

Water Committee Report

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Discussion Item 04

Title: Update on Sustainability and Water Efficiency Efforts [Oral Report]

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Receive and file a presentation on Department of Utilities' sustainability and water efficiency efforts.

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Presenter: Roshini Das, Sustainability Manager (916) 808-6270, Department of Utilities

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

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Issue Detail: The Department of Utilities (DOU) mission is to provide the customers dependable, high quality water, storm drainage, and wastewater services in a fiscally and environmentally sustainable manner. One of the strategic goals adopted by DOU focuses on sustainability, which is to plan for current and future generations by protecting, preserving and enhancing water resources, the environment, and the community.

Recently, DOU has received recognition for its sustainability and water efficiency programs:

- DOU was recognized as a founder of the Water-Energy Nexus Registry (Registry). The Registry was launched by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) per California Senate Bill 1425, which required Cal EPA to oversee the development of a voluntary registry for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from the water-energy nexus. As a founder of the Registry, DOU is measuring and tracking emissions using the newly developed standardized guidance and tools to better understand the energy GHG emissions associated with each process in water management and use.
- The US Environmental Protection Agency recognized City's efforts in going above and beyond in promoting WaterSense Certifications and water efficiency in 2017.
- The City also earned a Gold-level certification from the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) in recognition of DOU's significant efforts in developing and running an exemplary water conservation program that complies with the American Water Works Association G480 Standard. The G480 standard describes the critical elements of an effective water conservation program and encompasses activities undertaken by a utility within its own operations to improve water use on both the supply and demand sides. DOU earned this certification through a combination of efforts, including but not limited to its rapid investment in AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) meters and customer-side leak notification, distribution system management, promoting landscape efficiency (River Friendly Landscape program), water waste enforcement, and water conservation outreach and education.

In this presentation, DOU will update the Water Committee on the latest projects and initiatives that helped City achieve these awards and recognitions.

Policy Considerations: The 2035 General Plan includes policy U1.1.3 Sustainable Facilities and Services, which requires the City to provide sustainable utility services and infrastructure in a cost-efficient manner. The General Plan includes policy U 2.1.11 (Water Conservation Programs) that requires the City to implement conservation programs that increase water use efficiency, including providing incentives for adoption of water efficiency measures.

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations: None.

Sustainability: DOU's sustainability and water efficiency efforts will not only impact the immediate water needs of the community but will help in the City's Climate Action Plan goals of GHG reductions and water resource management.

Commission/Committee Action: None.

Rationale for Recommendation: None.

Financial Considerations: None.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.

Background:

I. Sustainability

DOU has adopted an ambitious Sustainability Plan, which includes a goal to develop a roadmap to become a Carbon Neutral Utility. Under the plan, DOU will focus on addressing climate change impacts, implementing the DOU energy management plan, reducing waste generation and improving the efficacy of our water conservation programs. DOU is also taking equity and resilience justice assessment into consideration under this plan. Staff anticipates bringing a Sustainability Policy to the Water Committee's consideration soon.

II. Water Supply

Winter 2018-19 experienced a significant amount of storms that brought well above the average amount of snow to the Sierra Nevada region. DOU will provide an update on the run off, snow pack, precipitation reservoir levels and groundwater storage that impact the water supply forecast for the City.

III. Outdoor Water Conservation Ordinance

City Council approved the Outdoor Water Conservation Ordinance that has been in place for more than a year. Staff will provide an update on the marketing campaign "Keep Sac Water Wise" that was established to educate residents to use water wisely.

IV. Rebates and Grants

Staff is in the process of updating the Water Conservation Plan. Meanwhile, DOU continues to offer various rebates and incentive programs in accordance with the 2013 Water Conservation Plan. Staff will provide an update on the rebate participation,

initiatives taken to improve the rebate process, and grants applied by the DOU to improve these programs.

V. Outreach, Education and Partnerships

Per Council's direction, DOU has increased public outreach and education regarding water efficiency, the City's watering schedule and related exemptions, drought resiliency and leak detection. DOU will provide an update on partnerships and the outcomes of these efforts.

VI. New Programs and Studies

Staff will update City Council on new programs and initiatives structured to address and advance the resilience and capacities of marginalized communities in the City.