

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

June 12, 2007 Board Meeting

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**8-10**

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**Subject**

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Authorize implementation of 2007/08 updated water conservation communications plan and renew a one-year agreement for up to \$5.45 million with Johnson/Ukropina for regional advertising services to promote water conservation

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**Description**

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Record dry conditions in Southern California and the key watersheds for its imported water supplies have created worst-case dry-year conditions in 2007. While there is no supply shortage projected for this year, the conditions provide a unique opportunity for Metropolitan and its member agencies to make gains in water conservation education and community outreach among Southern Californians to help ensure water supply reliability for the future. Efficient indoor and outdoor water use from residents and businesses is key to managing peak water demands especially during the coming hot summer months.

Anticipating a normal hydrologic year, External Affairs staff originally planned and budgeted for its ongoing advertising efforts to promote outdoor water conservation through more efficient irrigation and use of California Friendly<sup>®</sup> plants. In light of recent events, weather conditions and at the Board's direction, staff has updated this communications plan. Making an effective call to action to the residents of Metropolitan's service area will require a sustained, multi-pronged effort including the use of mass media advertising such as radio, television, billboards, the Web and print, as well as coordination with member agencies and extensive media and community relations efforts.

The expanded public education, communications and advertising plan is the first of several actions that will be before the Board in the coming months regarding water use efficiency. In July, Water Resource Management staff will propose to the Board new steps in conservation incentive approaches, formulated over the last year in collaboration with the member agencies. In August the Board will consider an update to Metropolitan's five-year conservation plan, which provides an overarching guide for implementation actions.

The updated comprehensive and region-wide communications plan (**Attachment 1**) is proposed to encourage voluntary conservation from Southern California residents. This plan will accomplish four measurable objectives:

- Inform Southern Californians of the need for water conservation, and give them the tools to use water more efficiently;
- Gain the support of the news media and community leaders to spread the message;
- Partner and collaborate with large landscape owners and users to demonstrate water use efficiency; and
- Partner and collaborate with government agencies, businesses and nonprofits on resource efficiency campaigns.

Two notable recommended initiatives included in the plan are:

- **“Running Dry: The American Southwest Documentary Project”**

At the request of the producers of “Running Dry,” a documentary about global water needs that was previewed at the Board Retreat in April, the Chairman of the Board and staff met to discuss sponsorship of a sequel.

The Chronicles Group, under the direction of James Thebaut, is currently developing this production. The proposed sequel will include a historical overview of the American Southwest region, current water

supply and demand issues, current and projected population projections and climate change. The Chronicles Group invited Metropolitan to join the Southern Nevada Water Authority as a lead sponsor of this endeavor and match their \$150,000 sponsorship.

- **Multi-Agency Climate Change Outreach Campaign**

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has invited Metropolitan to participate in and be a founding member of a multi-agency effort to begin a public education and outreach campaign on the effects of climate change on water supply. The campaign would educate and coordinate efforts among water utilities, their customers and other stakeholders such as legislators and government officials regarding the potential impacts of climate change on water utility operations and mission.

In addition to Metropolitan, participants include Denver Water Agency, New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection Commission, Portland Water Bureau, San Diego County Water Authority, Seattle Public Utilities and Southern Nevada Water Authority. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) was the sponsor of the January Water Utility Climate Change Summit and has taken the lead in organizing the steering committee that will oversee the outreach campaign. Both the SFPUC and Southern Nevada Water Authority have pledged \$100,000 each to the effort.

