

Austin Water Oversight Committee Meeting Transcript

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[1:33:43 PM]

It is 1:33 and I am calling the Austin water oversight committee meeting to order. Thank you so much for joining us. I am joined by councilmember pool as well as mayor pro tem alter who is with us, and myself. First before we get started, I would -- wanted to share a few remarks. We have a lot to cover today on many very important topics, and even though we've had a lot of rain lately in Austin, it's another reminder that with climate change, we can expect periods of heavy drought as well as more frequent heavy rains when it does happen. So, today's topic will include an update on our drought planning efforts as well as our water supply planning efforts, which are very appropriate for

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us. For many austinites, drought remains one of the top weather-related issues. I'm glad we will be able to tackle this. Recently we had a report that showed per the drop monitoring report it showed that even with the rainfall we received last weekend, lake Buchanan and lake Travis are both lower than a week ago and lake Travis is just barely above where it was a week ago. Lcra stated the rain soaked into the ground and never made it to the lake. Lcra expects levels in water supplies, lake Travis, lake Buchanan, to keep going down this summer. Just want to take another moment to acknowledge how vital this committee is to our planning efforts, and look forward to today's presentations. So, first, colleagues, we have approval of minutes from the may 25th committee meeting. Is there a motion?

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Thank you, councilmember pool. Motion to approve minutes seconded by our mayor pro tem. All in favor? That passes unanimously. And with that, I will now turn it over to our Austin water staff for an update on water supply and drought planning efforts. >> Good afternoon, chair Fuentes and councilmembers, my name is Kevin, assistant director for Austin water. As you are aware, summer conditions continue.

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Try that again. Is that better? Maybe if I just -- >> Fuentes: Thank you. We are joined by councilmember kitchen as well. >> All right. Again, good afternoon, Ken with Kevin with Austin water. Drought continues in the central Texas area. This summer we've had a number of days above a hundred° and continuing a lack of rainfall, despite the recent rainfall in Austin, more significant rainfall in north Texas, we remain alert and on guard and kind of looking out for our water supply conditions. This afternoon we have a couple of presentations for you. We'll start with a water supply overview and drought outlook. Part of that is really to reorient everyone to our water supply and reliance on the Lakes and talk about what this current drought looks like for us locally and regionally. Following that presentation, we'll also then bring up another staff to have a conversation

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around our water forward activities, our integrated water resource plan that deals with trying to accommodate and understand the impacts of the growth in our community and climate change. With that, with me this afternoon is Teresa, the managing engineer over our systems planning division and she'll take us through a conversation around our water supply and drought planning. >> Thank you. I am Teresa Lut es, division manager for systems planning within Austin water. I wanted to thank you for having us here, chair and councilmembers. Can you advance to the next slide, please? I'm going to provide an overview of our water supplies and talk some about our drought conditions. For water supplies, this is an overview map that shows our water treatment plants and the Colorado basin's water supply reservoirs, which are Lakes Buchanan and Travis, shown there

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on the map. The city receives its water from the Colorado river through our three water treatment plants -- Davis and Ulrich both draw water. We have access to 325,000-acre feet of water per year, this is part of our run-of-river rights, and also a contract with the lower Colorado river authority, the Icra to provide firm water and backup water to our run-of-river rights. To give you a feel for what the difference is between those types of waters, run-of-river water is from state-granted water rights that entities can receive for water available in the river based on a first in

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time, first in right priority system. Lcra firm water is water that Lcra provides using the Colorado river system sources to -- including the stored water in Lakes Travis and Buchanan -- to make those run-of-river rights firm, or provide water to them in times when it's dry. So that's why Austin as water supply contracts with the Lcra and water can be released by Lcra from the lake's stored water in dry times when we don't have enough run-of-river water available under that priority system. Next slide. Austin has been focused on conservation. This graph goes back to I think the early '90s or so. This shows the focus that Austin

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has had on conservation and drought management with the strong customer response we've received from our efforts in us stepping up conservation. We had a gallons per capita per day amount of 190 and if you take all the uses and all the water pumped into the system divided by the amount of population served, that's the gallons per capita per day number. Last year the number was down do 125 gallons per capita per day. So you can see on the graph there has been a significant drop in the amount of water use per person. That means we can serve more people with the same amount of water that we're serving out into the system. We're serving over 1.1 million people and the amount of potable water pumpage for the recent years, you can see there is in a par of 157,000-acre feet.

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And the amount of reclaimed water is a little under 5,000-acre feet. Next slide. I wanted to show you some of Austin's relative use. If you look at the Colorado river and highland Lakes use overall, this is a graph showing the overall use of Lcra water or water from run-of-river water sources within the Colorado river basin across the entire region. So, in the pie chart there on the left-hand side it shows run-of-river water on the left-hand side of that thicker white boundary there. And then on the right-hand side it shows Lcra stored water. So this shows that if you look at the overall water uses, Austin's is shown in blue. It shows the split between

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run-of-river water and stored water that Austin uses of the overall system. This is just the city's use within the overall system. This is based on a recent five-year average from 2017-2021. You can see there

that Austin's use of the full pie is 7% of the amount of lcra stored water used during that period. It's about 46,000 acre feet. And about 18% of the run-of-river water used in the Colorado river and highland lake system. So, I wanted to give you that overall scale and relative use perspective. The total there of those two Austin pies is about 157, 158,000 acre feet. It's 25% of the overall. But I wanted to show how that

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water amount typically splits out. And then I just wanted to mention for this year, because of the dryness we will likely -- that likely will shift to where we'll probably be using more stored water this year compared to run-of-river, since there's been some very dry periods during this year. So we continue to track this and have access to lcra information on overall water use within the basin to be able to see Austin's place in the big picture. Next slide. I wanted to give you a sense of the amount of water flowing into the highland Lakes. This is a graph of inflows to the highland Lakes. That's water coming into the Lakes. The bar shows how low the inflows have been in 2022 thus far. Those are the green bars, are

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the 2022 bars. We don't have the numbers in for August yet, but we're on track for about 400 or so acre feet, so it will be repeating roughly about the same amount as the July bar there. The inflows to the highland Lakes are at historic lows and we've also included on the graph 2011 for comparison. 2011 is shown there in pink. So you can compare that. In 2011, for the period from January to July, the same period of where we are through this year, in 2011 the inflows were about 74,000-acre feet. And in this year so far they're about 52,000 acre feet, so we're tracking a little lower than we were tracking to this point of the year in 2011. >> Would you mind repeating that?

