



# Water Conservation Update

Resource Management Commission

Kevin Kluge | May 17, 2022

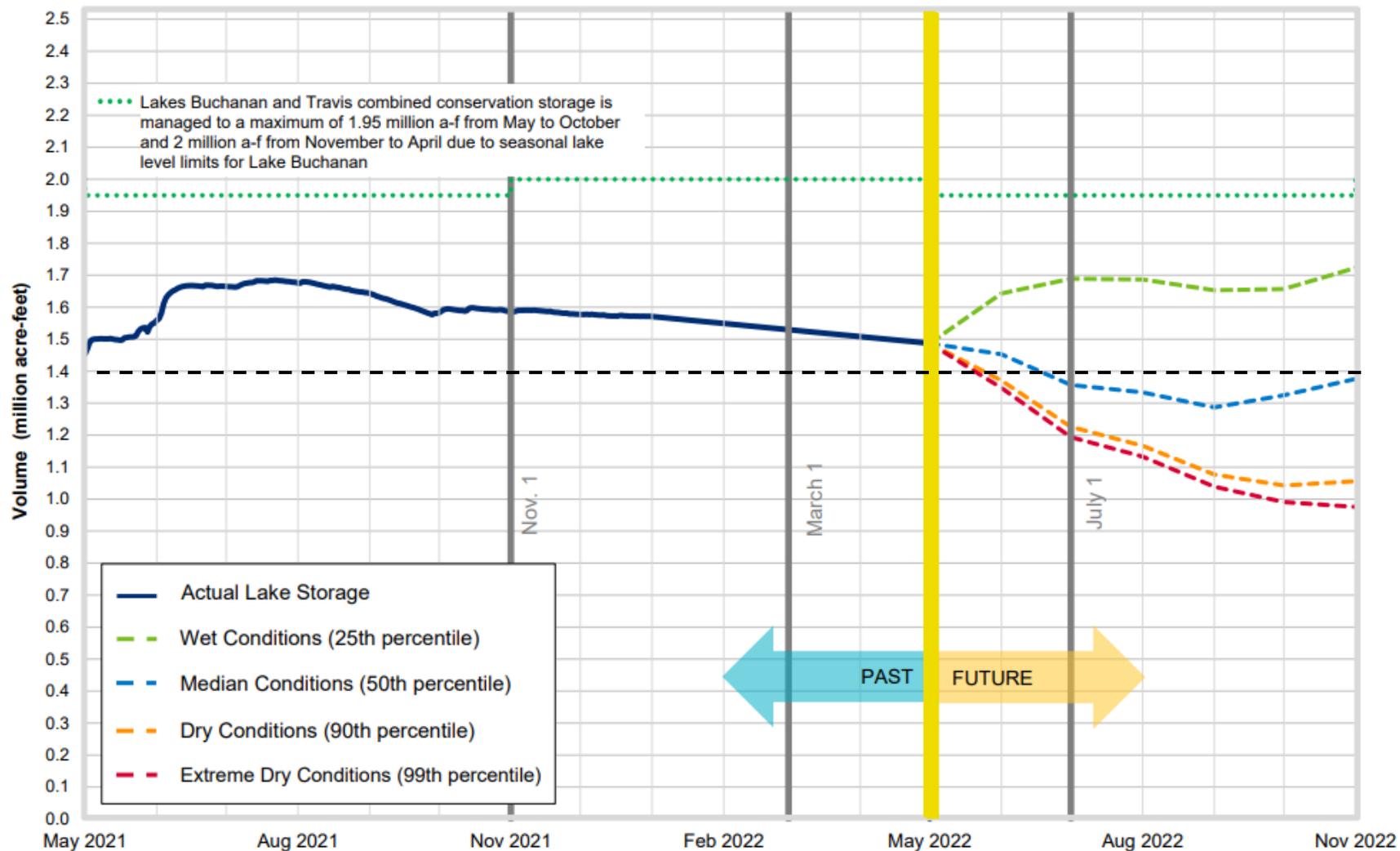


# Agenda

- Water Supply Outlook
- Conservation Penalties
- Water Forward Plan - Landscape Transformation Ordinance
  - Timeline
  - Feedback received



