

PEI

## Charlottetown uses less water than 20 years ago, despite population growth

Low-flow fixture regulations and water conservation have reduced how much is used

[Isabelle Gallant](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 18, 2024 7:16 PM AST | Last Updated: January 18



Though Charlottetown's population has grown, water use has decreased. (Elena Elisseeva / Shutterstock)

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Despite the growth of its population, Charlottetown's water consumption has decreased over the past 20 years, says the manager of the city's water and sewer utility.

That's thanks to water conservation efforts as well as provincial legislation around low-flow water fixtures, Richard MacEwen said in an interview.

"We've really emphasized the importance of water conservation, and the residents and businesses within the City of Charlottetown have embraced that concept."

Charlottetown's population increased by 7.5 per cent between 2016 and 2021, according to census figures.



In this 2022 water conservation presentation, students were able to see the difference in water use between a high-flow toilet and a low-flow toilet. (Shane Hennessey/CBC)

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Right now, the city uses under 6 million cubic metres of water per year, down from 7.2 million cubic metres in its peak year, 2008.

In 2015, Charlottetown brought in a new residential water meter program to encourage a reduction in water use.

Around the same time, the provincial government introduced new regulations around low-flow toilets, faucets, and showerheads.

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That all helped reduce water consumption, said MacEwen, and that trend will continue as older fixtures get replaced.

"There's still an opportunity for more conservation and less water being used," he said.

## **'Always looking to the future'**

The city is looking to the future, said MacEwen, including updating aging infrastructure.



The city is focused on upgrading its aging water infrastructure, says Richard MacEwen, the manager of Charlottetown's water and sewer utility. (Steve Bruce/CBC)

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"Our main challenge now is the fact that we have infrastructure in the ground that is 100 years old," he said. "We have older lines in the ground and we need to look at doing upgrades to those lines."

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The city is using only 60 per cent of its water supply right now, but MacEwen said developing a new municipal well field is still on his mind.

"We're always looking to the future. We'll be looking for where that next well field will be," he said.

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*With files from Laurent Rigaux*