of Northport are impacted?

The Moratorium applies to any property within the village limits of Northport Village Corporation that is currently within the area of the NVC Sewer System (the “NVC System”) and is currently (or could be) served. See Attachment B for a map of the Village sewer system limits. The NVC System will never extend sewer mains to serve other areas of the Village. This was expressly forbidden by the EPA when the NVC was licensed to build the treatment plant.

3. What type of Moratorium is the Northport Village currently in?

The Moratorium applies to projects in the NVC System that require a new connection to the Sewer System. Full details are described in the Moratorium found in Attachment A.

4. How long will the expanded Moratorium last?

The initial Moratorium was put in place on March 26, 2022 and has been extended four additional times. This Moratorium runs from April 7, 2023 to October 6, 2024. At the end of that period, it could be repealed or extended depending on the review and analysis of sewer systems’ capacity, or the Utilities Committee could determine to make the terms of the moratorium permanent through changes to the applicable NVC policies and ordinances.

5. How does the NVC Primary Treatment wastewater plant work?

The Village's Sewer Utility operates under a license from the federal EPA and the Maine DEP. This license includes limits for volume of discharge, and volume and concentration of various components such as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), and Total Suspended Solids (TSS). The wastewater undergoes primary treatment involving settling of solids in a series of settling tanks (which are periodically sludge wasted). Wastewater is decontaminated with chlorine and then the chlorine is neutralized chemically with bisulfite before the effluent is discharged to the ocean. Decontamination is monitored by sample testing for BOD, TSS, Coliform organisms, and Enterococci. The wastewater undergoes primary treatment involving settling of solids in a series of settling tanks (which are periodically sludgewasted) and then chemical treatment of the effluent. The system has capacity to handle the volumes received without fear of license violation, however concentrations of soluble organic BOD load increases with the increase in summer population and have, at times, approached license limits.

6. What is the Village's sewer treatment capacity?

The plant capacity was designed to serve the existing sewer customers and the lots of record within the service area as defined by existing sewer mains (plus room for a 10% expansion). Calculations were based on 2.7 persons per household. In absolute numbers this amounts to 272 connections. This is the absolute maximum number of connections. However, recent experience, particularly during heavy summer occupancy, suggests that the plant is seeing wastewater from much more than 2.7 persons per household.

7. How does the Village know when its sewer system capacity is being reached?

The Village needs time to study whether the current treatment system is at or near capacity. During the expanded Moratorium, the Sewer Utility will conduct research in order to analyze data from system use in all four seasons and to see whether alterations in operating the system (more frequent sludgewasting, use of all three trains) will bring the levels of BOD lower. Village staff along with professional consultants provide sampling and testing of the effluent as required by the EPA. The NVC Utilities Committee also tracks sewer permit applications received through the development process to verify available capacity.

8. Is there anything that the sewer users can do to help minimize strains on the treatment system?

The Villages wastewater treatment system was designed to deal with sewage and wastewater from toilets, showers and tubs. Use of garbage disposals clearly adds a load of organic matter that adds to strain on the system; disposals should not be used. Garbage should be composted, not washed down the drain. Paints and organic compounds should never be flushed down the drain or toilet. Rice, noodles, coffee grounds, and bones should never be washed down they drain.

9. Who treats Northport Village's wastewater flows?

Wastewater generated by dwellings within the Sewer System service area is treated at the NVC Wastewater Treatment Plant adjacent to Ruggles Park near the wharf. All other wastewater is treated by private septic systems.

10. Why is it so critically important not to exceed the capacity of the treatment plant? If wastewater flows exceed the capacity of our current primary treatment plant such that there are multiple violations of our license, the NVC would likely be required to design and build a secondary treatment plant whose costs could exceed 10-15 million dollars. This would not only be beyond the means of the financial resources of the NVC, but the operation and maintenance costs of a secondary plant could not be borne by user fees on a 250 customer system. It is therefore critical to operate the wastewater treatment plant within limitations of the existing license.

11. How does Northport Village get out of a sewer Moratorium?

The Village needs time to study whether the current treatment system is at or near capacity. Within the next 6 months, the Sewer Utility will conduct research in order to analyze data from system use in all four seasons.

12. Did Northport Village expect the amount of growth it is currently seeing for land development activities that impact our Sewer system capacity?

Growth of the system by dwelling construction on buildable lots of record has been anticipated from the outset and was included in the engineer's estimations of size and demand when the system was built in 1986. All but six of these lots of record have been built on or licensed to connect.

13. I have a vacant lot in Northport Village, can I build a new home and hook up to the sewer system?

Maybe. A new home can be built on a lot of record (as of 1986) within the area served by the Sewer System only if a sewer permit was approved prior to the effective date of the Moratorium. If you have applied for and received a sewer permit, this Moratorium does not affect you. Building on a lot large enough to allow for use of a private septic system, then you may not be impacted by this Moratorium.

14. I'd like to build a commercial building in the Village not knowing exactly what type of tenants I may have. Can I do this?

Maybe. New structures requiring connection to the sewer system are not currently allowed (unless they have already obtained a sewer permit), or are on a private septic system. Commercial uses are also governed by the NVC zoning ordinance and only limited uses are allowed.

