

7-24-20

PUBLIC FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Hallowell provides a range of public services and facilities and is generally well-prepared for the expected population growth over the next 10 years. While the ownership of the services is disparate, and some services (such as solid waste pickup) are entirely private, that's not unusual for a city the size of Hallowell.

SEWER & WATER

The City's sanitary sewer system serves the portion of the city closest to Water Street, as well as a section of Winthrop Street on the west side of I-95. The sewers are managed by the Greater Augusta Utility District (GAUD.) The GAUD has existed in various forms for over 100 years, but most recently was created via charter in 2007, at which time the wastewater services previously provided by the Hallowell Water District were moved to the GAUD.

GAUD serves several communities in the Augusta area, some with water and sewer, and some, like Hallowell, with just sewer.

Most of Hallowell's sewer lines connect directly to the GAUD's wastewater treatment plant on Jackson Avenue in Augusta via a pumping station. The portion located up by Granite Hill Estates is sent to the treatment plant via a trunkline that also serves Winthrop,

Monmouth, Manchester and a portion of Augusta (see chart.)

The heart of GAUD's wastewater treatment system is an activated-sludge secondary treatment plant located along the Kennebec River Rail Trail at 33 Jackson Avenue. It treats an average of 4 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater, with flows reaching 40 MGD during rainstorms.

This requires large and expensive equipment, especially pumps, and a multi-step process:

1. Wastewater is collected through a system of underground pipes that flow into a wastewater collection system.
2. The collection system sends the wastewater to pumping stations, which convey the wastewater to the treatment plant from the east and west sides of the Kennebec River through large pipes called "interceptors."
3. As a first step at the wastewater facility, metal screens with automatic raking systems remove most of the large "stuff".
4. Next, a grit separation system is used to help remove sandy, heavy materials.
5. The water then flows to the primary clarifiers which allow solids to settle out, leaving cleaner water to flow to the aeration tanks. These provide oxygen for bacteria that we

want to grow, so they can enlarge and settle out in the secondary clarifiers.

6. The tanks provide a second means of clarification, which removes even more solids from the wastewater.
7. In the winter, the water from the secondary clarifiers flows into the Kennebec River with no further treatment. In the summer, the water is treated with a disinfectant to kill remaining organisms in the water. Then the disinfection chemical is removed before the water is discharged to the Kennebec.

Water service in the city is provided through the Hallowell Water District. The service territory of the District includes all of the City of Hallowell, portions of the Towns of Chelsea and Farmingdale. The District also sells finished water to the neighboring City of Gardiner. In all, the District serves 872 customers, including 719 residential properties. The District also serves some private hydrants and building sprinkler systems.

The District's source of water prior to 1991 was surface water source from Jamie's Pond. In 1991 the District moved to a well system, with two 16"x10", 85' deep gravel packed well located in the Town of Chelsea that can yield up to 575,000 gallons per day. Water is pumped into the distribution system with two 40 horsepower vertical turbine pumps. Two small booster pump stations with 7.5 hp pumps provide service to two elevated areas.

The District's treatment process consists of disinfection with sodium hypochlorite and corrosion control with a polyphosphate. According to the 2019 Consumer Confidence Report issued by the District, the water tested met all standards for inorganic compounds, lead, copper, radionucleotides, disinfectants and chlorine. However, contaminants can still be introduced to water service through individual service lines, especially lead. In addition, the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit that tests water services, has raised concerns about some contaminants in the water supply, though they agree that there are no violations of federal or state standards. Hallowell's water is not currently fluoridated.

