



GRAND PRAIRIE

WATER COMMISSION



2024
ANNUAL
REPORT



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BACKGROUND AND MISSION



Groundwater modeling performed by the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) in 2015 and updated in 2018 indicated that the deep aquifer used by the City of Joliet for its water supply may not be able to support pumping to meet the City's maximum day summer demands by the year 2030. In response to this finding, Joliet initiated technical studies and regional outreach efforts to evaluate and adopt a strategy for establishing an alternative water source. Three years of alternative development and evaluation led the Joliet City Council to decide in January 2021 that it would pursue the development of a new water transmission system to convey treated Lake Michigan water purchased from the City of Chicago to the region, and work to engage other regional partners in this ambitious project. Other studies completed by the ISWS in 2020 revealed that increasing chloride levels and the presence of PFAS compounds in shallow aquifers in the region represented additional water quality concerns for area water supplies.

In February 2022, after extensive consideration of these issues and the costs and benefits of the proposed program, the City of Crest Hill and the Villages of Channahon, Minooka, Romeoville, and Shorewood joined with the City of Joliet in committing to the creation of a new regional water commission to provide their communities with a long-term water supply through the implementation of the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP). Together, the members formulated a strategic plan for implementation of the Program centered around a mission *"to provide a sustainable, reliable and high-quality water supply for our communities by 2030 and beyond in order to support public health, safety, economic interests and quality of life."*

Since the adoption of the strategic plan, the members have worked aggressively to formally create the new water commission, advance the design of the needed transmission system infrastructure, and acquire land rights for construction of the system while promoting key values focused on sustainability, funding strategies that are cost-effective and affordable, engagement of local and disadvantaged business enterprises, and transparency achieved through regular communication and outreach.

This annual report for 2024 provides additional details related to the Commission's progress in these areas over the past year and highlights key milestones planned for completion in 2025 and beyond.





2024 OVERVIEW

Multiple Alternative Water Source Program milestones were achieved during 2024, and efforts to advance the program toward completion of design and the start of significant construction activities will continue during 2025.

The formal creation of the Grand Prairie Water Commission (GPWC) in June represented a critical step forward in the overall Program. Since that time the Commission has taken key actions including retention of legal, advocacy, and financial support firms, adoption of initial budgets, acquisition of land for the proposed intermediate pump station and storage facilities, and award of the first AWSP construction contract.

On the technical front, designs for work packages across the Program have been advanced, with plans and specifications for one project, the Tunnel Extension at the connection point with the Chicago water system, being completed.

Designs for several other work packages are at or near 90% complete, while designs for the remaining projects are moving from the preliminary phase toward their 60% design milestones. The Program Team completed extensive field investigations (soil borings, utility investigations, and environmental investigations) for several work packages during 2024 to support these design efforts and continued to develop opportunities for incorporating sustainability measures into the work package designs.

The GPWC acquired two sites needed for the construction of GPWC intermediate pumping and storage facilities in 2024, while coordination with other right-of-way agencies (ComEd, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Forest Preserve District of Will County, Will County Department of Transportation) led to conceptual approvals of routes for construction of the regional water transmission main. Land acquisition efforts will continue in 2025 and 2026 through implementation of the easement acquisition governance process adopted for the Program.

After reviewing progress updates, the GPWC Board of Commissioners decided in 2024 to maintain the current budget for the Program at approximately \$1.45 billion and proceed with implementation of a funding strategy using low interest state and federal loan programs, revenue bonds, and grants. During 2024, the GPWC submitted its application to USEPA for low interest Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan funds and received approval from the Illinois EPA for a plan to fund multiple work packages with low interest state revolving fund (SRF) loans. The Commission also received approval of a workplan for use of \$3.5 million in Will County American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds for ongoing development costs.

These accomplishments, together with prequalification of several local and DBE firms for construction inspection and management support, position the Commission well for a shift toward construction activities. Groundbreaking for the Tunnel Extension is planned for the second quarter of 2025, and advertisements for bids for three additional work packages including the first large diameter transmission main project will be issued before the end of 2025.

COMMISSION FORMATION



After more than two years of collaborative planning the Grand Prairie Water Commission (GPWC) was formally created on June 28, 2024. The GPWC Board of Commissioners made up of Mayor Missey Schumacher (Channahon), Mayor Ray Soliman (Crest Hill), Mayor Terry D'Arcy (Joliet), Trustee Barry Thompson (Minooka), Mayor John Noak (Romeoville), and Commission Chair Mayor CC DeBold (Shorewood) held its first meeting on July 2, 2024 and officially began the journey to bring Lake Michigan water to its member communities by 2030.