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>> In 2011, the amount that -- the inflows were about 73,000-acre feet. And then for 2022 thus far it's about 52,000 acre feet. Those are approximate. Next slide. This graph shows the combined storage of Lakes Travis and Buchanan back to 2005. Today's storage is about 1.2 million acre feet, 56% full. This graph was updated through August 1st, so it doesn't include the more recent days since the beginning of the month. But we continue to monitor this and update our -- the combined storage graph and track that combined storage on a frequent basis. On this graph also are shown the

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drought contingency plan stages. So, we have our stage one that we're in now, drought contingency plan stage is at 1.4 million acre feet. That's shown in green. Also in green is shown the stage 2 drought contingency plan level of 900,000 acre feet. And then stage 3 is at 600,000 acre feet. In 2016, after the drought broke, what's now the new drought of record for this basin, which was from 2008-2015, in 2016, city council adopted a new drought contingency plan for Austin that incorporated things we learned through the last drought and incorporated the permanent one-day per week watering schedule for all the irrigation systems -- automatic irrigation systems as a year-round permanent policy. So after the drought concluded, having incorporated those higher levels of conservation and

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embedded those in our policies as an on going practice. So we can talk some more about this later in a following slide, but as we would go progressively into higher stages, those stages focus on Progressive stages of more restrictive watering hours. Next slide. Wanted to mention a little bit about the lower Colorado river authority. The lcra was created by the Texas legislature in 1934. And they manage the lower Colorado river and highland Lakes. They operate the Lakes within an approved plan by the Texas commission on environmental quality that is a water management plan. And that's something that the city of Austin was very involved in the recent updates of the lcra's water management plan. And the current plan that they are operating under is a 2020

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plan. Austin has a formal partnership with lcra based on an agreement in 2007. So, senior staff members and executive -- members of the executive level within both entities meet on a regular basis to share information and have cooperation on a number of many topics that come up along -- in the arena of water supply and management. Next slide. The lcra water management plan, as I mentioned, it was -- the current water management plan was approved by tceq in 2020. And this is for the lcra. This determines how lcra manages the water in the highland Lakes, Lakes Travis and Buchanan.

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They have limited the overall amount of irrigation water that's being released this year. They have cut off the second crop irrigation for what are referred to as non-barwood divisions within the downstream rice irrigation and agricultural irrigation areas down in the lower three counties within the Colorado river basin. So for the remainder of 2020, releases of second crop water for those districts won't happen. So there is a cutoff in place. The lcra water management plan is based on the worst multiyear

drought to date, which includes -- which is the drought from the 2010s which started in 2008 through 2015. So the data from that drought is what was used to develop the current water management plan that's in place. And that one is in place until there is a schedule that it will

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begin being updated no later than 2025. Austin was very involved as an active stakeholder in the water management plan update process. Next slide. This graph shows the lcra's combined storage projection as of August 1st. Lcra makes a projection of combined storage each month. So at the beginning of September we anticipate seeing a new update of this graph. This shows that we -- the lcra projects that we will stay above the 900,000 acre foot level that would trigger stage 2 drought restrictions under our drought contingency plan at 900,000. It's expected that we will stay above that, even in very dry conditions. [Clearing throat] As I mentioned, the drought contingency plan stages focus on Progressive stages of more

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restrictive watering hours as we would go in the progression from stages one, two, and three. The stage numbering is not necessarily consistent across cities or other drought contingency plans. Austin's year-round restrictions are more stringent than other communities' stages two and three. That may be the case. So, that's something we're aware of, and we have communications with our customers and other entities within the region about that. And we recognize that there are differences between the various drought contingency plans among various entities across the state. As I mentioned, the second crop cutoff for non-garwood divisions is reflected in this graph, so that's part of the reason why

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there's some flattening out of the decline in the projected storage. Next slide, please. This is the most current drought monitor, Texas drought monitor picture. It was from the August 18th, last week. It's going to be updated again on Thursday this week, so I anticipate that the conditions will have eased somewhat due to the -- rain, but we will look for that and to see to what extent this drought monitor picture changes as a result of the rains. But just wanted to provide this update and this picture of the most recent drought monitor. You can see the exceptional drought level for much of Travis county there in the middle, with the blue circle showing where Travis county is there. And then some of the upstream,

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up-basin counties up until just recently with this rain, we've been mostly up-basin, been in the category of extreme or exceptional drought. Next slide. NOAA's three-month outlook is for the temperature to be on a seasonal basis running higher than normal, but the chances of precipitation about normal for the upcoming three months. So, we will see how this tracks with what occurs and continue to look out into the future to see what the chances of rain and conditions are so that we can stay on top of monitoring what the projections are for temperature and precipitation over the coming months. Next slide. So, to kind of wrap, our next

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steps are continuing to monitor the drought situation and promote conservation and adherence to our drought contingency plan stages. Also a factor is we're continuing to implement our water forward plan, Austin's integrated water resource plan. And I think the next presentation is in relation to that, our implementation, including our implementation of water forward. For our customers, just want to assure folks that we're all in this together. We want folks to take time to look at their own water use and ensure that they're following their water schedule and saving water as much as possible. We have social media. And we have a new drought response web page that we have on our website that provides information on drought response and what the conditions are and what's happening. And we'll be providing additional information over time

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there as needed. It includes some frequently asked questions and we can help direct people there to provide information on the drought as conditions may change into the future. So, that concludes the presentation. I'd be happy to try to answer any questions. >> Fuentes: Thank you. Councilmember pool? >> Pool: I have two questions. Do you know what the change in volume of the water coming down the Colorado river is, given the extreme drought status that we're in? >> With this most recent rain event, how much is coming in? >> Pool: Or just generally. So, I'm thinking about the presentation we had the last time we met, and it was on the water budget for businesses like Tesla or Samsung. And the concern about them taking water out of, I guess, out of our pipes, because they're on our water system, and

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also out of the Colorado river. So I was wondering if the drought conditions have slowed the rate of the river water moving down to the bay. >> Amount of water flowing in the river coming into the Lakes and then some of that water is passed through by LCRA for downstream uses. That has been -- the amount

coming into the highland Lakes has been less because of the drought. >> Pool: Right. >> But then Icra releases water through the dams and the lake system for downstream purposes. Their customers downstream use that water. So, Icra makes releases from water that's being passed through, if there is water coming through, some of that gets passed down through the Lakes, or there is some stored water releases as well.