### **Budget**

- \$5,450,000 Advertising Services Contract with Johnson/Ukropina
  - Purchase of media broadcast air time, print and electronic media placement
  - Advertising production, including talent fees, creative development, photography, editing licensing, illustrations and other production
- \$ 600,000 Research and measurement, video production, curriculum development, editing, design and printing
- **\$6,050,000 TOTAL**
- \$ 150,000 Partial sponsorship of “Running Dry: The American Southwest Documentary Project”  
(Total cost is \$500,000; Southern Nevada Water Authority is paying \$150,000)
- \$ 100,000 Climate Change Impacts on Water Utilities: Public Education and Outreach Campaign
- **\$6,300,000 GRAND TOTAL**

### **Advertising Services Contract**

Specialized advertising and media buying firms offer expertise and expanded media buying power. The contract with advertising agency Johnson/Ukropina would allow Metropolitan to obtain the lowest possible prices for proposed advertising time and space as well as negotiate for the maximum amount of added value items, such as public service announcements, interviews, event sponsorships and on-air promotions. Coupled with Metropolitan’s in-house capabilities, their specialization streamlines and enhances the creative development and production process. Johnson/Ukropina’s client list includes Jenny Craig, Blue Cross, Carl’s Jr., Orange County Transportation Authority and the Orange County Sanitation District.

In September 2005, Metropolitan entered into a contract for advertising services with Johnson/Ukropina, an Irvine-based small business enterprise, after the agency was selected through Request for Proposals 755 issued earlier that year. The Board renewed the contract for a second year in July 2006. Johnson/Ukropina’s current contract with Metropolitan has a maximum amount payable of \$2.9 million. Staff recommends that the new maximum amount payable be increased to \$8.35 million, reflecting the updated budget for advertising services of \$5.45 million. This will be the third year of the contract and staff will discuss with the Board a new RFP before expiration.

## Policy

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Pursuant to Metropolitan Water District's Administrative Code, Section 4210, it shall be the policy of the District to undertake and support water conservation programs.

By Minute Item 45828, dated July 2004, the Board adopted the Integrated Water Resources Plan Update.

By Minute Item 46554, dated February 14, 2006, the Board adopted the California Friendly logo and theme as a brand name for promoting water use efficiency among Southern Californians.

## California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

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CEQA determination for Options #1 and #2:

The proposed actions are not defined as a project under CEQA because they involve continuing administrative activities (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, the proposed actions are not subject to CEQA because they involve 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 actions are not subject to the provisions of 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

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### Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize the General Manager to implement water conservation communications plan and renew a one-year agreement for up to \$5,450,000 with Johnson/Ukropina for advertising services related to water conservation.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$6,300,000 in budgeted 2007/08 Operations & Maintenance funds

**Business Analysis:** A highly visible yearlong advertising campaign using budgeted funds will be implemented regionally to heighten awareness of the need for water conservation and promote rebates and incentives.

### Option #2

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize the General Manager to implement water conservation communications plan for the first and second quarters of the fiscal year 2007/08 and renew a one-year agreement for up to \$3,700,000 with Johnson/Ukropina for advertising services related to water conservation.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$4,500,000 in budgeted 2007/08 Operations & Maintenance funds

**Business Analysis:** This option uses budgeted funds to promote water conservation during the first two quarters of the fiscal year 2007/08. Staff will return to the Board in November 2007 with a recommendation to continue or discontinue the updated plan based on weather conditions, campaign success and analysis of the current water supply situation.

### Option #3

Do not authorize the General Manager to implement the water conservation communications plan. Do not authorize the General Manager to renew a one-year agreement with Johnson/Ukropina for advertising services.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$-0-

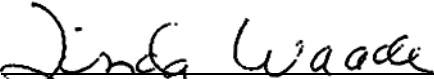
**Business Analysis:** Staff would look to the Board for direction to either re-bid for advertising services, use existing staff and resources to conduct the campaign, or not do a campaign. Re-bidding will take six to eight months to bring a new firm under contract. Using existing staff to conduct the campaign will make it very difficult to access the lowest prices for media time, which can be attained through the increased buying power of the advertising agency, and also pull an estimated six External Affairs staff members from other projects

for the duration of the campaign. Not doing an advertising campaign would mean low awareness of the need for conservation and a reliance on free media for messaging.