Formation of the Commission was a major milestone in the regional efforts to establish a new entity that would purchase treated Lake Michigan water from the City of Chicago and deliver it to members in need of a sustainable, reliable, and high-quality water supply.

During the second half of 2024, the members continued their close collaboration to establish the policies and procedures needed for effective operation of the organization, take ownership of the land required for construction of new GPWC pumping and storage facilities, advance the overall design of the Commission's new infrastructure, and award the first contract for construction of the needed improvements.



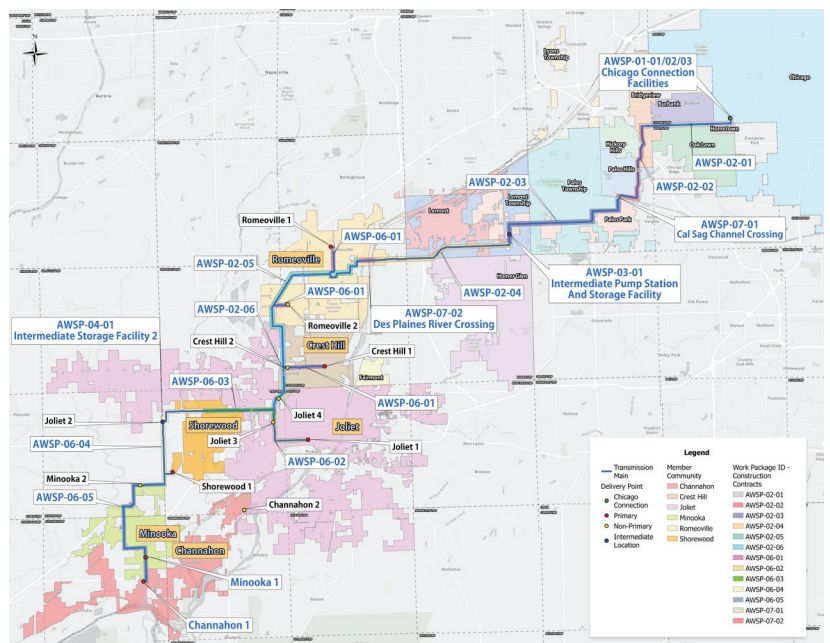
2024 GPWC Board of Commissioners (L to R): GPWC Chair Mayor CC DeBold, Mayor Ray Soliman, Mayor Terry D'Arcy, Mayor Missey Schumacher, Trustee Barry Thompson, Mayor John Noak

DESIGN



Extensive field work and design engineering is required to prepare for construction of the more than 60 miles of water pipeline, three large pump stations, three water storage facilities, and 13 delivery structures needed to bring Lake Michigan water from Chicago to the Commission members. During 2024, these efforts were advanced through the performance of detailed surveys, soil borings, utility and environmental investigations, and detailed engineering analysis. Detailed mapping of the project area was completed through a combination of aerial and ground activities. As of the end of 2024, more than 200 soil borings have been completed to provide accurate information on the soil conditions that will be encountered during construction.

In addition, all 26 of the planned construction work packages had been advanced beyond Preliminary Engineering, with several at or approaching 90% design completion, and design for one project, the 520-foot long Tunnel Extension, completed. Design work is expected to continue through 2025 and 2026 to support bidding and construction of the projects needed to meet the target for delivery of Lake Michigan water to GPWC members by 2030.



LAND ACQUISITION

During July and August of 2024, the GPWC acquired two pieces of land critical to the development of the new regional transmission system. The first parcel is a 14.75 acre site located on the west side of Bell Road in Lemont, immediately south of the Sunhill Subdivision. This property will be used for the construction of a 4 million gallon water storage standpipe and an intermediate pump station. The pump station will also house the Commission's control and operations center.







The second site is a 20 acre parcel located on the east side of County Line Road south of Black Road in unincorporated Troy Township. The site will serve as the location for a 1.5 million gallon GPWC elevated water storage tank and a future intermediate pump station. The 20-acre site immediately to the north was purchased by the City of Joliet for water delivery, storage and pumping facilities, and 10 acres of land immediately to the south were purchased by the Village of Shorewood for future water facilities.

During 2024, the Program Team also finalized and began implementing processes for procuring easements and right-of-way agreements required for construction of the regional transmission main. Acquisition of these land rights is expected to continue through 2025 and 2026.

