



GREAT WATER
ALLIANCE™

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Monday, November 30, 2020

Waukesha Mayor Reilly and Milwaukee Mayor Barrett hold groundbreaking to announce start of new water pipeline construction

(MILWAUKEE) Construction is about to begin on pipelines that will bring Lake Michigan water to over 70,000 people in Waukesha, and then return clean water back to the Great Lakes Basin. A groundbreaking event was held in Milwaukee today to share the news about this historic project.

Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly said, “Today, we are happy to announce the start of the construction phase of our Great Water Alliance project – a project which will ensure sustainable drinking water in Waukesha for generations to come.”

The project will bring drinking water to the Waukesha Water Utility from the Milwaukee Water Works, then return treated water back to the Root River, a Lake Michigan tributary. In keeping with its approval under the Great Lakes Compact, Waukesha will return back to the Great Lakes Basin approximately the same volume of water that it takes out.

The groundbreaking was held at the corner of West Oklahoma Avenue and South 76th Street in Milwaukee, where a new pumping station will be built. From that station, a 13-mile water supply pipeline will be constructed through West Allis, Greenfield and New Berlin to Waukesha. A 23-mile return flow line will begin at the Clean Water Plant in Waukesha and be built through New Berlin and Muskego, before ending at a new outfall facility in Franklin.

Construction will occur in phases along the route until completion in 2023. Mayor Reilly thanked the many municipal officials along the route for their cooperation on the major construction project.

Mayors Reilly and Barrett said the agreement they signed in 2017 shows how regional cooperation can be mutually beneficial. Receiving treated water from the Milwaukee Water Works will save the Waukesha Water Utility money compared to other suppliers, and the project will provide Milwaukee with a new source of revenue from Waukesha. Both mayors discussed the difficult and complicated approval process under the Great Lakes Compact.

Reilly said, “This shows that we can make southeast Wisconsin better if we can continue to find ways to work together.” Reilly continued, “Our project was intensely scrutinized, but all that attention and analysis resulted in unanimous agreement by the Great Lakes states and provinces. The governors and premiers agreed with us about what the science shows – that this project is the only reasonable alternative for Waukesha’s water supply.”