**Staff Recommendation**

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Option #1

  
Linda Waade  
Deputy General Manager, External Affairs

5/31/2007  
Date

  
Jeffrey Nightlinger  
General Manager

5/31/2007  
Date

**Attachment 1 – 2007/08 Water Conservation Communications and Outreach Plan**

BLA #5450

**2007/08****Water Conservation Communications and Outreach Plan****Executive Summary – “Partnerships are key”**

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California proposes to conduct a comprehensive regional communications and outreach plan to attain voluntary conservation from Southern California residents during 2007/08. While no water shortage for the region is projected, the recent dry conditions in Southern California and on the key watersheds for its imported water supplies have created a unique opportunity to make water conservation gains through education and community outreach.

Metropolitan’s call for voluntary conservation among residents of its service area will be made through a variety of channels, including advertising, “free” or earned media, editorial boards, school education programs, television and film, and partnerships with public and private entities.

Partnerships are key to the plan’s success. Metropolitan will draw upon the support of many individuals and organizations, including its member agencies, elected officials, government agencies, power utilities, Caltrans, municipalities, sanitation districts, businesses and non-profit organizations to spread the word.

The outreach components will include advertising, editorial boards, distribution of educational materials, online marketing (such as YouTube), elementary, middle school, high school and college education and other activities through peak demand months in summer and fall, and continue through the remainder of the year.

The plan will be launched with a summertime media event bringing together civic and community leaders and partnering agencies to demonstrate a broad base of public commitment to water use efficiency this summer and beyond. The launch event may include a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by all partners.

Background information and details can be found in the following pages.

## **Introduction**

Experts suggest that 2007/08 could be the start of a multi-year drought, or simply the driest year on record for Southern California. This record dry year has combined with a severe, eight-year drought on the Colorado River and a below-normal year of rainfall and snow in Northern California.

The silver lining for Southern California is Metropolitan's Integrated Water Resources Plan, which serves as the foundation for developing a diverse and sustainable water resource portfolio. The IRP's success becomes apparent in these dry conditions. Because of ongoing conservation plans and programs<sup>1</sup> and other supplies identified in the resource mix, the region will not suffer a supply shortage.

While Southern California can take comfort in its continuing reliable water supplies, there is no doubt that the time is right for a strong call for voluntary conservation. Southern California's hot, dry conditions have drawn consumers' attention to the fact that we live in a semi-arid climate, providing an opportunity to make further gains in water-saving awareness and practices. This communications plan was created to provide a framework for education and outreach efforts for the next fiscal year.

Metropolitan's Water Supply & Drought Management Plan lists a call for extraordinary conservation when certain water supply conditions are triggered. As of today, there is no call for extraordinary conservation, and it is important to recognize that this strongest call for conservation is to be held in reserve in the case of unlikely events. The plan described below can be scaled up in intensity and frequency should the need for extraordinary conservation arise.

This plan focuses on communications and outreach efforts that can be used to enhance and complement conservation programs implemented by Water Resources Management. It does not provide details of Metropolitan's core incentive and outreach programs, or supporting programs like the Innovative Conservation Plan, the Enhanced Conservation Plan or the development of legislation and standards.<sup>2</sup>

## **Background**

Since 1990, Metropolitan and its member public agencies have made great strides promoting long-term conservation through installation of more than 2.4 million ultra-low-flush toilets. The subsequent 1992 plumbing code ensured the installation of millions more. Today, member agencies are rapidly phasing out rebate and incentive

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<sup>1</sup> The Board policy principles adopted in February 2003 guide Metropolitan's conservation efforts, and the development of this communications plan. These include cost-effective financial incentives to improve water use efficiency, equitable share of responsibilities between Metropolitan and the member agencies, legislation, regulation and voluntary water use efficiency programs, Metropolitan taking a leadership role in advancing water conservation practices, and improving outdoor water use efficiency through landscapes and irrigation technologies.