The District has three finished water standpipes, one each located in Hallowell, Farmingdale, and Chelsea. Total storage capacity is 1.6 million gallons. Current Average Daily Demand is approximately 200,000 gallons per day with a max day of approximately 250,000 gallons. The District has total assets of over \$6.7 Million with an annual operating revenue of over \$600,000

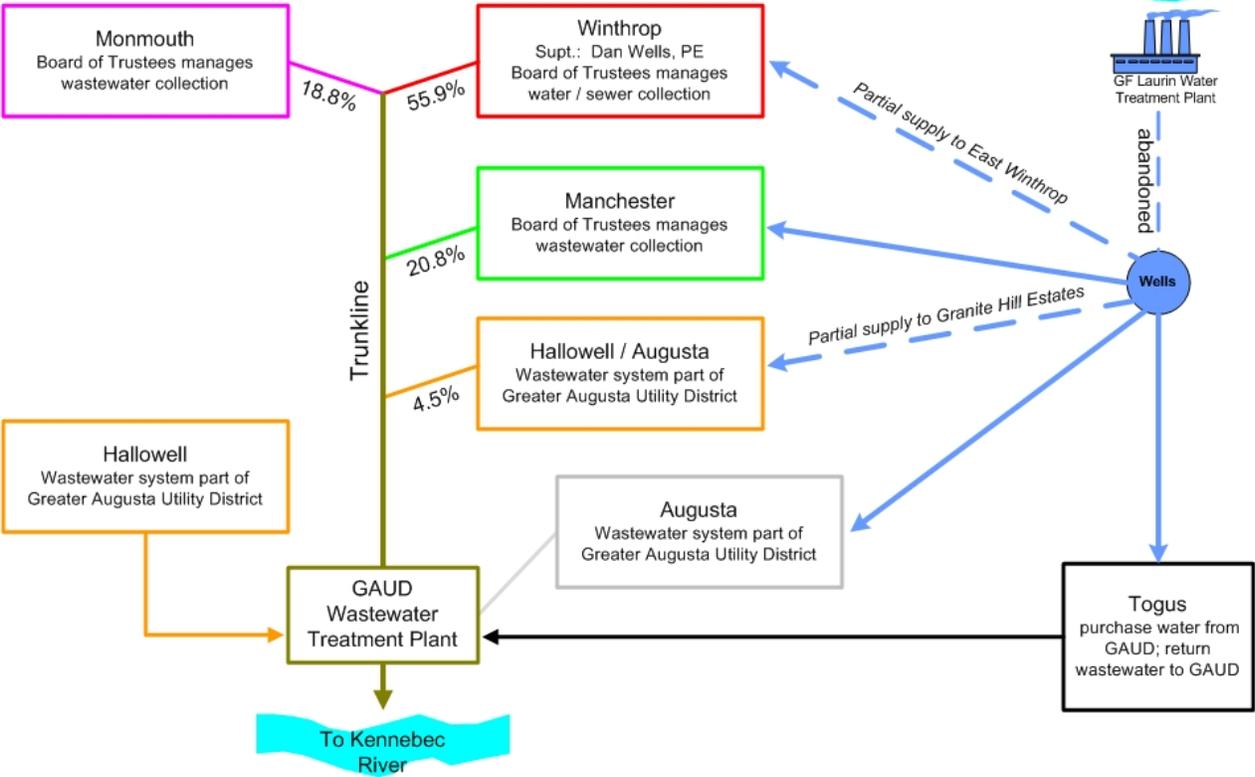
Areas of the City without water service rely on private wells that are not directly managed by the City or other public entities. City code generally requires that developments near city water lines use City water, although exceptions from this requirement are common.

Inputs to Greater Augusta Utility District wastewater treatment plant

Trunkline Group
 Monmouth
 Winthrop
 Manchester
 Hallowell

Advisory Board → GAUD General Manager

Trunkline capacity is 2.58 MGD



SEPTIC SYSTEMS

There are many parcels in the city that are not connected to the public sewer. They are generally located to the west of I-95, other than outer Winthrop Street, which has sewer service. Litchfield Road also does not currently have sewer service.

New developments are generally required to connect to the sewer system if possible, although there have been some exceptions.

Hallowell follows Maine's Subsurface Wastewater Rules with respect to private septic systems. Local officials are authorized to follow up on complaints related to systems. Hallowell officials inspect systems when they are installed, but do not undertake any proactive inspection program after installation.

