Approved Town Council Ordinances - 2027

Ordinance Number	Title	Sponsor	Date Introduced	Timeline	Status
D-FY27-001	Amend Part II Admin Code Chapter 2, Article II Order of Business and Agenda	Murphy	7/15/26	7/14/26: Town Council voted to retain at council 8/11/26: Town Council voted to refer to advertising 9/8/26: Public Hearing held; Town Council voted to approve	Closed Approved
D-FY27-005	Chapter 220 Water Impact Studies and Town Council Notification	Kennedy	8/11/26	8/11/26: Town Council referred to Rules & Procedures 8/26/26: Rules & Procedures voted to recommend 9/8/26: Town Council referred to advertising 10/6/26: Public Hearing held; Town Council voted to approve	Closed Approved

Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By:	Paul Murphy, Councilor
Date Introduced:	7/14/2026
First Reading:	7/14/2026
Second Reading:	8/11/2026
Amendments Adopted:	
Third Reading:	9/8/2026
Date Adopted:	9/8/2026
Date Effective:	10/8/2026

Proposed Ordinance D-FY27-001: Amend Part II Administrative Code Chapter 2, Article II. Section 24, Order of Business & Agenda

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter relative to amendments to the Administrative Code, it is therefore;

ORDERED that; the Town Council of the Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to amend the Bridgewater Administrative Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article II, Section 24 Order of Business & Agenda as follows:

All items for the agenda, including any relevant communications from town officers and town boards other than the Town Manager, shall be submitted to the Council Clerk in writing no later than 10:00 AM on the ~~**Wednesday**~~ **Tuesday** preceding the regular Council meeting. The agenda including any additional relevant information shall be provided to the Council by ~~**12:00 noon**~~ **4:00 PM** on the ~~**Friday**~~ **Thursday** preceding a Tuesday Council meeting.

Explanation:
Due to the Academy Building's revised operating hours and Friday closure, the deadline for submitting items for the Town Council agenda must be adjusted.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
• Town Council	• 7/14/26: Voted to retain at Council.

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	• 8/11/26: Voted to refer to advertising.

Attachments: None

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, to approve the aforementioned Ordinance, by a Voice Vote 9-0-0

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

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Debra Ward, Town Council Clerk

VOICE VOTE FOR APPROVAL
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Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By:	Sean Kennedy, Councilor Mary McGrath, Councilor
Date Introduced:	8/11/2026
First Reading:	8/11/2026
Second Reading:	9/8/2026
Amendments Adopted:	9/8/2026
Third Reading:	10/6/2026
Date Adopted:	10/6/2026
Date Effective:	11/6/2026

Proposed General Ordinance D-FY27-005: Chapter 220, Article V Water Impact Studies and Town Council Notification

ORDERED: That Part III of the Bridgewater Town Code, General Ordinances, Chapter 220, Water and Sewer, is amended by adding the following Article V:

Section 1. Purpose, Administration, and Scope

This Article establishes Water Impact Study requirements for development that may create significant demand upon Bridgewater's municipal water system and requires timely informational notice to the Town Council.

The Town Manager or designee is responsible for administering this Article.

Nothing in this Article changes zoning, alters the authority or statutory deadlines of a permitting board or municipal official, or transfers permitting, administrative, or technical authority to the Town Council.

For development proceeding under M.G.L. c. 40B, §§ 20 through 23, this Article applies only to the extent its requirements have not been superseded, waived, or incorporated into the comprehensive-permit process.

Section 2. Definitions and Demand Calculations

Full Development means the entire proposed development at reasonably foreseeable buildout, including related lots, buildings, phases, uses, ownership entities, and applications.

Title 5 Design Flow means the applicable design-flow calculation established under 310 CMR 15.203.

Water Impact Study or **WIS** means a technical study evaluating projected daily water demand and the anticipated effect of a development on the Town's water supply, treatment, pumping, storage, pressure, transmission, and distribution systems.

Residential demand must be calculated using the applicable Title 5 design flow.

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Commercial, industrial, hotel, motel, restaurant, and other nonresidential demand must be calculated using the maximum applicable Title 5 design flow. Hotel and motel calculations must use guest-room count, and restaurant calculations must use maximum authorized seating. Separate or accessory uses must be included when Title 5 assigns them additional design flow.

