

# indian hills water district

## Frequently Asked Questions Water System and Costs

### Engineering Master Plan and Current Issues

**What is the Master Plan, and what are the major issues it is addressing?** The Indian Hills Water District (IHWD) contracted with a professional water engineering firm to perform an analysis and provide recommendations, i.e. The Master Plan. This plan evaluates existing infrastructure and water supply against current and future needs. This helps identify deficits in the system, opportunities to improve storage capacity, increase quantity and quality of water and includes estimates for those upgrade costs.

**Where can I find the Master Plan?** The Executive Summary of the updated Master Plan lives on the IHWD website, here: <https://indianhillswater.com/documents> The original (1972) Master Plan can also be found at that link.

**Why did we need to truck water in this summer? Should I start to truck in my own water too?** The current nitrate treatment system (MIEX) could not provide sufficient water quality or quantity. Therefore, to ensure sufficient water supplies for potable and fire-fighting use this summer, water needed to be trucked in. During drought conditions, Phase III does not allow for any outdoor use including for livestock and large outdoor domesticated animals.

**Why are there so many outages recently?** As with any aging system, the older it gets the more issues can occur. Our current infrastructure has components that are approaching 70 years old, and as the infrastructure continues to age and be further out of date, more maintenance is required and more issues are discovered. An analogy we use often is: my 1984 Honda Civic still gets me to the grocery store, but it's going 40mph up I70 and I pray I get there and nothing falls off the engine on my way.

**Why are so many infrastructure improvements needed?** As with any aging system, more maintenance and repair becomes necessary over time.

**Does the current Nitrate Reduction system function?** The current nitrification reduction system (MIEX) has frequent performance issues, produces a waste stream that is expensive to dispose of, and can affect the water's taste. Therefore, the MIEX is not utilized unless absolutely needed.

**Why are we 'blending' our water sources?** Because our current nitrate removal system (MIEX) is not an efficient nitrate reduction solution, higher contaminant water sources are combined with lower contaminant water sources to ensure we meet water quality standards.

**What is the main source of nitrates found in our water? Is there anything I can do as a homeowner to reduce the level of nitrates in our water? Or, to prevent contamination?** Older septic systems and livestock runoff are major contributing factors to the nitrates in our groundwater. Homeowners can reduce nitrate levels by ensuring that septic tanks are appropriately sized for their home and operating correctly, and by properly disposing of livestock waste.

### District Operation Projects/Financials

**Are there grants or bonds we can use to address our major issues?** While government agency grant programs have seen reduced budgets in the last 3-5 years, we are hopeful that grants may assist with several capital improvement projects. The current budget has allocated a small amount of funds to support a grant writer to assist in identifying and securing these grants.

**How are property tax funds and monthly bills funds used? (include historically what was happening) - very simple graphic on what the funds go to, separated out between property tax revenue and monthly bills revenue.**

There are two separate buckets where funding comes in for the district: property taxes and monthly water fees. Generally, water fees are utilized for operational and maintenance costs (what keeps the district functioning day-to-day) and property tax funds are utilized for capital improvements (major projects to keep our infrastructure and supply up to date and efficient). In the past years, both property taxes and water fees have been utilized to cover operational costs, so capital improvements were not able to be implemented.

**Why are we contracting out for staffing?** With the retirement of our long-time operator in responsible charge (ORC), and other employees moving on to pursue other career opportunities, there has been a changeover in staff. The District is required to have a C Level certified Water Operator in charge of the District.

**Is it more economically feasible to hook into Denver (or another district's) water instead of managing our own supply?** On the surface, this does seem like a simple solution: hook into another municipality. However, costs born by annexation into another municipality will be paid for by IHWD customers. This would simply solve the water supply situation, but issues with existing distribution will still remain and will need to be addressed.

**Why does the District issue new taps?** Colorado Division of Water Resources will issue a well permit for any undeveloped properties that meet minimum lot size requirements and do not have a water tap. The District's only decision is to approve a new tap or essentially permit drilling of a new well.

Funds from water rates (i.e., monthly funds) cover operating expenses, including:	Funds from taxes (i.e., annual funds) cover non-operating/capital expenses, including:
Distribution system leak repair	Well improvement projects
Building maintenance	Upgrades to systems (i.e., treatment plant or booster station improvements, Memcore upgrade, etc.)
Repairs and maintenance treatment plants	Engineering projects (i.e., discharge permit)
Safety equipment	Distribution system improvement/replacement
Water quality testing	Fire hydrant upgrades/replacements
Security monitoring	Nitrate system replacement
Chemicals and filters	Tank repairs and upgrades
Nitrate consumables (resin)	Water rights
Fire hydrant testing	SCADA upgrades
Insurance: property & liability and workers comp	GPS mapping project
Accounting audits	Customer Meter upgrade
Asset management	
Engineering support	
Legal support	
Employee-related expenses (wages, taxes, and education)	
Truck expenses	
Meter maintenance	
Administrative needs such as postage, merchant fees	
Fees, licenses, permits	
Utilities	