



Summerfield Water Exploration and Efforts to Date (March 2022)

- 1998** The NC Water Science Center produced a report (“1998 USGS Study” or “Daniel and Harned Report”) investigating recharge and storage in the region’s aquifer. It was used as the basis for setting Summerfield’s maximum housing density to 0.73 units/acre. This report has been challenged by state geologists.
- July 2002** Concerned with potential well contamination and low well yield, the town hired Hobbs Upchurch & Associates to review water supply alternatives. The study recommended consideration of municipal water to address growth in light of a largely unknown groundwater supply.
- Sept 2002** Concerned with drought conditions since 1998, the town passed a resolution urging residents to conserve water.
- Mar 2004** The town considered creating a municipal system by connecting Aqua America (provider at the time) customers through a franchise agreement.
- Dec 2005** The town held a public hearing and considered a franchise agreement with Aqua America, but no action was taken.
- May 2010** The Summerfield Comprehensive Plan was adopted with “Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Options” as an objective area with the following abbreviated narrative: *“The Town of Summerfield recognizes the singular importance of plentiful, safe, potable water to present and future residents and businesses. To preserve the availability of this resource, the Town shall make water supply, water conservation and groundwater recharge very high priorities and shall encourage its citizens to do likewise....”* The Comp Plan contains several water-related policies and the most relevant to current study efforts are:
- *Policy 5.1: The Town should work regionally on a broad range of WATER SUPPLY OPTIONS AND APPROACHES for the long term.*
 - *Policy 5.2: To improve short and long-range water supply projections, the Town shall support voluntary as well as institutional efforts to MONITOR GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES underlying the Summerfield community.*
 - *Policy 5.3: Recognizing that water and sewer services have a POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, the Town of Summerfield shall require that the design and location of water supply and sewage treatment facilities promote desirable development density and growth patterns.*
- An Action Item of Policy 5.1 of the Comp Plan is to: *“Re-initiate discussions with water suppliers and other utility providers who may have an interest in supplying water to the Town of Summerfield. Stay abreast of regional water supply issues and maintain contacts in the region.”*
- Jan 2014** The Summerfield Fire District presented a fire-fighting video to Council and noted that available area “water points” (sources such as ponds) had diminished, explained the challenges of fire-fighting without hydrants, and said water supply was a serious safety concern. A water sub-committee of the town’s Public Safety Committee was requested to examine the issue.
- Apr 2014** The Public Safety Committee requested that the town “provide an update of any forward progress on town water issues...” since January. The committee considered water from two different angles: 1) future municipal water exploration (updating the past efforts and study in that regard), and/or 2) improvements to town fire protection. Council’s minutes read: *“Council discussed ISO ratings, previous exploration of a potential public water system, and existing water sources, and expressed interest in terms of improvements to town fire protection, but not municipal water exploration. Some potential ideas of improving fire protection were discussed. It was decided by consensus to specifically request that the entire Public Safety Committee explore improvements to fire protection, but not municipal water exploration at this time, and come back in the near future with a recommendation. The intent was for the committee to suggest what should be pursued and how to best go about it. (It could be any route related to improving fire protection and public safety from that standpoint.)”*