For mixed-use development, each component must be calculated separately under Title 5 and combined to determine the projected demand of the Full Development. When a final bedroom count has not been established, the Town Manager or designee may determine the maximum reasonably possible bedroom count from the floor area, layout, occupancy, and development plans.

Section 3. Developments Requiring a Water Impact Study

A Water Impact Study is required for:

A. New residential development containing two or more dwelling units within a single building or on a single lot;

B. A subdivision, resubdivision, phased subdivision, or coordinated residential development containing more than five cumulative homes;

C. Residential development containing or proposing 15 or more cumulative bedrooms;

D. Commercial or industrial development, including the nonresidential portion of a mixed-use development will be considered to have a projected daily demand equal to or greater than 75 gallons per day per 1,000 square feet;

E. An expansion, conversion, change of use, amendment, additional phase, or redevelopment that causes a development to meet a threshold in this Section or increases demand beyond the amount evaluated in a prior WIS.

Water-service pipe size does not independently determine whether a WIS is required.

Section 4. Referrals, Exemptions, and Cumulative Review

A. Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board referrals

After an application has been filed, the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board must refer it to the Town Manager or designee when the requested waiver, variance, special permit, subdivision approval, amendment, or other relief may increase the number of units, homes, lots, bedrooms, guest rooms, restaurant seats, commercial floor area, occupancy, or projected water demand.

Within ten business days after referral, the Town Manager or designee must issue a written determination stating whether a WIS is required and identifying the applicable threshold. The determination must be provided to the referring board, applicant, and property owner.

A referral does not affect the application's filing date or completeness, extend a statutory deadline, or alter the referring board's authority. When a board must act before a required WIS is completed, the WIS may remain a condition of final municipal water-service authorization to the extent permitted by law.

B. Residential exemptions

A WIS is not required solely because of:

1. The creation of one lawful accessory dwelling unit; or
2. An addition, alteration, renovation, reconstruction, repair, or other improvement to an existing one-family or two-family property,

provided that the work does not otherwise meet a threshold in Section 3.

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The exemption does not apply when the work is part of a related, phased, expanded, resubdivided, or coordinated development.

C. Cumulative and phased development

Related plans, applications, parcels, buildings, phases, uses, or ownership entities must be considered together when they have common or related ownership or control, share infrastructure, involve coordinated permitting or construction, or form part of a common or reasonably foreseeable development plan.

Development must not be divided, phased, transferred, or presented through separate applications for the purpose or effect of avoiding this Article. All thresholds and demand calculations must include the Full Development.

D. Previously approved subdivisions

A previously approved subdivision is not automatically subject to a WIS solely because construction continues within the scope of its existing approval.

A later amendment, expansion, resubdivision, or additional phase is subject to this Article when the cumulative development exceeds five homes or otherwise meets a threshold in Section 3.

A WIS required under this subsection must evaluate the Full Development but does not, by itself, reopen or modify an existing approval. Development of an individual lot does not independently trigger a WIS when no expansion, resubdivision, or additional phase is proposed.

Section 5. Water Impact Study Requirements

The applicant is responsible for preparing and submitting a required WIS. The Town Manager or designee may require that the study or a technical component be prepared or certified by a qualified professional.

A WIS must, at minimum, evaluate:

A. Projected daily water demand, expressed in gallons per day, with the applicable Title 5 calculations and supporting assumptions;

B. Existing water pressure and the anticipated effect of the Full Development on available pressure, using a pressure test, hydraulic analysis, or other appropriate technical evaluation;

C. The Full Development and all related phases at reasonably foreseeable buildout;

D. Anticipated effects on supply, treatment, pumping, storage, transmission, distribution, pressure, fire flow, and infrastructure; and

E. Any proposed demand limitation, infrastructure improvement, phasing condition, operational restriction, or other mitigation.

These are minimum requirements. The Town Manager or designee may require additional information, testing, calculations, modeling, or analysis reasonably necessary to evaluate the development's effect on the municipal water system.

