



MWRA WATER QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. Is the Town considering joining the MWRA for water?

A. Yes. Weymouth's water supply has always been limited. Since the 1960s, the Town has faced intermittent water shortages and water bans.

For decades, since town officials began the redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station in the 1990s, it was known a permanent water solution would be needed. Since a new Master Developer was identified by the Southfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA), the SRA hired a consultant to re-evaluate the Town's water needs. The study showed Weymouth's town wide water demand would likely surpass the Town's withdrawal limit within 15 years.

Q. Are there other options for new sources of water?

A. Studies have concluded that the only viable option to address the long-term water needs of Weymouth and the proper development of Southfield is a MWRA connection.

Q. What is the status of the Town's application process? How long could it take?

A. Town officials and our consultants have been working with the MWRA for more than a year to ensure we understood exactly what the process entailed and how best to proceed. The SRA, the Southfield Master Developer and the Town agreed to split the cost (\$361,500) of hiring Environmental Partners Group, LLC to provide engineering services related to Weymouth's application to the MWRA. The application process can take up to two years.

Q. Does Town Council need to approve the Town's entrance into the MWRA?

A. Yes. A requirement of the MWRA application is Town Council approval.

Q. Is it true that Weymouth has a high percentage of Unaccounted-For-Water (UAW)? If true, wouldn't fixing UAW solve Weymouth's need for water?

A. It is true that Weymouth's UAW percentage is around 20%. The MassDEP standard is 10%. This is a factor that the MWRA will consider as part of our application. We will need to explain the cause and explain our ongoing efforts to address it. We are working to address UAW continuously and it has been determined that unknown leaking infrastructure is not the biggest cause of our unaccounted-for-water. Solving unaccounted-for-water will not make enough additional water available.

Q. Will water rates increase if we join the MWRA?

A. MWRA water rates are currently higher than Weymouth's current water rates, but future Weymouth rates could be impacted by further federal and state mandated health and environmental requirements of which MWRA would likely not face. The MWRA waiving the entrance fee will lessen the typical increase. We expect State assistance in the construction of the MWRA infrastructure, further limiting capital costs. In addition, the new Master Developers at Southfield will still be expected to pay their fair share of the cost to bring MWRA water to Weymouth, consistent with past agreements. Lastly, there could be a revenue opportunity for Weymouth should the MWRA Weymouth connection expand to other South Shore Communities.

(for which a study has shown there is need and interest). The Mayor and the Water Department are committed to finding the solution that has the least impact to ratepayers.

Q. Is the recent increase in new construction in town the reason Weymouth has water concerns and needs MWRA water?

A. No. Weymouth has had water concerns for decades. Emergency water level conditions date back as far as 1964, with a state consent decree issued by the MassDEP in 1999, forcing the town to develop a solution and put a freeze on new connections. This is the first serious effort to address future water needs with a long-term solution.

COVID was the biggest contributor to the spike in recent water use. Water use continues to decrease since the COVID year 2020. In addition to water use being less in both 2021 and 2022, water use in December 2022 was the lowest for that month since 2018 and water use in January and February of 2023 was less than the previous year, due to infrastructure repairs and conservation efforts.

Q. Is Weymouth on the verge of running out of available water?

A. No, we're not. Weymouth is still at least 500,000 gallons a day below our allowable use under the state Water Management Act. Using the mid-range of our consultant's projected water use, demand would likely surpass the Town's withdrawal limit within 15 years.



MWRA water is nationally recognized for quality and taste and has no PFAS or contamination concerns. The MWRA has excellent water quality due to its well protected watershed and large reservoirs. In any given year, up to 100 MGD (million gallons per day) of additional water supply is available to be withdrawn from MWRA's reservoirs while operating within their safe yield of approximately 300 MGD.

The MWRA has waived their usual entry fee for the next 5 years for the communities first to be accepted, a potential savings of up to \$25 million. There is also additional funding assistance available through the State. House Speaker Mariano is a key supporter of an MWRA expansion to Weymouth and the South Shore. Many other non-MWRA communities in the region also face challenges with water supply - the timing for joining the MWRA has never been more opportune.

MWRA water would allow us to potentially utilize Great Pond as a recreational resource and restore River Herring passage to historic spawning grounds. This would also mean improved water quality and recreational opportunities for Whitman's pond and healthier rivers and wetlands in town, as they would no longer be used for water supply.

Questions? Contact mwrawater@weymouth.ma.us for assistance.