



City of Fairburn Work Session Agenda

June 22, 2026
6:00 PM

The Honorable Mayor Hattie Portis-Jones

The Honorable Anatavia M. Benson
The Honorable Fannie Mae Houser
The Honorable Samuel Perry

Mr. Tony Phillips
Mr. Rory Starkey
Ms. Deannia Ray

The Honorable Linda J. Davis
The Honorable Shanita Nichols
The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood

City Administrator
City Attorney
City Clerk

- I. Meeting Called to Order: Hattie Portis-Jones, Mayor
- II. Roll Call: City Clerk
- III. Agenda Items:
 - 1. Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority Presentation (**City Administrator's Office**)
- IV. Adjournment:

When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following Issues:
(1) Personnel (2) Real Estate or (3) Litigation



CITY OF FAIRBURN WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority Presentation

ITEM TYPE: Presentation

SUBMITTED: 06/15/2026 **WORK SESSION:** 06/22/2026 **COUNCIL MEETING:** N/A

DEPARTMENT: City Administrator's Office

BUDGET IMPACT: N/A

PUBLIC HEARING: No

PURPOSE:

To provide Mayor and City Council with an in-depth overview of the Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority's purpose and mission.

HISTORY:

The Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority was established by the Georgia General Assembly to serve member jurisdictions across the Southern portion of Fulton County.

FACTS AND ISSUES:

The Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority obtained a \$41,630,000 water revenue bond to cover estimated project costs. The cities of Fairburn, Palmetto, and Union City fund debt service payments on the bond in proportion to their water usage. The Authority used a portion of the bonds to purchase Palmetto's water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, and reservoir. The 50-year agreement expires in 2053.

FUNDING SOURCE:

N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. MCRWSA Presentation 6.22.26



MIDDLE CHATTAHOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority

City of Fairburn · June 22, 2026

🕒 Serving the Regional Water Needs of the cities of Fairburn, Palmetto and Union City

Today's **Agenda**



SECTION 01
Authority Overview & History

01



SECTION 03
Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)

03



SECTION 05
Project History: Reservoir & Direct Withdrawal

05



SECTION 02
Legislative Milestones

02



SECTION 04
Service Delivery Strategy

04



SECTION 06
Funding Pursuit, Assets & Mitigation Credits

06

Who is the Authority

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority — established by the Georgia General Assembly to serve member jurisdictions across the Southern portion of Fulton County.



MIDDLE
CHATTAHOOCHEE
RIVER BASIN ·
GEORGIA



01 Established

House Bill 1421 created in 2000 by the **Georgia General Assembly** to serve the regional water and sewer needs of member jurisdictions in the Middle Chattahoochee River basin area. The Authority has focused on securing water supply.



02 Mission

Provide **reliable, cost-effective** regional water supply to member cities and their citizens across the region. The cities had a desire to be independent from Atlanta and control their own water destiny.



03 Member Jurisdictions

Serves multiple local governments – **Cities of Fairburn, Palmetto and Union City.**



04 Regional Approach

Formed for a **coordinated, multi-jurisdictional** approach to water resource planning and infrastructure development across West Georgia.

REVENUE BONDS

\$41,630,000 Water Revenue Bond

The Authority obtained a \$41,630,000 water revenue bond to cover estimated project costs.

Primary uses of funds

- Land acquisition
- Capitalized interest
- Mitigation acquisition
- Project-specific studies

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

Operations and Finance Agreement

Between the Cities and the Authority, establishing terms for cost-sharing and water supply.

- Cities fund debt service payments on the bond in proportion to their water usage
- Once a water supply project is operational, cities must purchase all potable water requirements from the Authority
- Authority used a portion of the bonds to purchase Palmetto’s water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant and reservoir
- **50-year agreement** that expires in 2053

Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)

IGA Framework Structure & Governing Provisions

- ✓ **Formal agreement** between the Authority and member jurisdictions governing regional water and sewer service delivery
- ✓ Defines **rights, responsibilities, and cost-sharing obligations** among all participating parties
- ✓ Establishes **service territories and connection protocols** for each member jurisdiction
- ✓ Sets **rates, billing structures, and financial obligations** for service delivery and system investment



City of Fairburn's Role Entitlements & Responsibilities

- ✓ Fairburn is a **key member jurisdiction and service recipient** within the Authority's regional system
- ✓ IGA defines Fairburn's **water and sewer service entitlements** and guaranteed access to regional capacity
- ✓ **Cost-sharing formula** is tied to usage and system capacity, ensuring equitable financial participation based on proportional water usage.
- ✓ Agreement provides **long-term service security** and supply reliability for Fairburn residents and businesses upon securing and constructing infrastructure for a water source.

