

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Water

CBQ NO.: 196

REQUESTED BY: Alter (D5)

DATE REQUESTED: 08/02/2023

DATE POSTED: 08/10/2023

REQUEST: Please describe what investments are proposed in this budget to achieve the Water Forward Plan?

RESPONSE:

Water Forward is Austin's 100-year integrated water resource plan. The Water Forward Plan was approved by the Austin City Council in November 2018 and is now in the implementation stage. The plan was developed by Austin Water, working closely with the Council-appointed Water Forward Task Force, to adapt to growth, drought, and climate change and ensure a sustainable, resilient, equitable, and affordable water future for our community for the next 100 years. As part of the plan's adaptive management approach, Austin Water (AW) is currently updating the plan. The updated plan will include refreshed demand, climate, and other projections to prepare for a range of possible futures.

Water Forward provides a road map of conservation, reuse, and water supply strategies to ensure a diversified, sustainable, and resilient water future. Implementation of Water Forward is focused on requirements for new development to incorporate conservation and reuse strategies, incentives for existing development to implement conservation and reuse enhancements, replacement of all analog meters throughout the City with digital meters, utility-side water loss control, and water supply projects to help augment Austin's access to water during droughts.

Following is a list of AW Water Forward Plan initiatives:

Water Forward 2024 (WF 2024)

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$560,000 for personnel costs supporting Water Forward planning efforts, \$250,000 for Water Forward 2024 (WF 2024) professional services contract and Climate and Hydrology Analyses. In addition, the proposed 5-year capital spending plan for FY 2024-2028 includes \$800,000 to refresh and update the Water Forward plan.

My ATX Water

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$2.3 million for personnel costs and \$1.5 million of contractual and commodity costs related to AW's city-wide smart water meter program. In addition, Austin Water's proposed 5-year capital spending plan for FY 2024-2028 includes \$39.3 million to implement the My ATX Water Program.

For more information on My ATX Water, refer to FY2024 CBQ NO 015.

Water Conservation

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$2.6M for personnel and \$2.3M for various incentive and programmatic costs related to the Water Conservation Division within the utility. These costs do not include incremental costs for specific water conservation initiatives described below.

Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget includes \$360,000 for three Environmental Compliance Specialist Sr. positions, including 2 new FY2024 FTEs for implementation of Water Forward Landscape Transformation strategy (irrigation inspections).

Onsite Water Reuse

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$517,000 for special incentive and grant pilot programs funding for a variety of water conservation measures including innovative technologies such as the installation of alternative on-site water use systems in large new commercial and multifamily development.

Reclaimed Water Services

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$800,000 for Reclaimed Water Services, while the proposed 5-year capital spending plan for FY 2024-2028 includes \$39.6 million to expand Austin's reclaimed water infrastructure.

For more information on Reclaimed Water Services, refer to FY2024 CBQ NO 136.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

Austin Water's proposed capital spending plan for FY 2024-2028 includes \$88.6 million of funding over the 5-year period to inject and store potable water from AW's distribution system into an aquifer for later recovery during droughts. Austin Water is in the early desktop analysis phase of developing an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Pilot to test technical assumptions and get detailed data before beginning any work on a full-scale ASR project; this phase includes a detailed study to identify possible locations by the end of 2023. Once a proposed location for the pilot is identified, AW plans to begin field testing in 2024 and construction in 2025. Upon successful completion of the pilot project, AW would begin design and construction of a full-scale ASR facility to extend the City's water supplies during drought and climate change as soon as 2040, as described in the Water Forward Plan.

Indirect Potable Reuse

Austin Water's proposed 5-year capital spending plan for FY 2024-2028 includes \$1.3 million to support the Indirect Potable Reuse strategy outlined in the Water Forward plan.

Water Loss

Austin Water's proposed Operating Budget for FY 2024 includes \$11.0 million for the following water pipeline operating and maintenance activities:

- \$7.8M for leak repairs and preventive maintenance
- \$1.0M for large diameter leak detection and condition assessments
- \$2.0M for in-house leak detection crews
- \$140K for small diameter leak detection and condition assessments

AW's proposed budget for FY 2024 includes \$67.1 million in capital funding to support leak prevention and detection efforts, which include pipeline maintenance, repairs, and replacement. Additional funding of \$134.9 is included in years FY 2025-FY 2028 of the capital plan for the replacement of our most deteriorated water pipes.

For more information on Water Loss, refer to FY2024 CBQ NO 197.