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So, with the dry conditions, the amount of water flowing in the system, especially up-stream, has been reduced. >> Pool: I guess that's reflected in the lower levels of lake Travis, because I think lake Austin is a standard level. >> Right. But that's what the firm water contracts are for. They provide that stored water. So that water can be released and used during the times when it's very dry. >> Pool: Like a buffer. >> Right. Like a bank account, sort of. >> Pool: The second question I had was on your Texas drought monitor page, which was really interesting. You mentioned that you will be having these stats updated pretty soon as a result of the rain event that we had this week. And I was hoping that you maybe able to send us that update and show us the change between this. >> Yes. >> Pool: And the one on the

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next page, the noaa three-month outlook. I was interested in what were they saying six months ago and now to kind of get a sense of the trends and the accuracy of the forecasting, which is tricky and doesn't mean anything, but a brain exercise for me. I wanted to know how accurate are these forecasts with this limited amount of data just the last few months. >> Sure. Yeah. Definitely we can provide that. >> Pool: Thank you, chair. >> Questions? Okay. A couple questions that I had, what percentage of our water comes from the Colorado river? >> All of our water comes from the Colorado river. So, I just want to make that clear. On that graph where I was showing the pie chart, the amount of water being shown there is all uses of Colorado river for other uses, other customers, downstream agricultural processes and so

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forth. So, all of our water comes from the Colorado river and the highland Lakes. And the graph I showed before just shows how much of it in the last five years as an average has been coming from water that Icra releases from storage versus how much comes from the river, but it's all river water. It all comes from the Colorado. Some is just in the form of what Icra keeps track of and does an accounting of how much water is coming to Austin under our run-of-river rights and how much they release from storage. So -- >> Fuentes: Is it customary for a city of our size to have 100% of our water dependent on one water resource? Should we look at diversity of resources, desalination? What's a benchmark for a

city of our size? >> We did some research into that as we prepared our water forward plan. It's our integrated water resources plan where we look at

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a hundred years and we came up with our best mix of -- we called it a portfolio of water sources that we would look at for the city of Austin going forward, and we're undergoing an update of that plan right now, so we will be looking at that again. And the next presentation is about that. But some larger cities do have one water source. In some ways, there is some diversity in the supply in that it's Colorado river water, but there is also the storage element that kind of adds diversity to that. And plus, we also divert water from two different storage reservoirs within the Colorado river system. So there's some diversity there. We have some reclaimed water and we are building up that system, too, for meeting non-potable uses. And then as part of water

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forward, we are focusing on strategies including aquifer storage and recovery where we will store water in wet times when we can -- not in times like this where water, you know, it's very dry. But to add to our supply diversity, we will store water when it's available -- Colorado river water, but we'll put it in an aquifer and be able to draw that out. So, that adds some supply diversity as well, even though it will originate as Colorado river water, it will become asr water and be another water source. So -- and the water forward plan includes some other strategies that will provide some supply diversity. But again, we're looking at that and updating our plan in an adaptive management kind of process. So, we'll be looking at that additionally into the future. >> Fuentes: Okay. And I guess as an outlook, a drought outlook moving ahead in the coming months we don't

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anticipate going into stage -- drought stage level two at this point. >> Correct. So far for the lcra's combined storage projection is for six months, so at the beginning of September we'll get one that goes through March 1. But for the foreseeable future, for six months, lcra's projections don't show going below 900,000 acre feet, which is the stage 2 trigger. >> Fuentes: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Mayor pro tem. >> Alter: I think councilmember pool pretty much asked my question. I just -- as we digest the rain from the last week or so, it would be helpful to understand how that changes where we are or if it doesn't. And if it's not, it would be helpful to have more information on why not, because we may get questions from constituents on

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that. >> I'll just jump in here. One thing that we are doing, we have increased our internal monitoring on water supply conditions. So we have a weekly report that we're dealing with. As I look at the last several weeks and how the relative inflow of rain fall, temperature levels have had impacts on highland Lakes levels, one thing that's stood out to me is you can visibly see the reduction in Lakes Travis and Buchanan slowing because of the implementation of the curtailment. That's a huge piece. And also, just these recent several weeks where we've had a little bit of aftercast has also helped slow the evaporation -- overcast. So that's good signs. More directly to your point, obviously this very local recent rain, it has been dry, moisture conditions in the soil are very dry. A lot of that is not running off, but we are picking up some upstream inflow, so that's good.

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We've seen some zeros before. That's unnerving. We're starting to see numbers show up in the gauges. We'll keep you apprized. We'll continue to monitor that. I would say the other piece of good news is we are now moving into a traditionally wetter time of the year. Our rainfall distribution in this part of the world is bimodal. A lot of rain in the springtime and we pick up rain again as we move into fall. Obviously with hurricane season we'll be watching that. And, you know, the weather conditions become very unpredictable. We'll continue to update information and pass that your way. >> Fuentes: Thank y'all so much. We appreciate the presentation and the update on water supply and drought planning efforts. >> Thank you. >> Fuentes: Colleagues, we'll move to item number 3, which is an update on our water forward plan.

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>> Again, Kevin, Austin water. Gonzalez will be here and she will present the water forward update. She is our program manager and supervisor over resource planning, been involved with our water forward activities for quite some time. She'll walk us through our water forward '18 activities, which was the more recent water forward approved by council back in 2018, so a lot of conversation around implementation, and then a bit of a look toward water forward '24 activities, which we're in the middle of planning for that activity. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Marissa. >> Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to present about water forward. My name is Marissa, Mari, the water forward program manager and the water resources team supervisor. So you can go to the next slide.