SUSTAINABILITY

In support of the overall mission of the Alternative Water Source Program (AWSP), the Program Team has drawn upon principles from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision Framework¹ and crafted a strategy for sustainable and resilient design. Specific sustainability and resiliency priorities have been adopted for all five categories included in the Envision Framework as listed below. During 2024, the Design Teams worked to incorporate specific sustainability measures into the engineering plans being developed for each of the AWSP work packages.

ENVISION CATEGORY	IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES
 <i>Quality of Life</i>	<p>Advancing Equity and Social Justice – Ensure that equity and social justice are fundamental considerations within project process and decision making.</p> <p>Enhancing Public Space and Amenities – Improve amenities and publicly accessible spaces to enhance community livability.</p>
 <i>Leadership</i>	<p>Provide for Stakeholder Involvement – Early and sustained stakeholder engagement and involvement in project decision making.</p> <p>Develop Local Skills and Capabilities – Expand the knowledge, skills, and capacity of the community to improve their ability to grow and develop.</p>
 <i>Resource Allocation</i>	<p>Reduce Operational Energy Consumption – Conserve energy by reducing overall operational energy consumption throughout project life.</p> <p>Commission and Monitor Energy Systems – Ensure efficient functioning and extend useful life by specifying commissioning and monitoring of energy systems.</p> <p>Preserve Water Resources – Assess and reduce the negative net impact on freshwater availability, quantity, and quality at a watershed scale to positively impact the region's water resources.</p> <p>Reduce Operational Water Consumption – Reduce overall water consumption while encouraging the use of greywater, recycled water, and stormwater to meet water needs.</p> <p>Monitor Water Systems – Improve operational performance by including monitoring capabilities.</p>
 <i>Natural World</i>	<p>Managing Stormwater – Minimize the impact of development on stormwater runoff quantity, rate, and quality.</p> <p>Preserve Sites of High Ecological Value – Avoid placing the project and temporary works on a site that has been identified as being of high ecological value.</p>
 <i>Climate and Resilience</i>	<p>Evaluate Risk and Resilience – Conduct a comprehensive, multihazard risk and resilience evaluation.</p> <p>Improve Infrastructure Integration – Enhance the operational relationships and strengthen the functional integration of the project into connected, efficient, and diverse infrastructure systems.</p>

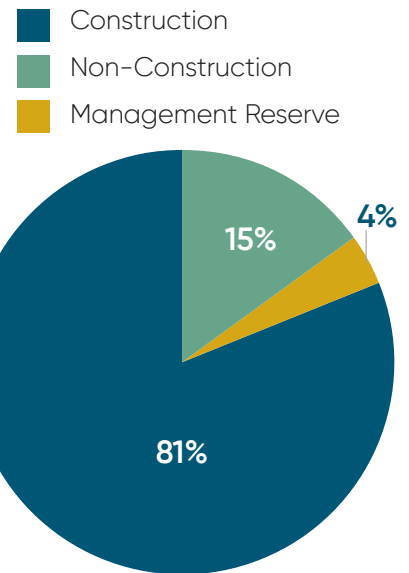
¹ Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Framework. Version 3. Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure. 2018.
<https://sustainableinfrastructure.org/wp-content/uploads/EnvisionV3.9.7.2018.pdf>

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The current budget for completion of the Alternative Water Source Program is approximately \$1.45 billion. This amount represents the total costs that the Commission is projected to incur through 2030 as it works to design, construct, and start-up the new regional water transmission system. As shown in the chart, construction costs represent the largest portion (81%) of the budget. Non-construction costs including costs for engineering design services, construction management, land acquisition, legal assistance, independent review services, and overall program management account for another 15% of the budget. A management reserve equal to about 4% of the budget is included to account for the potential impacts of identified risks to the Program.

At the end of 2024 approximately \$185.5 million of funds had been committed toward completion of the Program. Actual expenditures through the end of the year were \$52.6 million.

