



# Coastal Georgia Regional Surface Water Supply Plan

## *Talking Points*

### **Overview:**

In response to rapidly increasing water supply demands, the City of Savannah engaged in productive conversations with utility partners in Effingham County and Bryan County on a framework for a new Coastal Georgia Regional Water Supply (CGRW) partnership. This new utility partnership will address the immediate and future water demands of the region as it currently experiences unprecedented growth that is forecasted to continue over the next decade.

### **Key Points:**

- The near-term water demand in North Bryan County of 6+ Million Gallon's Day (MGD) will be met by new Bulloch County groundwater wells drawing from the Floridan Aquifer. The State's water withdrawal permit will limit the groundwater draw amounts to no more than 15 years.
- Over the last 20 years, the Georgia EPD has decreased groundwater withdrawals levels due to environmental limits, increasing the demand for surface water.
- Additional residential, commercial, and industrial growth in the area is projected to increase water demand by an additional 12-20 MGD over the next 10-15 years.
- The water supply demands of the region are currently being met through a combination of treated surface water from the City of Savannah's I&D Plant and groundwater from the Floridan Aquifer.
- In order to meet the increasing demand, Effingham County will construct a new surface water intake on the Savannah River and a new 12MGD water treatment facility—which will have the ability to expand to 24MGD—Bryan County will install water transmission lines, and City of Savannah will enhance the existing I&D surface water treatment plant to increase surface water available for regional use by 8MGD.
- This partnership will answer the growing demand for water while keeping utility rates as cost effective as possible for our customers.
- Surface water can be up to three times more expensive to deliver than groundwater due to higher permitting, infrastructure, and treatment costs. To subsidize that additional cost, the state will directly invest \$232.5M in the form of grants. An additional \$269.2M will be made available in the form of low/zero interest Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loans—which will have an extended amortization period up to 40 years.

- The Governor’s AYF 2025 Budget Report recommends a total of \$501.7M be appropriated through the GEFA via grants and loans to support the project’s initial infrastructure:
  - Effingham Co. - \$319M for new intake/plant.
  - Savannah - \$146M for expansion of I&D Plant
  - Bryan Co. - \$36.7M for transmission lines.
- The City has identified specific capital improvements needed to increase our water supply to the forecasted demand, including:
  - Expanding the capacity of our surface water intake at Abercorn Creek
  - Implementation of applicable dissolved oxygen mitigation measures at the Abercorn Creek intake
  - Upgrading the treatment process equipment and expanding the production capacity of the I&D Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
  - Enhancing the City’s water distribution system including transmission lines, pumps, and other critical facilities to provide the desired level of service to existing and future customers.
- The plan to expand Savannah’s I&D surface water plant to reach the forecasted 90MGD to 100MGD by 2050 has not changed. It is the City’s expectation that the construction of the Effingham County WTP will result in Effingham County returning to the City 5MGD to 8MGD of water supply capacity upon commencement of their full operation which could result in the City having to construct less capacity than 100MGD because of this returned capacity for resale.

**Data:**

- Surface Water I&D average use in 2023 was 49 MGD (Permitted for 58)
- Groundwater average in 2023 was 18.7 MGD (Permitted for 20)
- Approximately 80,000 metered accounts serving approx. 350,000 people.
- President St.: Capacity 27 MGD; average flow 15.39
- Wilshire: Capacity 4.5 MGD; average flow 2.47
- Georgetown: Capacity 2.45; average flow 2.18
- Crossroads: Capacity 3.00; average flow 2.24
- Travis Field: Capacity 4.00; average flow 1.18