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Water forward is Austin's 100-year plan, a plan to develop and implement diverse and environmentally conscious strategies to adapt to growth, drought, and climate change and to ensure a sustainable, resilient, and affordable water future for our community for the next 100 years. So it's a plan that's covering a lot of territory, but the main goal is to be able to meet our community's water demands for the next 100 years. Next slide. So the idea for the water forward plan came out of the last drought that we experienced in the central Texas region from late 2007 to 2016. Like you heard before in the last presentation, that drought is the new drought of record within our region. Our city has also experienced strong population growth historically and we expect that our population growth will continue into the future. And we know with climate change, like the councilmember

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mentioned, we expect to see periods of future more severe drought punctuated by more intense rainfall events. These factors were the primary drivers behind water forward 2018. Next slide. So, the water forward 2018 plan was developed by Austin water, working closely with the council-appointed task force. We call them the water forward task force, the long name is the Austin integrated water research planning community task force. We also gathered -- hence the nickname. We also gathered significant community input at over 100 different community engagement events. Our technical work was supported by consultants supporting us with engineering, climate science, and hydrologic services and our plan development process is outlined on the right-hand side of the slide. We started in 2016 by laying out our methodology, developing blue

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sky lists of demand management and supply-side options, characterizing those options in terms of cost and yield and other information around those strategies. We combined them into portfolios of options and then we evaluated those options against criteria like supply reliability, cost, environmental benefits, implementation benefits and social benefits. Ultimately we came up with a set of plan recommendations in 2018 and those plan recommendations in the final plan were unanimously approved by council in November of 2018. And you can go to the next slide. So our water forward 2018 strategies can be grouped into four categories, including reducing demand with strategies like advanced metering infrastructure that you'll hear more about today in a later presentation, moving reuse forward by increasing the amount of reuse coming from on-site reuse applications at the building scale, decentralized reclaimed systems at the

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neighborhood scale, and our centralized reclaimed system that stretches across a broad swath of our city. The third category is protecting our core Colorado river and highland Lakes supplies. Those supplies will continue to be important supplies for our city and the cornerstone of our water supply strategy through the hundred-year planning horizon. And so we work with our regional partners at the lower Colorado river authority and through the regional water planning process facilitated by the Texas water development board to continue protecting those supplies. -- Supplies. The last category is building drought resiliency through strategies like aquifer storage and recovery that Teresa described, as well as emergency strategies like indirect potable reuse that we could utilize if we got down to unprecedented levels of combined storage. And all of these strategies are built on a foundation of continued stakeholder and

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community engagement. You can go to the next slide. So, by implementing the water forward strategies, we anticipate we could reduce our demands shown on the bar chart from approximately 485,000 acre feet of annual demand to below 300,000 acre feet of annual demand. And if you remember, we have 325,000 acre feet of supplies available to us through our current run-of-river and highland Lakes contract water. That said, we know that climate change will potentially impact our surface water supplies out into the future, and that's why it's important that we continue to build our drought resilience through additional strategies like ASR and even further out into the planning horizon we have additional strategies in --2070 that include an off-channel reservoir. Since the plan was approved in

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November 2018, we've been working on implementing the near-term plan strategies. The first year after the plan was approved by council we worked on tactical implementation planning. So, what kind of more discreet action steps would we need to take to implement the strategies. In 2020 that's when the work started to kick off. Austin water initiated the my atx water advanced metering infrastructure project to replace 250,000 analog water meters across the city. Also in 2020 we brought before council and council approved the on-site water reuse system regulatory framework, the second of its kind within the nation at that time. We also developed an incentive for new developers to install on-site water reuse systems in their buildings. And also in that year we executed a consulting contract to begin desktop analysis to identify locations for an

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aquifer storage and recovery pilot project. In the next year, in 2021, we brought before council and council-approved code changes related to water benchmarking, on-site water reuse system

requirements, as well as extension of our reclaimed water connection requirements. And Austin water also developed a new voluntary reclaimed water incentive to encourage developers to connect to our reclaimed water system. That incentive provides up to \$100,000 to help with costs associated with voluntarily connecting to that system. And like I mentioned, we also participate in the region K water planning process. Our staff participated heavily in the development of that plan, a plan that brings together municipal, agricultural, environmental, as well as industrial stakeholders throughout the lower Colorado river basin to develop a plan

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for how we're going to meet demands from that diversity of interests throughout the next 50 years. That plan was approved by the Texas water development board in 2021. And by early 2022, we had worked our way down from an eight-county study area to a narrower scope including aquifers in three counties in Travis, bastrop, and Lee counties that we're looking at for detailed study for potential pilot project locations for asr. Very recently, the last update I heard, we might hear more details about it, in our my atx water project we achieved installation of 63,000 meters across the city. And in early 2022 we began the process to update our water forward plan with anticipated project completion by end of calendar year 2024. Next slide.

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To go into more detail about our implementation efforts, I'm going to walk through several strategies that we're working on right now. Austin water's conservation division has begun development of a new irrigation and landscape ordinance that will be applicable to single-family residences, new single-family residences. Staff are working to draft ordinance language that they'll be presenting to the public for feedback and we anticipate making further revisions and developing an affordability impact statement before we're bringing that to boards and commissions in spring 2023. I've included the link to the speakup Austin page for that ordinance if you'd like more information on that effort. And next slide. And as I mentioned, in 2021 we received council approval of code changes to require that all new commercial and multifamily and mixed use developments submitting a site plan also submit a water benchmarking application. Each applicant that submits an

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application is provided recommendations for how to improve water use efficiency within their development, and other information such as potential water utility bill savings and available rebates and incentives for their projects. Developments with a total gross floor area greater than 250,000 square feet are also required to meet with city staff prior to site plan approval. And this is intended to be an

informational meeting and serve as a resource for the applicant. Future phases of this strategy may include requiring developments to establish and adhere to an annual water budget as laid out in the 2018 water board plan. Next slide. In 2022, Austin water also completed commissioning of the Oscar and Clara on-site water reuse system project at our new permitting and development center. The project is anticipated to reduce the site's potable water usage by 75%. The pilot includes a blackwater

