

Oak Ridge Water: Timeline Update



Introduction

Since the Town of Oak Ridge incorporated, its leaders envisioned and have been working toward the creation of a municipal water system so that citizens have a safe and secure source of water for consumption and fire suppression, thereby ensuring their overall health and safety.

Next Steps (Estimated Completion Date)

Town Council to approve agreement with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities to provide treated water for Oak Ridge Water System (Summer 2023).

Council to issue Request for Proposals for construction of water tower (Fall 2023).

Complete construction of water tower (Fall 2024).

Town to reach out to potential customers of proposed water main (TBD).

Finalize design of water main and approve accepting bids for construction (TBD).

Construct water main along NC 150 from Forsyth County to Oak Ridge (TBD; dependent upon funding).

Recent Actions

October 2023: Council approves construction documents for 250,000-gallon water tower to submit for state permitting.

September 2023: Legislature approves \$4.5 million to complete construction of 12-inch water main to bring Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities water to Oak Ridge (total water funding now \$8.86 million).

April 2023: Site plan and water tower graphic approved by Water Advisory Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, and Planning & Zoning Board.

April 2023: NC Session Law 2023-11 extends \$1.1 million state appropriation for water until expended.

February 2023: Council approves contract with Guilford County for \$3.26 million from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for construction of 250,000-gallon water storage tank and a portion of construction of a 12-inch water main to connect to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities.

January 2023: The Wooten Company chosen to provide engineering services for construction of elevated water tank and water main; design and a portion of construction costs for tank to be funded from state funds. Initially, the elevated tank will be filled from a high-producing well in Heritage Farm Park, and will serve both the park and the Oak Ridge

Fire Department. In the future, it will connect to the water main and provide the backbone for the Town's water system.

December 2022: Mayor signs agreement for the Honeycutt Reserve subdivision's water system to be turned over to the Town, providing the first customers to the Town's water system.

September 2022: Council approves leasing an office in Town Hall to Envirolink for water department office.

June 2022: Water System Fees and Charges Schedule adopted.

May 2022: Water for Fire Protection Study received from Wooten, including recommendations and cost estimates for several water supply options.

November 2021: Town Council adopts revised Water System Management Plan and revised Water Rules, and authorizes submittal to the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for approval. Approval from the state received in February 2022.

June 2021: Council approves a resolution to accept \$3.265 million in federal ARPA funds from Guilford County for water. Council selects The Wooten Company to complete Water for Fire Protection Study.

Recent Actions (continued)

August 2020: Council approves creation of a new Water Advisory Board to oversee the Town's new water system and make recommendations to Council regarding water. Five residents are appointed by Council to serve on the new board.

July 2020: Town Council announces House Bill 1163 had been signed by the governor, allowing Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Stokesdale to receive \$1.1 million each for water to be used within 2 years. Council approves a proposal for proposed municipal water system operation, maintenance, billing, and customer service from Envirolink Inc.

May 2020: Town Council approves Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified water system operators.

February 2020: Freese & Nichols hired to assist in developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a municipal water system operator.

January 2020: Council adopts Water System Management Plan and Water Rules to guide future water system, as required by state statute.

December 2019: Council approves resolution requesting funds the state had dedicated for a northwest Guilford County water authority be distributed to Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Stokesdale for local water investment.

November 2019: Proposed Water System Management Plan released for public review. Open House on water hosted by Town of Oak Ridge to update and seek input from residents.

October 2019: Proposed Water Rules released for public review.

September 2019: Town Council reviews Envirolink's financial model and approves ordinances establishing the requirement to construct publicly dedicated community wells in new developments with 30 or more lots.

May 2019: Town Council adopts a Resolution of Intent to establish a municipal water system based on groundwater, pending a review of financial, legal, operational, and administrative considerations. Envirolink Inc. selected to conduct the review.

Past Efforts

2017-2018: Town signs letter of agreement with Guilford County, Summerfield, and Stokesdale to participate in a Regional Water Feasibility Study conducted by Timmons Group. Feasibility Study results indicate that costs for a proposed regional system are prohibitively expensive.

2015: Town Council adopts a Water Ordinance, a proactive first step to position the Town to continue to pursue water sources, distribution strategies, and funding.

2011: Town chooses not to act on Hobbs & Upchurch study due to difficulties in obtaining a water source commitment from either Forsyth County or Rockingham County as well as the estimated cost of installing pipes for such a system.

2009-2010: Hobbs & Upchurch hired to update regional water system feasibility study involving representatives from Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Stokesdale for a municipal water including transmission mains, elevated storage tank, pump stations, etc.

2008: Council re-establishes Water Committee.

2007: After completing engineering work for the proposed system, Aqua backs out of contract with the Town. Town takes legal action.

2005: Town enters into contract with Aqua North Carolina to provide municipal water.

2004: Town establishes Water Committee and reserve fund for future water system expenses. Discussions begin with Aqua North Carolina. Water Standards Manual adopted.

2003: Town hires Hobbs & Upchurch to prepare water study, with Madison/ Rockingham County as likely water source.

2001: Town hires Mariano & Minier Consulting Engineers to prepare Preliminary Engineering Report on water, with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County as possible source. Efforts stall due to inability to obtain water source.

1998: Town of Oak Ridge incorporates.