# Lakes Buchanan and Travis Total Combined Storage Projections



## Drought Stage Triggers:

**Stage 1:** 1.4 Million Acre Feet (MAF)

**Stage 2:** 0.9 MAF

**Stage 3:** 0.6 MAF

Date: May 1, 2022

Note: One acre-foot equals 325,851 gallons

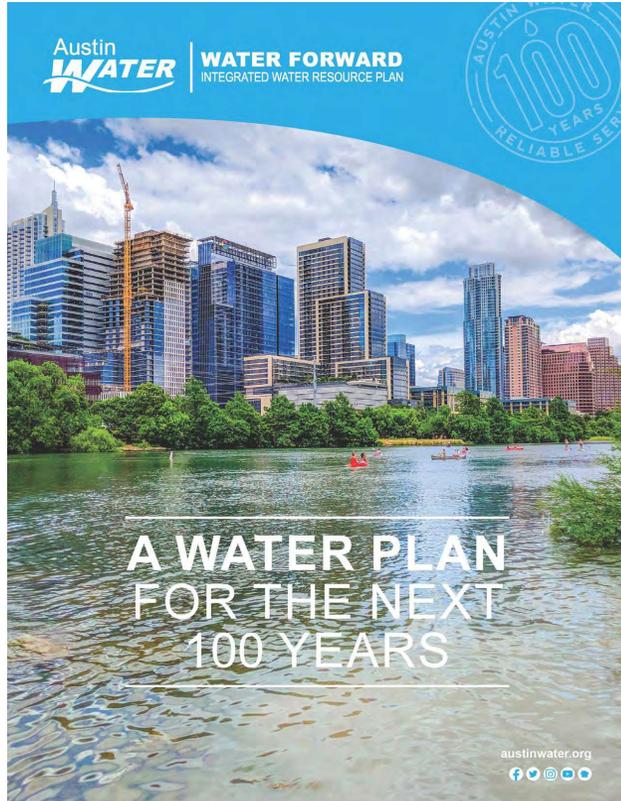


# Conservation Penalties

- Approvals
  - Water & Wastewater Commission – April 13
  - City Council – May 5
- Public information regarding enforcement
- Process development
  - Rule regarding admission of liability
  - Hearings
  - Invoicing



# Water Forward Plan



- 2014 – Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community (Water Forward) Task Force
- 2018 - City Council approved Water Forward Plan
- 2021 - Council asked Austin Water to accelerate the Landscape Transformation Ordinance strategy

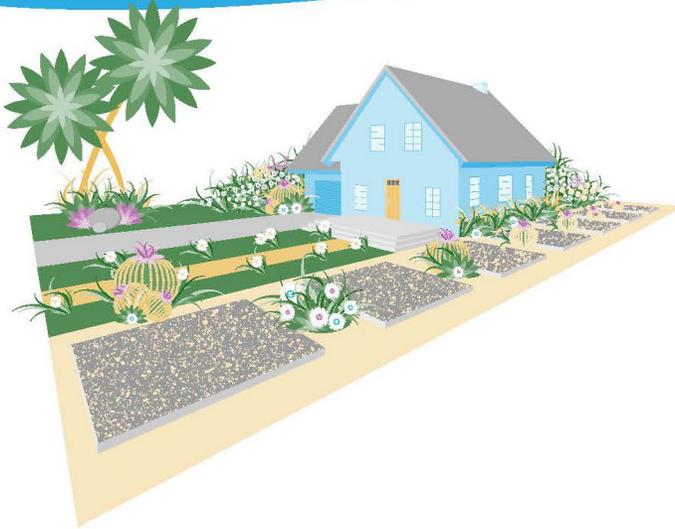


# Landscape Transformation Ordinance Strategy

## Landscape Transformation Incentives or Ordinances

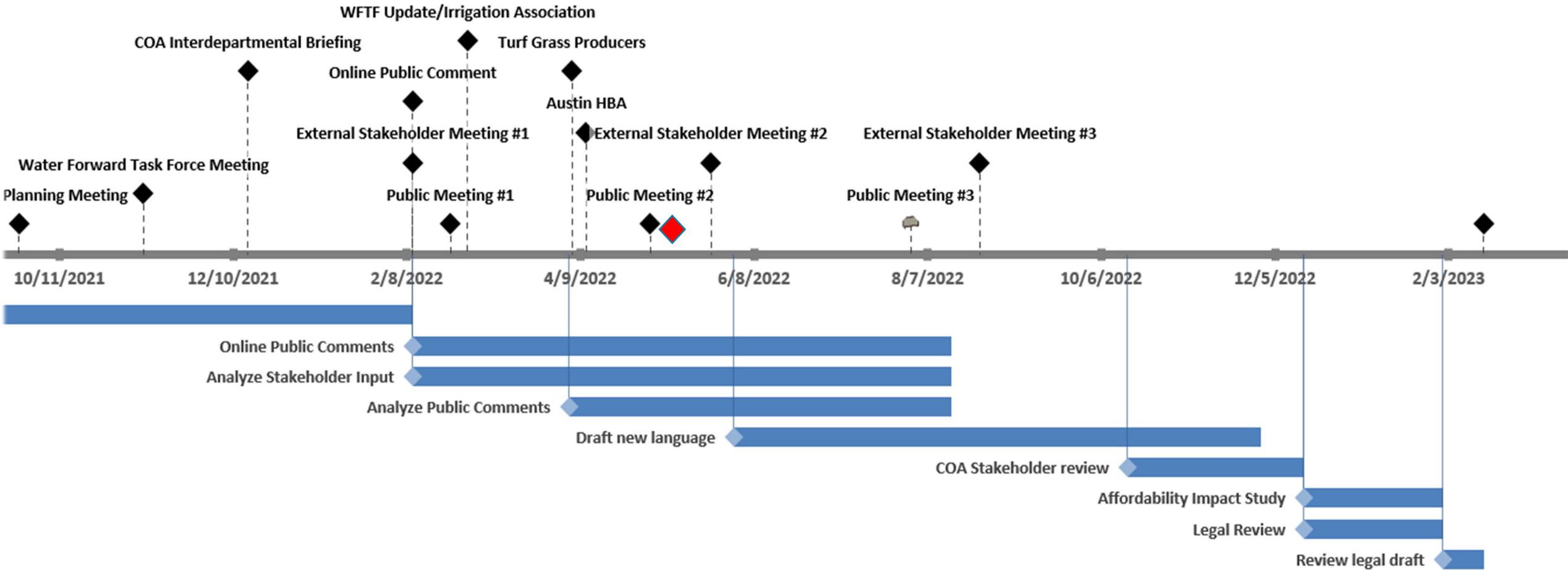
Landscape transformation to regionally-appropriate landscapes can reduce water needs for outdoor irrigation and provide additional benefits.

