

What is the 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. The Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP) consists of the planning, design and construction of a new water source for the City of Joliet by 2030. In January 2020 following a comprehensive, two phased study, the City Council selected Lake Michigan as the City's new water source. The program activities in 2020 are focused on the evaluation of two Lake Michigan Water Alternatives – purchasing treated Lake Michigan water from the City of Chicago or going straight to the lake and constructing a new intake and water treatment plant. The 2020 evaluation will further define the alternatives and cost estimates in order to allow the City Council to select one of the alternatives at the end of 2020.

Alternative Water Source Program Technical Highlights

One of the first steps in the evaluation of treatment requirements for a new water source is the collection of existing water quality data. For the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP), raw water quality data for Lake Michigan is being compiled from multiple sources. The City of Chicago has performed extensive raw water quality testing of Lake Michigan water and publishes the results on its website at: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/water/supp_info/water_quality_resultsandreports.html

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) initiated a Lake Michigan Monitoring Program (LMMP) in 2010 that includes a probability-based survey of 50 sites in May, June and September of each year. LMMP data collected for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, clarity, chloride, fluoride, metals, nutrients, solids and sulfate have been obtained by the team and are currently being analyzed along with data from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) STORET database and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) water quality atlas and watershed assessment programs. The compiled data will be used to inform the evaluation of water treatment process options being completed in 2020.

Educational Topic

As part of the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP), various educational topics will be highlighted each month. Follow the links to find out more information on the Educational Topics this month:

- What is a PESTLE Analysis and why do one? [Click here](#)
- Identifying and Quantifying Risk? [Click here](#)

Copies of all Educational Topics for the Alternative Water Source Program can be found in the Information Center on the website at www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org.

Program Calendar

While we are just getting started, there are several recent and upcoming program activities.

Recent and Upcoming Program Activities:

- April 21st – City Council approved agreement with Stantec Team for Alternative Water Source Program
- April 21st – Meeting with Hammond, IN
- May 5th – Meetings with IEPA (Public Water Supply Loan Program & Bureau of Water)
- May 13th – Meeting with City of Chicago
- May 22nd - Meeting with IDNR (Lake Michigan Allocation Pre-application)
- May 27th – Regional Planning Kick-off Meeting
- May 28th – Stakeholder Meeting
- June 16th – Quarterly Update to Finance Committee Meeting

While most of these meetings are project team meetings, the meetings highlighted in **gray** are public meetings. To attend these meetings, visit the [website](#) for more Information.

Update on Existing Water System Initiatives

In order to receive an allocation permit for Lake Michigan water, the City must develop and undertake a plan to reduce the level of nonrevenue water in its system to less than 10%. To accomplish this, the City has developed a nonrevenue water reduction strategy. A major component of this strategy is water main replacement. This year the City will be replacing approximately 1% of the City's 690 miles of water main. Visit the City's website at <https://www.joliet.gov/departments/construction-zone> for more information on the water main replacement program and to find construction updates.



Regional Outreach Update

The depletion of the City's existing water source, the deep groundwater aquifer is a regional problem. Several neighboring communities, who also utilize the deep groundwater aquifer, will need to obtain a new water source in the next 15-30 years. The studies completed by the City over the past 2 years have evaluated water source alternatives that could be used by not only the City of Joliet, but possibly the region as a long-term, sustainable, reliable water source. In 2019, communities in the region formed the Southwest Water Planning Group (SWPG) which meets on the second Tuesday of each month to discuss regional water supply.

During 2020, the City will be meeting individually with each community to determine their interest in partnering with the City on the new water source. Various governance and water rate structures will be evaluated to form the basis of the discussions. To kick-off activities in 2020, the City of Joliet will be hosting a virtual meeting on May 27th for Mayors, City Managers and Water Operations' Staff from neighboring communities to share program updates and discuss activities planned for 2020.

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Public Outreach

Public Outreach during 2020 will focus on providing opportunities for the public to attend and participate in public meetings for the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP). Three Stakeholder Meetings will be held during 2020 (May, July, & October), with the first one occurring on May 28th at 1 pm. During the Stakeholder Meetings, the public will be updated on program activities and have the opportunity to ask questions. Three City Council Workshops will be held during 2020 (June, August & November) at which the project team will provide updates to the City Council. Finally, there will be a Public Forum held in December to present the results of the 2020 evaluation and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments ahead of the City Council's selection of an alternative at the end of 2020.

Be sure to stay informed by reading our program newsletter which will be published on a monthly basis.

Stay up-to-date with public meetings and to receive the monthly newsletter In your Inbox by joining the mailing list at www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org.

Water Conservation

Water Conservation will continue to be a highlight of 2020. The Water Conservation Subcommittee will meet the first Wednesday of every month at 3:30 pm beginning on July 1st in the Executive Conference Room – 2nd Floor, City Hall. Please check the City's website at www.joliet.gov to confirm meeting dates and times. These meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact the subcommittee's staff liaison, Amy Wagner, at 815-724-4220 or awagner@joliet.gov.

The City of Joliet currently has two water conservation initiatives – a rain barrel subsidy program and a low flow toilet rebate program. More information on these programs can be found at www.RethinkWaterJoliet.org.

Funding Strategy Update

As part of the Phase II Study in 2019, a strategy for funding the improvements associated with the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP) was developed and consists of federal (Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act or WIFIA) and state (State Revolving Fund or SRF) low interest loan programs as well as traditional bond financing. This funding strategy was used along with the conceptual cost estimates to determine the potential impact to water rates which were presented at the end of 2019. The focus of 2020 is to fine-tune the funding strategy, cost estimates and resulting water rates. The financial team which includes City Staff, AWSP project team members, and the City's financial consultants will be meeting monthly (first Wednesday of each month) in 2020. In addition, quarterly updates will be presented at the Joliet Finance Committee Meetings, with the first update scheduled for June 16th.

To learn more check us out at RethinkWaterJoliet.org



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