A Stormwater Utility

And what it means to you

Stormwater Division

https://www.franklinma.gov/stormwater-division

Franklin Department of Public Works
257 Fisher Street, Franklin MA 02038

Stormwater Infrastructure

And what it means to you

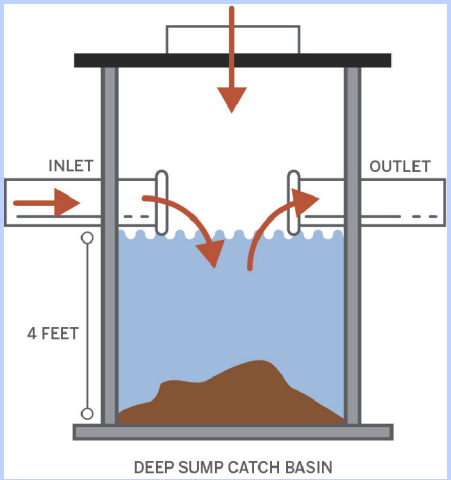
Franklin's Stormwater System

The stormwater infrastructure is valued at $175 million *- an emormous asset that must be cared for. This network protects our drinking water from pollutants, our properties from water damage/flooding and our local waterways from debris.*

5,700 catch basins

Catch basins are our first line of defense against pollution.

As stormwater drains into a catch basin, the litter and debris (leaves, sand, grit, etc) sink to the bottom. This debris must be cleaned out on a yearly basis to prevent localized flooding and to keep pollution from flowing farther down the drainage system. Due to a lack of resources, the Town is not able to clean every catch basin as frequently as is required.



152 culverts

Culverts carry surface water (streams, brooks, rivers etc) under roadways and large scale infrastructure (example: the Beaver Street Sewer Interceptor). Culverts are easily clogged with branches, trash and other debris, making localized flooding a frequent risk. Failure to inspect and maintain our culverts may lead to roadway or infrastructure collapse and flooding.

Culvert under the Beaver St interceptor (24" sewerline) on the verge of collapse - 2014

The failing culvert led to local flooding and risked dumping thousands of gallons of wastewater into a local waterway - 2014

Emergency culvert replacement - 2014

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124 detention and/or retention basins and 23 rain gardens (BMPs)

The BMPs (best management practice) in Franklin are our last defense to prevent pollutants from entering our groundwater and local water ways. They're depressions in the landscape which allow water to infiltrate back into the earth, replenishing our drinking water and filtering out pollutants. Maintanence has been neglected over the last few decades due to a lack of resources.

Well maintained or new detention basins

Clearview Dr - 4.2.2021

Sculpture park - 4.2.2021

The current state of many of our detention basins.

Woodhaven Dr - 4.2.2021

Townline Rd - 3.16.2021

Crystal Drive - 3.16.2021

138 miles *of drain pipe*

Our drain pipe network carries stormwater away from private and public property, roadways and other infrastructure to either a BMP or local waterway. If one small section of pipe fails, large portions of the network will cease functioning and cause localized flooding. Every mile needs to be maintained to prevent a system failure.

Did you know...

The DPW receives 2 - 4 calls from residents regarding drainage issues every week.