The Water Forward recommendations are to implement incentives and ordinances to encourage water use efficiencies and reduce water needs for outdoor irrigation. Implementation of an ordinance option could include implementing limitations on turf grass area, and/or irrigation area.



- 💧 Transition new homes to water-efficient landscaping
- 💧 Could include limitations of "lawn" grass and/or irrigation area
- 💧 More detailed ordinance ideas/language to be created with public input

# Expected Near-Term Timeline



# The Ordinance on SpeakUp Austin

- **A platform for online public input**
  - Comments
  - Free form input
  - Future meeting dates
  - **Survey**



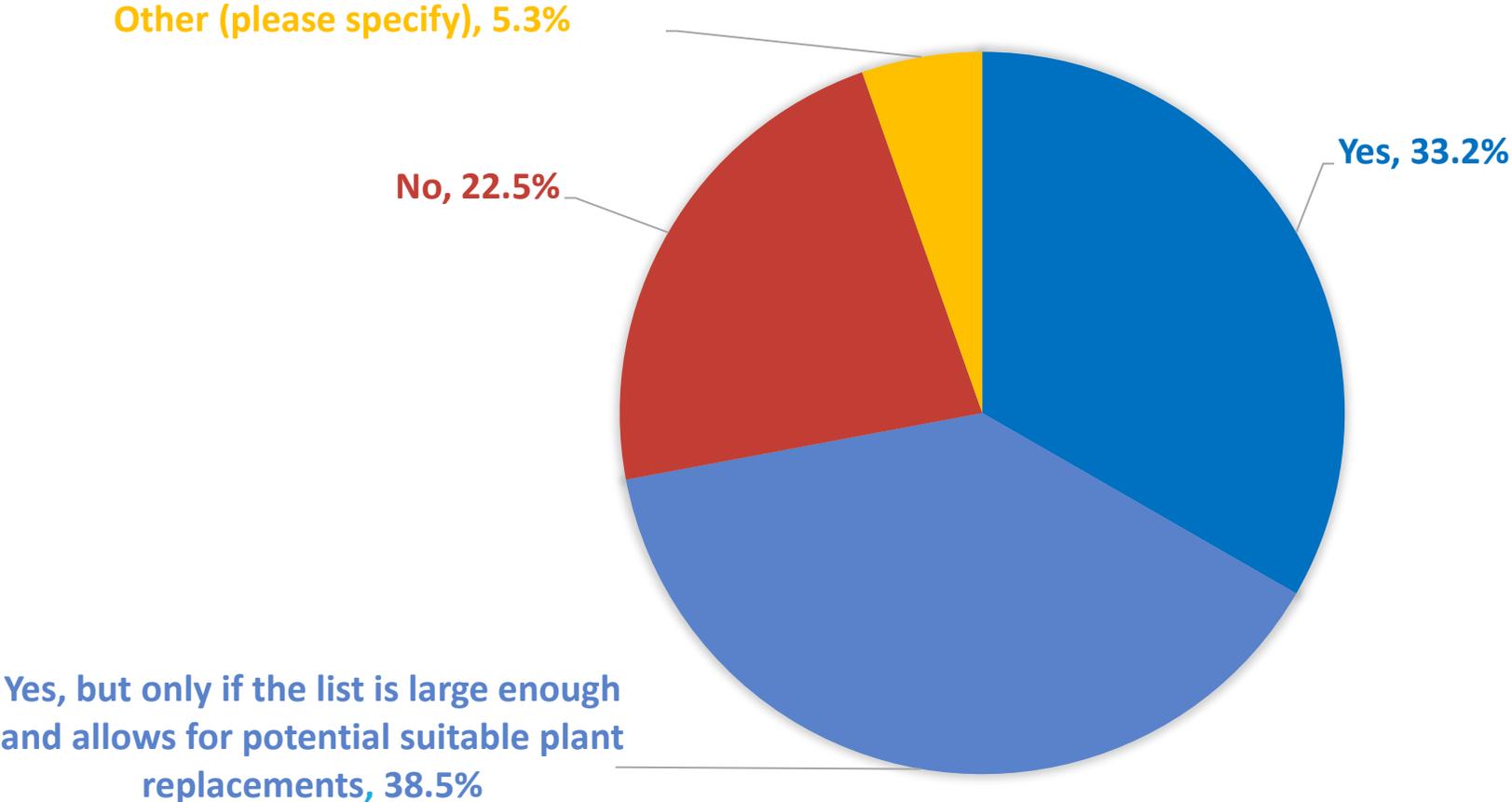
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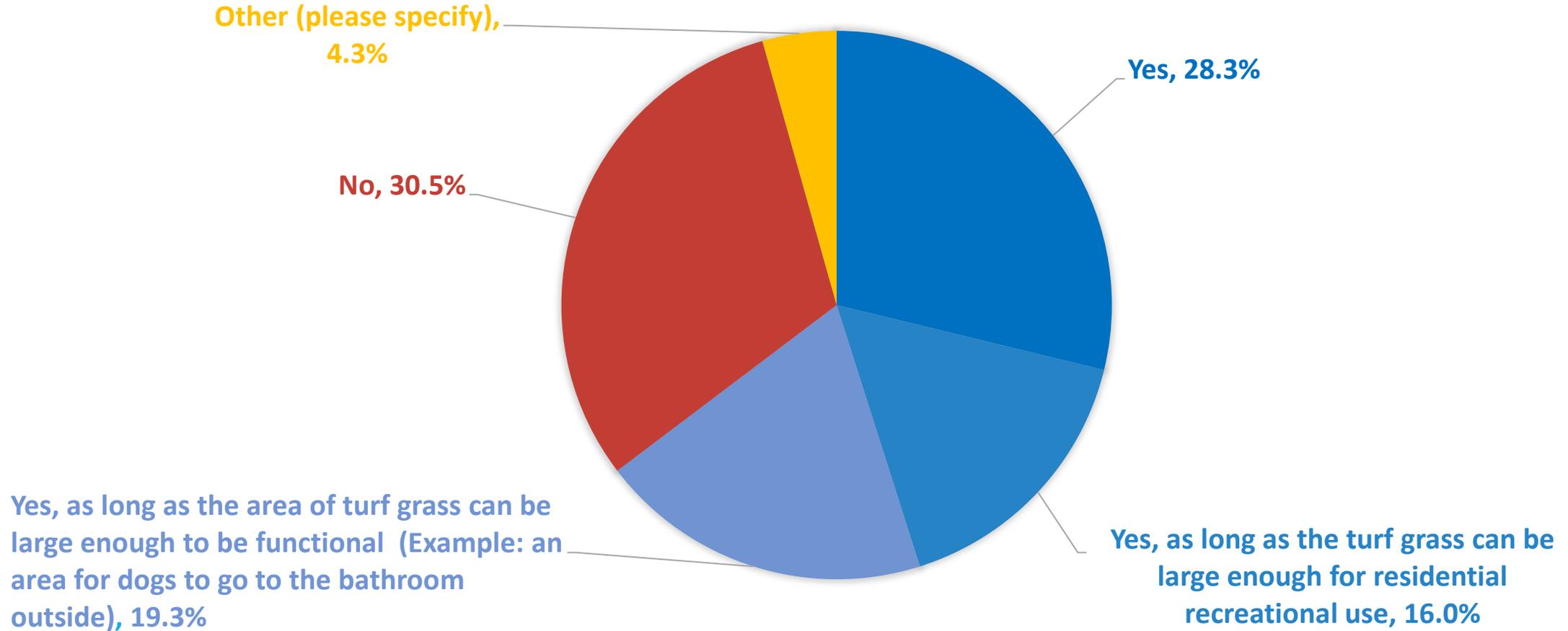
# Survey Q2:

## SHOULD THERE BE A CITY OF AUSTIN LIST OF ALLOWED NATIVE OR ADAPTED PLANTS AND GRASSES FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES?

