



**VAN BUREN**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP

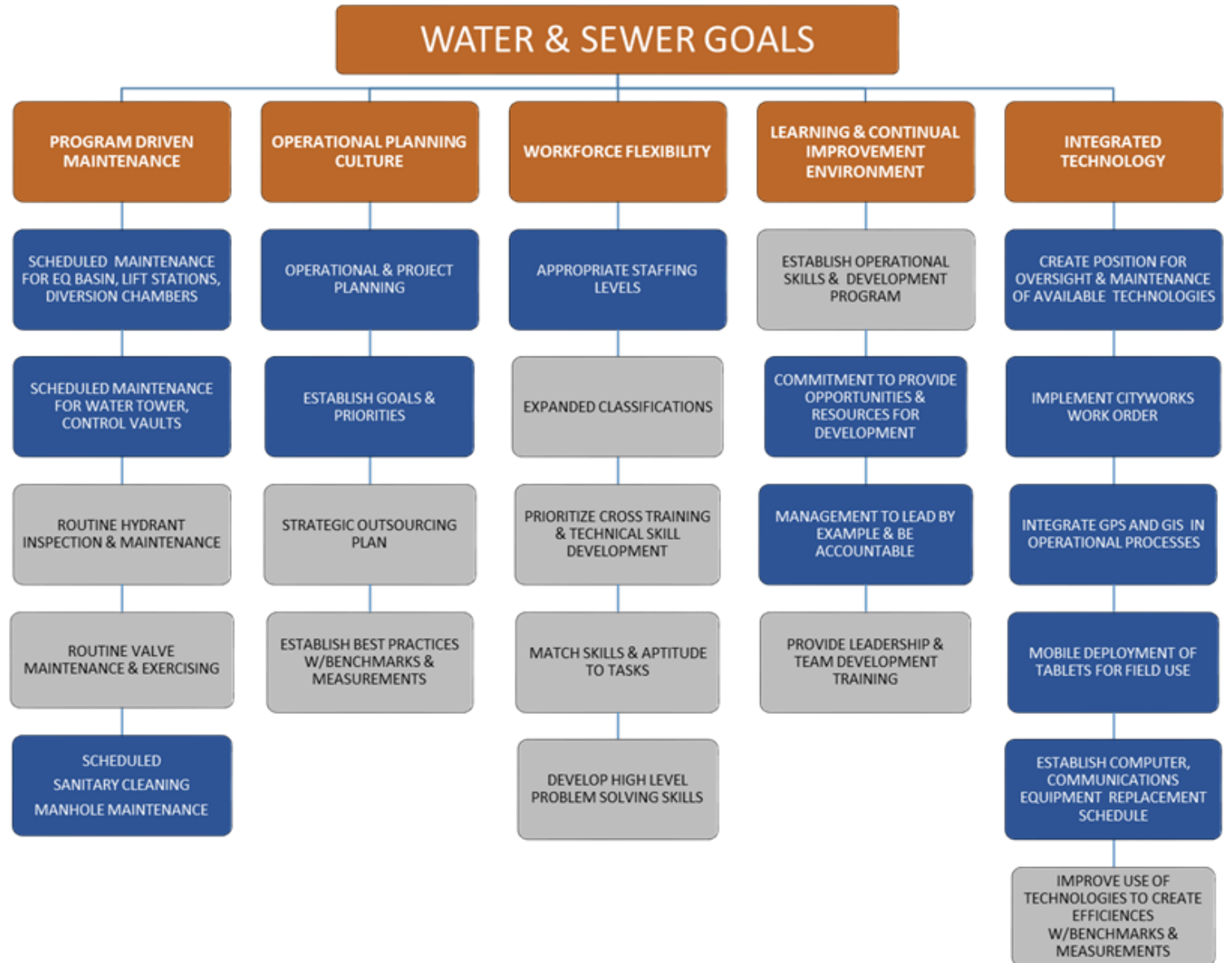
# Water & Sewer **Public Engagement Plan**

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# Background

“Engagement as a way we do business.”



# Public Engagement vs. Public Education

We seek to involve our internal and external customers in **evaluating** our services, asking for their **input** and **suggestions**, and **using the combined knowledge** to improve our service delivery and operations.

