

Carlisle Center Wastewater Connection

The proposed shared system, its public costs and the decisions ahead.

A focused first phase

Gleason Public Library and
Ferns

An existing Town asset

The Banta-Davis treatment
facility

Separate decisions

Design and permitting, then
construction

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The proposal at a glance

A proposed Carlisle Center connection, beginning with Gleason Public Library and Ferns.

The project	The decision ahead
About 2,100 feet of pressure main to the existing Town treatment facility.	November 16, 2026: proposed design and permitting funding of \$225,000-\$300,000.
Ferns pays for its private connection and the work on its own property.	Early 2027 target: a separate construction funding vote, following design and cost review.
Total public project planning range: \$685,000-\$1.4 million, including design.	The Town sets connection rules, reserves capacity and allocates costs before expansion.

The initial scope serves the Center, with any additional connections subject to Town review.

A longstanding town-center constraint

Small lots, nearby wells and limited septic options have shaped this discussion for years.

Carlisle's Board of Health raised nitrate-related groundwater concerns in 2017.

Carlisle Board of Health / January 2017

The Town has studied a connection

The 2022 Master Plan describes the existing school treatment system as underused and calls for water and wastewater feasibility work.

Planning across property lines

The 2026 Underground Study compiles well and septic records to inform groundwater planning. It supports a broader view of shared constraints.

Local drinking-water records

Recent Town records reinforce the importance of protecting local water supplies.

Location and date	Documented event
Gleason Public Library May 1, 2026	Do Not Drink order for elevated nitrate levels.
Carlisle Town Hall August 26, 2026	Boil Water order after E. coli and total coliform positive samples.
Ferns Country Store September 2021	An E. coli violation led to a boil-water order. Town records also describe coliform detections.

Each water-supply issue requires its own review. These records do not identify a common source, and drinking-water compliance remains separate from the sewer project.

The shared connection

The proposal uses the Town's existing treatment facility at Banta-Davis, which serves the school.

About 2,100 feet of 2-inch pressure main

A small pressurized sewer line would carry wastewater from the Center to the pump station upstream of the treatment facility.

Initial public work

The shared main, pumping and related work, plus the Gleason Library connection. Ferns would fund its own connection to the main.

Other Center properties

The study can evaluate additional municipal buildings and private properties in need. Future connections require separate review and written authorization.

The Town would own and oversee the shared infrastructure.

Capacity: what the preliminary figures mean

Engineering and MassDEP review will address capacity, treatment performance and school needs.

Source	Gallons/day	Basis of the figure
School / treatment plant	4,220	Recorded peak daily effluent flow
Proposed Ferns use	2,145	Design allowance for the proposed use
Gleason Public Library	395	Recorded peak daily water use
Preliminary screening total	6,760	Sum of the three figures above

Different measures

The 6,760 total adds recorded peak days to a proposed design allowance. It is a screening figure, not measured combined flow or available capacity.

Permit and school reserve

The plant permit is 13,500 gallons/day. The 80% reference (10,800) applies to average annual flow. The proposal prioritizes school needs.

The estimated public investment

November 16, 2026: design vote. Early 2027: target for a separate construction funding vote.

Phase	Planning range	What it covers
Design and permitting November 16, 2026 vote	\$225,000-\$300,000	Plans, site investigations, permits, up to two grant applications and bidding support.
Construction Early 2027 vote target	\$460,000-\$1.1 million	Shared main and library connection, construction administration and police details.
Combined public project	\$685,000-\$1.4 million	Includes design. Assumes no grant awards.

Why this phase is a significant share

Site investigations, permit applications, grant work and bidding support are substantial parts of the allowance. These are project-wide tasks needed to prepare a public project for construction, even with a relatively short pipe route.

Ben and Amy are privately funding Phase 1 of the feasibility study. No Town reimbursement is being requested.

Who pays for what

Proposed responsibilities, to be formalized in funding and connection agreements.

Private Ferns investment	Proposed Town investment
Phase 1 feasibility study, property purchase and restoration.	Shared main and Gleason Library connection.
Ferns’ connection from the public main to its property.	Design, permitting and construction of the public infrastructure.
Water supply, environmental work and other private site obligations.	Ownership and oversight of the shared system.