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reuse system that collects wastewater from the building's sewers, treats it on-site using advanced membrane technology and then recycles the clean water back into the building to flush toilets and urinals. The water can be used repeatedly on-site. It collects rainwater and the water is filtered and stored in tanks and can be used for outdoor irrigation at the building. Austin water placed educational signage throughout the building to share information about the pilot with visitors and we're also using that pilot to be able to collect data and information about operations and maintenance requirements for on-site systems. Next slide. If you'll remember, in 2020 we received council approval of code changes establishing new on-site -- a new on-site systems program. We have also established an

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incentive for on-site water reuse systems and we're currently working with two different applicants towards their use of those incentive funds. We're also working towards implementation of the mandatory component of our on-site water reuse program. That was approved by council in 2021 and will be effective in December 2023. This code change will require that new commercial and multifamily developments with a gross floor area greater than 250,000 square feet install on-site water reuse systems. Right now our staff is working to develop rules and enforcement mechanisms for that mandate prior to its effective date and will also be working with housing and planning to develop an affordability impact statement due to council by September 2023 to understand the potential affordability implications of the mandate. Next slide. In 2019, Austin water completed construction of a new reclaimed reservoir and pump station at

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montopolis that will help improve reliability of that system for customers in east Austin. And you can see the photo of the ribbon-cutting there, pre-covid times. We are continuing our efforts to expand that system. By 2040 we'll increase the length of main for the reclaimed system from 73 to 96 miles of main. And that new -- over 20 miles of main will help us to loop the system, providing redundancy and allowing us to meet additional customer demands. Annual customer demand is expected to grow from the current 1.35 billion gallons to 5.81 billion gallons in 2040. And now prior to 2021, code required that

new developments within 250 feet of a reclaimed water main connect to that main and use that reclaimed water. In 2021, we brought before council, and council approved additional requirements that large developments with a gross floor area greater than 250,000

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square feet, if they are within 500 feet of a reclaimed water main connect to that main and use that water for substantial significant non-potable indoor and outdoor end uses. We are also -- that requirement is in effect, by the way. It went into effect December 2021. So, now we are still working with housing and planning to develop an affordability impact report due to council by September 2023 to understand the potential affordability implications of the extension of those reclaimed water system requirements. Next slide. Okay. So, we've already talked a little bit about aquifer storage and recovery. I believe you had a whole presentation about it, but we're going to touch on it because we're very excited about it. At this point, we are in the early desktop analysis phase of developing an asr pilot. That's a strategy that will allow us to store water in a naturally occurring underground aquifer when supplies are

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plentiful. The water would then be available to store under Austin's existing water rights and contracts. That stored water would be treated to drinking water quality and possibly undergo additional pretreatment before it is injected into the aquifer. Water would remain stored in the aquifer until it's needed. Asr is an additional cornerstone to our future drought resiliency planning. It allows us to maximize our existing supplies while also increasing operational flexibility. Next slide. So, this timeline, which you've probably seen, shows next steps for the asr project from the start of the project in 2021 to the expected completion of the project in 2035. Right now we're far to the left and we're trying to identify which would be the best locations for a potential asr pilot project. Once we have that -- or those pilot locations identified, the next step will be to build and

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test an asr pilot project. That will be small-scale, give us an opportunity to test our assumptions, and to get detailed data before beginning any work on a full-scale asr project. And then upon successful completion of a pilot project is when we would begin design and construction of a full-scale asr project with construction expected to be completed by 2035. And between 2035 and 2040 we will be working on building up our storage within that asr facility to reach our water forward 2040 goal of having 60,000 acre feet available to us by that year. Next slide. All right. Like I mentioned, in 2022, Austin water kicked off the first five-year update to the water forward plan. We are going to be updating that plan

continuously on a five-year cycle, similar to how the regional water plan is updated on a five-year cycle. The plan update will allow us to

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incorporate new information and adapt to changing conditions. We'll be refreshing our projections of demand, our future available water supplies and potential water needs. We'll also refresh expected strategy savings and yields to develop an updated 50-year portfolio of strategies and a 100-year adaptive management plan. We anticipate completing the final plan by mid-2024 and hope to bring the plan before boards and commissions and council in fall and winter of 2024. Next slide. We started this work by gathering input from the water forward task force and others in our community including our community ambassadors group on updates to the plan's guiding principles. Key guiding principles that are shown here include creating a plan that is resilient to growth, drought, and climate change, using an equity and affordability lense to develop and implement the plan, as well as focusing on locally available

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water supplies. Next slide. Key changes for this planning round include better outlining water forward '24's relationship to related Austin water and city of Austin efforts. We know that water forward is one of a suite of plans and efforts across the city to create a sustainable and resilient future for our community. We want to make sure that we are placing the right things within the right buckets in this planning effort. We are also working to better align water forward outputs with the inputs needed for the regional water planning process, and we're working to develop an equity and affordability roadmap and tool for the planning process. A really important part of this planning process is to create a more robust approach as well to addressing risk and uncertainty. Next slide. So, we know that we are moving

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into a future of greater uncertainty and that we need new methods to be able to plan for that uncertainty. Old methods use one or several scenarios to plan for what we think will happen, but we know we can't make predictions about the future. In water forward 2024, we'll be testing our strategies, demand management and supply strategies grouped into portfolios against a much wider range of plausible scenarios, because we want to identify strategies that work against many different futures. We want to be prepared for anything that happens rather than trying to identify what we think will happen. This is a conversation that we'll be having more with the task force and with our community about how we can set that range of plausible futures that we want to plan for. We'll also be developing an adaptive management plan that lays out key decision points for implementation of strategies in

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response to changing conditions. That's part of the strength of this process and updating the plan on a five-year cycle. We have identify how are conditions changing and how do we need to respond. It's a very proactive approach. Next slide. We're also working with climate scientists at at the university of Texas to understand climate trends in the lower Colorado river basin and in Austin. Our work with climate scientists tells us that we will see those more severe droughts punctuated by more intense rain and flooding events in the future. This slide summarizes some of the initial findings on projected high-level climate trends within the basin. We anticipate that annual mean temperature will increase over time. We also know that our rainfall distribution will change. That leads to less frequent, more intense rainfall events. And we see that the number of dry days with precipitation