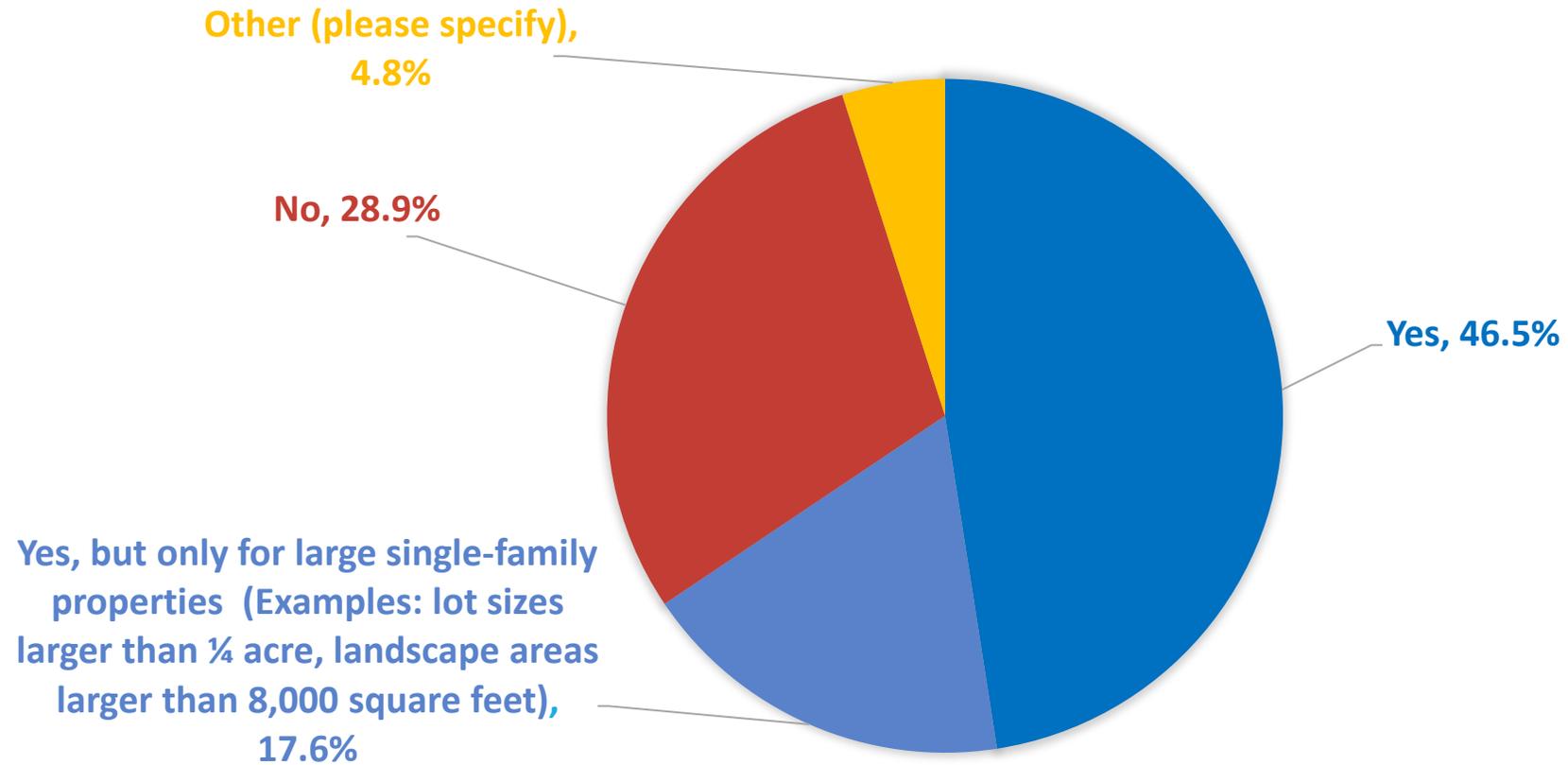


# Survey: Q3

## SHOULD THE AREA OF TURF GRASS (LAWN GRASS) BE LIMITED FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES?

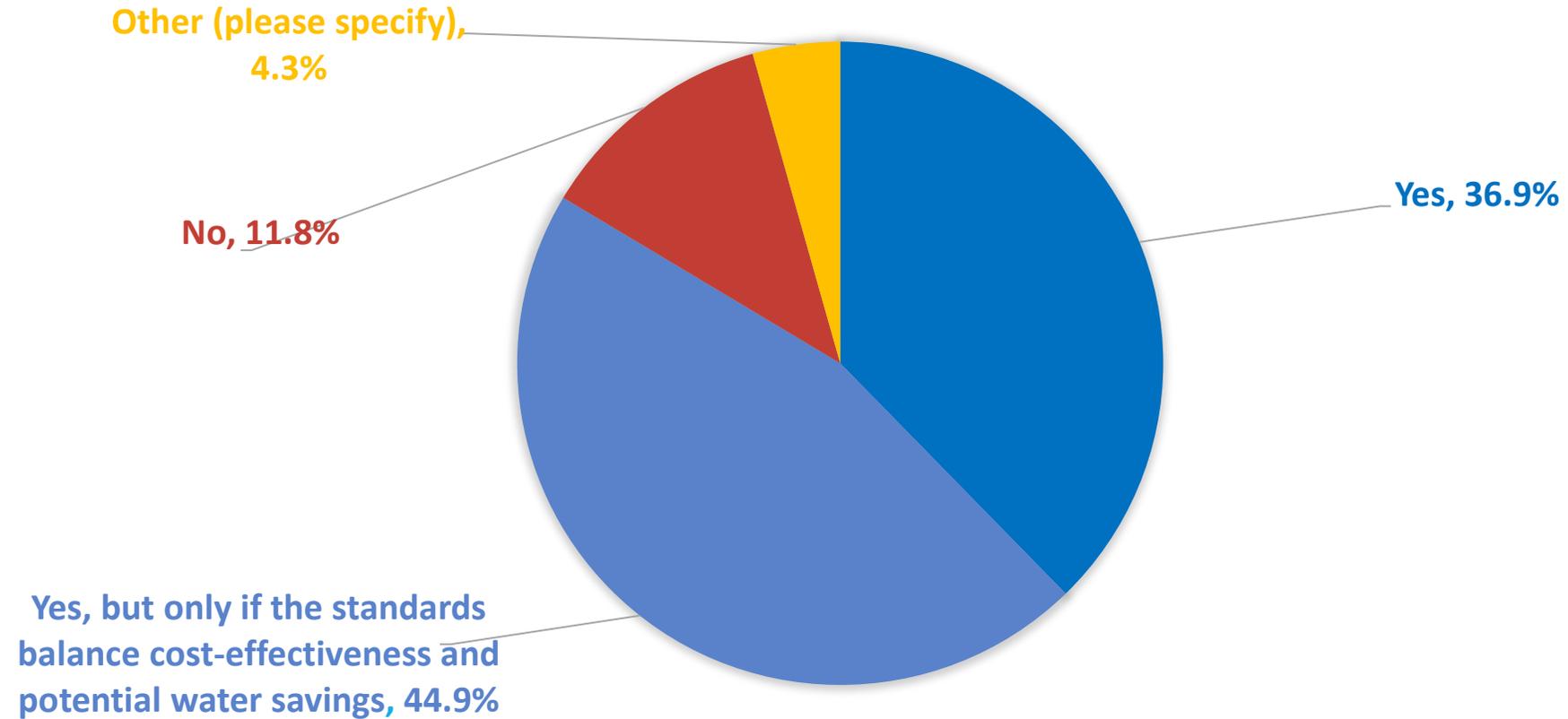


## SHOULD THE SIZE OF THE NEW AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEMS BE LIMITED FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, WITH SIZE LIMITATIONS BASED ON THE SIZE OF THE PROPERTY?



