

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Why am I receiving this information?** Your property has been identified as having access to city water (a service line has been extended into your property, or a water main is close enough to your property) but are not connected to the system.
2. **Why is this an issue now?** The City Council asked staff to analyze the water system and the number of people who are connected and the number who have water available, but who are not connected. The analysis shows there are approximately 245 parcels that have city water available but are not connected. Also, there are many new property owners that may not know that water is available at their property. The Council wants to educate residents about city water and is encouraging connections through a couple of incentives.
3. **Does it cost to connect to the City water system?** Yes, the City charges a Water Access Charge of \$10,000 for single family homes. The Water Access Charge for multi-family and commercial properties is different.
4. **How is the Water Access Charge determined?** The Water Access Charge is the average cost determined by dividing the cost of installing watermain, hydrants, service extensions to the edge of the right-of-way, valves, etc. by the number of connections. The resulting average is the Water Access Charge. The Water Access Charge amount has been \$10,000 for more than 15 years, while the average cost has exceeded that amount.
5. **What are the incentives to connect?** First, the council has decided to hold the Water Access Charge at \$10,000 for those who connect to the system by December 31, 2019. The city will be evaluating the Water Access Charge throughout the next year, it is likely to increase significantly over the next few years. The second incentive is that the city will allow the Water Access Charge cost to be assessed on your property over a maximum of 10 years. Finally, that assessment will be done at 0% interest, provided the principal amount is paid each year.
6. **Could I owe something less than \$10,000 for a single-family Water Access Charge?** Yes. During research on this issue, the city has determined that numerous properties that have not connected to water have already paid an assessment for water. Any amount previously assessed for water will be deducted from the \$10,000 Water Access Charge. For example, if there was a \$5,000 assessment previously paid for water on the property you own, to connect now, you would have the remaining \$5,000 as an assessment. Likewise, if there was a previous assessment of \$10,000, there would be no Water Access Charge due to connect.
7. **Are there other costs to connect?** Yes. The property owner must pay for the service line to be brought into the house from the water shutoff valve, typically located at the property boundary at the street, and for the cost of a plumber to connect the water in the house.
8. **What are advantages to being on city water?** There are several; confidence that the water you are drinking is safe; availability when power is out; access to optional private service line insurance, should the city sponsor that coverage.
9. **What are the disadvantages to being on city water?** Some people prefer taste of private well water, and there is no monthly or quarterly water billing.
10. **What happens after December 31, 2019 if I want to connect to city water?** You would still receive credit for any prior assessment, but the cost to connect will be based on the Water Access Charge at that time.

11. How often is it recommended that water be tested?

The City is required by law to test the water weekly for fluoride levels, monthly for bacteriological testing, and reports annually for copper, lead, arsenic, gross alpha particles, combined radium, total haloacetic acids, total chlorine and floured as part of the annual Consumer Confidence Report for the water system and is available here:

<http://www.ci.shorewood.mn.us/pages/pdfdocs/2017%20CCR.pdf>

There is no specific requirement for testing private well water. However, the MN Department of Health recommends testing well water every three years. MN law does not require that well water be tested prior to the transfer of a property, but many banks and lending institutions require it as part of the mortgage process.

12. Why should I have my water tested? Many contaminants found in water are tasteless and odorless and can only be detected by testing the water. Even at low levels, many of the contaminants can cause health issues.

13. How can I test my well water to know if there are any contaminants in my water? Twin City Water Clinic has offered a reduced price for Shorewood residents to test their water. For \$140, the lab will test for four main contaminants – coliform, nitrates, arsenic, and lead. If you are interested in having your water tested, you can stop at City Hall and pick up a bottle for testing and instructions. Payment by check is preferred and can be made when you drop off the bottle for testing at Twin City Water Clinic. Your test results will not be sent to the city. These tests can also be conducted by any State-approved laboratory. Regardless if you choose to connect to the city's system, the City urges you to test your water, so you can make an informed decision.

14. After connecting to the city's water system, can I continue to use my well in any way? Yes. If you desire to continue to use your private well (some people use it for irrigation), the private system and the city system must be separated by a plumber. That work is required to be inspected by the building official. You may also choose to abandon the well.

15. What is the next step if I am interested? Contacting the city to express interest and determine if an assessment has previously been paid, and if so, the amount. If you desire to proceed with connection, the city will work with you on an assessment agreement. Once that is in place, you can hire a contractor make the connection.