



Our Communities

Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative

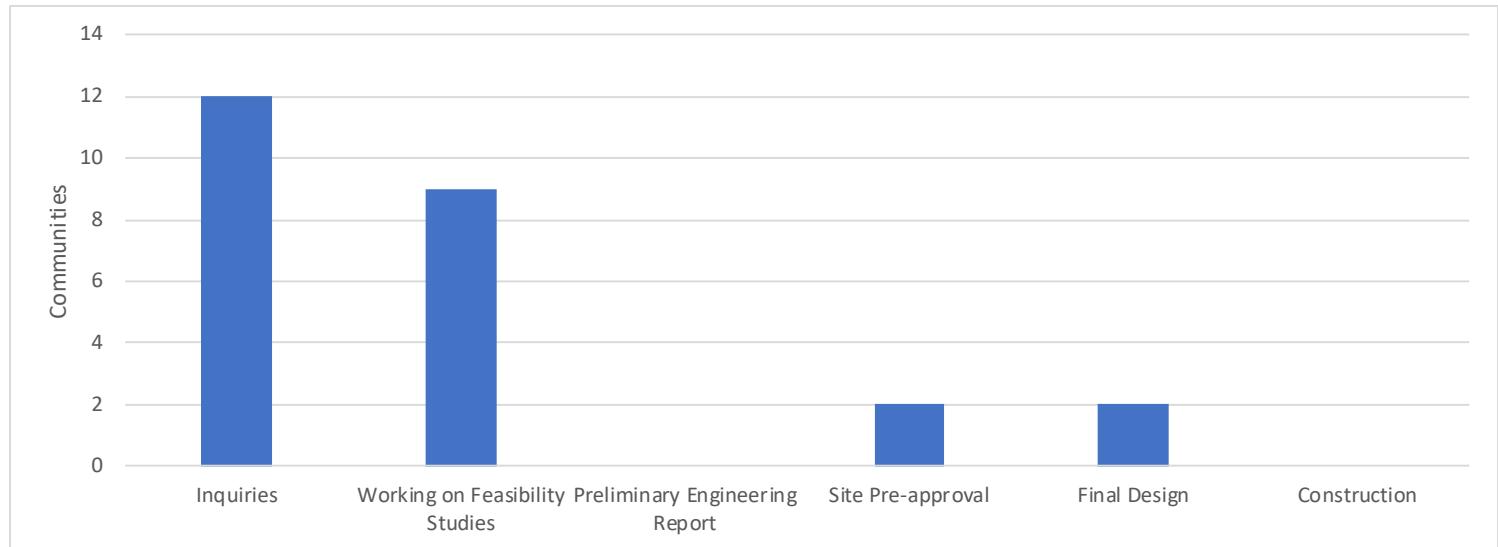
Supporting communities with their water infrastructure planning and financing

9

Number of communities
pursuing feasibility
studies in 2018

PERFORMANCE TREND

Communities Working on Water/Wastewater Projects (2018)



DATA ANALYSIS

DEC has set a strategic goal of supporting drinking water and wastewater infra-structure in Vermont's unserved and underserved communities. Staff from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and Department of Health collaborated to form an inter-agency work group to provide support to rural communities interested in exploring the feasibility of public water or wastewater infrastructure. Partners include: RCAP Solutions, USDA-Rural Development, VT Council on Rural Development, VT Rural Water Association, and Windham Area Regional Commission.

Formed in the summer of 2018, the workgroup has already made significant strides. The group has held feedback sessions with communities that have completed feasibility studies, created a workplan and website, revitalized a legacy funding program, and drafted an informational workbook for how to form a project committee. Staff attended public informational events and held several individual meetings with interested municipalities.

In the summer of 2018, DEC successfully applied for a grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission, in the amount of \$219,213, with a match

of \$112,000 from DEC and \$40,000 in volunteer time. The grant will support village infrastructure feasibility work in East and West Burke and Wolcott, providing a model for projects in other communities.

There is significant interest among Vermont's communities in exploring water or wastewater infrastructure projects. The support, guidance, and resources that are available from the group have been helpful in jump-starting the decision-making process. Nine communities are pursuing feasibility studies: East Burke, Grafton, Jamaica, Marlboro, Montgomery, West Burke, West Dummerston, Westminster West, and Wolcott. Twelve other communities have expressed interest, and conversations are ongoing about next steps.

Two systems (Westford and Bromley Mountain) have been pre-approved by the DEC indirect discharge program. The indirect discharge rules allow an applicant to submit a partial application for approval of a site for a future community wastewater system. The preapproval helps villages applying for a Village Center designation from ACCD, which offers financial incentives, training and technical assistance to these communities.

NEXT STEPS

- Post a Request for Proposals to hire consultants for implementation of the NBRC grant
- Conduct outreach events across a spectrum of stakeholders and potentially interested parties; continue to refine and improve the initiative's website
- Evaluate existing policies and procedures for infrastructure and permitting, for efficiency and effectiveness
- Develop and evaluate tools for assisting in rural infrastructure project development
- Promote the indirect discharge pre-approval process