<sup>2</sup> A thorough assessment of Metropolitan's conservation programs and five-year implementation goals can be found in its updated Five-Year Conservation Strategy Plan, developed by Metropolitan and its member agencies. The Conservation Plan was created to support efforts to advance the Integrated Resource Plan's water conservation savings target of more than 1.1 million acre-feet by 2025. An updated Plan is expected to be before the Board in August 2007.

programs for these devices due to their success and the availability of more efficient technologies.

Heightened public awareness programs have played a key role in past successes. During the last decade, toilets, showerheads and educational materials were distributed through non-profit organizations, at events, and through partnerships with local businesses such as McDonald's restaurants and bank branches. Advertisements and earned or "free" media helped spread the word.

Today, the greatest gains in conservation are outside the home. Outdoor water use ranges from 30 to 70 percent of total single-family household consumption in Metropolitan's six-county service area.

There is ample potential for increasing water use efficiency through an enhanced public education and outreach campaign in 2007/08. First, consumer surveys report that 97 percent of Southern Californian homeowners strongly or somewhat agree with the opinion statement "It is important for Southern California residents to try to control water consumption." Some 96 percent strongly or somewhat agree that "It is important to me to try to reduce water consumption whenever possible."<sup>3</sup> A campaign can focus on concrete suggestions on how to save water *now*, as research shows people are aware that saving water is important.

Dry year conditions provide an excellent platform to discuss the need for water conservation. The news media is covering the dry year story quite regularly, helping to spread awareness of a need for immediate action. The introduction and success of new technologies such as smart sprinkler controllers and rotating sprinkler heads in the retail marketplace offers another indication that public awareness campaigns can be highly successful. Awareness of these new products, as well as awareness of available rebates, is relatively low, which suggests a public outreach program can help increase consumer and commercial interest in these water-saving devices.

Starting in 2003, Metropolitan's region-wide public outreach program to seek outdoor water use efficiency has primed the pump for success. Efforts have been great especially in the fall, when water waste is highest as homeowners are watering landscapes at summer levels, and when the season is right for planting low-water-using California Friendly<sup>®</sup> plants.

One notable success of the 2003-06 campaigns is the partnership that has developed with Home Depot's Southern California region and with 70 independent garden retailers, all of which featured California Friendly plant signs and displays in their stores last fall. Home Depot has agreed also to work with Metropolitan on a California Friendly product labeling campaign.

The increasing level of awareness among Southern California homeowners about the existing advertising campaign offers another sign of probable success. In November 2006, advertising awareness and recall among the sample consumer group was measured

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<sup>3</sup> Consumer Attitude and Awareness Survey, conducted by Strategic Consulting Research in November 2006 among 539 Southern California homeowners, distributed across the six-county region, and providing an accuracy level of +/- five percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

at 45 percent – a 12 percent increase from the 2005 study, and an awareness number on par with that achieved by the Flex Your Power energy-saving campaign in a similar study. Awareness and knowledge about smart sprinkler controllers increased from 15 percent in 2005 to 24 percent in 2006.<sup>4</sup> A year-long campaign will bring further gains to these awareness levels and increase the desired water-saving behavior.

### **Goal**

Voluntary water conservation from Southern California residents.

- *Note: Commercial, industrial and institutional water conservation, including rebates, industrial process improvements and large landscape irrigation improvements for homeowner associations, are addressed through Board authorized programs managed by Water Resources Management, and will not be detailed in this document.*

### **Measurable Objectives**

- Inform Southern Californians of the need for water conservation, and provide information, incentives and resources to use water more efficiently
- Gain support of the news media, civic and community leaders to spread the message
- Partner and collaborate with large landscape users such as Caltrans, city and county parks and golf courses to demonstrate water use efficiency
- Partner and collaborate with government agencies, businesses and non-profit organizations on resource efficiency campaigns

### **Target Audience**

Daily water consumption for Southern Californians living in Metropolitan's service area, estimated using the near normal year of 2005, is 126 gallons per person. A single-family household in the service area uses 474 gallons of water a day; and a multi-family household uses 281 gallons per day.<sup>5</sup>

Southern Californians will be asked to do his or her part to conserve water voluntarily through this campaign. To accomplish this, residents in Southern California will need to be informed and/or reminded about ways to use water more efficiently. They will be divided into two broad categories – single-family residents and multi-family residents. Product and incentive information, informational materials and resource lists to help save water will be developed for each type of resident.