SOLID WASTE

The City does not collect solid waste. However, it does contract with the City of Augusta's Hatch Hill Landfill for disposal. Hallowell residents can also use solid waste services are provided by private vendors. According to Public Works, there are currently four companies that are active in the market.

This private vendor approach results in residents paying for waste disposal both out-of-pocket (to their vendor) and through property taxes (for Hatch Hill operations.) In addition, it results in some duplication of service provision, as multiple waste haulers may travel the same routes for pickup based on who contracts with them for waste disposal.

There is a City recycling facility at the Public Works Garage at 286 Water Street that allows residents to drop off papers, plastics, metals and glass during daytime hours. The facility has about 20 large containers for materials on site,

which are picked up twice a week. According to Public Works, they are generally full when they are picked up.

The City regulates private trash haulers to ensure that they meet certain standards. For example, they are required to provide recycling services along with trash pickup. However, it is hard to track whether the providers are actually offering recycling pickup. In addition, there appear to be no financial incentives for residents to recycle, as they do not appear to receive a reduced cost from their vendor based on how much they recycle.

Since most of the solid waste is privately handled, there is no good data on volume or type. However, recycling rates are estimated at about 100 tons of material per year.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The City's stormwater system has been separated from its sanitary sewer. All stormwater eventually goes into the Kennebec River if it is not managed on site.

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Under Maine law, you can choose your electricity provider from a competitive market. In practice, there is little price difference between most providers, and the vast majority of consumers use the default provider, Central Main Power.

The distribution of the electricity is provided by a regulated monopoly. In Hallowell's case, distribution is provided by Central Maine Power.

Properties that install solar power are able to deliver excess energy to the grid in exchange for energy delivered back to them in a later period through a program called "net metering." The

energy exchanged is valued at the applicable energy and the delivery rates per kilowatt hour. Customers may also participate in shared net metering projects provided that the maximum project size is 5 megawatts.

Summit Natural Gas of Maine provides service to most of the portion of Hallowell east of I-95.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internet and phone services are provided in Hallowell by a few different providers. Spectrum and Consolidated Communications offer packages and a la carte services for internet, phone and cable for most addresses in the city. Spectrum advertises a standard internet speed of 100 mbps and premium speeds of up to 940 mbps. Other providers include wireless provider Redzone and satellite providers such as Viasat and HughesNet.

While the basic service levels are adequate, internet speeds and reliability are not great, with the exception of some areas near downtown, where up to 100 MBS service is available. During the pandemic, the weaknesses in internet quality in Hallowell have particularly come to light. There is interest among City residents and businesses to find a way to provide faster and more reliable internet service, through provision of more fiberoptic or other approaches. As more people seek to work remotely, and the City seeks to attract more high-tech businesses, this issue will become more important.

At least four carriers, Verizon, US Cellular, AT&T and T-Mobile, offer 4G cellular telephone and internet service in the city. T-Mobile advertises that it currently offers 5G service in the city. The others have all announced national plans to deploy 5G service.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Hallowell's Fire Department provides coverage within the city for fire and hazardous material situations. The Department has an overall membership of 19, with most members being volunteers. In FY19, the department responded to 156 calls for service. There were no major fires in FY19, but there was a major house fire in May 2020 on Second Street.

The Fire Department's new station on Winthrop Street has a more central location than the previous station. Response times are generally considered adequate.



Emergency medical transportation is provided by the Augusta Fire Department through contract. Emergency calls through 911 are managed by the state's Consolidated Communications Bureau Regional Communications Center in Augusta. That center serves as the Public Safety Answering Point and emergency dispatch facility for police, fire and emergency medical services.

The Hallowell Police Department employs five full time officers and brings other on-call as needed. In FY2019, it responded to 5751 calls for service.

FACILITY CONDITION & LOCATIONS

The City owns several buildings, some of which are still actively used for public services, and others of which are not. There is a City Council Property/Public Lands Committee that oversees City facilities.

Hallowell City Hall, on Second Street, consists of two levels and a basement. The first level houses the City Council Chambers as well as some city offices. The basement is the home of the City's Police Department. The second-floor auditorium is currently used by Gaslight Theater, one of the oldest community theater companies in the country. The historic building was recently renovated to make code and accessibility improvements.