1999 – 2012

Contentious Interactions with Atlanta

Very contentious interactions with Atlanta regarding the Authority's right to serve the three cities.

2012 · LETTER AGREEMENT

Service Area Designation

Letter agreement between the Authority and Atlanta designating each's service area prior to construction of the reservoir.

- Atlanta keeps its existing retail customers within the three cities.
- Cities may serve all customers within their boundaries that are not Atlanta retail customers as of the date of the letter — future annexations will be discussed at the time of annexation.

Reservoir Plan

2003 – 2017 · PROJECT

Pursued from 2003 to 2017

- Authority pursued reservoir development as the primary regional water supply solution over a 14-year planning horizon.

440

ACRES

Reservoir footprint

754'

POOL ELEVATION

Normal pool, msl

16.44

MGD YIELD

With pumped diversion

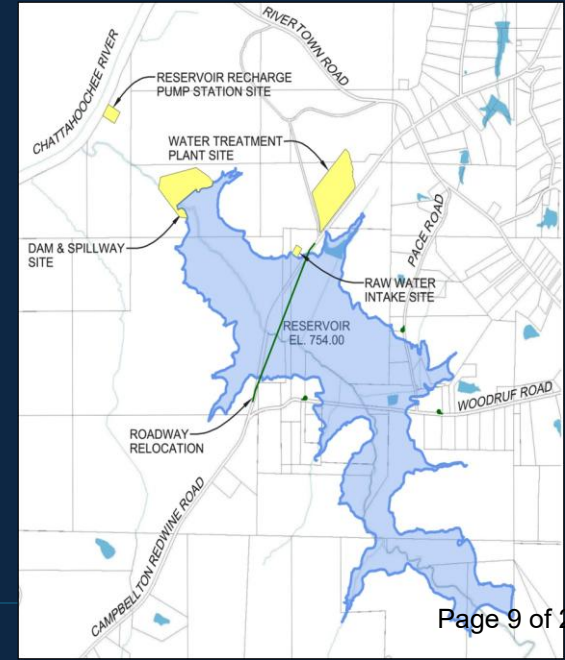
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DAM TO RIVER

To Chattahoochee

Project Profile

- Site control** — Authority owns all reservoir property identified for the project.
- Diversion design** — Yield depends on pumped diversion from the Chattahoochee River.
- Long planning horizon** — Studied and advanced from 2003 through 2017 before a strategic pivot.



50-Year Water Supply Need Verified

EPD verified a 50-year water supply need

- Georgia EPD issued a formal need verification establishing the long-term demand basis for the Authority’s water supply program.

13.25
MGD VERIFIED
Sep 13, 2017

131,700
2065 POPULATION
Three-city service area

103
GPCPD
2065 per capita water use

50
YEAR HORIZON
Long-range planning basis

Verification Basis

- **Population basis** — Includes population within the 2012 city limits of each city.
- **Atlanta exclusion** — Excludes Atlanta’s existing retail customers.
- **Demand methodology** — Per capita water use of 103 gpcpd applied to projected 2065 population.

Reservoir Project: History & Status



CHATTAHOOCHEE BASIN
Regional Supply

PHASE 1
Early Planning & Site Selection

Regional need identified; site studies conducted to evaluate reservoir locations within the Middle Chattahoochee basin for long-term water supply.

PHASE 3
Corps of Engineers Permit Application

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 dredge-and-fill permit application submitted, initiating federal review of reservoir construction impacts.

PHASE 5
Wetlands & Stream Mitigation Planning

Mitigation credits developed for permitted wetland and stream impacts; coordination with Corps and EPD on compensatory mitigation strategies.

PHASE 2
Environmental Studies & Permitting Initiated

Baseline environmental surveys launched; wetland delineation, stream assessments, and state/federal pre-application consultations begun.

PHASE 4
404 Permit & State Environmental Review

Joint federal/state review process underway; coordination with Georgia EPD on state water quality certification and environmental compliance requirements.

PHASE 6
Funding Applications & Grant Pursuit

Applications submitted to GEFA, USDA, EPA State Revolving Fund, and federal congressional programs; revenue bond capacity established.

CURRENT STATUS Paused

Current Project Status & Next Steps
Permitting and funding activities were paused pending identification of funding sources or regional partnerships.

