

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council		Item ID	37485	Agenda Number	8.
Meeting Date:	11/20/2014		Department:	Austin Water Utility	
Subject					
Approve an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 15-1 and Chapter 25-12, Article 6 relating to requirements for auxiliary water systems using sources such as rainwater, gray water, and reclaimed water.					
Amount and Source of Funding					
Fiscal Note					
There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.					
Purchasing Language:					
Prior Council Action:	September 27, 2012 – to authorize award, negotiation and execution of a contract with CDM Smith to analyze and assess various City Codes related to auxiliary waters.				
For More Information:	Dan Pedersen, 972-0074; Daryl Slusher, 972-0218; Denise Avery, 972-0104				
Boards and Commission Action:	August 13, 2014 - Reviewed by the Water and Wastewater Commission. August 19, 2014 - Reviewed by the Resource Management Commission. August 26, 2014 - Reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board. September 17, 2014 - Reviewed by the Environmental Board. November 13, 2014 - Recommended by the Mechanical, Plumbing and Solar Board on a vote of 5-0-0-2 with Board members Dawson and Combs absent.				
MBE / WBE:					
Related Items:					

Additional Backup Information

The City of Austin is in a semi-arid area with limited water resources. Austin Water, the City's municipally-owned water utility has strong water protection, water conservation, and reclaimed water programs. However, currently required cross-connection protections add to project cost for reclaimed water, gray water, rainwater and other auxiliary water systems, and may in some cases deter potential auxiliary water uses. At the same time, there is a limited understanding among the public about cross-connection hazards, installation requirements and long-term maintenance responsibilities. As a result, the City hired a consultant to comprehensively analyze and assess the various regulations governing auxiliary water use and to recommend revisions that will promote auxiliary water use while assuring public health protection through the drinking water system.

After reviewing the consultant's report, Utility staff is recommending changes to the applicable regulations that would reduce regulatory limitations on small and moderate-sized auxiliary water systems, and potential reclaimed water customers. If approved, the proposed ordinance would codify these recommended changes in the applicable provisions of the City Code: Chapter 15-1 (Cross-Connection Regulations) and Article 6 of Chapter 25-12 (Plumbing Code). A summary of the proposed code changes is attached.

Five boards and commissions have been briefed on the proposed changes: the Water and Wastewater Commission; Environmental Board; Resource Management Commission; Parks and Recreation Board; and Mechanical, Plumbing and Solar Board. As the commission with jurisdiction over the Plumbing Code, the Mechanical Plumbing and Solar Board voted unanimously to recommend adoption of the proposed plumbing code amendments.

When the Mechanical, Plumbing and Solar Board (MPSB) made their recommendation the ordinance they considered

included Table 1602.4 which prescribes minimum distances between gray water systems and various features such as building structures, streams and lakes, and critical environmental features.

Discussions between Austin Water and the Watershed Protection Department, subsequent to the MPSB's action, resulted in staff removing from the table the setbacks from streams and lakes, critical environmental features and bedrock outcrop or recharge features, in order to ensure there is no conflict between the Plumbing Code and the Land Development Code. The rules for these setbacks will be determined as the two departments write the guidance document that will provide information for citizens who are considering installing gray water systems.

The table below reflects these changes and is proposed for Part 16 of attached ordinance.

TABLE 1602.4 LOCATION OF GRAY WATER SYSTEM ⁶		
MINIMUM HORIZONTAL DISTANCE IN CLEAR REQUIRED FROM	SURGE TANK (feet)	SUBSURFACE AND SUBSOIL IRRIGATION FIELD AND MULCH BED (feet)
Building structures ¹	5 ^{2,8}	2 ^{3,7}
Property line adjoining private property	5	5 ⁷
Water supply wells ⁴	50	100
Sewage pits or cesspools	5	5
Sewage disposal field ⁹	5	4 ⁵
Septic tank	0	5
On-site domestic water service line	5	5
Pressurized public water main	10	10
For SI units: 1 foot = 304.8 mm		
Notes:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Including porches and steps, whether covered or uncovered, breezeways, roofed carports, roofed patios, carports, covered walks, covered driveways, and similar structures or appurtenances. The distance shall be permitted to be reduced to 0 feet for aboveground tanks where first approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. Reference to a 45 degree (0.79 rad) angle from foundation. Where special hazards are involved, the distance required shall be increased as directed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. Add 2 feet (610 mm) for each additional foot of depth in excess of 1 foot (305 mm) below the bottom of the drain line. For parallel construction or for crossings, approval by the Authority Having Jurisdiction shall be required. The distance shall be permitted to be reduced to 1 1/2 feet (457 mm) for drip and mulch basin irrigation systems. The distance shall be permitted to be reduced to 0 feet for surge tanks of 75 gallons (284 L) or less. Where irrigation or disposal fields are installed in sloping ground, the minimum horizontal distance between a part of the distribution system and the ground surface shall be 15 feet (4572 mm). 		

Also subsequent to the MPSB's action, staff determined that the language in the Plumbing Code prohibiting gray water over the Barton Springs Zone and northern Edwards Aquifer could be made clearer. Therefore, the following change is proposed for Part 17 of the ordinance.

Section 1602.6 Prohibited Location. Where there is insufficient lot area or inappropriate soil conditions for adequate absorption to prevent the ponding, surfacing, or runoff of the gray water as determined by the Authority Having Jurisdiction, no gray water shall be permitted. A gray water system is not permitted ~~on the land located over an outcrop of the Edwards or Georgetown limestone~~ Barton Springs Zone and in the northern Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zone or in any other geological sensitive area as determined by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.