

Auburn Water District's Proposal to Purchase Water from Worcester under the Interbasin Transfer Act

WRC Draft Staff Recommendation

February 10, 2022

Facts Pertaining to the Application

The Auburn Water District's distribution system is mainly in the Blackstone River Basin

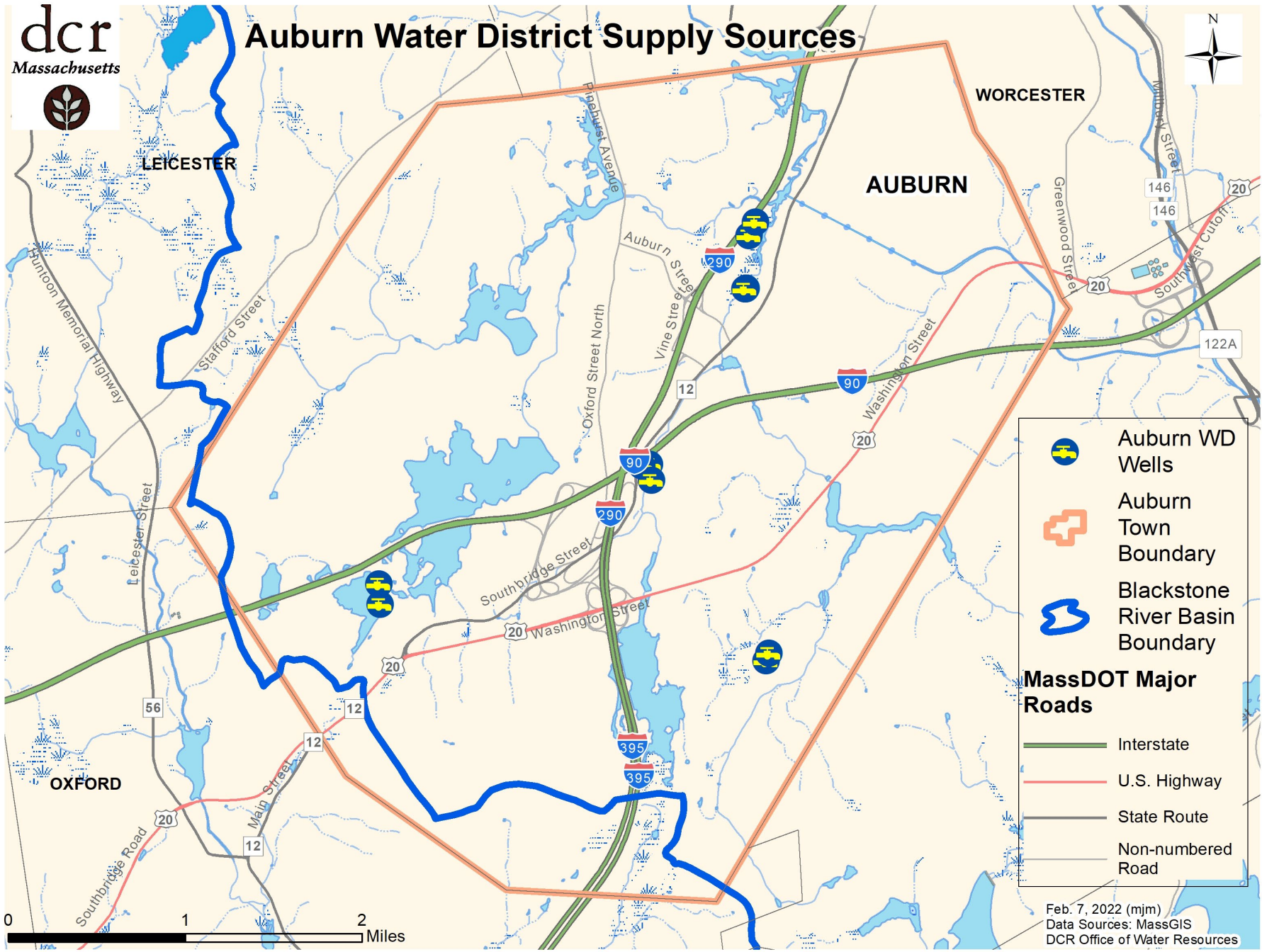
Twelve groundwater wells




- Vulnerable to contamination due to the proximity of multiple major roadways
- Deicing chemicals, fuel spills are of concern
- Supplemental source of water needed when supplies are offline for maintenance or potential contamination, or during periods of high demand

Proposing to purchase a maximum of 0.54 MGD from Worcester (0.36 subject to ITA)





Worcester's sources are in the Nashua and Blackstone River Basins

Auburn Water District Supply Sources



-  Auburn WD Wells
-  Auburn Town Boundary
-  Blackstone River Basin Boundary

MassDOT Major Roads

-  Interstate
-  U.S. Highway
-  State Route
-  Non-numbered Road



The Secretary's Certificate on the Final EIR was issued on October 29, 2021, stating that no further MEPA review is needed.



The WRC accepted AWD's application as complete on December 9, 2021.



Public hearings were held via Zoom for the donor and receiving basins on January 20 and January 26, 2022.



No public comments were received.