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below very low levels are also projected to increase. We're now working with both climate science and the hydrology team to translate these trends into potential future impacts on stream flow as well as combined storage within the highland Lakes. Next slide. And finally, we're updating this plan using an equity lense and building on concepts that relate to procedural and distributive justice. Procedural justice meaning how do we create a process that is equitable in how we make decisions and distributive justice meaning how do we make sure that the resources and outcomes of this plan are distributed in an equitable way. We're working with a community ambassadors group as well as with the water forward task force to develop an equity and affordability roadmap for the plan that will contain

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recommendations for our education and engagement plan to create that more equitable plan development process. The roadmap will lay out a framework of questions and data that we will use to create an equity and affordability tool. We'll use this tool to evaluate the distribution of benefits and burdens from expected plan outcomes, especially on communities of color and low-income communities. Very excited about this work. It's one of the first examples that we have been able to find of this type of approach being used in water resources planning. And we are excited to see how we're able to utilize this in this round of planning. And next slide. >> Fuentes: Did you say that we would be one of the >> Did you say we'd be one of the first to use this? >> The equity -- it builds on best practices that have been -- by city planning processes

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including the climate equity plan and other plans that are currently being developed. I would say that the city of Austin is a leader in that area in trying to operationalize how we're looking at equity as well as affordability in our planning of work. >> Wonderful. Thank you so much. That was a thorough and super informative presentation. I appreciate it. Vice chair kitchen? >> Kitchen: My first question relates to the - find it here -- the centralized reclaimed aspect of water forward. I notice that the project is delayed and I just want to ask a question about that in terms of the timeline and what's driving it. I'm understanding that according to -- thank you very much. This was very helpful. That there's some delay related to project connect's Orange

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line. So can you speak to what the thinking is on the timeline for the delay and how much that matters or not for the overall completion of the project. >> In terms of the overall completion of the completing the corps project, I do not think that's a significant delay. I think that that's more in the scale of months rather than years. >> Kitchen: Okay. Can you give me a little bit more details? Project connect's Orange line doesn't have -- their timeline is not finalized. What is y'all's thinking right now? >> Please. Go ahead. >> Good afternoon. Shea Wilson, assistant director for engineering. Completing the corps project, we have a project for the reclaimed system that was intended to run down south congress. We did coordination with project connect and we actually moved that pipeline to go down south

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first street. So that project is continuing, won't be affected other than the coordination that we need to do over time with project connect for that particular project. We had some coordination with crossing I-35 related to the I-35 central project with txdot. So we had some added time on the project for that coordination. So there's hey lot of projects going on through the central city that affect this particular reclaimed water project. But we're working through those details. >> Kitchen: Thank you very much. I have another question that might be in the next -- it's related to my atx. Should I wait for that? >> I think so. That's the next presentation. Any other questions? Okay. I just have a few on my end. You mentioned that there was at least two developments that have applied for one of the incentives that council recently initiated. I want to know how do the other incentive program go with the on

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site water reuse system? Have we had a lot of interest in that one or -- that program. >> I'm referring to that program for the on site water reuse system incentive. There have been two different applicants

who submitted applications and then the time frame, their applications essentially expired. There were several Joe Iis particulars and details to work through. We are still working with those applicants and anticipating that they'll be resubmitting the applications for processing by staff. >> Fuentes: Did applications expire on their end? >> I will say that we continue to market that program and try to do outreach. Again, as was said, we've got two formal applications in that we with expect to see again. We're involved in dialogue with others. We're just kind of working through -- I think the newness

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of using can on site reuse, trying to educate the community, the development community about those opportunities. So we continue to be dedicated to it. And we hope to see more, just for information, we do -- we will be bringing to council reauthorization of the incentive program for its final year. So you'll be seeing that in September, possibly October >> Fuentes: Was it set up as a three-year program? >> It was a three-year voluntary program to incentivize voluntary participation. What happens beyond that is a whole another conversation. >> Fuentes: In the two years that we've had it going, two applicants have shown interest but hasn't been a development. I think that would be a conversation -- yes. Vice chair? >> Kitchen: If you finished? >> Fuentes: I think that's a conversation we should have when the reauthorization comes forward if we should do any tweaks or adjustments to the incentive program. >> Kitchen: I think part of the

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conversation is whether or not to make this mapped mandatory. It was begun as an incentive program thinking it was a way for the development community to test the waters, get used to it. But it's always been a conversation about when and how to make it mandatory. So I guess my expectation was that at the end of this time period, we would be having a conversation about making it mandatory. Is that -- I'm seeing you shake your heads yes. >> Absolutely, our expectation. >> We're both trying to -- >> Kitchen: Okay. Go ahead. >> That's correct. That the code changes that council has already approved, include the on site water roo he use mandate for developments greater than 250,000. It will be effective in December 2023. And the reason we had phased the -- were planning to phase the incentive out was because at

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that time we expected that the large developments would be subject to the mandate. They would be required to -- >> Kitchen: It's already passed, right, that it's required. When we pass the voluntary program, we also passed the requirement at the three-year mark. >> Okay. >> Fuentes: How about the reclaimed water connection incentive, how is that going? >> I think that -- I don't have any more details

about current applicants for that program, although I can follow-up with more details if you would like. >> We do continue to make connections. I couldn't give you a granular perspective on how many more we've captured because of the 500 versus 250. But we can certainly look at that. Kind of do a little deep dive on kind of our connections. We do continue to make connections to the system. Both mandatory connections and voluntary connections. So if you would allow us, we'd like to get back with you on that information.

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>> Great. Thank you. Lastly, I want to ask it -- maybe it's better served as an email update. But just with the region K planning plan that was adopted by the state, can we get to the top lines of that plan sent to us so that we have an understanding of what that entails and how it will impact us here locally? >> Sure, absolutely. >> Fuentes: Thank you. Thank you all so much. Colleagues, we're going to one of our last items. It's our last presentation item of the day. It is an update on the atx water

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meter. Good afternoon. Rick Coronado, assistant director for operations. With me is Randy Jenkins, assistant director for customer experience. I mentioned, we have three executives that sponsor my atx water. David Johnson, our cio is kind of over the I.T. Portion of the project. I'm over the infrastructure and Randy here is over the customer experience, including the portal. So this is a very important program for us. As was mentioned in the previous presentation, it is under the umbrella of water forward. So it is a demand management strategy that we've launched, at least the construction side. This has been going on for planning efforts for some time. At least a couple of years ago we launched the construction efforts to start implementing my atx water smart meters across the city. Last time we presented -- next slide, please.

