We are working hard to continue providing high-quality water for you. The City of Ferndale is nearing completion of the nanofiltration water softening system installation. We expect to begin producing softened water by the end of September.

What to expect with the change in water treatment:

- Tap water will taste different. The softened water will contain less minerals, less salt, and less disinfection byproducts, each of which can affect water taste.

- The white particles that may currently be present in fixtures (from hard water scale) should disappear over time. However, the amount of these white particles could increase temporarily due to the change in water characteristics.

- Home water softeners will require less frequent regeneration.

- Those who use water in aquariums, spas, and pools should expect a decrease in pH and alkalinity.

- Home water filters should be unaffected.

- Over the past 2-1/2 years, hard water scale has been slowly accumulating in city water mains, household piping and hot water heaters. With the conversion to softer water, there will be a change in the “chemistry” of the drinking water – hard water scale will no longer accumulate in piping. For all cold water piping, the hardness scale will slowly dissolve away over time. During this process of dissolving away the hardness scale, rust or other substances could also come loose from pipe walls.

Why is this project needed?

City drinking water is hard (average of 170 mg/L). It used to only be slightly hard (about 70 mg/L). The water softening system will bring the level of hardness back to being only slightly hard and will also reduce the concentration of dissolved solids (i.e., minerals).

Water mains that are made of iron could release iron for a period of time after the switch to softened water. This could color tap water shades of brown, red, orange or yellow.

Particles of rust could also appear in tap water.

If your household tap water had any iron color prior to 2012, you may see a return of this iron color.

If water discoloration does occur and it occurs at all water faucets on your property, the cause is probably the main water supply. If it occurs only in certain faucets or if the discoloration goes away after running the water for a few minutes, the problem is probably somewhere in your household plumbing system.

For more information, visit www.cityofferndale.org/safecleanwater.php.

¹ A small rate of scale deposition could still occur in very hot water such as on-demand hot water heaters.