15. Does this Moratorium impact new water hookups?

No. This Moratorium does not impact water connections. The water utility has ample capacity to take on new customers adjacent to the water mains.

If you have any questions about the Moratorium, please contact the NVC Utilities Committee via email at: utilities-committee@nvcmaine.org

Attachment A:

2024 Expanded Sewer Connection and Capacity Moratorium

Date: April 7, 2024

The Utility Trustees hereby impose an expansion of the Moratorium upon the receipt and processing of any sewer connection permits or any other application for other permits of any type which requires a new connection to the Northport Village sewer system, for the purpose of evaluating the systems efficiency and efficacy in removal of TSS and BOD and to determine if improved testing and removal mechanisms may be identified and/or Implemented.

This expanded moratorium shall be in place from April 7, 2024 until October 6, 2024, and may be lifted sooner by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Utility Trustees.

This moratorium imposed shall be subject to the following exceptions:

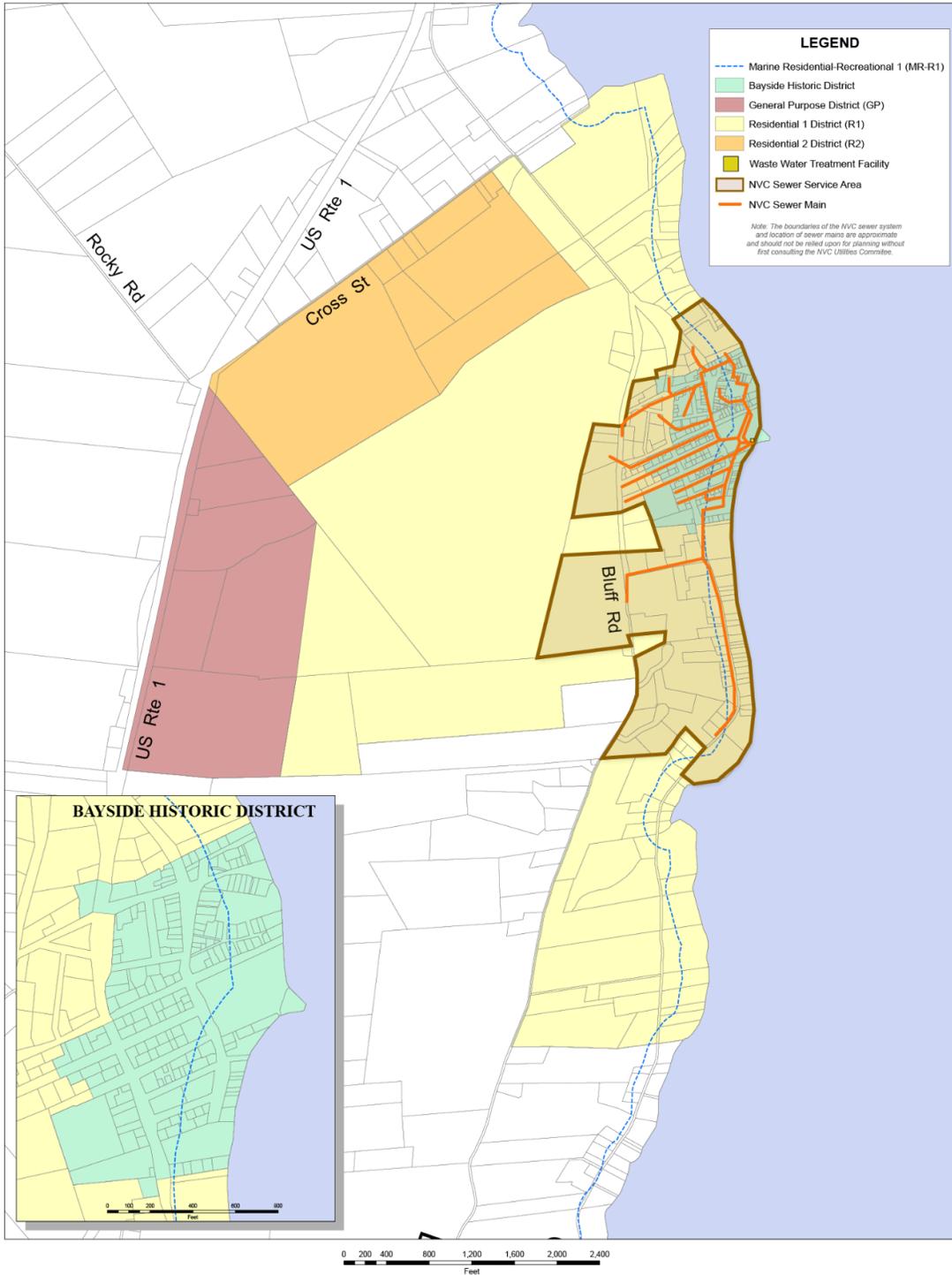
A. This moratorium shall not apply to sewer connection permits approved prior to March 26, 2022.

B. This moratorium shall not apply to the processing and issuance of any permit or approval for a project that does not require any new connections to the Northport Village sewer system.

Attachment B:

Northport Village Corporation

SEWER SYSTEM MAP



Revised January 17, 2022