Water Forward 2018 - FY23 Q2 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

Progressing on revised schedule targeting plan completion in 2024.

FY23 Q2 Stats

1 - # of community engagement events
~5 - # of meeting attendees

FY23 Q2 Progress

Presented draft Equity and Affordability Roadmap (EARM) to Task Force on 3/28. Held online webinar on equity and affordability on 3/29. Began work to integrate population and employment projections into demand model to develop draft demand projections. Substantially completed the climate and hydrology analysis. Continued to work to procure consultant services for scenario planning support.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Continue planning for community engagement on water management strategies (WMS). Complete integration of population and employment projections into demand model. Begin preliminary needs analysis. Finalize optimization model logic and preliminary metrics to begin model testing.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23: Complete Equity and Affordability Roadmap and Tool. Gather comunity input on WMS and continue broader community engagement. Develop demand projections, identify water needs, and characterize WMS. Perform preliminary water needs analysis. Develop and test WMS optimization model.

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

On target to be completed by 2025.

FY23 Q2 Stats

~140,000 - # of meters installed
~32,000 - # of customer portal registrations
~30% - Avg. customer portal registration rate
~74,000 - # of continuous usage alerts

FY23 Q2 Progress

The My ATX Water contracted vendor, Aclara, continues pre-install field surveys and meter installations around Austin, bringing the total number of installs to ~140,000. All Data Collection Units are installed and functional. The My ATX Water customer portal has almost 32,000 registered, engaged users and continues to grow.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Meter surveys and installs continue around Austin, increasing in frequency as more installers are hired. The halfway point of the project was recently celebrated with a community gathering.

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

Progress has slowed a bit since it was determined that some of the activities would be local amendments to the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC). Overall, looking to implement all activities by FY25.

FY23 Q2 Stats

1 - # of community engagement events
5 - # Event attendees
303 - Survey responses

FY23 Q2 Progress

Ended community survey in January 2023 - the majority of Austinite responses were in favor of proposed activities. Met twice with 'green industry' stakeholders. Met with the Development Services Department. (DSD) regarding proposed activities and briefed the Water & Wastewater Commission.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Coordinate with DSD regarding UPC local amendments. Discuss code language with City of Austin Law.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23-25: Planning to host final public meeting and include local amendments in the adoption of the 2024 Uniform Plumbing Code

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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 (OWRS).

Actual vs. planned progress

On schedule

FY23 Q2 Stats

N/A

FY23 Q2 Progress

Worked with internal City of Austin stakeholders to ensure implementation of mandatory program is smooth across departments, including working with Watershed Protection Department (WPD) to develop dual crediting policies and working with Law on ordinance language. Developed billing and metering approach for OWRS. Established reviews in City's permitting database for compliance with OWRS and reclaimed connection requirements. Completed 75% of dual plumbing cost study to better understand cost implications; Completed preliminary programming in AMANDA to allow applicants to submit OWRS permit applications through Austin Build + Connect (AB&C) portal; Finalizing OWRS cost estimates and cost saving estimates in support of affordability impact analysis requirements, and stakeholder engagement. Continued study to determine water quality credit to be allowed for mandatory OWRS projects and worked with WPD to develop edits to the Environmental Criteria Manual (ECM) to allow this credit to be easily implemented.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Finalize preparations for stakeholder engagement meetings (in person and virtual stakeholder meeting dates set for mid-June), continue work with internal City of Austin stakeholders to ensure implementation of mandatory program is smooth across departments.

Future Implementation Steps

Work towards Council adoption of Mandatory OWRS ordinance in December 2023. Compile Affordability Impact Statement by September 2023. 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

FY23 Q2 Stats

71 - # of benchmarking applications received (this quarter)
19 - # of benchmarking applications received for developments >250,000 Square Feet (this quarter)
1 - # of OWRS applications received (FYTD)
2 - # of OWRS application approved (FYTD)
0 - # of OWRS incentive applications received (FYTD)

FY23 Q2 Progress

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. Staff is continuing to push for implementation of OWRS through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Staff is using benchmarking process to identify projects that are required to implement OWRS and making sure project owners are aware of these requirements early in the process. Staff is continuing to work with OWRS applicants to get their systems permitted and incentive program funds applied.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23: Staff will work on programmatic changes and implementation steps in preparation for the mandatory OWRS program. Affordability Impact Statement will be finalized. Will complete a 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 (WWTP), 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

FY23 Q2 Stats

3 - # of decentralized reclaimed water customers
31.9 - Decentralized reclaimed water use in Q2 (MG)

FY23 Q2 Progress

AW has finalized the consultant selection for the Decentralized WWTP & Reclaimed Design Criteria project and is continuing to work on refining the scope with them. AW is continuing to develop infrastructure planning documents related to decentralized reclaimed for the Northeast and Southeast service regions.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Begin analysis of on-site and other decentralized reuse yield updates for Water Forward 2024 Plan Update.

Future Implementation Steps

FY23: Continue Decentralized WWTP & Reclaimed Design Criteria planning efforts; begin pilot project conceptualization.

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

On Schedule

FY23 Q2 Stats

~186 - # of centralized reclaimed water customers
249 - Centralized reclaimed water use in Q2 (MG)
634 - Centralized reclaimed water use FYTD (MG)
1,402 - FY23 Goal (MG)

FY23 Q2 Progress

Design is ongoing for the final Completing the Core mains. Onion Creek Phase 1 and Oltorf Phase 1 is in construction, and Oltorf Phase 2 is advertising soon.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Continue design and construction of the final Completing the Core mains.

Future Implementation Steps

FY26: Estimated completion of all Completing the Core mains as well as completion of SAR and Montopolis Pump Station Upgrades.

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

FY23 Q2 Stats

3 - # of community engagement events
47 - # of people reached

FY23 Q2 Progress

Work continued on characterizing ASR project alternatives, including development of technical information for ASR evaluation in parallel with analysis of ASR project alternatives using the equity and affordability tool. Preliminary evaluation criteria, including those incorporating input from community workshops, have been finalized.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

Next steps will include finalizing the characterization of ASR project alternatives, completing the technical and equity/affordability evaluation of ASR, and beginning to plan for Fall 2023 community engagement.

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.

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Water Loss

Water Forward includes a strategy to reduce losses from pipes in the utility's water distribution system by enhancing Austin Water's current water loss reduction program. Austin Water is focusing on leak response, leak detection through tried and tested techniques, pilot testing emerging leak detection technologies, and, through its Renewing Austin program, repairing and replacing water mains.

Actual vs. planned progress

N/A

FY23 Q2 Stats

N/A

FY23 Q2 Progress

AW continues its ongoing efforts related to water loss (proactive leak detection, minimizing leak response times, replacing deteriorated infrastructure, and AMI implementation). Black and Veatch was selected for AW's Water Loss Program Review Analysis and Optimization Request For Qualifications (RFQ) and work began 3/24.

Current/Planned FY23 Q3 Activities

AW will continue its ongoing efforts related to water loss. Black and Veatch performed Level 1 Water Loss Audit Validation, and will continue its review of the water loss control program.

Future Implementation Steps

AW will continue its ongoing efforts related to water loss. The Water Loss Program Review Analysis and Optimization project will continue with anticipated report delivery in Q4 of FY23.