CITY OF VERGENNES

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE BOND

VOTER INFORMATION

Why another bond authorization is being considered, what the projects include, and what it could mean for sewer users.

THE NEED
Complete required wastewater and sewer improvements identified through planning, design, and the City's 1272 Order[1] to eliminate the sanitary sewer overflow.

THE FUNDING
Combine nearly $14 million of state and federal grants and low-interest financing the city has been awarded, with additional borrowing authority.

THE DECISION
Authorize an additional $22 million in borrowing for the full wastewater program.

[1] What is a 1272 Order and Why is it Important?

In 2018, Vergennes was issued an updated 1272 Order by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This mandate requires the city to develop and execute a Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) to eliminate Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) from our current wastewater system into Potash Brook and Otter Creek. The infrastructure projects supported by this bond vote will provide the borrowing capacity to fulfill this state mandate. Fulfilling this order ensures Vergennes remains in compliance with state and federal clean water laws, avoiding potential administrative, legal, or financial enforcement actions from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

What has changed since the 2022 bond vote?

In March 2022, voters approved a $17.5 million sewer bond ($25.5M less $8M in grants equaling $17.5M). At that time, several major project elements were still in early planning and had not been fully engineered. Since then, designs have advanced, project-specific construction costs are better defined, and the City has secured substantial outside funding. In addition, costs for materials has naturally risen from 2022 estimates. The Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) has been bid and the low bidder is holding their price pending the bond vote. The City has decided to seek an additional $22 million in bonding authority to advance all four major projects.

What projects are included in the current wastewater program?

Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)	New treatment and hydraulic improvements, including headworks/ Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) work and associated site, equalization, building, and process improvements.
Macdonough Drive Pump Station + Force Main	Increase pumping and conveyance capacity. The force main includes the Otter Creek crossing and related permitting/construction considerations.
North Main Sewer Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of North Main sewer infrastructure, including the Meigs Road alternate identified in current estimates.
Otter Creek / Maple Street Interceptor	Interceptor rehabilitation on Water and Maple Streets. Current planning recognizes this project may be deferred depending on affordability and sequencing.

WHAT COULD THE ADDITIONAL BORROWING MEAN?

What is the proposed additional bond authorization?

The City needs the additional bond authorization of $22 million to advance the full wastewater program, including the Wastewater Treatment Facility, Macdonough Drive Pump Station and Force Main, and sewer rehabilitation along North Main along the Otter Creek / Maple Street corridor.
The additional authorization supplements the $17.5 million bond approved by voters in 2022. Borrowing authority does not mean all funds are borrowed immediately, and it does not by itself establish the final sewer rate. Actual rates will depend on project costs, grants, financing terms, borrowing schedules, and City budget decisions.

Outside funding already secured or identified

USDA Rural Development	$7.1 million grant + $10.5 million low interest loan * identified for the WWTF upgrade. *1.75% for 30 years
Congressionally Directed Spending	$3 million grant identified for the pump station / force main program.
ARPA	City materials identify ARPA funding supporting wastewater work, including engineering and force main construction.
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)	The City's wastewater financing strategy includes low-interest financing and planning-loan subsidies.

What are the risks of a “NO” vote?

- The project will lose the current bid held and would need to be rebid. Rebidding will increase the cost of the project and push our completion.
- ARPA grant funding expires September 30, 2027.
- Project delays could prevent the City from meeting the terms and schedule of the 1272 Order.
- Increased construction costs will continue to rise.
- The City could risk losing the USDA Rural Development funding offer, which includes approximately $7.1 million in grant funding.

What does a “YES” or “NO” vote mean?

YES VOTE

Authorizes the City to borrow up to an additional $22 million for the wastewater program. Borrowing authority does not determine the final sewer rate.

NO VOTE

Denies the City the additional borrowing authority. The City would need to reconsider scope, timing, and financing, with potential consequences summarized above.

Key takeaways for voters

- Vergennes is not starting over: substantial engineering has been completed and multiple grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans have been secured or identified.
- The bond question asks voters to authorize an additional $22 million so the City can complete the full wastewater program while coordinating compliance, project sequencing, funding deadlines, and affordability.
- The projects remain subject to final costs, funding conditions, permitting, construction sequencing, and City Council oversight.
- With the approval of this bond request, construction for the WWTF project will commence mid-November and is anticipated to conclude early 2029

Voting Information

Voting will occur from 9 am to 7 pm on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at Saint Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 S. Maple Street in the City of Vergennes.

Local ballots were not mailed. Available options: call city hall (802-877-3637) or email clerk@vergennes.org and request a ballot by mail, vote early at City Hall (120 Main Street) or vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at Saint Peter’s Parish Hall.