Lake Forest Neighborhood*

Transition to Municipal Water – FAQ

1. **What if a homeowner just can't afford these new costs?**

To make this project more affordable, the following measures are in place or being considered:

a) The City Council is considering extending the water assessment payback period to 30 years from a typical 8-year period.
b) For private service lateral work:
    a. The City Council is considering raising the current reimbursement to homeowners for half of the cost of this work up to a total of $3,000 (currently $1,500).
    b. Coop members will receive a minimum of $1,000 as an advance against 'remaining dollar amounts'.
c) The City's assistance program – MadCAP (Madison Customer Assistance Program) – provides income-eligible households up to a $30 monthly credit (discount) on their complete Municipal Services Bill, which includes up to $12 monthly credit directly towards monthly water charges.

2. **What is the timeline for this entire transition?**

The transition to municipal water is expected to take about a full calendar year. Associated costs to the Lake Forest Neighborhood will begin to be incurred towards the end of this transition.

3. **Which City wells will be used to serve the Lake Forest Neighborhood? Is there PFAS and/or Fluoride in these wells?**

Most of the water to this area will be supplied from Unit Well 18 (1925 S. Park St.), and some also from Unit Well 30 (1133 Moorland Rd.)

Residents can use the Water Utility's Water Quality for Wells Serving My Address tool to review the estimated proportions from these two wells (this program assumes connection to the water system, so Coop addresses should work)

Water Quality Reports are also available for review: Well 18 / Well 30

All Madison wells were tested for PFAS in 2023. There was no PFAS detection at all at Well 30. A trace amount of one PFAS was found at Well 18. This is below the 4 ppt federal level set by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Fluoride is added to Madison drinking water to improve dental health and reduce tooth decay. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Wisconsin Department of Health Services recommend maintaining an average fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L. MWU uses that policy to set its fluoride levels; water from every well in the system is tested daily to achieve this target.

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4. **Will our current wells be added to the MWU system?**

No – the Coop will be required to abandon the wells and all related infrastructure once the area is completely connected to City water

5. **What will happen to the water table in our area now that we are not pulling water from our aquifer? We struggle with water in our neighborhood already, there are concerns there will be an influx of water if the neighborhood no longer draws from the water table.**

We have reviewed the Coop's well information and pumpage data that was provided. Given the low total pumpage from the two existing Coop wells and their draw depths, they have minimal to zero impact on the naturally high water table in this area. The water table will continue to be dictated by precipitation and nearby water body levels.

6. **What is the nature of the environmental impact study for this neighborhood related to the water project?**

A permit from the WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be required for the installation of any new water infrastructure, and that process includes addressing nearby wetlands and water bodies, dewatering needs, erosion control, groundwater levels, and floodway/floodplain areas. The plan and specification submittal process for community water system improvements are governed by Chapter NR 811 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and more specifically NR 811.09. For details of the comprehensive procedural requirements, please see 'Requirements for the Operation and Design of Community Water Systems' at the end of this document.

7. **How will this impact affordability of housing in our neighborhood?**

Upon completion of the project, properties will carry the assessment obligations as estimated. The assessment charges can be paid off at any time over the course of the payback period or settled upon the sale of a property. While this amounts to additional cost burden on the property, the property will benefit from the improvement in water infrastructure and reliable long term water supply to the area.

Immediately following Common Council approval, ***preliminary*** assessment amount gets levied on each property. However, the first payment of the assessment charges (annual or optionally the total amount) is not due until after the project is complete, final costs are known, and the Common Council approves the ***final*** assessment amounts.

If a property is sold before the final assessments are approved by the Common Council, the preliminary assessments levied on the property stays with the property and the new owner assumes responsibility for it. At the same time, the Coop membership transfers to the new owner and stays that way until the Coop is dissolved.

8. **Will the city do their own bonds or will they be reliant on the state?**

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Typical assessments in the City are managed through their own bond/borrowing process. The annual interest rate for such a borrowing is estimated to be 5%; Madison Water Utility can apply for a loan through the state-administered Safe Drinking Water Loan program which currently has an annual interest rate of 2.31%.

9. **How much will the monthly water charges increase after transitioning to municipal water service compared to the current monthly water charges?**

Currently, all Lake Forest Neighborhood homes pay between approximately $60 and $70 per month between a combination of their City of Madison Municipal Services Bill ($50 to $60) and a flat monthly water charge from the Coop ($10). A increase of approximately $20 per month is anticipated as a result of this transition to municipal water.