More Facts

Criteria of the Act

Criteria	Application Meets?
Criterion #1: MEPA Compliance	Yes
Criterion #2: Viable In-Basin Sources	Yes
Criterion #3: Water Conservation	Yes, with conditions
Criterion #4: Forestry Management	Not Applicable
Criterion #5: Reasonable Instream Flow	Yes
Criterion #6: Groundwater/Pumping Test	Not Applicable
Criterion #7: Cumulative Impacts	Yes

Criterion 2 Viable In- Basin Sources



Water quality challenges



Capacity challenges



Alternatives: no action, add treatment for existing sources, bring new sources online, purchase from neighboring in-basin towns



Recommended alternative: new interconnection with Worcester

Criterion 3 Water Conservation

Meets most of the Performance Standards for Water Conservation including:

- Metering, leak detection, UAW, water rates, rgpcd

Conditions to fully meet Performance Standards for a few other items:

- Billing, drought plan, public education/outreach, ICI use

AWD completed a written water conservation plan in July 2021 which was submitted as part of the FEIR.

Over the last 5 years (2016-2020), rgpcd averaged 61 and UAW averaged 9%.

Regulations require consideration of a broad range of environmental information, taking into account existing flow alterations

- Drought and low flows
- Intermediate and high flows
- Impacts to fisheries, rare and endangered species

Criterion 7 evaluates impacts of all past, authorized, or proposed transfers on streamflow in the donor basin

Looked at the incremental 0.36 MGD transfer as well as the cumulative 0.77 MGD (incl. Cherry Valley & Rochdale)

Criterion 5 Reasonable Instream Flow & Criterion 7 Cumulative Impacts

Criterion 5 Reasonable Instream Flow



Worcester's system has an approved safe yield and authorized WMA volume of 29.5 MGD



Little to no expected impacts to intermediate flows or high flows; only 18 additional "no-spill" days estimated over 10 years for all Nashua River Basin reservoirs



No impacts to low flows as reservoirs are not spilling during periods of low streamflow



No impacts to other resources listed in the regulations (e.g., fisheries, endangered species)



Determined that "reasonable instream flow" remains and there are no adverse impacts to resources



AWD must commit in writing to abide by any required conditions. Conditions cover:



Redesign bills to include usage in gallons and trend data



Revise drought plan to match MA 2019 DMP



Expand public education and outreach efforts

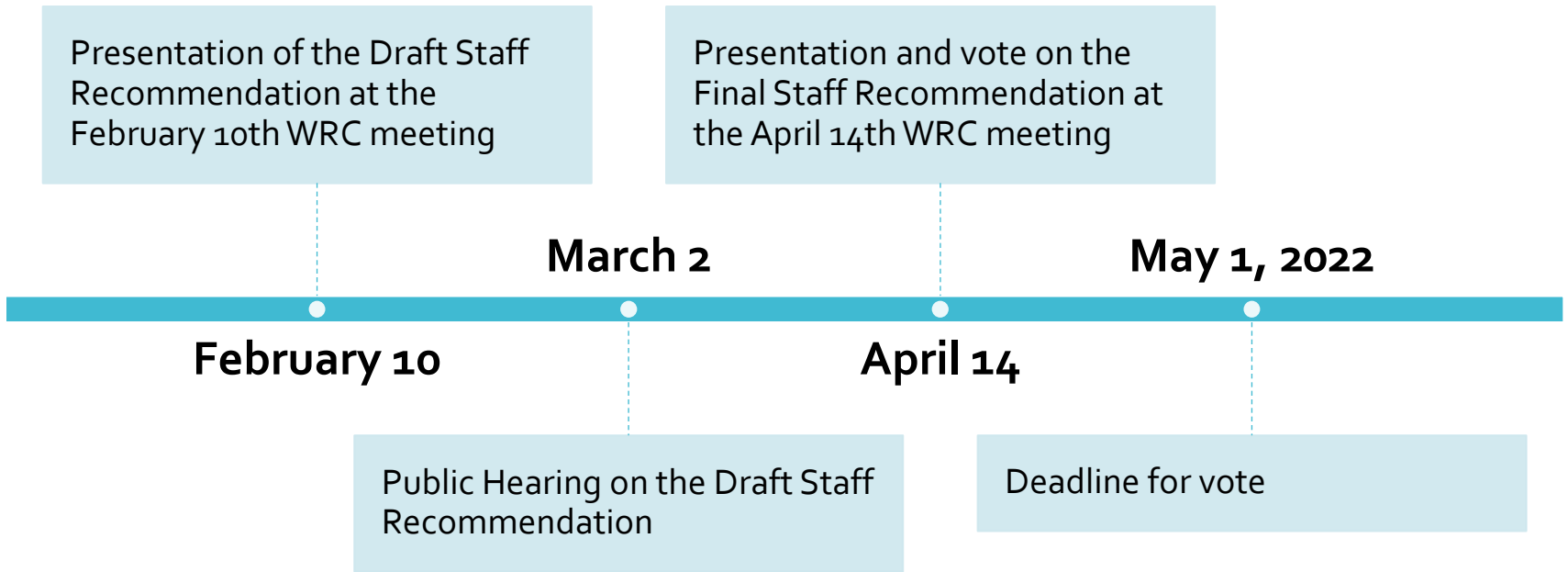


Reach out annually to top ICI users to encourage conservation



Continue efforts to remain at/below 65/10

Conditions of the Approval



Next Steps