#### *Opportunities for residential water conservation:*

- Almost all Southern California homeowners agree about the importance of controlling water consumption and reducing water use where possible.<sup>6</sup>
- Dry year conditions create high awareness of the need for water conservation.
- New technologies such as smart sprinkler controllers and rotating sprinkler heads are well-received by consumers who have tried them.

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<sup>4</sup> Consumer Attitude and Awareness Survey, November 2006

<sup>5</sup> Water Resource Management staff

<sup>6</sup> Consumer Attitude and Awareness Survey, November 2006



*Challenges to residential water conservation:*

- Water bills are low compared to other household bills. While some residents will be economically motivated based on total household income and local water rates, most will need additional motivation to save water.
- Frustration with public agencies, municipalities and others over their perceived lack of participation in water conservation activities. “They should first fix their own house,” one survey respondent said of highway sprinklers going off on rainy days.<sup>7</sup>
- Lack of knowledge about total household water use and effective ways to save water.
- Scarce availability (particularly in big box retailers) and perceived difficult installation of new water-saving devices, such as smart sprinkler controllers and rotating sprinkler heads.
- Low awareness of new water-saving devices such as smart sprinkler controllers and dual-flush or high-efficiency toilets, or rebates for them.<sup>8</sup>
- Perception of some residents that they have already done their part to save water.

*Benefits of residential water conservation to the target audience:*

- Reduced water and sewer bills
- Personal satisfaction from doing the right thing
- Lower maintenance landscaping saves time and money and reduces green waste
- Less run-off to storm drain systems protects watersheds and the ocean
- Saving water saves energy systematically, by reducing the need for pumping water for deliveries and for treating water

**Key Messages**

Key messages for this year-long campaign are designed by examining water use characteristics for the target audiences of single-family and multi-family residents. These are further defined by an examination of the timing of peak water demands.

For example, each resident may easily find ways to reduce water use by 10 percent, or about 13 gallons a day. Shortening showers by one or two minutes can reduce water use by up to 23 gallons a day (depending on showerhead efficiency). Fixing leaky faucets can save 20 gallons a day for every leak stopped.

Residents of single-family homes typically stand to make the greatest gains in water conservation. Single-family homes typically use more water than multi-family homes due to larger lot sizes, larger family sizes, and more water-using appliances. Today, residential outdoor water use among single-family homes averages 50 percent of total home water use. In 1993, residential outdoor water use was 35 percent of total home water use.<sup>9</sup> This may be a reflection of past successes in reducing indoor water consumption.

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<sup>7</sup> Homeowner Research Report, conducted by Alliance Consulting Group for Metropolitan, June 2006. In-depth interviews were conducted with 50 homeowner couples regionwide who have started or completed new landscape projects.

<sup>8</sup> Consumer Attitude and Awareness Surveys, June 2006 and November 2006

<sup>9</sup> Urban Water Use Characteristics in the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, April 1993

Installing a new smart sprinkler controller for outdoor landscapes can save up to 40 gallons of water a day. Using tools like the watering index and watering calculator on [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) allow homeowners to water landscapes only as much as needed, saving 750 to 1,000 gallons a month. Adjusting sprinklers so water goes on plants and turf instead of sidewalks and driveways can save 500 gallons per month.

Water savings vary based on weather conditions. The hot summer and early fall months bring the region's peak water demands. Demands are lowest in the winter.

Below is a list of recommended water conservation messages based on target audiences and time of the year. Priorities are set based on potential water-savings.