To offset this increase, as mentioned earlier, the City offers a customer assistance program – MadCAP (Madison Customer Assistance Program) – which provides income-eligible households up to a $30 monthly credit (discount) on their complete Municipal Services Bill, which includes up to $12 monthly credit directly towards monthly water charges.

10. **When were the sewer lines placed and why can't this project all happen at the same time? When they replace the sewers will there be an assessment? What will our assessment be for curb and gutter?**

City Engineering rates every street on an annual basis. When pavement conditions hit a certain level, they are programmed for eventual repair/replacement. For funding or other priority reasons, the City can only do a certain number of projects each year. This area – that was recently attached to the City from the Town of Madison – is now included in that process. However, it is not currently a part of City Engineering's 5-year plan. When a street goes on the 5-year plan, City staff begin the long process of planning the project and the improvements to the streets (repaving, sidewalks, curb and gutter) and utilities (storm, sanitary, water).

The current water project is based on the request from the Coop to the City to address the more immediate need for water service and related infrastructure. Hence the plan to move ahead with the water part of these improvements first. Because all street and utility improvements are typically assessed, the water work going ahead of the other improvements will help to stagger the costs.

11. **What will be the conditions of the roads be once installation is complete?**

Roads will be patched with new asphalt wherever water mains are installed – this will essentially be nearly half of every road. Furthermore, City Engineering will coordinate a "chip seal" operation after the project is completed, to further restore and upgrade the current road's conditions.

12. **Can individuals dig their own wells?**

If municipal water is available (i.e. fronting a given parcel), properties are required to connect to the City's public water system per City ordinance. Private domestic wells are allowed in the

City, and if properties do **not** have access to municipal water, then the wells can be used as a source of drinking water. A well operation permit must be obtained from Madison Water Utility to use *any* well, regardless of if it is for drinking water or other uses (such as irrigation).

13. **The timeline seems fast to the membership.**

The current phase of this project is to provide all relevant and necessary information to the Coop's board and general membership to consider whether to go ahead with this project. The project will only start after the Coop's general membership votes to go ahead with this project. After receiving a formal request to proceed with the project from the Coop, it still will take close to a year for project completion. At all phases of this project, Coop board members and Water Utility staff will be on hand to provide any needed information.

14. **Private Service Lateral Work:**
    a. **What is a "private service lateral"?**
       This is the pipe on private property that runs from the water distribution piping directly to a home to give it water.

    b. **Where is my service lateral currently located?**
       Many of the Coop service laterals are located in backyards (along with the Coop distribution lines). This was a somewhat popular layout at the time that this system was built because it reduces the amount of piping to distribute to homes. However, it does not align with current standards due to accessibility issues for maintenance as well as fire protection.

    c. **What work is necessary to modify my current service lateral?**
       When new infrastructure is built, it will be built in the roadways rather than through backyards. Service laterals will therefore need to be re-plumbed within homes so that they connect to these street-side areas rather than the backyards.

    d. **What are the estimated logistics and costs to relocate my current service lateral?**
       A private plumber will need to be hired because the City cannot do private property work as part of this project. Costs for their work can vary; estimates could be around $3,000 on the lower end and $9,000 on the high end.

15. **Are there any long-term consequences of not removing existing piping when the Coop abandons its system?**

No long-term consequences are anticipated; abandoning piping in place rather than removing it is typical practice. It is possible that these pipes are encountered during future excavation projects, however since they are abandoned, they can be removed as needed. Excavating and removing all abandoned pipes would otherwise be prohibitively expensive.

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16. **Are there any recommendations to adjust or change home/flood insurance, given potential landscape changes?**

This project is not intending to alter the landscape as it currently exists. Because the focus of this project is drinking water and distribution rather than alterations to water bodies, stormwater, floodwater etc., Water Utility cannot make any recommendations on this.

17. **What risk management / insurance policies are in place for this work?**

Madison Water Utility's work is covered by the overall City of Madison insurance "umbrella". Similarly, contractors performing Public Works Projects on behalf of the City must be insured and prequalified in order to proceed with the work.

Any vendors, such as a plumber doing work on private property as described above, will also be required to carry insurance if they are properly licensed by the State.

