



## **ADVANCED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

WSSC is modernizing its operations and technology infrastructure to improve our customers' experience. Part of this initiative is the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project. AMI is the foundation of a smart utility, enabling WSSC to use the latest technology and data to better serve our customers.

#### **What is AMI?**

AMI is technology that allows water meters to communicate water usage information wirelessly using radio or cellular technology. The resulting data is used to optimize operations, administration and infrastructure management.

#### **What specific parts comprise AMI?**

AMI consists of a number of components:

- Water meter – equipment that measures the water used at each location.
- Encoder register – device attached to the meter that converts water usage into electronic data.
- Small radio or cellular transmitter - typically mounted outside a building, this transmitter sends encrypted water usage data back to WSSC.

#### **How will AMI benefit customers?**

AMI allows customers to better control their water usage, manage their bills, and helps to better identify and correct on-property issues by providing real-time access to meter and water usage information.

#### **How Will AMI benefit WSSC?**

AMI provides frequent meter read data throughout WSSC's water distribution system. This data can be compared to water production data to help identify areas experiencing water loss, allowing WSSC to identify leaks and prevent larger main breaks. AMI also provides WSSC the ability to install additional sensors throughout its system, which can detect leaks through noise and pressure loss. Additional benefits are environmental and economic. WSSC's use of AMI technology:

- Reduces the WSSC carbon footprint by decreasing the need to drive to locations to read meters.
- Reduces operating costs for meter reading, allowing WSSC to reallocate those resources to other priorities.

**How will customer information be protected?**

Customer information and usage data is encrypted using industry standard processes and technologies before being transmitted to WSSC. Personally identifiable information, such as name, address, bill account number, or credit/collection information, is not transmitted to or from the meter.

**If I have an inside water meter, will WSSC need to move it outside?**

In rare instances, there may be a need to move the meter outside because the data transmission is somehow blocked.

**Will AMI require new water meters for all residential customers?**

No, however, some residential meters that were due to be replaced were deferred to complete replacement while implementing AMI technology.

**Is AMI technology safe?**

AMI uses non-ionizing radio frequencies (RF) to communicate water usage information. Approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), this type of RF is commonly used in mobile phones, broadcasting signals, baby monitors, medical monitors and Bluetooth devices. RF also exists naturally in our environment due to the sun’s interaction with our atmosphere. The World Health Organization, American Cancer Society, National Toxicology Project (National Institutes of Health), and International Agency for Research on Cancer, among others, have all studied RF safety. As a result of these studies, no public agency has identified RF as harmful to human health.

**What is the schedule for the project?**

WSSC is currently in the planning stages of the project. Projected installation of AMI technology is expected to begin in late 2019, and should be complete by late 2023 / early 2024.

**How much will it cost to purchase/install AMI technology?**

WSSC’s current estimate to fully implement AMI technology is \$96.8 million, ([Proposed FY2020-FY2025 Capital Improvements Program](#)). This estimate is for planning purposes only and is expected to change as AMI technology continues to evolve and the project moves through the planning and design phases. Although most capital projects do not have a measureable payback, based on previous studies, AMI implementation is projected to pay for itself in less than seven years.

**Are there other utilities in this region using AMI technology?**

Yes. Other utilities in the region using AMI technology include Baltimore City, BGE, DC Water and Pepco.

**Will the adoption of AMI technology have an employment impact?**

Yes, however, all current employees will be retained and transitioned into new positions to support the new technology. This training is already underway.

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