Operating costs and user charges

Ferns would pay agreed user charges. The design and policy work would establish operating, maintenance and replacement costs, with clear terms for current and future owners.

What the cost could mean for a household

Illustrations for a home assessed at \$1,356,763, Carlisle’s FY2026 single-family average.

Illustrative funding approach	Household share
Design only: \$225,000-\$300,000 spread through taxes in one year.	\$118-\$158 once
Entire public project: \$685,000-\$1.4 million spread through taxes in one year.	\$361-\$737 once
Entire public project: borrowed at 4% over 20 years, with equal annual payments.	\$27-\$54 per year

These are alternative examples, not amounts to add together. The full-project examples already include design.

The Town has not selected a funding method. Grants could reduce the amount. Actual rates, future assessments, operating costs and borrowing fees affect the final household cost.

State grants could reduce Carlisle's share

The Town and project team are reviewing funding opportunities.

Rural Development Fund

Supports eligible small-town planning, predevelopment and infrastructure work. The Town can assess how the project fits the next available funding round.

MassWorks

Funds public infrastructure tied to private investment and economic development. It is a potential construction funding opportunity for the shared connection.

The engineering scope includes up to two grant applications.

The estimates are shown before any grant assistance. The Town can confirm eligibility and application dates as the design work proceeds.

Questions for future connections

Suggested issues to work through before a construction decision.

Question	Possible approach for discussion
Who can connect?	A defined service area and objective connection criteria.
How is capacity allocated?	Reserve school and municipal needs; use a fair process for other requests.
How are requests decided?	An application, engineering and public review, followed by written approval.
Who pays?	Agreed fees and responsibilities for operations, maintenance and replacement.
Changes in use or ownership?	Terms that carry forward to new owners; separate review of added flows and expansion.

Future connections would follow Town policy, applicable zoning and state approvals.

A suggested way to organize the work

Technical and policy questions can move forward together, with clear roles and decision dates.

Potential participants	Possible focus
Select Board and Town Administration	The public process, project scope and Town Meeting presentation.
Municipal Facilities and engineers	The route, capacity, permits, construction costs and schedule.
A working group with finance and legal input	Eligibility, cost allocation, user charges and connection agreements.

By November 16, 2026

A clear scope, leads and timetable, including an explanation of what the design vote would authorize.

Early 2027 construction vote

Target for a separate funding vote, with updated design, costs, funding options and proposed connection terms.

Ferns within the shared project

One initial private user, alongside the public library; private site work remains separate.

970

gallons/day current capacity

Includes 220 gallons/day for the two-bedroom apartment, leaving 750 for store operations.

2,145

gallons/day for the proposed use

Design flow for a 49-seat café, retail store and apartment. This is a planning allowance, not measured daily use.

Engineering reviews have not identified a viable permanent on-site solution for the proposed use. Nearby land and advanced treatment have also been examined.

The private purchase and reopening plan depends on a permanent wastewater solution.

Ferns: the interim reopening requirements

A possible bridge to the permanent connection, within the current capacity.

The November 16 design vote alone would not allow interim reopening.

Construction commitment

MassDEP would consider interim operation only with an enforceable commitment to authorize, fund and build the permanent line on a defined schedule.

Limited interim operation

Interim use would stay within the current 970 gallons/day, including 220 for the apartment. The proposed 49-seat café requires separate approval.

An engineered tight tank, regular pumping and MassDEP/local approvals would be required, along with drinking-water compliance.

The public purpose for Carlisle Center

A limited infrastructure investment with benefits that reach beyond the initial users.

Support a public institution

A permanent wastewater option for Gleason Public Library, with its services and gathering spaces available to the entire community.

Plan for a functioning Center

Use the existing treatment facility, assess other Center needs and support reuse of a historic commercial property.

Carlisle's Master Plan links historic reuse, community gathering places and long-term infrastructure planning. A reopened store could restore everyday services and a place to meet.

The design phase would give the Town a clearer basis for considering public benefits, costs and long-term operation.

