

July 20, 2010

Draft Summary to Council:

As requested the Resource Management Commission (RMC) has reviewed the recommendations from the 2007 Water Conservation Task Force (WCTF) with the staff at the Austin Water Utility (AWU) and is providing you with the attached report which includes the activities completed, the savings achieved in the first two years, and the continuing efforts or recommendations for further action.

The AWU reports unanticipated success from the change in the watering schedule, which created a significant reduction in both peak use and overall consumption. The citizens must be commended for their response and cooperation in this significant effort. We also find that the overall savings that have been achieved to date are in line with the goals, and that these savings will continue in future years due to the permanent changes adopted by City Ordinance.

The RMC recommends that the AWU staff develop a plan to address further conservation potential that can be achieved within the various City departments. The City has long been recognized as one that 'leads by example' when it comes to sustainability and resource conservation. As the largest single customer to the water utility, particular emphasis must be focused on our internal practices and services.

The RMC recommends that the AWU continue to provide the Council and the appropriate Boards and Commissions with measurable results of their efforts, programs and outreach. These metrics would be part of the annual review of the Conservation Plan, which would also include the overall progress toward our long-term goal. This annual review will create an opportunity to assess the progress, adjust current programs, or develop new ones as needed to continue to encourage the citizens to participate in meeting the recently recommended long-term goal of reducing total per capita potable water production to 140 gallons per capita/per day (gpcd) by 2020 as measured by water diverted from the source prior to treatment divided by the total population served.

The RMC recommends that the AWU move toward proactive marketing and promotion of conservation and its various programs and incentives. We are specifically interested in the development of customer targeted outreach, rather than passive offerings. We encourage the staff to make use of available educational resources which are readily available, to expand their educational efforts with curriculum support materials for K-12 teachers to make water conservation a permanent component of every classroom.

The RMC recommends that the AWU staff consider any of the recommendations previously made, along with those proposed by the Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force in their final report to the Council in April 2010, in formulating their Conservation Plan. With the appropriate evaluation of cost effectiveness and potential for savings, these recommendations will be prioritized to achieve maximum water conservation by all customer classes. We look forward to reviewing the 2010 plan for water conservation and will continue to evaluate their effectiveness on an annual basis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Herbert, Chair  
Resource Management Commission