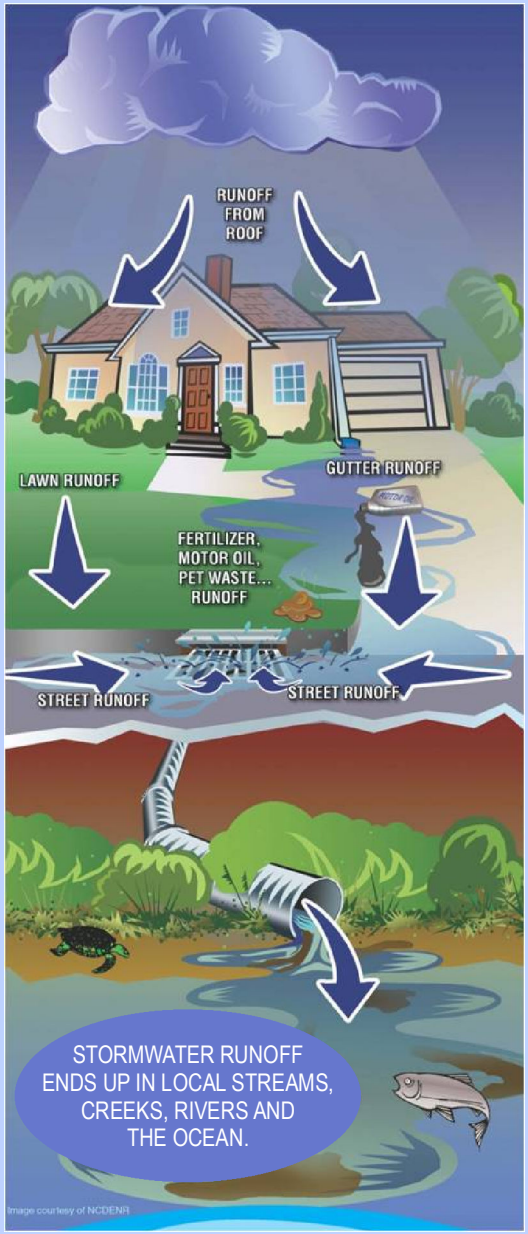
4/6/2021 - Lincoln St - debris filled outlet caused overflow and damage to a sidewalk

4/12/2021 Highland St clogged outlet

4/8/2021 - Lena Cir - clogged culvert

Clean Stormwater

And what it means to you



Why Do We Need To Keep Our Stormwater Clean?

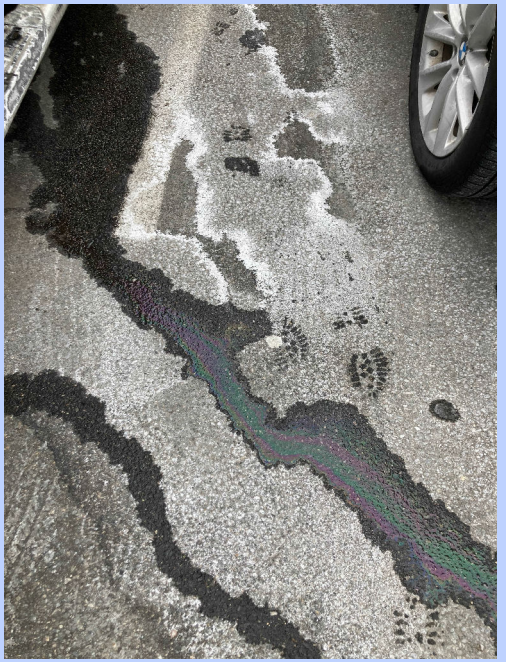
Sustainability!

We need to maintain and improve our system now instead of compromising our ability to care for it in the future.

Clean stormwater and a maintained infrastructure system keeps our waterways free from pollution and prevents localized and large scale flooding. It also protects our local wildlife from harmful bacteria and protects habitat.

Let's work together to keep our waterways and properties safe!

North American River Otters on the Charles River



Oil slick flowing into storm drain - parking lot on West Central St - 2.19.2021

Clean Stormwater

And what it means to you

Why Do We Need To Keep Our Stormwater Clean?

Drinking Water!

Stormwater directly impacts our drinking water; Franklin's drinking water comes from wells, which are replenished in part by the stormwater that is captured in Franklin's detention ponds.

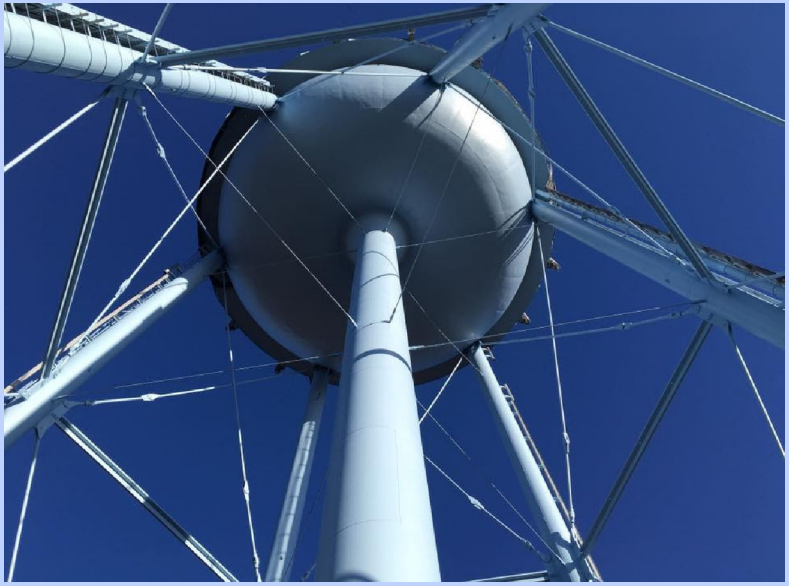
Keeping our stormwater clean and free of pollutants is imperative to keep our drinking water safe. This improves our health, the health of our children, our neighbors and our community.

