

# Preliminary Proposal for a Residential Landscape Transformation Ordinance

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WATER & WASTEWATER COMMISSION MEETING

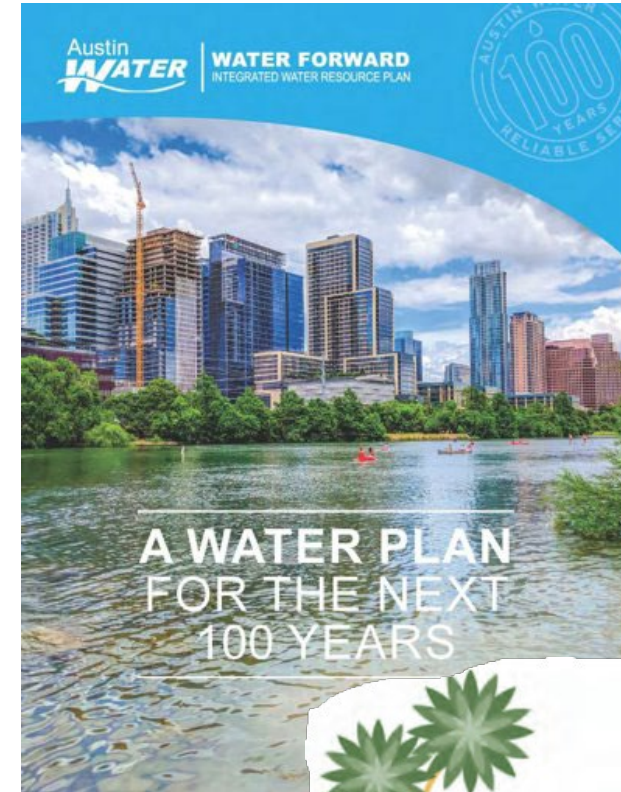
February 8, 2023





# Landscape Transformation Ordinance

- From traditional landscaping to plants with reduced water needs
- New single-family residential
- Potential limits on turf and irrigation
- Savings goal of 2,490 AF (2.2 MGD) by 2040



# Public Engagement & Input

- Public and stakeholder meetings
  - February, May, June, & November 2022
- Smaller stakeholder group meetings
- SpeakUp Austin! page
  - 2 surveys (256 and 303 responses)
  - Majority of local responses favored regulating landscape transformation



ne / Austin Water / Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance for New Single-Family Residential Developments

## Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance for New Single-Family Residential Developments



### About the Future Ordinance:

Austin Water is asking for public input to help meet Austin's growing water needs and prepare for impacts from our changing climate. Based on your input, we will create an **Irrigation and Landscape Ordinance** for new single-family residences that will set requirements for conserving water in irrigation systems and landscapes. **Please review updated information on the [provided slide deck](#) and [take the new survey](#) to provide feedback**

### Timeline

- ✓ Initial landscape code research
- ✓ February 2022: Stakeholder outreach and input
- ✓ February 2022: Public outreach and input
- ✓ May 2022: Public outreach and input  
[Public Meeting 2a \(online\)](#); May 3rd at



# Landscape Transformation to Save Water



**Build with  
savings**



**Set customers  
up for success**



**Encourage  
alternative  
water**

# Build with Savings



## 💧 Enhanced Soil Inspections

- A minimum of 6 inches of topsoil
- Topsoil mix composed of 20% compost
- **Estimated Water Savings:** 10% reduction
- **Estimated Cost:** Environmental inspection cost could increase by \$80

## 💧 Mulch is currently required and inspected



# Build with Savings



- Required residential plant list
  - Apply commercial plant requirements to residential
  - Grow Green Plant Guide is a possible model for a plant list





# Build with Savings



- Limit turf grass area
  - Up to 50% of landscape area; potential 2,250 SF max
  - **Estimated Water Savings:**  
16% reduction or 4,350 gallons annually per home
  - **Estimated Cost:**  
Possible \$80 increase for enhanced inspection  
Additional bed cost – \$6 per SF or \$8,700 average home



# Build with Savings



- Limit irrigation area
  - Up to 50% of landscape area
  - **Estimated Water Savings:**  
35% reduction or 9,800 gallons annually per home
  - **Estimated Cost:**  
Possible \$71 increase for enhanced irrigation inspection performed by Austin Water