The former Fire Station on Second Street is currently going through a review process for potential reuse, as the Fire Department has relocated to a new building in Stevens Commons. The building appraised at \$300,000 in 2019. Current plans call for the Hallowell Food Bank to remain in the bottom level of the building and for the Hallowell Citizens' Initiative Committee to create a museum with access to the hose tower.

The City also has a number of non-building facilities, including cemeteries and open spaces. There are also some City-owned historic documents.

The City's Public Works garage at 286 Water Street is a former trolley turnaround building. It currently houses city vehicles and other items related to public works operations in the City. While an attractive building, it is small for the level of operations that exist in Hallowell. For example, there is no indoor vehicle washing facility, so any washing must be done with hoses outdoors. In the winter, that is not

feasible due to freezing. Similarly, there is not sufficient room for indoor storage of all City vehicles.

There is interest in identifying a new site for a Public Works Garage, with additional space. Most likely such a facility would be located outside of downtown, in a geographically central location. Some sites near I-95 have been tentatively identified for a potential relocation. It's possible that such a new facility could be partially funded through sale of the existing building for adaptive reuse as housing or commercial space.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Medical facilities in Hallowell proper are limited to a small number of doctors and alternative care facilities. However, there are many medical care facilities in nearby cities, most significantly in Augusta and Gardiner.

The nearest significant inpatient medical center is the Alford Center for Health (formerly Maine General Medical Center) in Augusta. The Alford Center is part of the MaineGeneral Health network and serves as the regional hospital for the area.

The Alford Center has a 192-bed inpatient capacity, an Interventional Suite with 16 procedure rooms, 27 room Emergency Department, and 12 Operating Rooms.

Patients seeking additional specialized care options sometimes will go to Maine Medical Center in Portland, or one of the many world-renowned facilities in Boston.

Senior housing developments in Hallowell, such as Granite Hill Estates and Woodlands Senior Living, also provide some medical services on site.

EDUCATION

Hallowell is part of Kennebec Intra-District Schools Regional School Unit 2 (RSU2,) which provides public education in Dresden, Farmingdale, Hallowell, Monmouth, and Richmond. Richmond is currently working on a plan to withdraw from RSU 2, with a proposal planned for a November vote.

RSU2 currently operates eight schools in total. Hallowell students generally attend Hall-Dale Elementary School on Winthrop Street and Hall-Dale Middle School and High School at 111 Maple Street in Farmingdale.

Currently, Hallowell has a total of 220 students in RSU2, 121 in grades Pre-K through 5, 50 in grades 6 through 8 and 69 in High School. Enrollment in the district has been fairly constant over the past ten years, with a small decline. The City’s 2020 financial contribution to RSU2 was \$3.06 million. That represents a significant increase over the past ten years. The increase appears to be a consequence of both variations in state aid to education – which have been partially reversed in the based two years – and background increases in the cost of providing educational services. That increase is based on the fact that the cost of labor goes up based on the cost of living, as well as increases in fringe benefit and pension costs.

Hallowell Public School Students

Year	Students
2009-10	289
2010-11	291
2011-12	316
2012-13	257
2013-14	272
2014-15	276
2015-16	292
2016-17	323
2017-18	298
2018-19	259
2019-20	261

Many students rely on free- or reduced-price lunch programs. In all, 34% of elementary school students and 30% of middle and high school students use the program.

RSU2 has adopted a “proficiency-based education” approach. The district defines that approach as “based on a clear assumption that schooling should be focused on the learners. It is the difference between being school-centric and learner-centric. RSU2 is committed to becoming a learner-centered model of education.” In this model, rather than letter grades, students are assigned numbers ranging from 1.0 to 4.0 based on how proficient they have become in certain skills.