### **Summer – First Quarter**

These are the peak demand months, and it is recommended that any communications effort ask for conservation across the board. Sample universal messages to residents will be to:

- ◆ Take shorter showers.
- ◆ Fix leaky faucets.
- ◆ Turn the water off when you brush your teeth or shave.
- ◆ Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.
- ◆ Wash the car at a site that recycles water.

In addition, single-family residents will be asked to:

- ◆ Reduce the amount of time landscape is irrigated.
- ◆ Use a broom instead of the hose to clean the sidewalk.
- ◆ Install a new smart sprinkler controller and rotating sprinkler heads.

### **Fall – Quarter Two**

The days are shorter, but most people are still watering landscapes at summer levels. October is a transitional month that has seen historical high water demands when temperatures spike. This is the prime time for messaging about turning sprinklers down for fall, and planting California Friendly plants.

Messages to multi-family residents remain the same as summer, while single-family residents should now be asked to:

- ◆ Replace some turf with California Friendly plants, or consider artificial turf.
- ◆ Get a smart sprinkler controller and rotating sprinkler heads.

### **Winter/Spring – Quarters Three and Four**

The third quarter is historically cooler and wetter, and the fourth quarter is steadily warming up to June, the start of peak demand period. The “shoulder” months of April and May have seen high demands historically, depending on the weather. These two

quarters are an excellent time to get residents ready for peak water use months. January will also be launch of regional residential rebate program, if it is approved by the Board later this summer. Recommended messages are:

- ◆ Get a rebate on California Friendly products like high-efficiency clothes washers, high-efficiency toilets, smart sprinkler controllers and precision rotating sprinkler heads.

### *Messages*

**Need for immediate action:** Current dry year conditions mean that now is the time for residents to act. The water we save now may be the water we need next summer.

**Ease of implementation:** No matter where you live, there are simple steps you can take to start saving water today.

**Importance of using water efficiently:** Conservation is an important part of our regional water supply picture. Water agencies are counting on everyone to do their fair share.

**Keep up the good work:** Southern Californians have made many investments to reduce our reliance on imported water since the drought that ended in the early 1990s. This includes installing millions of water-wise toilets and showerheads. We need to continue this public ethic.

### **Strategies**

***Inform Southern California residents of the need for water conservation this year and provide them with information on products, incentives and practices to use water more efficiently***

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#### **Regional advertising campaign promoting ways to save water outdoors and water-saving devices**

In a service area encompassing 5,200 square miles and 18 million people, mass media outlets including radio, television, billboards, the Web (banner ads and search engine listings) and print are the most effective tools for heightening awareness of a call to action among the population. It is recommended that regional advertising through a combination of these outlets be conducted in English, Spanish and select Asian languages in the service area throughout 2007/08.

The overall outreach effort will be split into three distinct campaigns that promote water efficiency through actions specific to the season and weather conditions.

- Q1: Save water this summer.
- Q2: Turn down your sprinklers; minimize turf by using California Friendly plants or even trying artificial turf.
- Q3-Q4: Promotion of residential rebates on California Friendly products.

A campaign media plan will be created prior to each quarter based upon media outlet availability, pricing and audience demographics. Creative materials adhering to the messages laid out in this document will be developed based upon the media plan.

Member agency collaboration will be key in taking the message to the local level. To support member and sub-agency efforts, Metropolitan will provide advertisement templates, printed materials and bill stuffers for use locally. Member agencies wishing to buy into the campaign will be welcomed, and sponsoring agency names will be included in ads in proportion to the financial investment.

### **Internet Promotion**

The past three years have seen a revolution in new ways to communicate online, and it is recommended that Metropolitan seek to heighten awareness of its water conservation message through the Internet.

#### *Search Engine Marketing*

Staff recommends using search engine optimization, or SEO, to improve the volume and quality of traffic to bewaterwise.com. Currently, approximately 90 percent of the visitors to bewaterwise.com are direct traffic, meaning that they type in our specific Web address to reach our site. While this is good news in terms of visitor awareness of the site, it also is an opportunity for increasing traffic from those who have not yet been reached by our outreach efforts – such as someone who types “water conservation” into a search engine and sees the bewaterwise.com site appear among the top search results. The bewaterwise.com site will be evaluated for opportunities to optimize its code, presentation and structure.

