

- **Board of Directors**
Communications, Outreach and Legislation Committee

November 19, 2002 Board Meeting

9-5

Subject

Authorize \$2.374 million for a region-wide public outreach program to seek water use efficiency for summer 2003 and beyond

Description

Conservation has long been a key component of Metropolitan's integrated resource planning. Given recent water supply uncertainties – such as regional hydrologic conditions and the uncertainty of surplus water from the Colorado River outlined in Board Letter 10-2 "Water Supply Report" – a reduction in water use in Metropolitan's service area can have a real and significant impact in ensuring water supply reliability.

Heightened public awareness and incentive programs have proven to be effective tools for reducing water use, both nationally and within Metropolitan's service area. To this end, staff proposes an accelerated conservation program and a comprehensive public outreach program (**Attachment 1**) aimed at accomplishing two objectives. The first objective is to achieve a 7- to 12-percent reduction in water use for summer 2003, a range consistent with results achieved in the past by other conservation outreach programs. The second objective is to enable Metropolitan to meet conservation goals set in the Integrated Resources Plan, through a long-term campaign encouraging a heightened public ethic of resource efficiency as a lifestyle.

During the last drought, the Board authorized spending approximately \$2.5 million on advertising over a few months to encourage voluntary reductions. Southern Californians responded by conserving more than 10 percent of normal use, according to surveys conducted by Metropolitan in 1988-1991. In particular, great strides in promoting long-term water conservation were made through the installation of ultra-low-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads.

To achieve another significant level of conservation means partly directing efforts on encouraging reduced outdoor water use, which can range from 30 to 70 percent of total household consumption. Staff is developing and has developed new tools and programs to achieve increased conservation over the next several years. These elements include water conservation technology improvements, financial incentives to drive new technologies and programs as well as a range of programs to institutionalize the public ethic of adapting to the region's natural climate cycles.

Already, consumer response is positive to a limited-budget campaign launched this summer that focused on reducing outdoor water use and laid the foundation for native and drought-tolerant plant appreciation. The next step is to educate Southern Californians in specific ways to reduce outdoor water use in a permanent rather than temporary fashion. Working in conjunction with Water Resource Management, External Affairs staff has developed a comprehensive plan, using advertising, marketing and public relations elements, to promote reduced outdoor water use in both the short- and long-term. This plan ensures a synergistic approach to the promotion of conservation by tying all elements together through coordinated and consistent messaging and graphic design.

The success of the outreach program at achieving the 7- to 12-percent reduction in water use during summer 2003 will be measured through a comparison of year-to-year water demand data, accounting for changes in weather, population and economic factors.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code § 4210: Water Conservation. "It shall be the policy of the District to undertake and support water conservation programs. To that end, the District may develop and implement such programs and enter into agreements with member public agencies and other organizations to make more efficient use of water resources through water conservation programs so long as such agreements serve a beneficial purpose of the District."

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Options #1 and #2:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves continuing administrative activities, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA because it involves other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed action is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Option #3:

None required

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize the expenditure of \$2.374 million for a public outreach campaign aimed at reducing water use in Metropolitan’s service area in summer 2003 and beyond.

Fiscal Impact: \$2.374 million

Option #2

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize expenditure of \$1.859 million to implement high priority components.

Fiscal Impact: \$1.859 million

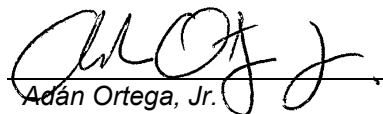
Option #3

Do not authorize the expenditure of \$2.374 million for a public outreach campaign.

Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation

Option #1


Adán Ortega, Jr.
Vice President, External Affairs

10/29/2002
Date


Ronald R. Gastelum
Chief Executive Officer

10/30/2002
Date

Attachment 1 – Proposed Public Outreach Campaign

PROPOSED PUBLIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Background

Conservation remains a key component of Metropolitan's long-term integrated resource planning. However, current dynamics – including political uncertainty with the Colorado River, continued drought conditions along the Colorado and dry-year conditions in Southern California – along with increased projected demands on Metropolitan will require Metropolitan to conduct an accelerated program to achieve greater, immediate conservation in its service area.