Pivot: Reservoir to Direct Withdrawal

2017 · STRATEGIC PIVOT



Strategic pivot driven by federal policy

- In 2017, federal policy changes required the Authority to pivot from its reservoir plan to a direct withdrawal from the Chattahoochee River.

2017

FEDERAL POLICY

USACE ACF Water Control plan allocated Fulton County's projected needs to be released from Buford Dam.

ACF Plan

DOWNSTREAM SUPPLY

Allocations made available downstream in the Chattahoochee River rather than via a new reservoir.

LEDPA

PREFERRED PATH

Direct withdrawal becomes the least environmentally damaging, practicable alternative.

Direct Withdrawal Permit

EPD PERMIT · 2020

Withdrawal permit issued by Georgia EPD

Dec 5, 2018

APPLICATION FILED

In the name of the three cities

Jul 27, 2020

PERMIT ISSUED

Withdrawal permit by EPD

10 yr

PERMIT TERM

Renewable with EPD approval

11.4 mgd

MAX DAY

8.55 mgd monthly · 7.12 mgd annual

Permit Highlights

- **Water quality** — Extensive water-quality studies confirmed the source is suitable for treatment.
- **Water quantity** — Extensive modeling supported an alternate minimum instream flow, negotiated with EPD and approved as part of the permit.
- **Renewal pathway** — The 10-year permit may be renewed with EPD approval ahead of expiration.

Direct Withdrawal Implementation

OWNED SITES · PHASED

Implement existing owned intake, pump station and water treatment facility sites

13.25

MGD RESERVED
Withdrawal reserved

7.2

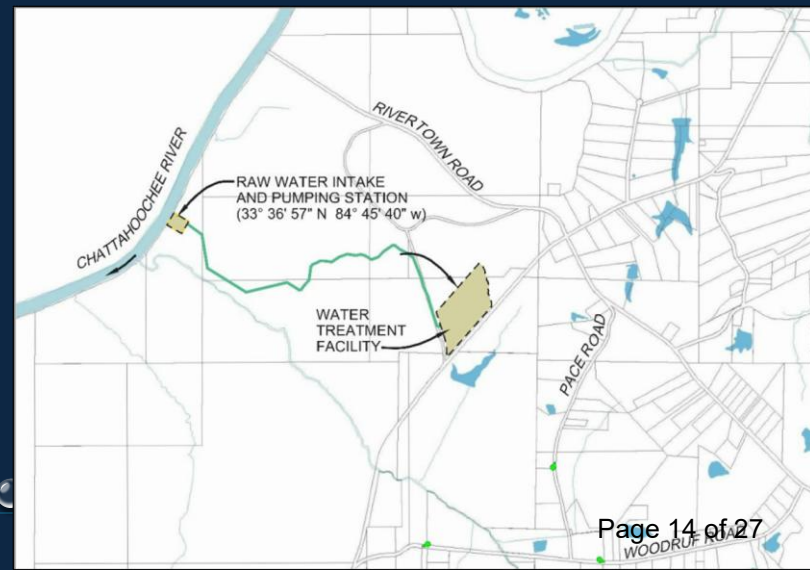
MGD AAF
Current permit

6

MGD PHASE I
Phased treatment facility

Implementation Plan

- **Owned infrastructure** — Build out on Authority-owned intake, pump station, and treatment plant sites.
- **Phased construction** — Treatment facility built in phases, with Phase I sized at 6 mgd to match initial demand.
- **Capacity headroom** — Reserved withdrawal of 13.25 mgd provides long-term capacity above current permitted volume.