18. **How will home insurance rates be affected by the installation of fire hydrants through the neighborhood?**

This is variable depending on a given home insurance policy, but home insurance rates are generally lower for homes closer to fire hydrants. Upon completion of the projects, homeowners could discuss the new hydrant locations with their insurance providers.

Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter NR 811

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OPERATION AND DESIGN OF COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS *(selected portions)*

NR 811.09 Specific requirements for waterworks, plans, specifications and engineering reports.

(1) Plans.

(a) *General.* The detailed construction plans shall contain appropriate plan and profile views, elevations, sections and supplemental views which together with the specifications provide all necessary information for construction of the improvements. The elevations shall be based on sea level datum or local datum when a conversion to sea level datum is provided. Manufacturer's drawings are not acceptable as construction plans and will not be approved. Other state and local codes, including those of the department of safety and professional services, the public service commission, and the department of health services, shall be consulted for other requirements where applicable.

(h) *Water mains.*

1. `Location plan.' The plan shall show the proposed water main extensions in relation to existing facilities. A map, such as required by s. NR 810.26 (2), of the existing system or a portion thereof with the proposed extensions shown will satisfy this requirement.

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2. `Detailed plans.' The plans shall show all of the following:

a. The location of the proposed water main within the street right-of-way or easement.

b. The location of other utilities, such as sanitary or storm sewers.

c. Elevations at intersections and hydrants or a profile of the proposed water main, proposed or existing sanitary sewers, and storm sewers.

e. The location of proposed appurtenances.

f. Details or special features and connection to the existing system.

g. Profile views including the ground surface, the proposed water main, the proposed sanitary or storm sewer, and rock depths when approval of a common trench is being requested in areas of high bedrock.

h. The size of proposed and existing water mains.

3. `Worksheet submittal.' Complete information as requested on any required worksheet shall be provided. The forms shall be completed for all water main projects including revisions to existing projects, upgrading of existing mains and resubmittals of projects previously approved by the department.

(2) Specifications. Complete, detailed material and construction specifications shall be supplied for all phases of the proposed project. Specifications shall contain a program for keeping existing waterworks facilities in operation during construction of additional facilities so as to minimize interruptions of service. Specifications shall be included for controlling erosion on the construction site as a result of construction activity as specified in subch. V of ch. NR 151.

Note: Department approved Construction Site Erosion and Sediment Control Technical Standards can be found on the department's internet web site.

(3) Engineering report. An engineering report shall be submitted with all reviewable projects with the exception of water main extensions. The engineering report, required by s. NR 108.04 (2) (a), shall contain the controlling assumptions made and the factors used in determining the functional design of the proposed waterworks improvements as a whole and of each of the component parts or units. Where applicable, the report shall make reference to available regional, metropolitan, county or local water supply or water quality management plans and shall clearly indicate whether the proposed project is in conformance with the plans.

Note: It is recommended that the report also include an energy efficiency analysis.

(4) Engineering report requirements. The engineering report required under sub. (3) shall, in all cases, indicate the basis of design and shall include the following specific data, if applicable:

(a) *Description.* A brief description of the project and the need for improvements.

(b) *Location.* A description of the geographic location of the project, including reference to maps or exhibits and the location of existing facilities.

(c) *Topography.* A brief description of the topography of the general area and its relation to the area involved in the project.

(d) *Population.* Past census data and estimated future projection to the design year for the area involved in the project.

(e) *Design period.* The design period being used for sizing major system components, based on the population projection.

(f) *Investigations.* The results of any investigations, such as soil borings, test wells, pilot tests, water quality data, and fire flow tests.

(g) *Flooding.* Any areas of the project which are located within the floodway or floodplain as defined in ch. NR 116 shall conform to the requirements of that chapter.

(h) *Wetlands.* Any areas of the project which are to be located within a wetland, pass through a wetland or may impact a wetland shall be identified.

Note: Copies of the Wisconsin wetland inventory maps are available for inspection at the office of the department of natural resources and may be purchased through the department's internet web site. The department of natural resources is in the process of placing the wetland inventory maps on the department's internet web site.

(i) *Recommendations.* After discussion of alternatives, the recommendations for improvements shall be listed and a statement of the reasons for selection of the recommended alternative shall be provided. A discussion of estimated capital costs and estimated annual operation and maintenance costs shall be included.