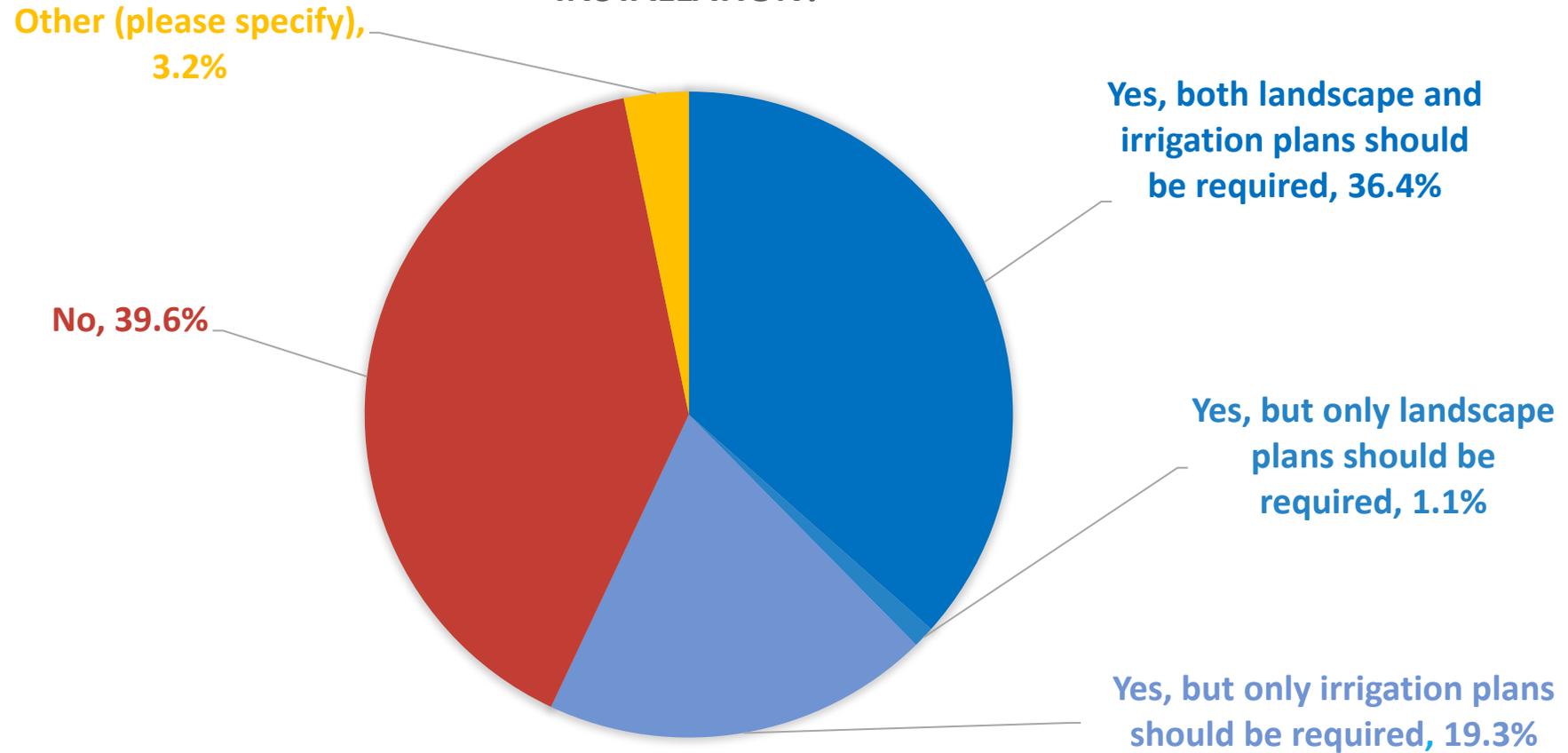
# Survey: Q5

**IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING STANDARDS FOR INSTALLATION OF NEW IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, SHOULD MORE STANDARDS BE IDENTIFIED FOR NEW IRRIGATION SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY?**



# Survey: Q6

## SHOULD NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT LANDSCAPE AND/OR IRRIGATION PLANS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL PRIOR TO THEIR INSTALLATION?



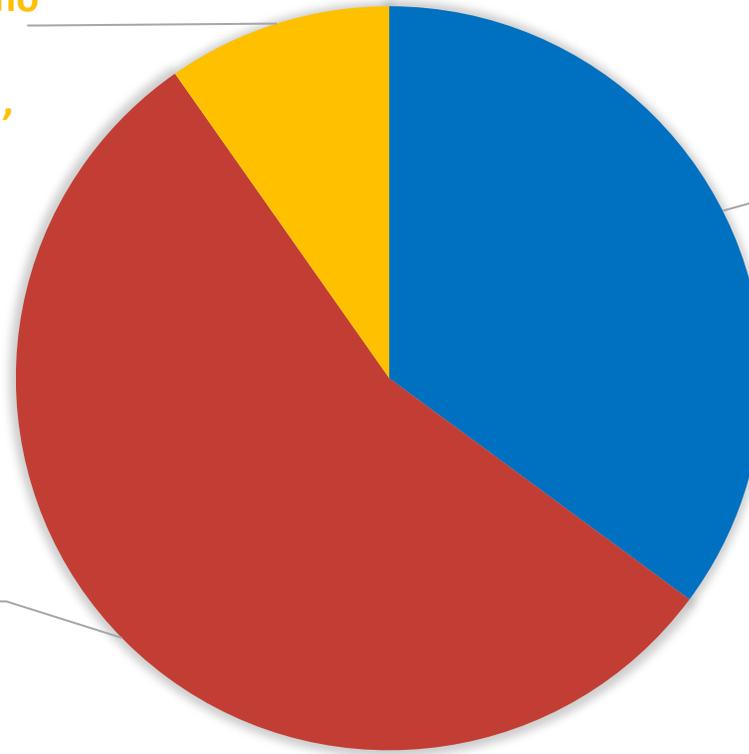