Direct Withdrawal Site

FACILITIES · OWNED SITES

Intake

RIVER STRUCTURE

Surface water intake on the Chattahoochee

Pump Station

RAW WATER

Conveyance to treatment plant site

Treatment Plant

POTABLE PRODUCTION

Phased capacity build-out

Transmission Mains

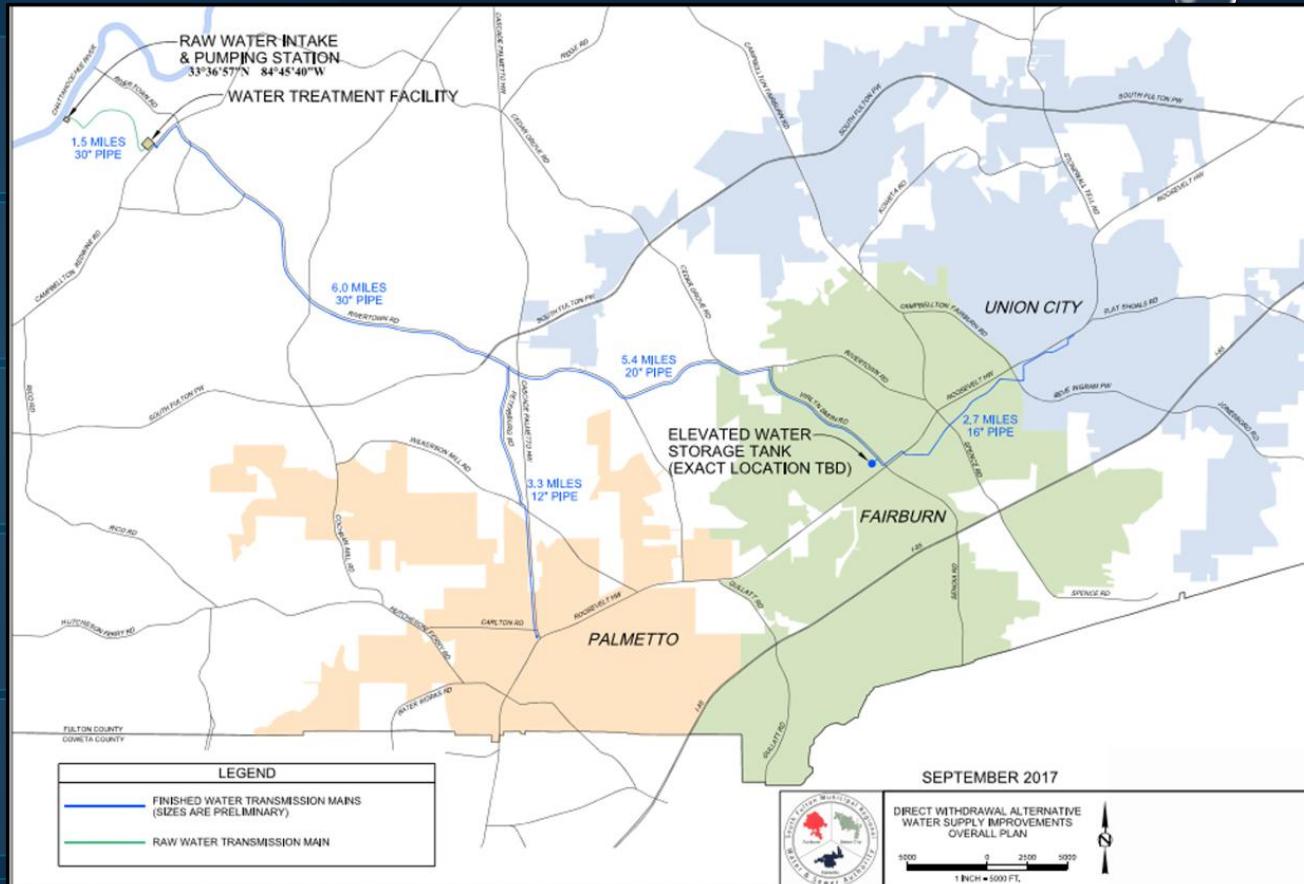
DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

17.4 miles finished water · 1.5 miles raw water

Elevated Water Tank

STORAGE

Exact location to be determined



Post-Permit Activities

2020 – 2022 · POST-PERMIT

Post-permit engineering, owners engineer, and re-scoping

2020 – 2021

PRELIM ENGINEERING

Krebs PER, approved by EPD

USGS

GAGE INSTALLED

Plus ARC source water assessment

2021 – 2022

OWNERS ENGINEER

Gresham Smith Partners selected

2022

COST RE-ESTIMATE

Resulted in pause of the project

Workstreams

- **Preliminary engineering report** — Prepared by Krebs (2020–2021), approved by EPD; USGS gage installed; source water assessment completed by ARC.
- **Owners engineer model** — Authority opted for an owners engineer (Gresham Smith) to oversee bidding, awarding, and construction oversight of the intake and treatment plant.
- **Updated cost estimates** — 2022 estimates from the Gresham Smith team resulted in a pause of the project.
- **Evaluation of other options** — Met with Atlanta and Coweta to explore interconnections and potential partnerships.

Interconnection & Purchase History

Interconnection and purchase discussions with regional partners

- Parallel to permit work, the Authority engaged regional partners on interconnection and water purchase options.

Atlanta

MEETINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Engagement years: 2012, 2022, 2023, 2024. Explored bulk water purchase and operational coordination scenarios.