The Town Manager or designee may establish written forms, technical standards, and administrative procedures consistent with this Article. Generally applicable standards must be publicly available and applied consistently to similarly situated developments.

A required WIS must be completed before final municipal authorization for water service associated with the development, to the extent that the authorization remains within the Town's lawful authority.

Section 6. Town Council Notification

A municipal office, department, or board receiving a WIS must forward the study and date of receipt to the Town Manager or designee without unnecessary delay.

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Within five business days after receipt, the Town Manager or designee must transmit the WIS, as received, to the Council Clerk. The transmission must include available information identifying the property, applicant, owner, project, applicable development measurements, projected daily demand, date received, and review status. Missing information does not postpone transmission.

Within two business days after receipt, the Council Clerk must distribute the materials electronically to every member of the Town Council.

Within five business days after a final written administrative disposition is issued, the Town Manager or designee must transmit the disposition and any material final technical analysis, demand limitation, infrastructure requirement, mitigation measure, or phasing condition to the Council Clerk. The Council Clerk must distribute the materials to every member of the Council within two business days.

The same notification process applies to a material amendment, withdrawal, expiration, suspension, or revocation of the final disposition.

Notification under this Section is informational only. Distribution does not constitute approval or a finding that the WIS is complete, sufficient, or accurate. No action by the Town Council is required as part of the WIS or associated permitting process.

Section 7. Existing Developments and Transitional Review

A development approved before the effective date of this Article is not automatically required to obtain a WIS solely because approved work remains incomplete or under construction.

A new application, expansion, subdivision amendment, resubdivision, additional phase, change of use, or other material modification submitted after the effective date remains subject to this Article.

For 90 days after the effective date, the Town Manager or designee may review an unfinished development approved before the effective date that would have met a threshold in Section 3.

A WIS may be required through transitional review only when:

A. The Town retains lawful authority over a pending or continuing water-service authorization or otherwise retains authority to require additional water-system information;

B. Written findings identify a potential material impact on the municipal water system based on the remaining development, projected demand, pressure impact, and remaining buildout;

C. The owner and applicant receive written notice and at least ten business days to respond; and

D. Town Counsel confirms in writing that the Town retains lawful authority to require the WIS and that the requirement does not unlawfully impair vested rights or conflict with an existing approval or applicable law.

A transitional designation must be issued within the 90-day period. It does not reopen or modify an existing land-use approval and may be used only in connection with a matter over which the Town retains lawful authority.

Sections 5 and 6 apply to a WIS required through transitional review.

Explanation:
This ordinance addresses a serious transparency and planning gap involving major development and Bridgewater's municipal water system.
Significant projects have previously advanced without a Water Impact Study or a clear explanation of why one was not required. Where studies were completed, no formal process existed to ensure that the Town Council

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received timely information about the development, anticipated water demand, study findings, or final administrative disposition.

The ordinance replaces water-service pipe size as the primary threshold with measurable development standards. A WIS is required for residential development involving two or more units, subdivisions containing more than five homes, residential development containing 15 or more bedrooms, and commercial or industrial development exceeding a single projected-demand threshold. Projected demand is calculated using the applicable Title 5 standards.

Every WIS must evaluate projected daily demand, water pressure, full buildout, anticipated system impacts, and proposed mitigation. Related phases and applications must be evaluated together so a project cannot be divided to avoid review. Applications before the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board that may increase water demand must also be referred for evaluation.

Completed studies and final administrative dispositions must be provided to the Town Council for informational purposes. The ordinance does not change zoning or transfer permitting or technical authority to the Council. The Town Manager or designee continues to administer the WIS process, while the Council receives the information needed for legislative oversight, budgeting, infrastructure planning, water policy, and public accountability.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	**Disposition(s)**
• Town Council	• 8/11/26: Referred to Rules & Procedures
• Rules and Procedures	• 8/26/26: Voted 3-0 to recommend
• Town Council	• 9/8/26: Voted to refer to advertising with amendments. • 10/6/26: Public Hearing held. Voted 9-0 to approve.

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, to approve the aforementioned Ordinance by a Voice Vote 9-0-0.

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

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Debra Ward, Town Council Clerk

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