

Waukesha alerts hundreds of property owners in three communities to field work along route of lake diversion pipeline

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(Photo: Don Behm / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

The pipeline to divert Lake Michigan water to the City of Waukesha will pass nearly 775 properties as it winds through Milwaukee, West Allis and New Berlin.

Those property owners have been notified that they will soon see contractors in their neighborhoods as part of the plan to build the pipeline and pumping stations needed to carry lake water west over the subcontinental divide.

The workers this spring will be checking property boundaries, collecting soil samples and confirming locations of wetlands and endangered species' habitats along Waukesha's preferred 12.5-mile-long pipeline route.

The route extends from S. 60th St. and W. Morgan Ave. in Milwaukee to Minooka Park in New Berlin.

The property owners will have front-row seats from 2020 to 2022 as a 30-inch water pipe is buried along the route as part of Waukesha's precedent-setting project.

The work will be done on public road rights-of-way or in the roads, not on private property, said [Waukesha Water Utility \(http://www.waukesha-water.com/index.html\)](http://www.waukesha-water.com/index.html) General Manager Dan Duchniak.

Milwaukee will pay up to \$20 million for building a pumping station and around two miles of the pipeline, from S. 60th St. west along Morgan Ave. to W. Honey Creek Drive, northwest on the drive to S. 76th St., north to W. Oklahoma Ave. and west to S. 84th St.

Milwaukee Water Works (<http://city.milwaukee.gov/water#.WtodL9PwY1M>) has not decided where it will build a pumping station along that route to help push the water out to Waukesha, Duchniak said.

RELATED: Waukesha Common Council approves 40-year agreement to buy Lake Michigan water from Milwaukee
(</story/news/local/milwaukee/2017/12/05/waukesha-common-council-approves-40-year-agreement-buy-lake-michigan-water-milwaukee/921232001/>)

Waukesha will pay costs of the pipeline west of S. 84th St. The preferred route follows Oklahoma Ave. into West Allis and beneath the I-41/894 freeway to W. National Ave. in New Berlin. The route turns southwest on W. National Ave. to Coffee Road and follows the road west to Swarz Road, where it turns south to Racine Ave. and Minooka Park.

New Berlin Mayor David Ament said Coffee Road was repaved and widened in 2013 and 2014.

"I would be concerned if the pipeline project has to cut into the road," he said. Ament said he would prefer Waukesha do as much of the pipeline work in the right-of-way as possible.

Even so, the heavy equipment needed to build the pipeline would damage Coffee Road since it is not designed to accommodate heavy trucks, Ament said.

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Duchniak said he has assured public works officials in each community that Waukesha will pay to repair any damage to their roads, roadside ditches and rights-of-way.

Waukesha will build a 10-million-gallon reservoir at county-owned Minooka Park to store lake water from Milwaukee. Waukesha will build a pumping station at the park and a pipeline to convey the water into the city's distribution system, Duchniak said.

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Nearly 1,300 other property owners in New Berlin, Mukwonago and Franklin will watch construction from 2020 to 2022 of a separate pipeline. That one will carry fully treated wastewater from Waukesha's sewage treatment plant to the Root River, where it will flow downstream to the lake. Property surveys and other field work were completed along this route last fall.

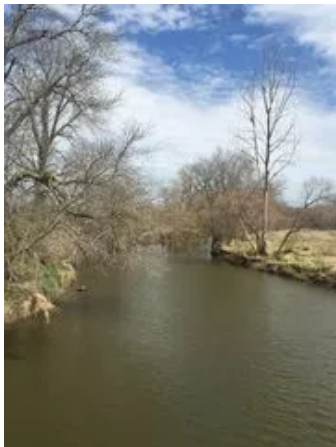
The discharge to the river, known as return flow, was required by the eight Great Lakes states as part of their 2016 approval of this first-ever diversion of lake water to a community located entirely outside of the Great Lakes basin. The multi-state approval complied with terms of a 2008 federal law known as the Great Lakes protection compact.

Waukesha's preferred 23.5-mile-long route for the return flow pipeline exits that city on Racine Ave. and ends at a discharge pipe on the riverbank east of S. 60th St. and south of Oakwood Road in Franklin. The size of this pipe will vary from 24 inches to 30 inches along the route.

The pipeline follows Racine Ave. south to I-43 and turns east along the freeway right-of-way for a few miles before turning south beneath the pavement to W. Small Road. The route might require the city to request, and pay for, an easement along the edge of one private property between I-43 and Small Road, Duchniak said.

The pipeline will turn south on S. Moorland Road, enter Muskego at College Ave., and continue south to Durham Drive and N. Cape Road before turning east on Ryan Road in Franklin. It follows Ryan Road to S. 60th St. where it turns south to the discharge location.

The Milwaukee and Waukesha city councils last year approved a 40-year agreement that will pipe Lake Michigan water across the subcontinental divide to Waukesha.



The City of Waukesha will discharge fully treated wastewater to the Root River at S. 60th St., south of Oakwood Road, in Franklin when it begins buying Lake Michigan water from Milwaukee in 2023. The river will return the water to the lake. (Photo: Don Behm, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

Waukesha will pay Milwaukee around \$3 million in 2023 to deliver an average of 6 million gallons of lake water a day when service begins that year. Milwaukee will provide Waukesha with up to an average of 8.2 million gallons a day by midcentury.

RELATED: [Great Lakes governors approve Waukesha water request](http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/waukesha/2016/06/21/great-lakes-governors-approve-waukesha-water-request/86220734/)
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In June 2016, delegates for the governors of the eight Great Lakes states unanimously approved the city's request for a lake water supply coupled with returning wastewater to the Root River, where it would flow downstream to the lake.

Waukesha has created a [Great Water Alliance](http://greatwateralliance.com/) (<http://greatwateralliance.com/>) website to give its customers updates on the project.

Connecting to Milwaukee's water supply and returning fully treated wastewater to the Root River, a lake tributary, will cost an estimated \$286.2 million, said Duchniak. The costs are about equally split between delivering lake water to Waukesha, at \$140 million, and sending an equal volume back to the lake, at \$146 million.

Waukesha water utility customers will begin paying those costs this year as the city completes planning steps and ramps up efforts to obtain more than 80 local, state and federal permits needed before construction can start.

Quarterly water and sewer bills starting in July will have a return flow charge for the first time, said Joe Ciurro, the water utility's administrative services manager.

The city's water commission last week recommended the city council approve a return flow rate of \$0.62 per 1,000 gallons of water for the second half of 2018. That rate would generate around \$702,700 this year, Ciurro said.

Residential customers would pay an average of \$29.59 in 2018 for return flow project costs, he said.

A preliminary plan for subsequent years projects the return flow rate would increase to \$1.85 per 1,000 gallons in 2019, \$2.16 in 2020, \$3.19 in 2021, \$3.73 in 2022 and \$3.91 in 2023. Those rates would cost residential customers an average of \$88.77 in 2019 and steadily increase to an average cost of \$187.74 in 2023, according to Ciurro.

The state Public Service Commission in December approved a 9.69% hike in the city's water rates this year to begin paying costs of the supply pipeline and pumping stations, Duchniak said.

Residential customers will pay an average of \$344.40 a year in 2018 and 2019, under the PSC's approved water rate plan.

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