# Survey: Q7

OF THE FOLLOWING, WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OPINION ON LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION STANDARDS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES REGARDING AFFORDABILITY:

Affordability is more important, and no new conservation standards that increase costs should be considered, 9.6%

Protecting our water supply is more important and we need new conservation standards regardless of affordability, 34.8%

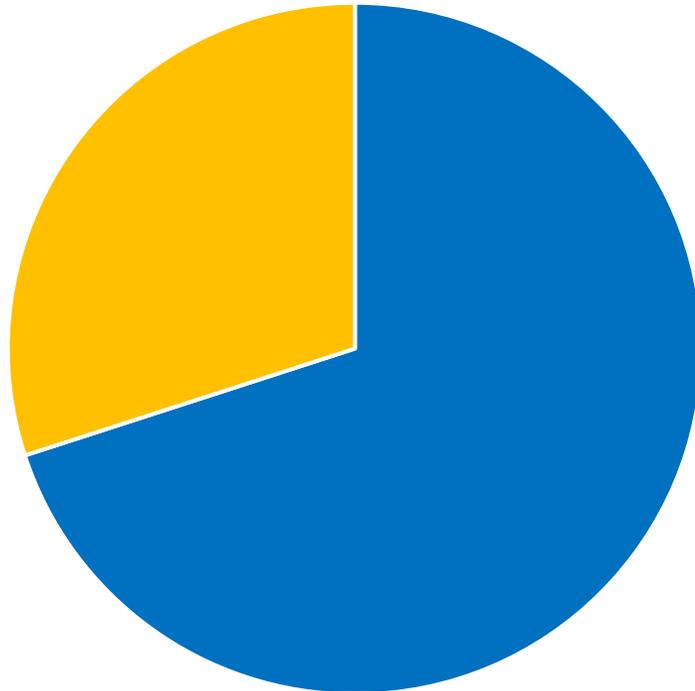
Both protecting our water supply and affordability are key issues; only conservation standards with minimal impact on affordability should be considered, 54.5%