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Last time we presented was back in a full setting, was in October of last year. At that time we had just kind of started to talk about full implementation throughout the city. That included a lot of the -- what we call the dcus or the data collection units that go mounted on poles, tanks, other infrastructure. We had talked about briefly, not only the progress of meters being installed but also our efforts to now go into the I.T. Efforts of having meter to Billie sengsly converting the my atx water meters, the manual reads to Ami reads and bill from those. We'll give you progress on that, not only the cumulative installs but some of the milestones in our continued citywide progress, as well as great news from customers and how this service

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has offered not only conservation but water savings and definitely a strong demand management effort on the utilities part that benefits all. Next slide, please. One more. One of our key metrics is our progress towards installing meters across the city. In previous conversations I've had and we'll update that in the next setting of presentations to awoc here, is the progress citywide. We have every single district, we have a meter installed and we'll continue to have that. As we build out the city's network, that will give us more flexibility on where we actually can redirect crews, but this shows that our key metric right now shows around 63,800.

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Our last data point, we had a briefing this morning, is closer to 66,700. So we continue to progress in installing meters throughout the city. One of the milestones that we achieved back in may was the 50,000 threshold. So we did hit the 50,000 mark in may. Just projecting out in even the workforce that we've had on board through the contractor, we should probably hit somewhere between 90 to 100,000 by end of calendar early January. That's kind of the progress that we're making, each despite some of the challenges that we're still facing with workforce or supply chain issues. Another note that I'll make is that that was kind of roughly 6,000 meters installed a month. And we're going to continue to work with the contractor to increase that.

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Just so that way that we continue to make progress throughout the city as we move forward towards next year and the following years residential conversion. Next slide, please. I mentioned that the last -- in October we started the installs of citywide data collection units and what that allows us to do is until we have a data collection in the vicinity, we can't collect information from a new meter install. So today we're probably approximately 71 to 72% of our data collection units installed citywide and that continues to make progress every day as we kind of go through permitting process, construction of new poles, utilize our existing

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infrastructure to install dcus on our tanks and other city facilities. So that is making great progress and we anticipate that to be one of our measures P -- another key measure to help accomplish citywide

efforts. Another note that I'll say is that, prior to you receiving a meter, we do a lot of pre-planning. That pre-planning allows us to take a look at the meter box, identify the cleaning regimen for that meter box and then to also give the customer notice prior to the installs. So we have so far about 60 -- 76,000 surveys throughout the city. That really helped us whenever we see any issues with supply chain challenges, we like to have in stock roughly around

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three months worth of supplies with some of the more recent conditions in the market, we have to adjust and redirect our workforce to do other things. And they will come back to the installs as those meters come in. So we're still making great progress. And we'll continue to make efforts to ensure that we're going to meet that pace that I just estimated. Another item that I'll kind of update you on is -- I mentioned is that the last time we spoke, it was about the meter to bill was just launching. We had not achieved any milestones on having the first meter bill. That has been achieved since then. We're approximately somewhere in the order of 35,000 meters are actually billing now. So that's just the conversion of going from a manual read to an actual Ami read that is used for billing. We go through a series of

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certifications before that happens. So that might be a number that you'll see that is typically less than however many meters that you actually had installed. But we are making progress every week to have at least somewhere in the order of 5,000 meters converted a week that go to an Ami bill. So we monitor that closely and ensure that that quality assurance is there as well. With that, I'll turn it over to Randy and she can talk about the customer interactions and benefits and then I'll answer any follow-up questions after she's completed. >> Great. Thank you so much, Rick. Next slide, please. As Rick introduced, I'm rapid I Jenkins, assistant director at Austin water. In addition to the toer presentations that you heard today, highlight and -- are the integrated water resource plan. It's tied to my atx water project. We certainly recognize our

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customer interactions and benefits that we receive out of this program. Next slide, please. So one of the highlights for our customer base is the customer portal and through that we are able to send out automated leak alerts. So any time the system itself through the portal recognizes a customer's meter is registering continual usage, it sends a leak alert to the customer. It sends it through their preference. But certainly, by text message, email and/or Robo call. In addition, if we do not have a certified phone number for that customer or email address, we also have the ability to send mailed letters and

notifications to that customer. One of the added benefits to the portal that we've recently added -- so this was not something that the portal offered, but something we asked

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for. In addition to continued usage alerts, we have asked and received tier notifications. This is based on a customer usage trend throughout the month. If the portal recognizes that based on their current usage patterns that the customer is going to move into a new tier in our billing rate structure, it will also send a notification to them. So that not only lets them know about conservation and how much water they're using but also a potential bill impact they may see on their next bill. So to date, we've September more than 30,000 -- sent more than 30,000 tip us usage alerts to our customer base. That is based off of our current registration -- not current registered but current -- you heard Rick report out on. Next slide, please. So this is really the biggest

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point of the presentation that I want to make. What we're already recognizing and seeing as a benefit, not only to our system but also our customers through bill saving. So the portal has estimated through the continuous leak notifications that our customers in our system overall have saved 33 million gallons. So in such a dire time that we're seeing drought hit our region, you know, this is certainly something that we are excited about and it's doing exactly what we hoped it would do. Not only for our system and our water management strategies, but also for our customers. Next slide, please. So one of the communication strategies that we've rolled out is one smart neighbor communications program where we are touting and reminding customers about the smart metering program and what it can do for them and the benefits

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that they will see. So one of the -- I have several testimonials listed there. But I wanted to point out that this one smart neighbor, that those are actually true customers. Those aren't images we bought off line but those are pictures we have taken of customers that reached out to us saying that they were really impressed and pleased with the my atx water project. So I'll just kind of highlight some of what they've said. It was mentioned by monitoring the household water use on the Newport AI, we've been able to cut back on our water bill each month. It's really important for us to conserve in a drought which is certainly what we've all been saying today. From Naomi, she said thanks to a high usage text alert. I found out about a water leak quickly and was able to pin point the location based on when it began. These tools are so helpful. And then lastly from Rebecca.