Coweta County

INTERCONNECTION OPTIONS

Engagement years: 2011, 2015, 2017, 2024. Discussed interconnection alternatives with the Coweta County Water Authority.

Pursuit of Funding History

Multi-source funding pursuit across two decades

Bonds, Loans & State Programs

- **2003** — \$41.63M revenue bond issued to fund the program.
- **2012, 2014** — Applied for Governor's water supply funds (competitive); no funds awarded.
- **2013** — Awarded \$10.5M Georgia Fund loan (expired 2025).
- **2021** — Applied for \$25M GEFA loan; GEFA verbally committed an additional \$25M the following year. Application withdrawn in 2023 due to lack of financial audits from a member city.

Federal & Recovery Programs

- **2021** — Applied for \$25M in COVID relief funds; no funds awarded.
- **2022** — Applied for \$33M in ARPA funds; no funds awarded.
- **2023** — Virtual meetings with EPA, GEFA, and Senator Ossoff representatives on funding opportunities.

Water Withdrawal Permit



🛡️ The Authority holds substantial tangible and intangible assets representing significant public investment and long-term value for member jurisdictions.



Water Rights & Permits

EPD-issued direct withdrawal permits and reservoir permits securing the Authority's legal right to water. Established water allocation rights within the Chattahoochee River basin for present and future regional needs.

✓ EPD AUTHORIZED



Land & Easements

Reservoir site land holdings secured for long-term project development. Pipeline corridors and right-of-way easements established across member jurisdictions, enabling regional infrastructure buildout.

✓ SECURED LAND



Infrastructure & Facilities

Regional transmission mains, pump stations, and connection infrastructure actively serving member cities. Physical assets form the backbone of water delivery and are owned by the Authority for the benefit of all members.

✓ OPERATIONAL



Planning Studies & Permits

Comprehensive environmental studies, engineering reports, Army Corps of Engineers permit applications, and regulatory approvals. These represent years of invested effort and significant monetary value protecting member jurisdictions.

✓ HIGH VALUE



USGS Gage Location
200 Feet upstream of intake



Legend
Feature 1

Other assets

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Palmetto Facilities

WATER & WASTEWATER

Water treatment plant, reservoir, and wastewater treatment plant.

USGS Gage

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

Installed in 2021. Measures river flow in real time.

Wetland & Stream Mitigation Credits

As part of the reservoir and infrastructure permitting process, the Authority developed and acquired mitigation credits — representing both regulatory compliance value and a tangible financial asset.



Wetland Mitigation Credits

Established to offset permitted impacts to jurisdictional wetlands as required under federal and state environmental review processes.



Stream Mitigation Credits

Developed to address permitted impacts to streams within the project area, ensuring full mitigation compliance for all regulated waterway crossings.



Significant Authority Asset

Credits held by the Authority carry both regulatory value — ensuring project compliance — and measurable financial value as a balance-sheet asset of the Authority.



Mitigation Bank & In-Lieu Fee Programs

Authority participates in mitigation bank or in-lieu fee programs as applicable, providing a structured, regulatory-approved pathway for credit generation and use.



Revenue-Generating Potential

Credits may be sold or transferred to qualifying third parties, generating revenue for the Authority and offsetting infrastructure development costs for member jurisdictions.



Section 404 & Georgia EPD Compliance

All credits established in full compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Georgia EPD requirements, with active coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Funding Pursuit & Financial Strategy



STATE

GEFA Grant Applications

Multiple grant applications actively pursued through the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority — Georgia's primary state financing source for water infrastructure projects.

✓ Low-interest loans & grants



FEDERAL

Federal Funding Opportunities

Actively exploring USDA Rural Development, EPA State Revolving Fund (SRF), and congressional earmarks as major federal financing pathways for capital projects.

✓ USDA · EPA SRF · Earmarks



AUTHORITY

Revenue Bond Capacity

The Authority's enabling legislation establishes revenue bond financing capacity, providing a powerful tool to fund capital infrastructure investment backed by system revenues.

✓ Legislatively authorized



REGIONAL

Member Cost-Sharing

Regional cost-sharing among member jurisdictions distributes financial responsibility across the system — directly reducing the per-city burden for Fairburn and all partner communities.