Let's work together to preserve the sustainability and health of our drinking water!

Blue-green algae bloom on the Charles River

Blue-green algae bloom in Wrentham fall 2020

Beaver Pond, Franklin MA



Water storage tank, Franklin MA

Franklin Department of Public Works
257 Fisher Street, Franklin MA 02038

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Do We Really Need To Do This?

Yes! *The Town of Franklin is required to have a stormwater management program as part of our Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. We are among 200+ other Massachusetts communities subject to the requirements of the MS4 Permit, as mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*

While this is a mandate from the Federal Government, it is also an ***investment in our future*** *which will ultimately improve Franklin's entire infrastructure system -* ***our roads, our drinking water and our environment.***

DelCarte Conservation & Recreation Area

Isn't This Just A Rain Tax? Let's Fight The Federal Government!

The MS4 permit felt like a massive overreach by the Federal Government and in 2018 Franklin joined a lawsuit to sue the EPA in an effort to fight the permit mandate and reduce the financial burden to the Town and our residents. We fought, but we lost. Ultimately if we do not comply with the permit, the Town faces thousands of dollars in fines PER DAY. The Town has been fighting for years to prevent and postpone the permit but the time has come to now fund the work involved in complying.

Why Do I Need Another Fee? Can We Fund It Another Way?

The cost of compliance is unavoidable and will continue to go up every year. By 2024, our yearly cost will be roughly $2.4 million per year. Simply trimming the fat will not fund compliance - drastic measures including layoffs from the schools, Police and Fire Departments would be needed if we do not solve our current funding source problem.

A Stormwater Utility

And what it means to you

What Are the Funding Options?

After the lawsuit in 2018 the Town Council formed an Adhoc Committee to explore funding source options.

*There are two main funding source options - a **property tax increase** or implementing a **utility fee**. A tax increase would mean many large property owners would be exempt, like Dean College. A Stormwater Utility fee would require all property owners to contribute - there would be no exemptions.*

The Committee held several public forums to get resident feedback; implementing a Stormwater Utility was considered the most equitable option. Based upon resident input the proposed fee was reduced by half.*

Public forum held at Franklin TV on March 11, 2020

**Visit the Stormwater Division website (below) to see the public forum presentation and other helpful information relating to Franklin's Stormwater Program.*

What Exactly is a Utility Fee?

A Stormwater Utility fee is collected to fund a stormwater management program. Any revenue collected through the Utility will be used specifically for stormwater activities to maintain and improve our stormwater infrastructure. This money CANNOT be used for other Town expenditures like schools, Police, Fire, Libary, etc.

Ben Franklin at the public forum on March 11, 2020

If implemented, the Town's Stormwater Utility will provide a sustainable and transparent funding source for an effective management program. Simply put - it will allow us to take care of our existing stormwater infrastructure (see pages 2-3 for details on what our system consists of).

A Stormwater Utility

And what it means to you

What Will the Fee Be?

The current standard for a Stormwater Utility Fee is based on Impervious Area (IA)

Impervious surfaces are generally manmade and consist of structures, driveways, roadways, walkways, patios, parking lots, etc.

*Franklin's **proposed** utility fee = 1 BU* = $18.66*
**1 Billing Unit (BU) = 1,000 square feet of IA*

Each parcel will be charged based on square footage of IA
The average Single Family house in Franklin = 3 BU = $56 per year

*Every property owner in Franklin will be subject to this Utility fee. Unlike a tax, **no organization is exempt,** which makes a Utility fee more equitable than a tax increase.*

How was the Impervious Area determined?