One-Way Communication vs. **Two-Way** Communication



# Benefits of Public Engagement

- **Facilitates** relationship-building between residents & the Township
- **Improves** services & customer satisfaction
- **Increases** transparency & insight
- **Increases** access of information across multiple channels
- **Empowers** our customers and residents
- **Helps** the Township understand the needs & priorities of the community



We don't want our consumers to just pay their bill – we want them to **pay attention.**



# Strategies & Efforts

- “Tap the Tap: Rethink Your Drink”.
- Develop an outreach email account
- Website Update with video content
- Public Educational Campaigns & Public Communication Efforts
  - Quarterly Water Letters, Van Buren Today Articles, Newspaper & Social Media
- Water Quality Citizen’s Report
- Public Services Day
- Township Services & Perceptions Survey
- Promotional Items & Branding
- Community Group Engagement
- Joint Environmental Programming





## VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP Water Meter Replacement Program

Van Buren Township will begin to replace all water meters in homes and businesses during 2021 as part of a community-wide meter replacement program.



### WHY DO METERS NEED TO BE REPLACED?

The existing system utilizes outdated technology and a "closed architecture" system. For the past three years the Township was approaching the replacement efforts as a gradual meter phase-out starting with large industrial customers. However, due to the current system being decommissioned by the current vendor, all meters that were not replaced as part of the gradual effort need to be replaced as soon as possible. During the past two and a half years we have installed approximately 1,200 new meters in homes and businesses.

### WHAT IS THE TIMELINE OF THE PROJECT?

The vendor chosen for implementing the project is projected to take approximately 6 to 8 months to complete.

### WILL THIS HAPPEN AGAIN WHEN THIS TECHNOLOGY BECOMES OUTDATED?

The lifespan for a typical meter is about 20 - 30 years. The Township is installing the new meters with an "open architecture" system, meaning that the new meters can be used with numerous different systems and will provide technological flexibility and consistency of services.

### DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR MY NEW METER?

There will be no direct cost to homeowners or business owners for the meter replacement. The funding for the project will come from the Township's Water & Sewer Fund. There will be no additional rate increases to fund the project.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT AS A HOME OR BUSINESS OWNER?

- The meter replacement will need to be completed inside the home or business. The Township, working alongside the chosen vendor, will notify home and business owners ahead of time to schedule installation of the meter and equipment.
- There will be a brief interruption in water service during your replacement appointment.
- Installers will be required to follow necessary precautions including social distancing, the use of gloves, foot booties, and face coverings when interacting with customers.

VAN BUREN | Water & Sewer Public Engagement Program

Questions?

[publicservices@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:publicservices@vanburen-mi.org)

734-699-8925

## FROM THE DESK of SUPERVISOR MCNAMARA



Hello Neighbor,  
As part of a community-wide meter replacement program Van Buren Township will begin **replacing all water meters in homes and businesses starting in February 2021**. The project is projected to take approximately 8-10 months to complete.



Please note, the meter replacement will need to be **completed inside the home or business**. The Township is working alongside with the vendor and will notify home and business owners ahead of time to schedule installation of the meter and equipment. There will be a **brief interruption in water service during your replacement appointment**. Installers will be required to follow necessary precautions including social distancing, the use of gloves, foot booties, and face coverings when interacting with customers. We also ask our customers to observe safe distancing and wearing of masks when interacting with installers.



There will be **no direct cost to homeowners or business owners for the meter replacement**. The funding for the project has been planned and will come from the Townships existing Water & Sewer Maintenance Fund. **There will be no additional rate increases to fund the project.**

During the past two and a half years we have installed approximately 1,200 new meters in homes and businesses. The lifespan for a typical meter is about 20 - 30 years. The Township is installing the new meters with an "open architecture" system, meaning that the new meters can be used with numerous remote reading systems and will provide technological flexibility and consistency of services.

Please direct questions to Van Buren Township's Water & Sewer Department at 734-699-8925 or [publicservices@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:publicservices@vanburen-mi.org).

Lastly, Township Administrative offices will CLOSE on Monday, January 18, 2021 in observance of MLK Day.

