Water Forward 2018 FY22 Q3 Implementation Progress Report

Water Forward 2024 (WF24)

The five-year update to the Water Forward 2018 Plan will include updated data, analyses, and community engagement activities. The final plan will include an updated 50-year portfolio of water management strategies and a 100-year adaptive management plan.

Actual vs. planned progress

Delayed; Development of population and demand projections and other plan components will take more time than previously planned. The revised WF24 schedule targets plan completion by mid-2024.

FY22 Q3 Stats

2 - # of community engagement events
25 - # of meeting attendees

FY22 Q3 Progress

Held two virtual public workshops to gather input on guiding principles and community values and launched SpeakUp Austin page. Substantially completed modeling scenarios and hydrologic models for development of climate change-adjusted streamflow series.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

Hold staff, Task Force, and Community Advisory Group equity trainings/groundings. Develop monthly streamflow timeseries for use in the Water Availability Model. Continue coordination with other City departments on climate change analysis takeaways.

Future Implementation Steps

FY22: Begin community engagement, update methodology, demands, climate & hydrology analysis.
FY23: Identify water needs, strategies, develop portfolios.

2040: 3,880 Acre Feet/Year

My ATX Water

This program will replace more than 250,000 analog water meters with digitally read water meters connected to a wireless network. The My ATX Water program also includes a brand-new customer portal that provides up-to-date water usage metrics, leak alerts, emergency alerts, water conservation tips, and many other customizable features.

Actual vs. planned progress

Delayed but catching up. Aclara had difficulties hiring and retaining meter installers at the beginning of the project. Various supply chain issues, city-wide freezes, boil water notices, and other issues also diminished their numbers, but they have increased productivity and are closing in on their target numbers.

FY22 Q3 Stats

~55,000 - # of meters installed
~16,200 - # of customer portal registrations
~30% - Avg. customer portal registration rate
~26,300 - # of continuous usage alerts

FY22 Q3 Progress

My ATX Water contracted vendor, Aclara, performed pre-install field surveys and continued meter installations around Austin, bringing the total number of installs to ~55,000. The My ATX Water customer portal has over 16,000 registered, engaged users and continues to grow.
A marketing campaign for portal sign ups has started and continues through the summer.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

Meter surveys and installs continue around Austin, increasing in frequency as more installers are hired. Innovative marketing campaigns will continue to focus on conservation and increasing portal sign ups.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23: Installation of 250,000 meters will continue.
FY25: Anticipated project completion.

2040: 3,040 Acre Feet/Year

Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance

AW will create an Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance for new single-family residences that will set requirements for conserving water in irrigation systems and landscapes.

Actual vs. planned progress

On Schedule

FY22 Q3 Stats

9 - # of community engagement events
114 - # of meeting attendees
81 - # of survey responses

FY22 Q3 Progress

AW staff held a second set of stakeholder meetings on May 3rd and 5th for the general public and June 21st and 23rd for stakeholders affected by this ordinance. The meetings presented responses from the online survey, feedback from stakeholder discussions, and activities by other utilities. Potential activities were presented with water saving estimates. The Speak Up Austin online survey was closed on June 30th.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

Development of staff-recommended activities and associated savings and costs. Recommendations will be presented to Austin Water leadership, COA stakeholders, Water Forward Task Force, City commissions, and the public. A draft ordinance will be created after feedback from these groups.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23: Address feedback on draft ordinances and incentives, develop affordability impact assessment, go through legal review, re-draft ordinance and incentives, and seek Council adoption.

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OWRS, Benchmarking and Reclaimed Code Changes

This suite of code changes includes requirements that site plan submittals include water benchmarking applications, extends the current reclaimed connection requirements, and requires that new developments ≥250,000 square feet install onsite water reuse systems.

Actual vs. planned progress
On Schedule

FY22 Q3 Stats
N/A

FY22 Q3 Progress
Worked with internal City of Austin stakeholders to ensure implementation of mandatory program is smooth across departments (working with Watershed Protection to develop dual crediting policies, developing billing and metering approach, working with Law on ordinance language). Continued work to get OWRS permitting integrated into AMANDA (the City's permitting system).

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities
Continue work from FY22 Q3.

Future Implementation Steps
Work towards Council adoption of Mandatory OWRS ordinance in December 2023. Plan for external stakeholder engagement. Update OWRS guidance materials to reflect mandatory program requirements.