The next decision

Special Town Meeting / November 16, 2026

Design and permitting

The proposed \$225,000-\$300,000 appropriation would develop the shared connection into a design the Town can evaluate, permit and price.

What voters would advance

Engineering, investigations, permit work, grant applications and preparation for bidding.

Early 2027: construction vote

A separate funding vote is targeted for early 2027, informed by design and cost review, with proposed cost allocation and connection rules.

Town notices and official decisions / Sponsor project background

Sources and calculation notes

Information current as of October 9, 2026. Public-source titles below are clickable.

Project engineering and costs

Weston & Sampson, *Carlisle Town Center Wastewater Distribution System Feasibility Study*, October 5, 2026, pp. 1-2. Patrick Cotton's cost framework, October 5. Preliminary findings and ranges; proposed timeline from sponsors, October 9.

Permitting and reopening

MassDEP written guidance to the project team, October 6, and the sponsors' October 8 update. WP11 permit modification and plan approval process. Final permits and agreements govern.

Town planning records

BOH memorandum, January 18, 2017, p. 2. Carlisle Forward Master Plan, 2022, Goals 3, 7, 21 and Recommendation 23B. Carlisle Underground Study, 2026.

Drinking-water records

MassDEP Public Health Orders, checked October 9, 2026. Ferns' 2021 E. coli event is documented in the MassDEP sanitary survey and January 2023 BOH minutes cited in the project record.

State funding

Christine Stevens' October 7 funding email. Massachusetts EOED: Rural Development Fund and MassWorks. Potential awards are not included in estimates.

Household illustrations

Carlisle FY2026 Tax Classification presentation, pp. 3-4. Total taxable value: \$2,577,548,143. Average single-family assessment: \$1,356,763. Household examples use this fixed FY2026 tax base.

Calculation: household capital share = assessment ÷ total taxable value × public project cost. Borrowing assumes 20 equal annual principal-and-interest payments at 4%. Figures are rounded. Operating costs and borrowing fees are excluded.

Funding and Town decisions

Suggested discussion notes / Select Board, Town Administration and Finance Committee

A few questions we would welcome help working through.

What should be ready for each vote? November 16 covers design and permitting. For the construction funding vote targeted for early 2027, what design, cost and agreement details would the Town want in hand?

How should costs be shared? Ferns pays its private connection and site costs. The public decision also needs an operating budget and proposed user charges covering maintenance and eventual replacement.

Which funding approach fits Carlisle? It would help to compare borrowing and other funding options alongside Town priorities, with grant opportunities shown separately from the base estimate.

How would future connections be handled? A service area, eligibility rules and school and municipal reserves would give the Town a basis for reviewing requests. Terms could address added flows and changes in ownership.

Engineering, school and library

Suggested discussion notes / Municipal Facilities, engineers, School Committee and library

The useful next step is a shared set of design and operating assumptions.

Flow review and school reserve

The engineering review can reconcile recorded peaks with design allowances and assess treatment performance. What reserve would meet future school needs before capacity is allocated to new users?

The physical work

Design would clarify the route, pumping, utility crossings, property access and restoration. Library staff can help plan building work around programs, deliveries and accessible entrances.

Day-to-day operation

The school is the permittee. Who will operate and maintain each part of the shared system, and how will added costs be paid? That includes the library connection and public/private handoffs.

Permitting and construction coordination

Suggested discussion notes / Health, land use, conservation, historical, DPW, Police and Fire

Health and interim operation

Board of Health: the design vote alone would not allow reopening. Interim operation needs an enforceable construction commitment, a tight-tank plan and approvals within the current capacity. Drinking-water compliance remains a separate task.

Local reviews

Planning and Building staff can identify land-use and building reviews. Conservation can advise on the route, wetlands and drainage; Historical on visible equipment, materials and restoration. Public infrastructure and Ferns' private work follow their respective approval paths.

Construction access and coordination

DPW, Police and Fire input would help coordinate utility work, paving, traffic and emergency access. Library and school schedules, pedestrian routes, deliveries, police details and public notices should be worked into the construction plan.