

## Spring 2021 Update Alternative Water Source Program

*The City of Joliet's existing groundwater source is being depleted and will no longer be able to meet the City's water demands by 2030. In January 2021, Joliet's City Council made the decision to proceed with a program to bring treated Lake Michigan water purchased from the City of Chicago to Joliet to meet customer needs. The Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP) consists of the planning, design, and construction of the infrastructure required to establish this new water source for the City of Joliet by 2030. This newsletter highlights elements of the Program update presented to the City Council on May 18, 2021.*

### AWSP Strategic Plan for Implementation

Originally adopted in January 2020, the Joliet Strategic Plan for Implementation of the Alternative Water Source Program (Strategic Plan) serves as a guidance document to track, monitor, and manage the series of major Program milestones needed to provide Joliet with a new water source by 2030. The Strategic Plan was recently updated to reflect the January 2021 City Council decision to proceed with development of a Lake Michigan water source in partnership with the City of Chicago. The Program Team has revised the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) assessment associated with this water supply choice, and updated the Strategic Direction and Goals & Objectives to align the Program with local and external partner requirements. Additional changes to Version 3.0 include a revised Program timeline that sequences the development and formation of a Regional Water Commission and actions to secure low-interest Federal loan funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Program (WIFIA). To view a copy of the updated Strategic Plan visit: [www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org](http://www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org) or click [here](#).

### Regional Water Commission Formation

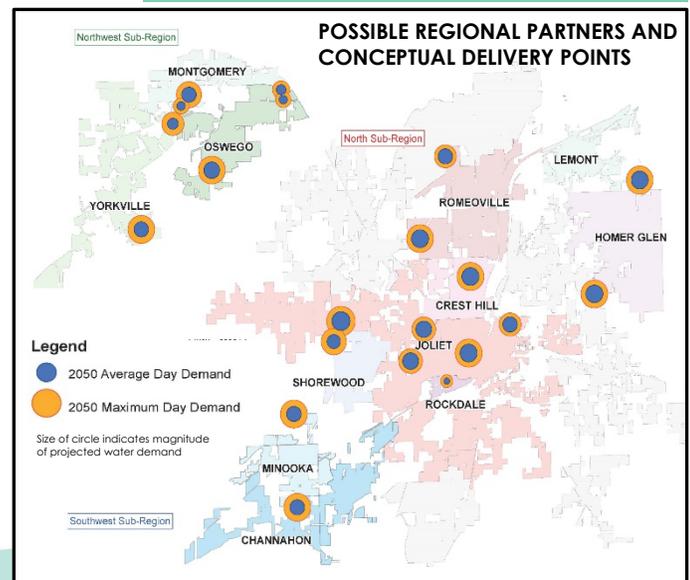
To realize a lower cost per customer for Lake Michigan water due to economies of scale, the City of Joliet is spearheading formation of a Water Commission by the first quarter of 2022. Water Commission formation efforts include regular meetings and workshops with 12 communities (including Joliet) through two groups - a Mayors/Managers Group and a Technical Advisory Group. These meetings are focused on key issues including promoting participation in the Alternative Water Source Program by other communities, generating regional support for enabling legislation for the Water Commission, and gaining consensus on issues related to commission governance and cost sharing.

## Program Calendar

### Recent and Upcoming Program Activities:

- May 18<sup>th</sup> - AWSP Update to Joliet City Council
- May 20<sup>th</sup> - Water Commission Formation Mayors/Managers Mtg
- May 26<sup>th</sup> - Water Commission Formation TAG Workshop
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> - AWSP Finance Team Meeting
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> - Water Conservation Subcommittee Meeting
- June 10<sup>th</sup> - Water Commission Formation TAG Meeting
- June 14<sup>th</sup> - Public Service Committee Update
- June 17<sup>th</sup> - Water Commission Formation Mayors/Managers Mtg
- June 17<sup>th</sup> - Public Stakeholder Meeting (virtual)
- June 24<sup>th</sup> - Water Commission Formation TAG Workshop

While most of these meetings are program team meetings, the meetings highlighted in **gray** are public meetings. For information on how to participate in these public meetings, visit the City's website by clicking [here](#).



