



**WATER SUPPLY CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
to the Mass. Water Resources Authority

485 Ware Road
Belchertown MA 01007
(413) 213-0454
fax: (413) 213-0537
email: info@wscac.org

February 10, 2020

Dear Councilors,

Water conservation, both indoors and out, is vital to maintaining quality water supplies through times of drought and plenty.

Somerville currently averages 49.5 gpcpd,¹ well under the MA Water Conservation Standards recommendation of 65 gallons or less per capita per day for residential daily use (see Figure 1).

MWRA customers use thousands of gallons of potable water each summer² (see Figure 2).

The rates residents pay for using high quality water reflects the cost of treating and transferring MWRA water from the Quabbin Reservoir. In Somerville, due to ascending block water rates, the more water you use, the more you pay. This system rewards careful water use and provides an appropriate user fee for those who opt for additional water during the outdoor watering season when demand is high.

To mitigate the need for high outdoor water use, WSCAC recommends targeted and consistent public outreach. We support:

- The use of drought tolerant grasses, plants, shrubs, and trees
- The use of certified irrigation specialists to design and maintain smart outdoor irrigation systems
- An annual spring workshop for homeowners on how to water wisely during May through October when water demand is high
- Community water rates that promote conservation
- MWRA's school education program, and indoor and outdoor water conservation inserts for community water bills
- The suite of sustainable outdoor water conservation practices supported by **The Green Industry Alliance of Massachusetts**³

Somerville's Open Space, Environment and Energy Committee promotes the use of native trees and plantings in the town's green and open spaces to ensure sustainability, biodiversity and good stewardship. Committee members can be leaders on appropriate plant choices and corresponding outdoor watering options for open space plantings. Somerville's public planting areas can serve as examples of successful planting and watering techniques.

Water conservation continues to be the *least expensive* way to protect our vital and valuable water supplies. WSCAC is happy to help with more information (info@wscac.org).

¹ MWRA Advisory Board 2019 Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey

² MWRA Community Water Use Report, December 2019

³ The Green Industry Alliance of Massachusetts is comprised of the Massachusetts Arborists Association (MAA), the Massachusetts Association of Landscape Professionals (MLP), the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals (MALCP), the Irrigation Association of New England (IANE), and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England (GCSANE)

The Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) was formed in 1978 and was retained by the MWRA in 1990. WSCAC advises the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply Protection on water conservation and watershed protection strategies. In addition to reviewing MWRA's water programs, policies and projects, WSCAC provides substantive input into environmental reviews for new projects in the MWRA service area. <http://www.mwra.com/02org/html/wscac.htm>

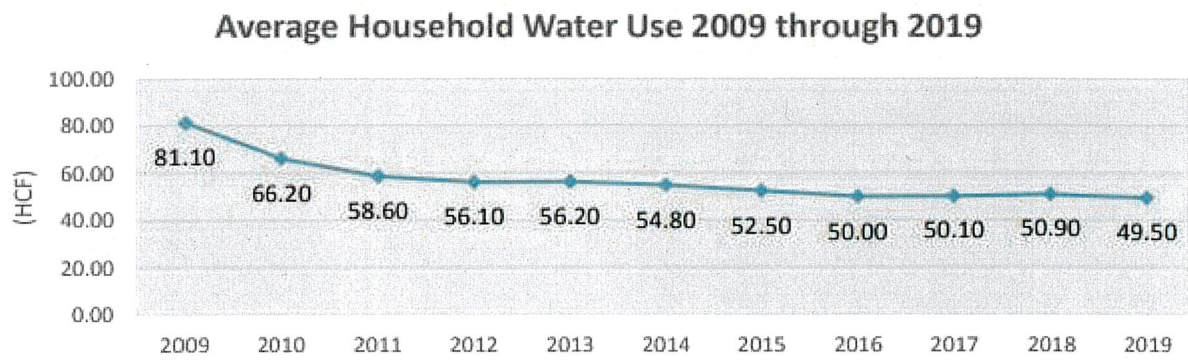


Figure 1

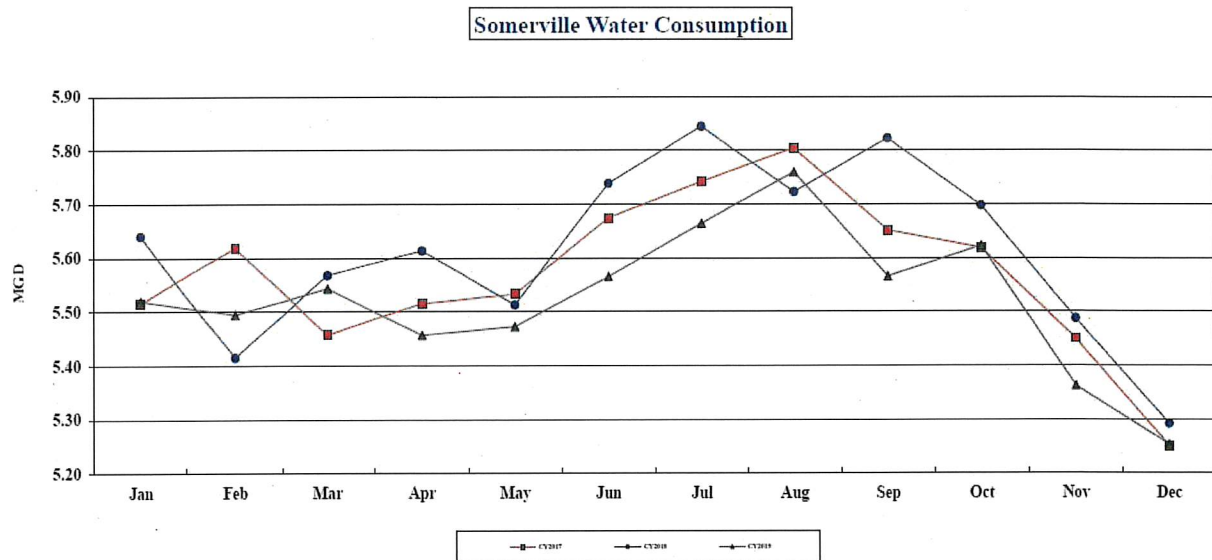


Figure 2