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- Feb 2015** The Public Safety Committee recommended that Council consider a feasibility study to evaluate “rated pressurized hydrants (with adequate storage) at key points in town.” Council minutes cited: “...*discussion of exploring all options, the need to consider future water needs due to growth and development, the potential to share costs of conducting a study, and if statutes allow the fire department to spent funds on a water system or a study. Council directed Whitaker to work with the fire department to determine the scope of a study and bring the information back to council. An engineer-conducted study would be considered during next budget year.*” Those funds were budgeted.
- Jan 2016** Council approved a contract with The Wooten Company for a water and fire protection study to focus on the feasibility of providing water for fire protection only.
- Apr 2016** Separate from Summerfield’s efforts, Council and area jurisdictions received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted by Rockingham County related to “the need to review and investigate water supply alternatives to current and future development corridors in western Rockingham County and northern Guilford County.”
- July 2016** The town held a special meeting for a presentation of the “Water and Fire Protection Study” along with discussion about the regional water initiative for water supply planning. Jurisdictions had just been informed that the state budget included \$14.5 million to “fund interconnection and extension of water lines” to be done by establishing a regional water authority that includes Guilford and Rockingham counties and “one or more municipalities within those counties.” Council discussed the Rockingham County water MOU and the following motion reflects the decision: “*I hereby move for a vote of support for this Council to explore the possibility of participating in a regional water authority along with Rockingham County and other jurisdictions. In making this motion, I am aware of our obligation to protect our citizens, which includes access to water to sustain growth and support our everyday lives. I am also aware of funds budgeted by the state of North Carolina for creation of such a regional water authority. At this time, my motion is that, we as a council, give a statement of intent to Rockingham County, to investigate and explore this possibility, without a pledge of any Town funds at the current time. After we gather all available information, we can then consider any and all financial obligations in this undertaking. In accordance with Policy 5.1 of the Comprehensive Plan, Summerfield should investigate the potential opportunities of participating in such a regional water authority.*” Rockingham County was notified per Council’s directive.
- Mid-2016–late-2016** Guilford and Rockingham counties and the towns of Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale discussed how to best proceed. Guilford and its towns wanted to collaborate and explore regional water supply options and the formation of a water authority and agreed that a significant feasibility study was needed. Rockingham wanted to sell water to the northwest Guilford area, but did not wish to participate in a preliminary feasibility study or be a part of a regional authority.
- Jan 2017** Guilford jurisdictions collectively drafted an MOU to share costs and issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a qualified engineering firm. Senator Berger pledged assistance with ensuring that the study could be paid for using the state’s budgeted \$14.5 million allocation and that legislation would support the exploration of a water authority. All jurisdictions passed the MOU and representatives from each began to work on the RFQ process.
- June 2017** Representatives had recently vetted engineering firms, The Timmons Group was selected, and a negotiated contract and scope of work were presented to the jurisdictions. House Bill 637 had been amended to ensure reimbursement of the study cost and participants would not need to front any local money. Council approved the multi-jurisdictional contract for the “Northwestern Guilford County Water System Feasibility Study” in the amount of \$175,000.
- Mid-2018–mid-2018** The town’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Review Committee scrutinized the Comp Plan and its water policies. The committee made recommendations to the Zoning Board in May. Representatives from Guilford County and the towns of Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale worked with Timmons to guide the study efforts, provide input, and evaluate potential water source providers. Timmons work is almost complete and formal presentations of the study, including an updated groundwater report, are expected as they can be scheduled within all jurisdictions.



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- 8/23/18** The public presentation of the feasibility study occurred 9/6 at Oak Ridge Town Hall and representatives from the four jurisdictions attended. Jurisdictions requested a proposal from Timmons to produce a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and to conduct a more in-depth study of groundwater (a field study and drilling test wells).
- 9/24/18** The Timmons Group's final presentation was received.
- Late 2019** The towns of Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale felt that the projected overall costs to develop an area water system as presented by the Timmons Group study were too high to address needs regionally; the towns chose to deal with needs independently instead. Each jurisdiction passed similar resolutions supporting a bill to request the equal division of the remaining Guilford-area appropriation of the original \$3.6 million from the General Assembly.
- Mid-2020** Water and fire protection continued to be discussed by Council. The town asked The Wooten Company to update its 2016 study regarding cost estimates for water tanks and that update was received. Also, a resolution was passed late last year requesting an "Allocation of Area Water Authority Funds for Local Water Investment" from the State. HB 1163 resulted and allocated approximately \$1.1M each to Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale.
- Early 2022** Council moved forward with a new water feasibility study using Freese & Nichols, the town's current contracted engineers. The study is another look at the cost of infrastructure and potentially sourcing water externally to both improve fire protection and to provide a public, potable water option in strategic areas for residents and businesses.