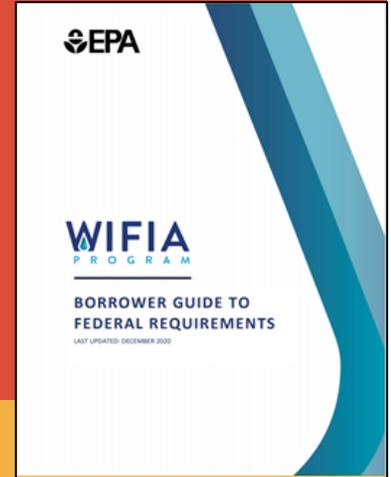


## Lake Michigan Allocation Application Status

With implementation of the AWSP, Joliet is poised to be one of the largest municipal users of Lake Michigan water in Illinois. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, representatives from Joliet and its consultant team participated in a Lake Michigan Allocation hearing before the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to present Joliet's application for an allocation and its commitment to the efficient use of Lake Michigan water. The hearing is the last major step in IDNR's process for evaluating and approving water allocation permit requests for Illinois water utilities that use Lake Michigan as their water source. During the hearing, members of the Joliet Team presented testimony supporting the City's application and answered IDNR questions. No third parties testified in opposition to the application during the hearing. A final decision from the IDNR is anticipated by mid-summer 2021.

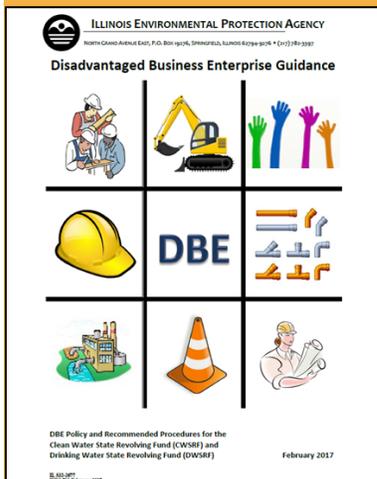
## Joliet Offered Additional WIFIA Funding Support

Also in April, Joliet was invited to apply for an additional \$441 million in Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) credit assistance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Combined with a previous invitation in 2019, Joliet is now eligible to apply for a total of up to \$731 million in low-interest loans through WIFIA. As a low-interest loan and guarantee program administered by the US EPA, the WIFIA program is designed to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. Joliet expects to submit an initial loan application in June 2021 to support AWSP development and design, along with design and construction activities for the City's ongoing water main replacement program.



## 2021 Public Outreach Strategy

As part of Joliet's effort to maintain and extend awareness and progress of the AWSP by residents and businesses – and plan for the eventual creation of the Regional Water Commission – the City has updated its Public Outreach Strategy for 2021. A copy of the updated strategy is available at [www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org](http://www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org) or by clicking [here](#). The 2021 update builds on existing outreach activities (website updates, e-blasts to stakeholders, stakeholder meetings, use of community billboards, bus posters, and newsletters) and identifies new activities to engage individuals and groups who may not have been reached by previous outreach efforts. For example, plans are currently being put in place for a June event with groups representing Joliet's Eastside community and preparation of brief informational videos that can be easily transmitted to various audiences.



## Local and DBE Partner Engagement Strategy

Providing Joliet with a reliable, long-term water supply through the AWSP will generate regional economic benefits, particularly for local and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE). To realize and plan for these benefits throughout the Program lifecycle, the City is preparing a Local and DBE Partner Engagement Strategy. The initial objective of this strategy is to identify local or DBE companies that can support tasks associated with the preliminary engineering phase of the AWSP such as geotechnical drilling and property appraisal. This engagement is important to provide opportunities for local and DBE businesses to participate in the work required to implement the program, to create diversity within the overall program delivery team, and to satisfy requirements associated with state and federal funding programs that will be accessed by the City. A broader request for qualifications (RFQ) from local and DBE firms for services associated with final design activities is anticipated to be issued later this year, and a formal program for active outreach and engagement of local and DBE contractors will be deployed as the program moves through design and toward the start of construction in late 2024/early 2025.

To learn more check us out at [RethinkWaterJoliet.org](http://RethinkWaterJoliet.org)

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