



DATE: November 9, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 4

TO: Environmental Commission

FROM: J. Logan, Staff Liaison

SUBJECT: Water Conservation

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss water consumption and conservation efforts

BACKGROUND

The Environmental Commission appointed a Subcommittee of Commissioners Eyre, Weiden and Halkola to determine methods for achieving the State's goals for reductions in water consumption. To this effort, the Subcommittee continues to: 1) review and report on water conservation efforts within Santa Clara County; 2) explore model water conservation ordinances and enforcement procedures; 3) gather water consumption data from the City of Los Altos water retailer, Cal Water; 4) formulate water consumption data to display annual and monthly usage in the Climate Action Plan Dashboard; 5) provide education and outreach efforts to residents and commercial establishments in Los Altos; 6) utilize resources from the Santa Clara County Valley Water District; and 7) analyze the provisions in the current City of Los Altos Water Conservation Resolution to determine the effectiveness of water reduction efforts.

At the Environmental Commission/Council Joint Meeting on March 17, 2015, Council advised the Commission that water conservation for the City is a major priority. Council encouraged the Commission to continue its Work Plan goal and projects on water conservation and to advise Council on the actions needed to attain the State's water reduction goals.

The Subcommittee efforts continue to provide reports to the Commission that result in discussions and lead to the formulation of recommendations to Council.

In September 2014, the Subcommittee began to explore opportunities for Cal Water Service, Purissima Hills Water District, the Town of Los Altos Hills and the City of Los Altos Environmental Commission to work together on the topic of Water Innovation for a public education and outreach effort to the joint communities. The Water Innovation seminar was held on March 12, 2015. The Subcommittee gave its report about the seminar at the April 13, 2015 Environmental Commission meeting.

The Subcommittee and Staff Liaison continue to work with Cal Water and the Santa Clara Valley Water District on local efforts, and data collection and initiatives for water usage reduction and conservation. Rachael Gibson, Office of Government Relations, Santa Clara Valley Water District, gave a presentation on water conservation efforts at the April 13, 2015 Environmental Commission meeting.

In addition, City staff attended a webinars hosted by the Office of the Governor regarding the Governor's Executive Order for water conservation and new goals set by the State for 25% reduction in water consumption. The Los Altos Water District goal for water reduction is 32%.

DISCUSSION

Staff met with Cal Water Service (CWS) on April 22, 2015 and received a report about the drought, water-use restrictions and conservation efforts that will be implemented in the Los Altos Water District effective June 1, 2015. Staff then meet with the Water Conservation Subcommittee on April 30, 2015 and provided a briefing on these measures.

CWS convened a community meeting on May 11, 2015 at 6 pm at Covington School and presented drought, water use restrictions and conservation plans for the community. The Environmental Commission meeting convened at approximately 8:00 pm after the conclusion of the CWS community meeting.

At the May 11, 2015 Environmental Commission meeting, Public Works Director Susanna Chan presented a report and requested comments on the proposed City of Los Altos Level Three water conservation measures and implementation strategy.

At the June 9, 2015 Council meeting, Council adopted Resolution No. 2015-15 for Water Conservation Measures. At the June 23, 2015 Council meeting, Council approved the City of Los Altos agency water conservation efforts and approved Level 3 water reduction measures and prioritization

Effective June 1, 2015, CWS commenced implementation of Rule 14.1 reduction mandates and monthly water budget allocations for individual water users along with enforcement measures for meeting a 32% reduction in water usage for residents, businesses and for City municipal operations.

The City Municipal Service Center is a distribution point for SCVWD issued shower buckets and "Brown is the New Green" yard signs. Distribution hours are 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition, drought gear items will also be distributed at the Hillview Recreation and Community Center Office from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

CWS notified residents and the City of a Boil Water Order due to contamination in certain locations. In response to Council's request for a report, at the August 25, 2015 meeting, CWS presented its report to Council regarding the circumstances requiring the Boil Water Order and its communication processes to residents.

The Water Conservation subcommittee will provide comments and updates on status of the drought and water conservation efforts.