Water demand reductions through conservation are achievable, but will require a visible and strategic public outreach campaign to educate Southern Californians on the need without declaring a drought emergency. During the last drought, Metropolitan spent nearly \$2.5 million on advertising over a few months to encourage voluntary reductions. Southern Californians responded by conserving more than 10 percent of normal use. Significant conservation has been achieved with permanent indoor devices, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads, and through other incentive programs. To achieve another significant level of conservation means focusing on outdoor water use, which can range from 30 to 70 percent of total household consumption.

Objectives

- To secure a 7 to 12 percent reduction in normal water demand through increased outdoor conservation gains during summer 2003
- To significantly raise awareness among Southern Californians that greater water conservation is achievable and lay the foundation for long-term measurable conservation gains
- To secure long-term, permanent changes in outdoor water behavior

Consideration

- Seeking voluntary reductions without widespread declared water emergency

Strategy

- Dovetail with existing and planned conservation efforts to promote proven initiatives to reduce water use
- Focus on reducing residential and commercial outdoor water use
- Use consistent messaging and graphic look and feel to ensure synergy between all conservation programs

Programs	\$2,374,000
Southern California Heritage Garden Program	\$827,000

This awareness program encompasses multiple efforts to foster the appreciation of California native and drought-tolerant plants in commercial, residential and public landscapes.

City Makeover Program (High priority)

\$667,000

Through the "City Makeover" program, Metropolitan will fund six native and drought-tolerant plant makeovers in cities within its service area. Each city will receive \$75,000 for a landscape makeover of a highly visible location, provided it incorporates native plant/drought-resistant themes and is readily transferable to residential landscapes. Makeovers will be publicized and featured in a Straight from the Tap segment as well as a dedicated issue of Aqueduct magazine, similar to that of Liquid Art.

Grants for cities to implement landscape makeover (6 cities at \$75,000/each)	\$450,000
Transportation and related costs for judging panel	\$5,000
Permanent signage for each makeover site	\$12,000
Production of television special, "Road Trip with Huell Howser," to air on PBS stations	\$100,000
Promotional Materials, including special issue of Aqueduct magazine and issue of Straight from the Tap	\$100,000

Educational Programs	\$160,000
-----------------------------	------------------

Protector del Agua	\$75,000
---------------------------	-----------------

Promote successful Protector del Agua program through advertising to general public through regionwide advertisements.

School Programs	\$85,000
------------------------	-----------------

Fully incorporate native plant themes into all levels of education program. Conduct research into best approach (either through supplementing existing curriculum or by creating new curriculums for elementary and secondary levels) and develop and write appropriate materials.

Hold regional staff development workshops to promote and train local educators on native plants.

Irrigation Calculator and Sprinkler Index (High Priority)	\$1,192,000
--	--------------------

Studies have shown that many residents with an automated sprinkler system are most likely overwatering their lawns significantly. We propose to reduce this waste through an aggressive public relations, advertising and marketing campaign that uses two new web-based tools that allow residents to calculate a watering plan for their lawn and then make weekly adjustments to their watering schedule according to the weather, time of year and other factors. This campaign would launch now to encourage residents to "turn back" their sprinklers for the fall and winter months, and save water for winter. The campaign would last for two to three months.

Promotion of these two tools will serve as a starting point to bring participants into Metropolitan's upcoming evapotranspiration controller program, the large landscape program and usage of native plants. Teaching residents to alter their watering habits is an important first step in ensuring the success of a native plant campaign.

Already, staff has begun work on a comprehensive PR campaign, collaborating with news outlets and organizations such as the Southern California weathercasters and the California Nurserymen's Association to promote these tools. Staff endeavors to secure placement of articles and segments regarding the landscape calculator and the Sprinkler Index in news media throughout Southern California. Media are also being approached to include the Sprinkler Index in weather reports, much as they have included such things as the UV Index and the Surf Report. Both tools will also be featured on the MWD web site.

