

As Truro prepares for the 2026 Annual Town Meeting on May 16, discussions continue on the development of the Walsh Property, particularly in relation to future water supplies and wastewater management. In this regard, the March 23 presentation of the Provincetown Town Manager's 2025 Growth Management Report (GMR) is essential reading for Truro residents.¹ The Provincetown Select Board's discussion of their GMR will certainly affect Truro's ongoing negotiations with Provincetown on the Joint Water Resources Working Group.

According to Provincetown Town Manager Alex Morse's GMR, "Provincetown has managed its growth for over thirty years through Article 6 of the Zoning Bylaw, known as the **Growth Management Bylaw**, whose purpose is to 'maintain the rate of development in the Town at a level which will allow the Town to provide in a planned and rational manner adequate public services and facilities to meet the needs of its current and future population without overburdening the Town's natural resources or the capacities of existing and planned public facilities, particularly with respect to provision of potable water, wastewater disposal, and solid waste disposal.'" Following this overview, the GMR makes several important points that directly affect Truro's interests:

1. North Union Field [located in the northwest corner of the Walsh Property] was planned to serve as a redundant water source, but since it is needed on a more regular basis, it does not satisfy the water system's redundant source needs.
2. **The Town of Provincetown Water System cannot serve the expected growth in Provincetown and the growth in Truro without an additional water supply source coming online soon after 2030.**
3. The Town of Truro submitted a formal request [to Provincetown Water and Sewer Board] in December 2024 to serve "Phase 1" of the Walsh Property housing development project. Provincetown has yet to provide an official response to the request, as it is unclear where the wastewater system will be sited. A wastewater disposal system has been proposed at the Truro Central School property, which would effectively eliminate any future well source on the Walsh property due to the proximity to and influence on a new source on Walsh. Truro has worked with a consultant to evaluate a storage tank design/sizing, as well as proposed siting.

During discussion of the GMR with their staff (Community Development Director, Tim Famulare; Public Works Director, Jim Vincent; and Water Superintendent, Cody Salisbury), Provincetown Select Board (PSB) members raised issues directly affecting Truro. Water Superintendent Salisbury noted that "Provincetown staff continues to work with Truro staff on development of the watershed management study. We're evaluating parcels which may be viable drinking water supplies for the future, and staff is planning to submit a policy to the Water and

¹ The Provincetown Growth Management Report is available in the [Provincetown Select Board Agenda Packet](#) for March 23, 2026, item 4A. A recording of the Provincetown Select Board meeting is available at <https://www.provincetowntv.org/watch.html>.

Sewer Board [which includes three members representing Truro] for consideration, which would outline a State Of Limited Capacity similar to the wastewater system.” This “limited capacity” designation would limit all future growth in areas in both Provincetown and Truro served by the Provincetown water system.

Acknowledging that Truro was contesting ownership of possible well site C-5 with the National Seashore, PSB Chair Abramson noted about any new well site: “If we’re looking at something that needs to be set in place and start getting something online soon after 2030, I would imagine you can’t look at that site because litigation itself would probably take quite some time if you’re suing the federal government, if they allow it.” Member Leslie Sandberg followed up by suggesting site C-5 should be taken off the list.

Addressing another key point, DPW Director Vincent asked: “And how are we gonna share the water from a new source? Is it gonna be 50/50? Is it going to be a different number? How do we share the water? So all of this gets back into, starts getting into the IMA, or the intermunicipal agreement.” Emphasizing time constraints, Mr. Salisbury clarified the time line for locating a new well site: “It’s five to seven years through the permitting process, the actual modeling and so on and so forth. It is a lengthy process,” once a site is actually identified.

Commenting on Truro’s position, Mr. Vincent noted that “Their perception is Provincetown is pushing them and once again, wants to control the water and control the development of that site. And so, I think we really need almost a reset, maybe... a couple members of the board meet, two members, the chair and a member or something to come up with an agenda for a meeting in June where we can get the scientists together and say...here's the facts. And let's see if we can agree on some of this stuff...I'm still very confident that there's room on that 70-acre site for a wellhead protection zone...we have very limited sites to access water on the Outer Cape...the Walsh property is an ideal site. It has the best water that we're gonna get on the Outer Cape. That's it.”

Mr. Vincent acknowledged the good news that Truro has grant money to do a wastewater assessment for the Walsh Property. However, he added that “Ideally, this should have been done years ago. You do a feasibility study before you envision a big development in a big community...They didn't do the feasibility study two or three years ago of where would the wastewater go? How will this impact the lens? Should we preserve this well site? None of those questions were asked. None of them were answered, and they're starting right now, asking those questions and doing it, hiring a consultant. So, there's a couple years to go before we even get that information, before this board can make any decision...” Mr. Salisbury added, “One of the big things that I've been pushing is to keep the Walsh property in the document, even though it hasn't been well received, because the town should continue to study...both towns should continue to study the groundwater at that site, and it should be included in a watershed management plan regardless of what happens to the property.”

In the light of this strongly worded discussion, it is to be hoped that Truro’s responses to Provincetown will contribute to reasoned, scientifically based, collaborative discussion and mutually beneficial action.

-Elaine Beilin