RSU2 Enrollment, 2010 through 2021

	2010				2015				2021			
Enrollment	PreK-5	6-8	9-12	TOTAL	PreK-5	6-8	9-12	TOTAL	PreK-5	6-8	9-12	TOTAL
Hallowell	112	57	120	289	140	59	173	276	121	50	69	240
Total	1102	481	791	2374	939	505	685	2129	943	438	611	1992

RSU2 Budget and Local Assessments, 2010 through 2021 (Proposed)

	2010	2015	2020	2021
Hallowell	\$ 1,764,257	\$ 2,571,981	\$ 3,062,505	\$ 3,211,817
Dresden	\$ 1,105,953	\$ 1,585,855	\$ 1,717,227	\$ 1,769,226
Monmouth	\$ 2,909,890	\$ 4,230,273	\$ 4,899,653	\$ 5,167,808
Richmond	\$ 2,194,337	\$ 2,887,425	\$ 3,354,279	\$ 3,496,657
Farmingdale	\$ 1,490,057	\$ 2,063,912	\$ 2,679,316	\$ 2,800,829
Total Local	\$ 9,464,494	\$ 13,339,446	\$ 15,712,979	\$ 16,446,337
Total State/Other	\$ 15,518,675	\$ 12,041,880	\$ 14,851,401	\$ 15,175,150
TOTAL	\$ 24,983,169	\$ 25,381,325	\$ 30,564,381	\$ 31,621,487

MUNICIPAL SERVICES & LIBRARIES

The City of Hallowell employs a total of 27 employees providing public services. These include the City Manager, City Clerk, Treasurer, and Code Enforcement Officer. Most employees are normally located at City Hall at 1 Winthrop Street. City Hall, originally built in 1898, went through a restoration project in 2004 that provided accessibility to City offices.

The Hubbard Free Library, the oldest active library building in Maine, was originally built in 1880. An addition was built in 1893 and a second addition in 1897. The library is a non-profit that is overseen by a 13-member Board of Trustees. It receives partial funding from the City. Located at 115 Second Street, the library employs 4 librarians. Desktop computers are available for public use. Normally open during weekdays, the library began closing on Fridays in 2019 until at least mid-2020. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the library is currently providing curbside service only. A strategic planning effort in 2019 suggested that residents wanted additional services from the library, but it remained unclear how to pay for expanded programs and hours.

The City provides partial funding to the Hubbard Free Library. In FY2018, the City provided quarterly payments totaling \$27,000. That amount increased to \$42,000 in FY2019, and has remained constant in FY2020 and the proposed FY2021 budget.

STREET TREE PROGRAM

Hallowell planted approximately 200 street trees in the past 20 years. However, those plantings occurred primarily in the early portion of that time period. There is an active Tree Board that works on the City’s public tree program, along with a Tree Warden.

FUTURE NEEDS & GROWTH AREAS

Based on future projected growth, the current public facilities are generally expected to be adequate. However, adequate funding for service provision and facility maintenance will be a challenge.

One exception to this is in the area of internet provision. As needs and standards change, Hallowell, like many other communities in Maine, will have to look at ways to provide better internet service in order to meet residents’ needs and provide economic competitiveness.



(Credit: Historic Hallowell)

ANALYSIS & ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- ✓ How can the City work with regional, state and private partners to provide broadband or other improvements in internet infrastructure in a cost-effective manner to allow for telecommuting and other resident needs?
- ✓ Should the City invest in new street tree planting?
- ✓ What should be done with the former Second Street Fire Station?
- ✓ Should Public Works relocate to a new site that can better meet their needs? If so, could the existing building be sold for adaptive reuse to help fund that relocation?
- ✓ Should the City look at its waste management programs and determine if it might be cost effective and/or increase recycling rates to contract with one vendor?
- ✓ Are the City's stormwater systems adequately mapped and understood, and are they sufficient?
- ✓ Is RSU2 providing adequate educational opportunities for Hallowell's families, or should the City consider alternative options?
- ✓ Should the City consider investing in a Police Station that might provide better programming than the existing space in the City Hall basement?
- ✓ Should Hallowell consider having a full-time professional fire department rather than continuing to rely on a volunteer Fire Department?