

# JEA to spend \$1.6 billion to keep up with water demands of growing population –

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Downtown Jacksonville. Wikipedia Commons.

The city of Jacksonville has a problem, and it is too many people. The city cannot sustainably provide drinking water for the populace, nor can it provide sustainable/acceptable disposal of wastewater.

Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) has had its share of [self-inflicted problems](#) in the past, and now faces paying for new water demands. Negative though the aspects may be of buying new

amounts of water and the ensuing expenses of waste disposal, they have not yet reached the problem of there being no potable water available.

Continuing to consume unsustainable amounts of fresh groundwater is accompanied by no acceptable methods to dispose of wastewater. Dumping wastewater into the the ground/aquifer is no more acceptable than the current practice of dumping it into the St. Johns River.

Forward thinking leaders in Jacksonville would do well to consider ways to curb growth and development if they want to sustain their city and its quality of life.

This article appeared on the [WJXT TV](#) news in Jacksonville.

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.*

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,  
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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**JEA to spend \$1.6 billion to  
keep up with water demands of  
growing population**

**Paying for water infrastructure is**

# JEA's next critical issue

[Jim Piggott](#), Reporter

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – As the population in Jacksonville continues to grow, it's going to cost JEA more than \$1 billion to make sure that water gets to all homes in the area.

But it's not only about the water we drink, but also how we get rid of the water we flush away.

With a boom going on with home construction in Duval County, JEA staff says there has been a 2.8% increase in new customers.

During its monthly board meeting Tuesday, News4Jax learned JEA anticipates spending more than \$1.6 billion to get water to those customers. The head of the JEA board, John Baker says figuring out how to pay for that is the utility's next critical issue.

The costs could be passed on to developers, which in turn could pass it on to new homeowners.

"It is a standard utility policy to try and recapture your cost. It is also going to be a big increase [in rates] if we do it, so it's going to have to be something we are going to have to look at very carefully, very thoughtfully to make sure we are helping the community not hurting the community," Baker said...

Besides at \$1.6 billion to get water to homes, JEA also has to talk about getting rid of the wastewater that would come from it.

There's legislation being considered by the state that would no longer allow the city-owned utility to dump treated water into the river. That's going to be another cost the JEA board will

have to consider.

“We have to see how that plays out and that would be a big number for JEA because we do discharge in the river,” Baker said.

If those new restrictions become law it could mean big changes in where that wastewater would end up.

That could mean more sewage water for yard irrigation or it could be injected back into the aquifer where it could eventually become drinking water.

No word yet on how this could impact JEA bills but it’s the discussion the board will be having in the coming months.

Also at the meeting Tuesday, it was revealed there could be a new senior management team in place in six months.

JEA fired most of the management team following a turbulent year in which there was an attempt to sell JEA.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



### **Jim Piggott**

Jim Piggott is the reporter to count on when it comes to city government and how it will affect the community.

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