# Survey: Q8

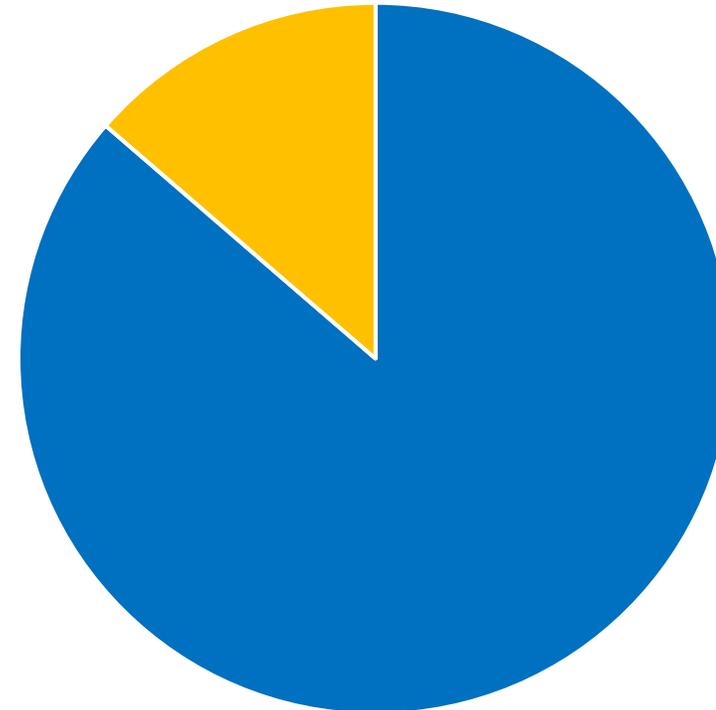
**IN YOUR OWN WORDS, PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY LANDSCAPE AND/OR IRRIGATION REGULATIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.**

Irrigation Regulations



■ More Restrictive   ■ Less Restrictive

Landscape Regulations



■ More Restrictive   ■ Less Restrictive

# How You Can Get Involved

- ◆ Learn More about the Irrigation & Landscape Ordinance by visiting the SpeakUp Austin page at [bit.ly/LandscapeOrdinance](https://bit.ly/LandscapeOrdinance)
- ◆ Take the survey
- ◆ Ask Questions and get answers from our staff



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# Internal (City of Austin) Stakeholders



- Development Services Department (DSD)
  - **Plan review**
  - **Inspections**
    - **Environmental**
    - **Building**
- Watershed Protection Department (WPD)
- Austin Energy (AE) – Green Building
- Sustainability Office
- Equity Office
- Planning and Housing Department
- Wildlife Austin (PARD)



# External Stakeholders include:



- Home Builders Association of Greater Austin
- Irrigation professionals
- Texas Nursery and Landscape Association
- Turfgrass Producers of Texas

# External Stakeholder Feedback:

## Home Builders Association of Greater Austin



- Want to see water savings numbers
  - estimates & examples from other cities.
- Include incentives for homebuilders
  - like an impervious cover credit
- Concern about project delays with extra inspections and/or plan reviews

# External Stakeholder Feedback: Irrigation Professionals



- ◆ Increased enforcement of non-permitted irrigation systems and non-licensed irrigation installers
- ◆ Separate irrigation meters for large estates
- ◆ Support high-efficiency irrigation system components
- ◆ Design for a certain water budget when installing

# External Stakeholder Feedback: Turfgrass Producers of Texas



- Do not want us to exclude any type of turf grass
- High carbon sequestration rate
- Acknowledgement of shade tolerance when trees are mature
- Delayed implementation
  - Give time for growers to grow
  - Promote grasses within the home building community

# Examples From Other Texas Cities

## City of Frisco, Texas

- Plan review on all irrigation systems
  - Done online
  - Check hydraulics
- Post installation inspections
  - 2,500 a year – 4 inspectors
  - 30% fail rate
- Recommend we start with what we can enforce
- Homeowners get a free irrigation check within 45 days of installation



## City of New Braunfels, TX

- One model home per subdivision must not exceed 50% "lawn" grass
- Separate irrigation meters for irrigation systems



# Input from February Meetings



- Public Meeting input included:
  - Concerns about erosion control
  - Concerns about increased gravel use when limiting “lawn” grass
  - No grass planted in the summer
  - More water saving data
- External Stakeholder Meeting input included:
  - Educate homeowners
  - Affordability of plant beds vs “lawn” grass
  - Increased incentives

# Irrigation Options Moving Forward



- ◆ Enhanced post-installation inspection (City of Frisco )
- ◆ Require specific irrigation components
- ◆ Homeowner education
- ◆ Pressure reduction devices
- ◆ Limited irrigation area
- ◆ Irrigation plan review (City of Frisco)

# Landscape Options Moving Forward



- ◆ Require a landscape plan to be submitted with the building plans
- ◆ One model home per subdivision must not exceed 50% "lawn" grass (New Braunfels)
- ◆ Limit "lawn" grass area (Austin HBA – 2016)
- ◆ Soil requirements



# QUESTIONS?

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