# Set Customers Up for Success

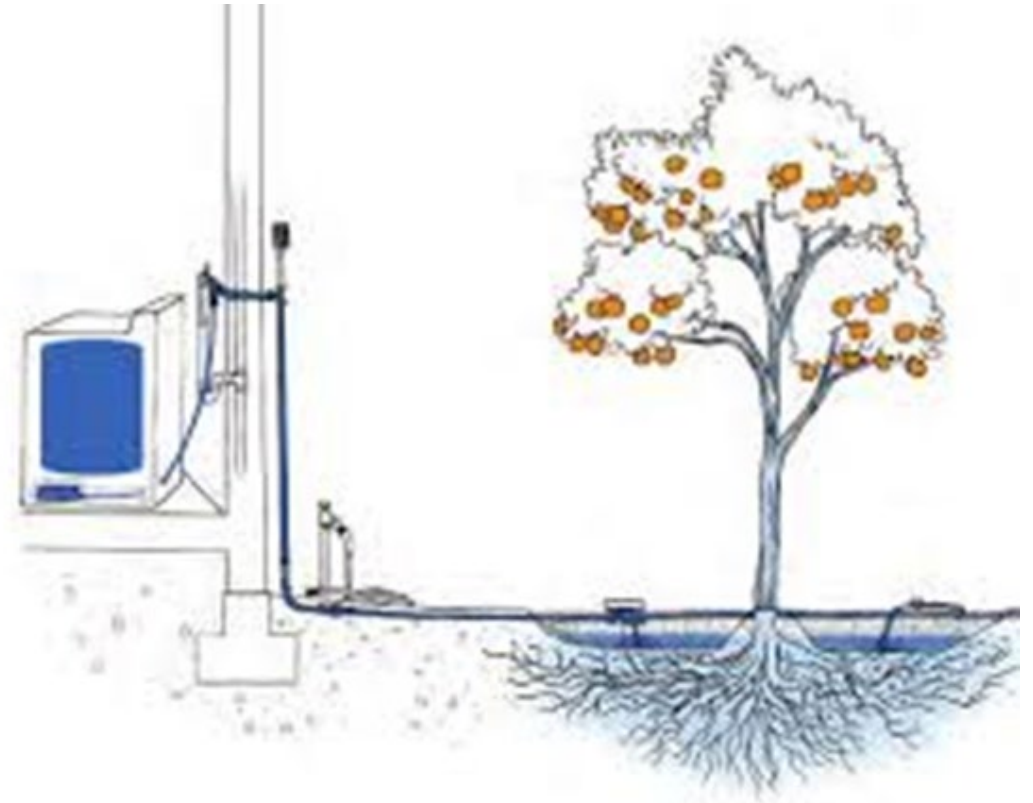


Better Irrigation	Estimated Water Savings (Gallons/year/home)	Estimated Cost
Require pressure reduction devices (PRD)	6,100 (22% savings)	\$350-\$500 + \$71 increase in permit cost for Austin Water inspection
Require irrigation inspection (post-installation)	2,800 (10% savings)	Austin Water inspection
Offer new home irrigation check-ups within 90 days	1,400 (5% savings)	Austin Water staff



# Encourage Alternative Water

- Required plumbing for laundry to landscape
  - Available in all new homes
  - **Estimated Water Supply:** 3,500 gallons/year
  - **Estimated Cost:** <\$1,000



# Encourage Alternative Water

- Incentivize builders to add rainwater harvesting
  - Incentivize building homes with 500-gallon tanks/systems
  - **Estimated Water Supply:** 5,000 gallons/year
  - **Estimated Cost:** No required costs





# Bundling Activities into Scenarios

- In all scenarios
  - Build with savings
  - Setting up customers for success
  - Encourage alternative water
- Options
  - Limiting turf or irrigation



# Scenario #1 (Turf Limitation)

	Est. Water Savings (Gallons/Year/Home)	Est. Builder Cost (Per Home)	Responsible Department
Existing Soil and Mulch Requirements	2,400	\$800 + \$80 increase to environmental inspection	DSD
Turf Grass Limitation (50%)	4,300	\$8,700 + \$80 increase to environmental inspection	DSD
Irrigation Requirements	6,400	\$350 - \$500 + \$71 increase for irrigation permit	AW
Irrigation Checkup	700	N/A	AW
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,800</b>	<b>\$10,150</b>	
Encourage Alternatives (graywater & rainwater)	8,500	<\$1,000 + TBD	DSD and AW

# Scenario #2 (Irrigation Limitation)

	Est. Water Savings (Gallons/Year/Home)	Est. Builder Cost (Per Home)	Responsible Department
Existing Soil and Mulch Requirements	1,800	\$800 + \$80 increase to environmental inspection	DSD
Irrigation limitation (50%)	9,800	\$71 increase for irrigation permit	AW
Irrigation Requirements	2,600	\$350 - \$500 + \$71 increase for irrigation permit	AW
Irrigation Checkup	400	N/A	AW
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,600</b>	<b>\$1,450</b>	
Encourage Alternatives (graywater & rainwater)	8,500	<\$1,000 + TBD	DSD and AW



# Next Steps

- ♦ Implementation plan with partner departments
- ♦ Final public meeting
- ♦ Affordability review
- ♦ Legal review
- ♦ Commission and Task Force briefings and recommendations
- ♦ City Council approval







**Build with  
savings**



**Set customers  
up for success**



**Encourage  
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water**

**QUESTIONS?**

[Austinwater.org](http://Austinwater.org)