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She said the Austin water portal is priceless. It notified me when we had a water leak in our yard. We would not have known as the leak was really deep. So thank you for this portal. So I just wanted to highlight some of our customer testimonials so that you're hearing directly from them how well this project is being utilized by our customer base. Next slide, please. So with that, Rick and I will open it up for any questions that you may have for us. >> Fuentes: Wonderful. What exciting news to share with us today. I appreciate Austin water and all the communications you do. Probably setting the standard for departments on how to do communications. I really appreciate it. >> Thank you so much. >> Fuentes: Mayor pro tem? >> I'm really excited to have this roll out and for us to see the benefits on so many levels. I'm wondering if you have a map of where we've already installed the water meters, roughly?

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>> Our plan is to provide that map. One -- we can give you a current one. We'll send that to you. One of our -- one of the notes I made is that as we built out the dcus, that gives us a little more flexibility on providing some redirection for crews. I mentioned that every sing will district has meters, but we're trying to maximize our efforts on efficiency, as well as definitely as this rolls out more. We'll give you kind of all the areas that we're working in. We do have a map online that allows customers to know when we're coming. It also provides an online register of where meters have been installed. We can share that link as well and provide you that information. >> That would be great. I notice that there's a low

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level of uptake to move to the online registration. Is that just a time lag or is that something where councilmembers may be helpful in connecting you up with neighborhood associations to get the word out in different ways or how do we increase that percentage? >> Yeah. I think it's certainly attributed to our roleout currently. -- Rollout currently. We're encouraging all of our customers to sign up for our portal. They can sign up tpt. They don't have to have an Ami reader. They can register and look at prior histories of their bills. So we certainly can partner with you and your offices to get that great information out, including in your newsletters and setting us up with neighborhood association meetings. We also conduct monthly virtual meetings on a recurring basis so that if the community, no matter

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where an individual lives, they're certainly able to join us on those monthly meetings and ask any questions that they may have about our project or portal and when you'll be coming into their area. I'll get that information over to your offices. >> That would be great. We can include it in our newsletters. If we are doing neighborhood association meetings, I know there's a slew in September and October. They happen to be areas where you have rolled out or about to roll out, we can help spread the message. >> Absolutely. Thank you. >> Fuentes: Vice chair kitsch snen. >> Kitchen: Just a quick question to follow-up on that. My understanding and tell me if this is correct. That even if folks don't sign up, the city is still getting benefit from this in terms of leak detection, is that correct? >> Absolutely. The leak notification runs and operates regardless of if the customer is signed up.

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Meaning, if they're not logging into the portal to check daily usage, it still will alert them of a leak as well as on our side. >> Kitchen: The benefit of Ami is also for the city perspective. I mean, it's absolutely more beneficial if -- you know, if the customer is using it and I appreciate what the mayor pro tem is suggesting. It would be great if we can all help you all in encouraging our constituents to sign up. I wanted to double-check that the benefit in terms of the gallons saved and the other kind of benefit happens because I guess we're monitoring the -- the city is monitoring, correct? >> Correct. >> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you. >> Fuentes: All right. Thank you so much. The only thing I would ask is that when y'all get to the 100,000th meter, I think it would be fun if our committee could gather and be part of that

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milestone moment to help spread the word. >> Absolutely. We'd be happy to >> Fuentes: Wonderful. Thank you all so much. Colleagues, the last item on our agenda is a discussion about future items. Our next meeting and final meeting for the year pending any special called meetings will be October 19th. So any thoughts, comments, feedback on topics to cover? Yes, councilmember pool. >> Pool: Never mind. I think I did get an answer to that question. P >> Fuentes: Mayor pro tem? >> I spoke with the city auditor the other day. And the water audit is likely to be back in December. We are still figuring out the appropriate rollout process given the language that was in the resolution. I don't know whether it will be appropriate to have that back

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for the 8th -- the December 8th council meeting or whether we would need to either hold that in Austin audit and finance which has a meeting scheduled already the next week or do a special called meeting

or combine that into the audit and finance meeting. Just flagging that for folks. Because that should provide us a lot of really important information to guide the new director and to guide Austin water into 23. Also, want to thank Austin water staff for really helping that process to be productive and effective. I understand that assistant director -- really leading that effort and appreciate the prompt spopss and the delivery of all data that the auditors need for that. >> Fuentes: Thank you, mayor pro tem. If we could do a joint committee meeting, that would be great.

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I know three of us serve on the audit and finance committee. >> We can do any form -- we haven't -- [indiscernible] It was not -- >> Fuentes: We're trying to figure out if it's a full -- all council would be invited. We just have to figure out the timing of that given that our last council meeting is December 8th. But, you know, we had put in some restrictions about the report having to be going to wastewater commission and to be posted before it came to council. So we have to work around those things for the timing. And I'm more talking about the timing than the form of the meeting. But those owe O. >> At a minimum, it would be on audit. Everyone would be welcome and it would probably be the main topic for that meeting. But we're working on it. And there's no problem at all to do the joint meeting.

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>> Fuentes: Wonderful. Anything else? >> I have another topic. >> Fuentes: Yes, vice chair. >> Kitchen: I think it Bob useful and helpful to get an update on the project. It's really in the beginning stages. But these offer an opportunity to highlight what's happening with that and just give us a heads up. I had the opportunity the other day to talk with someone about that. It also would be helpful from our perspective, I think, to discuss how that project is not just a siloed project with watershed. But it cuts across departments because of its impact on climate change. So I think it would be -- I think it would be great to have a conversation on that if the folks are available to do that. >> Fuentes: That's a great idea. Thank you. We'll add that to the agenda. Last but not least, wanted to thank staff for providing the

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implementation progress report in this format and providing for us to review. I think this should be done with all of our city plans, having an update on how plans are getting implemented. Appreciate the work of our Austin water team. With that, pending no further business, the meeting of Austin water oversight committee is adjourned at 2:59 P.M. Thank you.