**SINCERELY,**  
— Kevin McNamara



@mivanburentwp

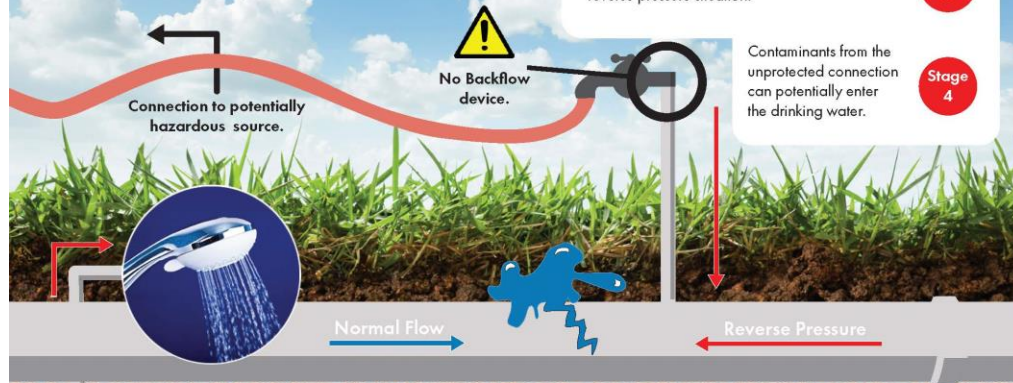
[vanburen-mi.org](http://vanburen-mi.org)



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# PROTECTING OUR DRINKING WATER

How the hazards of cross-connections and backflow can affect your drinking water



Your property has a connection to public water NOT protected by a backflow device.

Stage 1

Water pressure is reduced due to a main break or fire event that requires a lot of water.

Stage 2

The sudden drop of water pressure creates a reverse pressure situation.

Stage 3

Contaminants from the unprotected connection can potentially enter the drinking water.

Stage 4

Our water can become contaminated if connections to plumbing systems are not properly protected. Now that's nasty! To avoid contamination, the State of Michigan requires backflow preventers where there is an actual or potential hazard for a cross-connection.

## WHAT'S A CROSS-CONNECTION?

A cross-connection is an actual or potential connection between the safe drinking water (potable) supply and a source of contamination or pollution. State plumbing codes require approved backflow prevention methods to be installed at every point of potable water connection and use. Cross-connections must be properly protected or eliminated! See the do and don'ts on the next page.

## HOW DOES CONTAMINATION OCCUR?

When you turn on your faucet, you expect the water to be as safe as when it left the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) treatment plant. However, certain hydraulic conditions left unprotected within your plumbing system may allow hazardous substances to contaminate your own drinking water or even the public water supply.

Water normally flows in one direction. However, under certain conditions, water can actually flow backwards; this is known as backflow. There are two situations that can cause water to flow backward: back siphonage and backpressure.

## BACK SIPHONAGE:

This may occur due to a loss of pressure in the municipal water system during a fire fighting emergency, a water main break or system repair. This creates a siphon in your plumbing system which can draw water out of a sink or bucket and back into your water or the public water system.

## BACKPRESSURE:

This may occur when a source of pressure (such as a boiler) creates a pressure greater than the pressure supplied by the public water system. This may cause contaminated water to be pushed into your plumbing system through an unprotected cross-connection.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW TO PROTECT MY WATER?

### DO

Ensure that lawn irrigation systems have proper backflow protection. Backflow Prevention Assemblies must be tested at appropriate intervals by a certified tester, as required by your local water provider and plumbing codes.

Verify and install a simple hose bibb vacuum breaker on all threaded faucets around your home.

Make sure water treatment devices such as water softeners have the proper "air gap", which is a minimum of one inch above any drain.

### DON'T

Submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, sinks, or ponds.

Use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device.

Connect waste pipes from water softeners or other treatment systems directly to the sewer or submerged drain pipe. Always be sure there is a one-inch "air gap" separation.

## WHAT IS VBT DOING TO PROTECT CROSS-CONNECTIONS?



The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) requires all public water suppliers to maintain an on-going Cross-Connection Control Program involving public education, onsite commercial, industrial inspections and residential sprinkler systems. *Van Buren Township has implemented an inspection program, which began with commercial and industrial customers, and will now include residential irrigation systems in 2021.*

734.699.8925 | [publicservices@vanburen-mi.org](mailto:publicservices@vanburen-mi.org)





# Communications Dept. Partnership



**Questions?**



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