2040: 5,480 Acre Feet/Year

Onsite Water Reuse Systems (OWRS)

In December 2020, the City of Austin adopted the Onsite Water Reuse Systems Ordinance to regulate the collection, treatment, and use of alternative water sources for non-potable uses in multi-family and commercial buildings. AW's new OWRS team implements these requirements and assists the development community with the benchmarking and OWRS application processes.

Actual vs. planned progress
On Schedule

FY22 Q3 Stats
59 - # of benchmarking applications received (this quarter)
14 - # of benchmarking applications received for developments >250,000 Square Feet (this quarter)
4 - # of OWRS applications received (FYTD)
2 - # of OWRS incentive applications received (FYTD)

FY22 Q3 Progress
OSCAR and CLARA pilot was commissioned on May 1st and a public event to celebrate the commissioning was held on June 8th. Staff has reviewed OWRS applications that have come in and fielded questions on several potential applications. Staff continues to review water benchmarking applications for all site plans submitted after Dec. 1, 2021 and field questions regarding OWRS applications.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities
Staff is working towards improving the water benchmarking review process for accurate data collection for future budgeting strategies and benefit to the developer in terms of information gained. Staff is continuing to work with OWRS applicants to get their systems permitted and incentive program funds applied.

Future Implementation Steps
Targeting to have pilot incentive funds applied to ~3-4 systems and approve ~5-6 OWRS throughout the voluntary phase. Once systems are approved, will begin to implement inspections and periodic reporting. Developing national OWRS operator certification program.

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2040: 3,560 AF/Year

Decentralized Reclaimed

Decentralized reclaimed is the collection of effluent from the wastewater system in new development areas, treatment to non-drinking water quality at a small wastewater treatment plant, and reuse at the community scale via a decentralized reclaimed water distribution system that would be separate from the centralized reclaimed water system.

Actual vs. planned progress

On Schedule

FY22 Q3 Stats

3 - # of decentralized reclaimed water customers
43.4 - Decentralized reclaimed water use (MG)

FY22 Q3 Progress

AW completed draft Decentralized Reclaimed Area Plans for North and South Fork Basin and Elm Creek Basins. AW has also revised the draft Decentralized Reclaimed Planning Areas map and created process outlines documenting decentralized WWTP conception and approval processes for integration into future planning efforts.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

AW will continue developing infrastructure planning documents related to decentralized reclaimed for small area planning polygons.

Future Implementation Steps

FY22: Staff will continue development of Decentralized Reclaimed planning products and will begin updating analysis in preparation of Water Forward 2024 Plan Update.

2040: 15,480 Acre Feet/Year

Centralized Reclaimed

Austin Water provides highly treated wastewater through the centralized reclaimed water system for non-potable uses such as irrigation, cooling, manufacturing, and toilet flushing. The Water Forward plan includes expansion of the existing reclaimed water system to meet non-potable demands.

Actual vs. planned progress

Delayed; The completion of the Core Loop Mains has been delayed in order to avoid conflicts with Project Connect's Orange Line.

FY22 Q3 Stats

~180 - # of centralized reclaimed water customers
444 - Centralized reclaimed water use in Q3 (MG)
945 - Centralized reclaimed water use YTD (MG)

FY22 Q3 Progress

Design is ongoing for the final Completing the Core mains. Obtained Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Board endorsement for Onion Creek Phase 1 easement acquisition.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

Continue design of the final Completing the Core mains.

Future Implementation Steps

FY22: Start design of SAR and Montopolis Pump Station Upgrades.
FY26: Estimated completion of all Completing the Core mains in FY26.

2040: 60,000 Acre Feet/Year

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is a water supply strategy to store available water in a natural aquifer during wet times for later recovery and use. An ASR project will make Austin's water supply more resilient to the effects of climate change and drought and could provide a second source of water during emergencies, like freeze events or flooding.

Actual vs. planned progress

On Schedule

FY22 Q3 Stats

4 - # of community engagement events
<23 - # of meeting attendees

FY22 Q3 Progress

Continued detailed storage zone analysis, development of an equity and affordability evaluation framework, and ASR modeling to inform project alternatives development. Conducted ASR presentations for several community groups and began outreach to others to try and arrange meetings.

Current/Planned FY22 Q4 Activities

Finalize detailed storage zone analysis and begin developing project alternatives. Continue widespread community engagement efforts and finalize the equity and affordability evaluation framework. Plan dedicated Fall workshops to gather community input on criteria and weightings for project evaluation.

Future Implementation Steps

FY22-23: Initial contract and identify where to pilot.
FY24-27: Design, construct, and test ASR pilot. Develop recommendations for full-scale ASR.
FY28-35: Preliminary engineering, design, construction of full-scale ASR.