✓ Reduced per-city cost

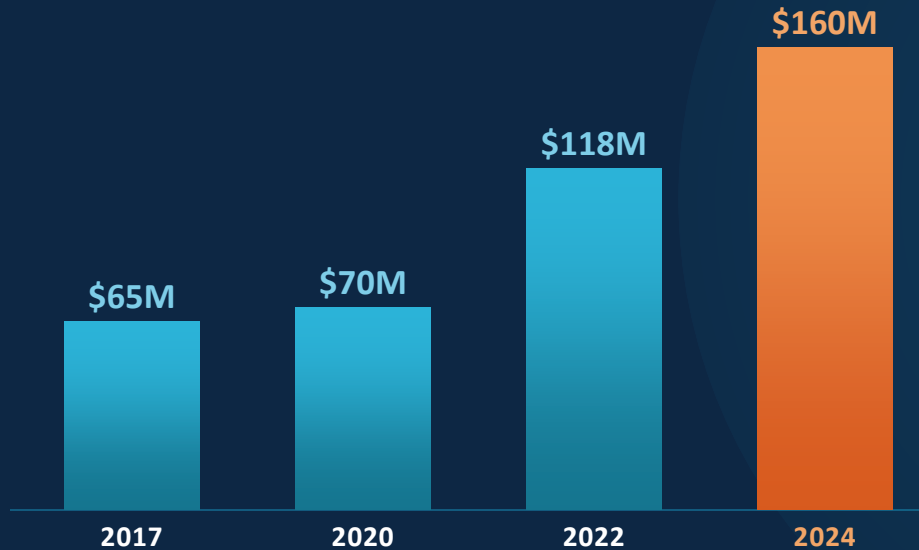


Authority Commitment: The Authority is actively pursuing all available federal, state, and regional financing mechanisms to minimize the financial impact on member jurisdictions and their ratepayers.

Project Cost Estimates Over Time

2017 – 2024 · COST ESCALATION

Estimated cost rose from \$65M to \$160M



What's Driving the Increase

- **Construction inflation** — Rising materials and labor costs sharply raised estimates after 2020.
- **2022 re-estimate** — Updated engineering figures nearly doubled the prior estimate and paused the project.
- **~146% growth** — Estimated cost more than doubled between 2017 and 2024.

Note: A 3% annual inflation factor is applied to the 2024 estimate for 2024–2026 planning purposes.



WATER SUPPLY

Chattahoochee River Direct Withdrawal

An active permit-backed surface water withdrawal strategy complementing the long-term regional reservoir project.

 GA EPD Permitted

Direct Withdrawal Project: Chattahoochee River

Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water & Sewer Authority · Alternative & Complementary Water Supply Strategy



EPD Withdrawal Permit

Permit secured from Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for direct surface water withdrawal from the Chattahoochee River.



Near-Term Water Supply

Withdrawal capacity provides an active supply source while the long-term regional reservoir project continues to advance through permitting.



Required Infrastructure

Infrastructure needed includes river intake structure, pump station, and treatment facility connection to deliver water to member jurisdictions.



Drought Contingency

Withdrawal permit provides critical supply resilience during low reservoir periods, ensuring service continuity for all member jurisdictions under drought conditions.



Regulatory Compliance

Full compliance with Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District requirements and EPD minimum instream flow standards for the Chattahoochee River.



Ongoing EPD Coordination

Active coordination with downstream water users and Georgia EPD continues to ensure permit maintenance, compliance reporting, and future capacity planning.

Key Takeaways for the City of Fairburn



Purpose-Built for Communities Like Fairburn.⁰¹ The Authority was created specifically to address the long-term regional water supply needs of member jurisdictions.



IGA Provides Legal Certainty.⁰² The Intergovernmental Agreement gives Fairburn a legally binding framework ensuring reliable, long-term water and sewer services.



Diversified, Resilient Water Supply.⁰³ Both the reservoir and direct withdrawal projects provide Fairburn with a layered, drought-resilient water supply strategy.



Aggressive Grant & Financing Pursuit.⁰⁴ The Authority is actively pursuing federal, state, and GEFA financing to minimize costs to member jurisdictions and their ratepayers.



Substantial Asset Value Protecting Your Investment.⁰⁵ Authority assets — permits, land holdings, and mitigation credits — represent significant value safeguarding Fairburn's stake.



Your Engagement Shapes the Future.⁰⁶ Active participation by Fairburn leadership is essential to shaping project priorities, funding strategies, and regional outcomes.



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

MIDDLE CHATTAHOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY · CITY OF FAIRBURN · JUNE 22, 2026

Thank you for your partnership in building a
resilient regional water future.



For More Information Contact Laura Benz (Laura@LWBenz.com) or Andrea Gray (Andrea@Andreagray.com)