Staff will work with an advertising agency to create a campaign that is thematically and graphically consistent and coordinated with all other promotional materials outlined in this plan. Based on an approximated \$1 million advertising budget, staff is recommending a media buy weighted toward radio and billboard, with limited purchases in newspapers and television. The preliminary strategy behind this purchase spread is based on positive response to our initial advertising campaign, the ability to leverage radio buys with other outreach opportunities, and increased frequency of message that radio and billboard placements provide in a cost-efficient manner. Final advertising allocations may change.

Production and distribution of point-of-purchase displays and other collateral and promotional materials **\$185,000**

- Point-of-purchase displays and other collateral materials will be placed at 1,000 nurseries and garden centers throughout Metropolitan’s service area to promote the landscape calculator. The displays will include: lucite counter displays with take-away cards promoting the landscape calculator, posters, and stickers.
- New homeowner welcome kits, containing water-saving tips, irrigation calculator, soil sensor and rain gauge, will be distributed through developers, real estate agents, direct mail, and via the Protector del Agua program.
- Magnets, native plant seed packets, rain gauges, soil sensors and other promotional giveaways will be produced promoting the landscape calculator.

Exhibit space at four Southern California home and garden shows **\$7,500**

Creation and purchase management of advertising campaign, to include radio spots, print ads and billboards **\$100,000**

Newspaper and magazine advertising placement **\$200,000**

- 4 times a month in major dailies in Southern California (1/4 page)
- 2 times a month in weekly community newspapers
- 1-2 times a month in newspaper magazines (Los Angeles Times Magazine) and other key magazines
- Suggest an “odd-size” purchase, like a strong vertical or horizontal to make advertising stand out
- May be tied into a sponsorship of weather page
- Promotes logo and number in a more “visible” medium
- Tie in when possible to newspaper Web sites

Radio **\$300,000**

Part A

- 30-second and 60-second spots
- 5-7 times a day
- 10 stations in Los Angeles, 2 in Inland Empire and 4 in San Diego
- Tie-in with station Web sites

Part B

- Sponsor weather reports
- Create “weather minute” or “water minute” paid program

Billboards	\$200,000
-------------------	------------------

- 20-30 billboards in high-traffic locations in all points of district

Television	\$200,000
-------------------	------------------

- Sponsorship of weather reports on TV newscasts
- 5 stations in Los Angeles, 3 in San Diego

High Efficiency Clothes Washers	\$200,000
--	------------------

Create and distribute point-of-purchase stickers and signs promoting high efficiency clothes washer rebates in stores throughout Southern California.

Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Conservation Program	\$70,000
--	-----------------

Create advertisements and buy space in key trade publications to market the following water-saving devices and rebates:

- Pre-rinse spray valves
- High-efficiency clothes washers
- Water pressurized broom
- Hospital X-Ray Machine Recirculation

Creation of five advertisements: one for each program and a general ad for all	\$7,500
---	----------------

Ad space in publications such as <i>California Restaurateur</i>, local business journals, <i>California Lodging</i> magazine	\$62,500
---	-----------------

Centralized Irrigation Controller Systems	\$65,000
--	-----------------

Promote these retrofit systems to large landscape users, such as homeowner associations, through advertisements and direct mail.

Creation of one advertisement	\$1,500
--------------------------------------	----------------

Ad space in publications such as <i>Condo Management</i>, <i>Apartment Age</i>, <i>Apartment Management</i>	\$13,500
--	-----------------

Purchase of mailing list and direct mail to large landscape users	\$50,000
--	-----------------

Hotel and Restaurant Water Awareness Campaign

\$15,000

Supplement \$75,000 in funding given to this program by providing additional marketing assistance through ads in trade publications and collaboration with California Restaurant Association and California Lodging Industry Association.

Innovative Conservation Program

\$5,000

Create and distribute postcard and other promotional materials to solicit applications for new water saving ideas to be funded through this program.