*Using GIS data and aerial imagery (dated 2018), each parcel in Franklin was individually assessed (by a human) and the IA was digitized and logged. Pools were not included and gravel or pervious driveways may be removed through the abatement process.**

When will I be charged?

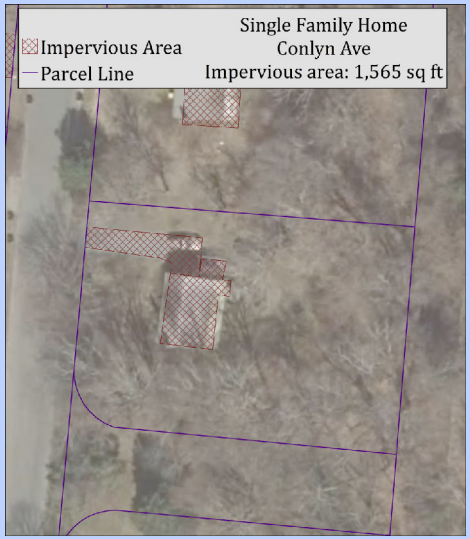
*If a utility fee is set, it will take 6-12 months for the Finance Team to implement. During the implementation phase, the Department of Public Works will also create a credit manual.**

**See page 10 for additional details on the abatement process and credit manual.*

1 acre lot - Single Family

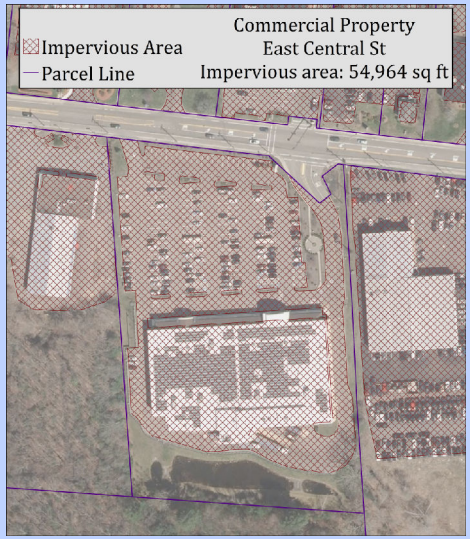
4 billing units x $18.66
$74.64 per year

1/2 acre lot - Single Family



2 billing units x $18.66
$37.32 per year

6 acre lot - Business



550 billing units x $18.66
$10,263 per year

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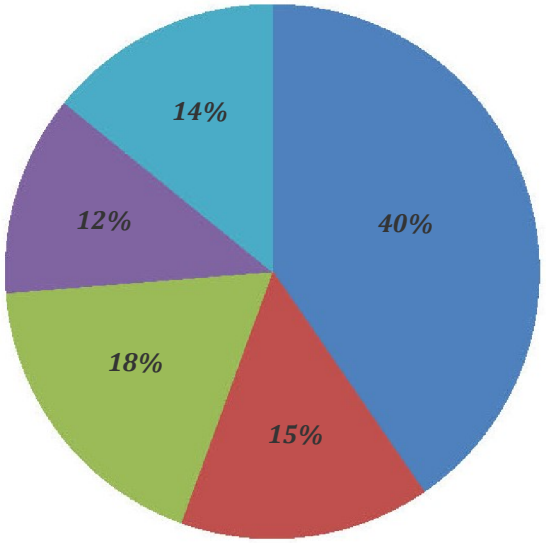
What Will the Money Be Used For?

Funds from the Stormwater Utility Fee will directly enhance the services provided by the Department of Public Works and improve the lives of Franklin residents. Investing in our drainage system will ultimately increase our capacity to capture and recharge more stormwater in Franklin, which will increase the amount of and improve the quality of our drinking water.

Improvements to the drainage infrastructure, like culvert replacement and drainage basin retrofits, will mitigate the risk of flooding and prevent property damage to our homes.



