



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0316, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Erick Lee, Public Works Director

Sean Roberts, Maintenance Manager

Erika King, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT:

Discussion on Reducing Water Usage at Medians (Public Works Director Lee).

(Estimated Time: 30 Min.)

DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction about water usage on City medians.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no fiscal implication associated with the recommended action at this time. However, once the City Council directs staff on this matter, future funding appropriations may be required, and staff time and resources may be expended to accommodate this request.

BACKGROUND:

On June 21, 2022, and in response to California's persistent drought conditions, the City Council declared a Stage 2 Water Shortage and imposed drought restrictions in accordance with the emergency water conservation regulations enacted by the State Water Resources Control Board. Under the Council's declaration, and in conformance with state regulations, commercial, industrial, and institutional sites are prohibited from watering "non-functional turf" (grass that is ornamental and not used for recreation and community events) with potable water.

DISCUSSION:

On June 21, 2022, the City Council requested a discussion to reduce water usage for landscapes located on City medians.

The City currently maintains medians along six arterial streets:

- Artesia Boulevard, Aviation Boulevard to Sepulveda Boulevard

- Aviation Boulevard, between Artesia Boulevard to Manhattan Beach Boulevard
- Manhattan Beach Boulevard, between Aviation Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard
- Marine Avenue, between Aviation Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard
- Rosecrans Avenue, between Sepulveda Boulevard and Highland Avenue
- Sepulveda Boulevard, between Rosecrans Avenue to Artesia Boulevard

The Marine Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard medians are the only medians that are currently landscaped with turf and trees. The other four locations have trees and plants, including mulch, and are not subject to the current drought restrictions regarding non-functional turf. Additionally, the medians along Marine Avenue are irrigated with recycled water and therefore not subject to the current drought restrictions regarding the irrigation of non-functional turf. As such, the Marine Avenue medians are not considered any further in this report's analysis. Should the Council wish to explore options related to reducing recycled water usage at the Marine Avenue medians, additional research and analysis could be performed by staff. Furthermore, staff will be reviewing the regulatory signage deployed in this area and reinstalling signs as necessary to remind the community that these areas are irrigated with recycled water.

The medians along Manhattan Beach Boulevard are the only ones that are supplied with potable water. Historically, the City has spent an estimated \$4,500 per year watering and \$8,800 maintaining the non-functional turf on these medians, which consumed approximately 900,000 gallons of potable water per year. In June 2022, Public Works turned off the sprinklers and began to install drip irrigation around the 48 trees in these medians. The grass at these medians is anticipated to dry-out and ultimately die this summer.

In order to keep the medians along Manhattan Beach Boulevard aesthetically pleasing, the City could replace the dying turf with drought-resistant landscapes. This alternative would allow the City to reduce water usage on a long-term basis and beautify the medians. The cost for removal of the existing non-functional turf on the Manhattan Beach Boulevard medians is approximately \$85,000, and the cost to install new plantings is approximately \$225,000, for a project total of approximately \$310,000 dollars. Staff estimates that this option would save approximately 450,000 gallons of water annually.

To offset some of the expenditures for this removal and replacement project, the City has already applied for a Public Agency Grass Replacement rebate program from West Basin Municipal Water District. This program provides rebate incentives of \$4.00 per square foot to remove non-essential grass on public property in the West Basin service area. If the City's application to replace 65,000 square feet of turf on these medians is funded by West Basin, the net cost for the project would be approximately \$50,000. The City anticipates receiving a determination on its grant application in the coming months. Additionally, ongoing watering and maintenance costs would be reduced from approximately \$13,000 to \$7,000 per year by transitioning from turf to drought-resistant landscapes.

PUBLIC OUTREACH: After analysis, staff determined that public outreach was not required for this issue since the City Council has already declared a Stage 2 Water Shortage and imposed drought

restrictions in accordance with the emergency water conservation regulations enacted by the State Water Resources Control Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Medians Along Manhattan Beach Boulevard