AWSP BUDGET



	Budget (\$ millions)	Commitments (\$ millions)	Expenditures (\$ millions)
Program Mgmt	\$49.5	\$45.1	\$18.0
Engineering	\$78.4	\$72.2	\$22.1
Construction Mgmt	\$67.9	\$55.2	\$0
Legal, Financial, Advocacy	\$5.3	\$3.7	\$3.5
Independent Review	\$6.6	\$1.3	\$1.1
Land/Easement Acquisition	\$11.1	\$6.0	\$6.0
Construction	\$1,173.4	\$2.0	\$1.9
Management Reserve	\$53.9	\$0	\$0
Total	\$1,446.1	\$185.5	\$52.6

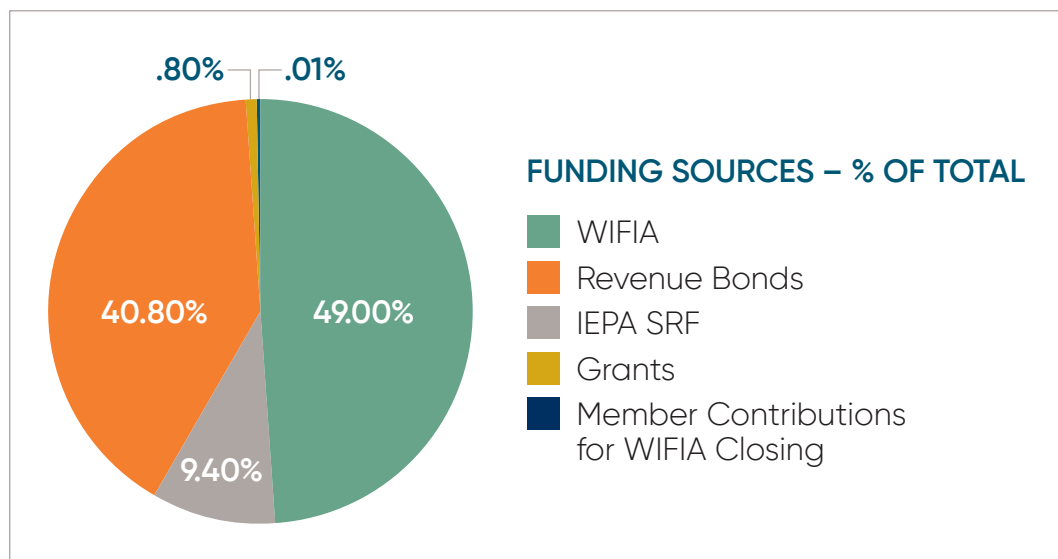


This budget represents a major investment in the future of the region by the Commission members. However, it also presents the members with a challenge – how to finance the completion of the Program while managing the impact of its costs on their water customers.

The funding strategy adopted by the Commission will leverage state and federal low-interest loans specifically tailored for water projects including large regional efforts like the work being undertaken by the Grand Prairie Water Commission. Federal credit assistance for up to 49% of the Program costs is being provided through USEPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans while another \$120 million in funding is being sought from the Illinois EPA's State Revolving Loan fund (SRF) program. Both of these programs provide low-interest rates and favorable repayment terms for infrastructure work such as the new regional water transmission system. During 2024, the Commission submitted a comprehensive application to USEPA for its WIFIA loan and received Illinois EPA approval of an initial Project Plan for use of SRF funds.

Revenue bonds issued by the Commission will be used to complement the loans and provide the balance of funding needed for the Program. The first GPWC bond sale is planned for Q3 2025.

The Commission also continues to make use of and pursue grant funding to help offset the burden of the project on local ratepayers. Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and the Commission's state and federal legislative delegations have been strong supporters of the Program and have been instrumental in securing this grant funding. At present, a \$3.5 million American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) grant administered by Will County is being used to offset engineering costs, while \$3.75 million in congressionally directed grant funding is being used to support the acquisition of required land and easements required for the Program.



LOCAL AND DBE ENGAGEMENT



As one of the largest public infrastructure projects planned for the region over the next five years, the Alternative Water Source Program will create significant economic opportunity for area businesses in the construction, technical, and financial sectors. Recognizing the overall importance of the Program to the regional economy, the GPWC is implementing a specific strategy for engagement of local and disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) firms.

Six of the seven firms that make up the core of the Program Design Team have offices in northeastern Illinois, including one firm with a local Joliet office and one woman-owned business enterprise (WBE) firm. To supplement this core team, three separate requests for qualifications (RFQs) have been issued by the team and more than 30 local or DBE firms have been prequalified to provide geotechnical investigations, engineering design support, or construction management services. Local and DBE firms are currently supporting program efforts related to surveying, appraisal development, structural engineering, maintenance of traffic design, and public outreach. At the end of 2024, firms with offices within the six GPWC member communities have provided nearly \$5.3 million in services for the Program, while minority-, women-, and veteran-owned firms have performed work valued at more than \$1.15 million.