- *Inspecting and fixing drainage problems, catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, identifying pollutant sources*
- *Determining areas of high pollutant risk, safety & reporting*
- *Planning future improvement projects, designing new detention ponds, preventing flooding through new design*
- *Staffing, updating documentation, training & public education*
- *Building new stormwater infrastructure, retrofitting existing structures, equipment*

Street sweeper

BMP retrofit

Future Costs

-Expanded Leaf Pick-Up
Leaves contribute a large amount of phosphorus to our waterways. To help mitigate this pollutant and offer our residents a service, we hope to implement this program in 5-10 years: estimated yearly cost is $150,000 per year

-The Charles River Phosphorus Control Plan will be implemented in the near future, which is projected to cost $38.4M over the next 20 years. Removing phosphorous from our stormwater is required under the MS4 Permit and will improve the quality of our drinking water.

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How Can I Save Money?

Credit Program

The Town of Franklin recognizes that this is an extremely difficult time and that adding an additional fee onto property owners is an enormous burden. In an effort to assist residents and reward property owners that practice good water stewardship, we've developed a Credit Program. Credits will be offered to all property owners for a ***maximum reduction of 50%*** *off their Stormwater Utility Fee. This program will give property owners the opportunity to earn credits as a result of the construction, operation, and maintenance of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that reduce a parcel's contribution of stormwater runoff.*

Prior to the collection of any stormwater fees, a credit manual will be created by the Department of Public Works to guide property owners through the Credit Program and application process.

Residential Credits

- ***Rain Barrels***
- ***Porous Pavement****
- ***Pavers****
- ***Gravel Driveways****
- ***Rain Garden***
- ***Dry Well***
- ***French Drain***
- ***Other Subsurface Recharge System***

Commercial and Large Residential Credits

- ***Rain Gardens***
- ***Bioretention Areas***
- ***Detention/Retention Basins***
- ***Sediment Forebays***
- ***Deep Sump or Leaching Catch Basins***
- ***Tree Well***
- ***Subsurface Structures***

Community Assistance Program (CAP)

All stormwater utility fees will be waived *for residents that qualify for the CAP.*

Abatement

Residents may apply for abatements within 30 days of their first stormwater utility bill if they feel their IA is reported incorrectly.

**Property owners with gravel driveways, pervious pavers or porous pavement may apply for an abatement.*

Credit Renewals

All credits must be reapplied for to maintain a lower stormwater utility fee. Residential credits must be renewed on a yearly basis and commercial (or large residential properties) credits must be renewed every five years. The Town will inspect the property at the time of the application to ensure eligibility.

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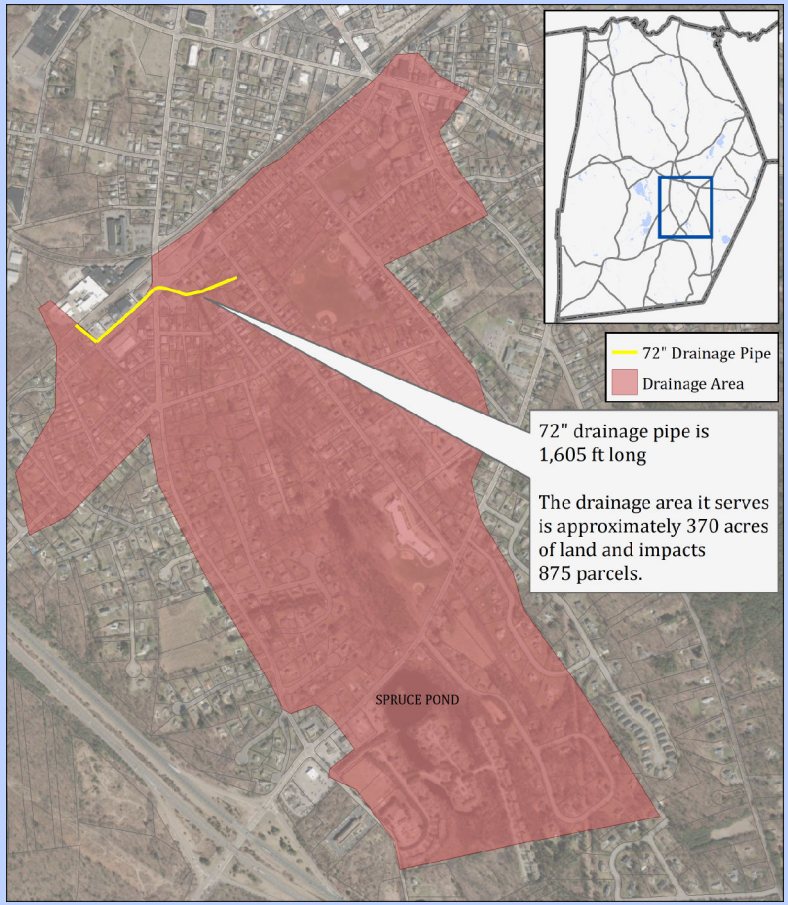
Localized Flooding

Public safety is the DPW's top priority in serving the residents of Franklin. Flooding directly impacts the safety of our residents. The Stormwater Division is therefore dedicated to reducing impact of heavy precipitation events. The first line of defense from flooding is Franklin's drainage system making it imperative to aggressively inspect, maintain, redesign and expand our drainage network. The efficacy of our drainage system directly impacts our ability to mitigate flood hazard potential and our ability to protect our residents and their properties.



Flood Disaster Scenario:

The image to the left represents the critical nature of Stormwater Management in Franklin. The 72" drain pipe (highlighted in yellow) drains approximately 370 acres, or just over half a square mile of the Downtown area. Any failure of this essential asset would result in catastrophic flooding, affecting 875 properties and potentially causing millions and millions of dollars in damage. It is, therefore, imperative the Stormwater Division inspects, maintains and repairs when needed, our drainage infrastructure and that we're able to create a funding source to plan for large scale repairs and maintenance.

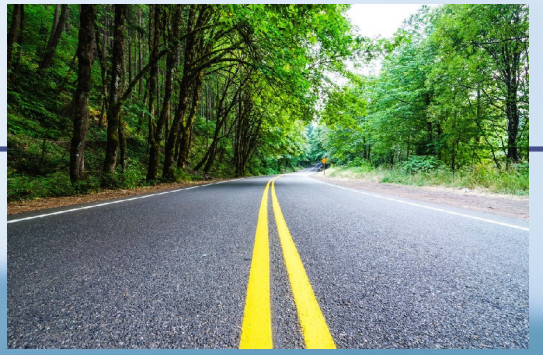
Flooding on Fisher Street in Franklin, MA

"Between 1958 and 2012, the Northeast saw more than a 70% increase in the amount of rainfall measured during heavy precipitation events, more than any other region in the United States."
- United States Department of Environmental Protection

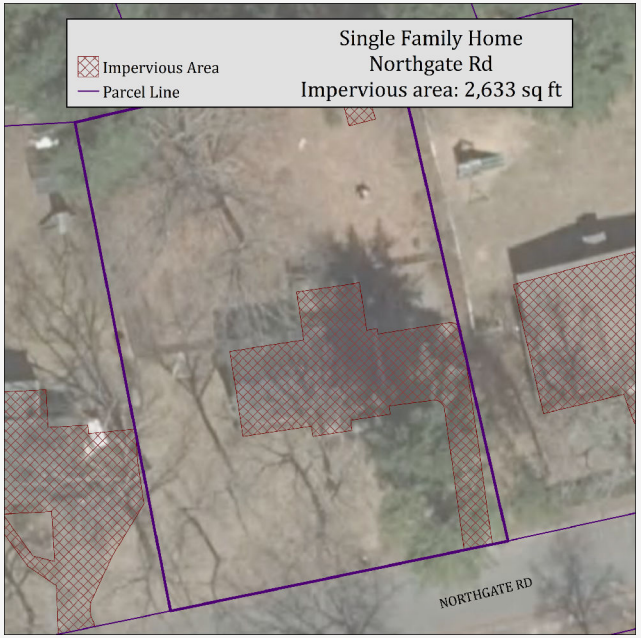
"On Sunday, torrential rain flooded Norwood, Massachusetts, so intensely that a hospital had to be evacuated and closed indefinitely. Norwood's downtown area is considered minimal risk of flooding by the Federal Emergency Management Association, but four inches of rain fell in 90 minutes..."
-Gloninger and Klein, NBC Boston, July 2, 2020

A Stormwater Utility

Final Thoughts



The average home will cost residents $56 per year



The Result

Clean Water
Infrastructure & Roads
Mitigate Flooding
Safety
Sustainability

Franklin Department of Public Works
257 Fisher Street, Franklin MA 02038