VENDOR CATEGORY	BILLINGS THROUGH 12/31/2024
Local Business	\$5,298,695
Minority-owned Business Enterprise	\$381,029
Woman-owned Business Enterprise	\$704,340
Veteran-owned Business Enterprise	\$69,430
Total M/W/VBE Participation	\$1,154,799

Construction contracts being bid by the Commission include goals for meaningful DBE participation. Goals for specific projects will vary based on the requirements of applicable funding programs but are anticipated to vary from roughly 17% to more than 30%. As projects move into construction in 2025, pre-qualified firms will also begin providing construction inspection and resident engineering services.

OUTREACH



Transparency and education are two of the core values identified in the Grand Prairie Water Commission's Strategic Plan for the Alternative Water Source Program. The Commission's 2024 outreach efforts were structured to deliver on these values across a wide range of communications platforms and opportunities.

Online, the Commission website www.gpwc-il.org continues to serve as the foundation of the GPWC outreach efforts, providing the public with ready access to information on the history, mission and structure of the Commission, schedules and agenda for Commission public meetings, news articles and reference documents, water conservation strategies, and the status of and schedule for bidding and award of planned construction contracts. In 2024, 2,590 new and 86 returning visitors viewed the site and 244 new subscribers signed up for updates via the website form.



The GPWC newsletter, *Current Connections*, was published quarterly in 2024, posted to the website, and distributed digitally to provide updates on the progress of Commission activities, Program design work, land acquisition, funding efforts, and featured information about individual Commission member communities. A stakeholder list including more than 700 individuals is used for eblasts highlighting release of the newsletter and other Commission activities. Quarterly digital toolboxes containing articles and social media posts were also sent to member communities for use in their own direct outreach efforts and participation in the Illinois Section American Water Works Association's Water Ambassador program, created to elevate public perception, knowledge, and understanding of the water industry.



At the same time, Commission representatives continued their efforts to engage directly with stakeholders through presentations, interviews, and participation in community events. Program representatives were present to hand out information and answer questions at community events including the Joliet Slammers Water Conservation night and Joliet Kidz Fest. Neighborhood meetings were held

quarterly in Chicago to keep the community living near the proposed Chicago Connection Facilities informed of plans for the work and efforts being made by the AWSP Team, the Chicago Department of Water Management, and the Chicago Park District to manage community impacts. Program Team representatives also coordinated with Chicago 18th Ward Alderman Derrick Curtis, Durkin Park Elementary School Principal Charles Beavers, and representatives of neighborhood groups to plan for ongoing strategic outreach during construction.

To promote interest in the Program within the construction contracting community, the Program Team held its third annual contractor outreach event on September 12, 2024, at Joliet Junior College. Over 60 individuals representing

contractors, vendors, manufacturers, and labor organizations attended the event to get first-hand information regarding Program objectives and schedules for advertisement of construction contracts.

Lastly, GPWC representatives continued to promote the Alternative Water Source Program through media outreach and public presentations. During 2024, presentations were made to journalists from the Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources and at local, state and national meetings/conferences including the Will County Water Summit, the Illinois Section of American Water Works Association Annual Conference, an Underground Engineering and Survey Institute workshop, the American Public Works Association PWX 2024 Conference, and an Underground Contractors Association meeting.



2025 MILESTONES

Looking ahead to 2025, the Program will see significant milestones achieved in Program financing, design, and award of construction contracts.

MAJOR MILESTONES INCLUDE:

First Quarter

- IEPA approval of GPWC as a Public Water System

Second Quarter

- AWSP-01-01 Tunnel Extension Groundbreaking
- Closing of GPWC WIFIA Loan for construction
- Assignment of Chicago Water Supply Agreement

Third Quarter

- AWSP-06-06 Water Delivery Structures Group 1 Construction Contract Bid
- AWSP-01-02/03 Suction Well and High and Low & High Service Pump Stations Construction Contract Bid

Fourth Quarter

- AWSP-11-01 System-wide Start-up and Commissioning Construction Contract Bid

Projected Program Status: December 2025									
LEGEND ● Task pending ● Task in progress/ongoing ● Task complete	Conceptual Design	Siting/Routing Analysis	30% Design	60% Design	90% Design	100% Design	Bidding/Contracting	Construction	Start-Up & Commissioning
	CIP #1 Chicago Connection Facilities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
CIP #2 Finished Water Transmission Main	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
CIP #3 Intermediate Pump Station 1, Storage Facility 1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
CIP #4 Intermediate Storage Facility 2	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
CIP #5 System-wide SCADA/Comm	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
CIP #6 Regional Transmission Network	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
CIP #7 Transmission Main Mega Crossings	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○