Staff will also evaluate paid inclusion in search listings after seeing the results of the search engine optimization.

#### *Blogs and Forums*

There are several blogs that focus on gardening in Southern California, including the “In My Garden” blog by Yvonne Savio on the National Gardening Association Web site, “My California Garden in Zone 23” by Snowdrop, and Douglas Welch’s “A Gardener’s Notebook.” The California Gardening forum on GardenWeb.com has a lively community of gardeners offering tips and ideas. Bloggers and forums will be added to our media lists and pitched stories on water conservation and California Friendly gardening.

#### *YouTube*

This viral video-sharing Web site allows visitors to upload, share and view video clips. Videos are ranked by viewers and editors, and an editorial staff chooses those to be featured prominently. The top videos are typically billed as the most provocative, funniest and incredible clips of the day. According to the YouTube Web site, the user base is 18 to 55 years old, and it has 70 million potential viewers worldwide each day.

YouTube has entered into several promotional partnerships with media entities such as the BBC and film distributors, and most notably with all U.S. presidential candidates through its You Choose ’08 site. It is establishing itself as the leader in video-sharing on the Web.

We recommend a pilot program creating a dedicated YouTube Web site, such as the You Choose '08 site, to feature short how-to video clips on California Friendly gardening and irrigation maintenance. Response rate will be measured by click-throughs to [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) to determine if the site draws more attention to our resources.

#### *Social Networking Sites*

Social networking Web sites are ones that allow individuals to create a network of friends and exchange photos, journals and interests. There are four top sites: MySpace.com, Friendster, Xanga and Facebook.com. The emphasis of each is on meeting like-minded people and sharing photos, writings and music. A study of social networking site users in the U.S. found that approximately 70 percent of Friendster and MySpace.com users were above the age of 25. MySpace.com has more than 100 million registered users; however, it is unclear how many of these users are in Southern California and therefore our target audience.

The challenge with harnessing the power of social networking sites for a water conservation message is that users primarily are seeking to talk to friends, make new friends or meet romantic partners. To this end, to be successful on MySpace.com or Friendster would require the creation of a Metropolitan Water District or Water Conservation Campaign persona as well as fresh content on a very regular basis that encourages return visits as well as the addition of new friends.

Maintenance of a social networking site is similar to that needed for a regular Web site, primarily design, content creation and responsiveness to e-mails and requests for friends. At this time, we do not recommend the creation of a MySpace.com persona, but we believe it should be examined for its potential for online advertising opportunities and monitored for future opportunities.

### **Educational Partnerships**

#### *Elementary*

The Education Unit of External Affairs will create a K-5 elementary education curriculum supplement on indoor and outdoor conservation (including a segment on native plants). The supplement has already been discussed as an extension of the unit's Board-approved Strategic Plan.

The supplement would include grade-level appropriate hands-on activities for students, a teacher guide, a take-home survey to be shared and even signed by parents as a homework activity. The new supplement could be introduced to K-5 teachers presently using Metropolitan programs, as well as a whole new generation of students. It would be linked to both state content standards and environmental education principles.

This proposed concept has already received a high level of interest from member and retail agencies, along with other resource agencies. Interactive elements of the supplement could be replicated in the updated Education Web page.

*Middle School Education*

This conservation initiative would build on elementary school successes by providing an opportunity to partner with resource agencies, businesses and environmental education organizations to create a service-learning program for middle school students. The suggested water conservation projects would focus on small successes at each school or in students' own neighborhoods.

Both middle school students and their parents represent a highly underserved population, many times overlooked by education outreach programs. Service learning credit has become a school, and in many cases a graduation, requirement.

*High School and College Education*

New and existing programs reaching out to high school and college students will be enhanced with timely information on water supply issues as well as the need for conservation. The World Water Forum and Solar Cup programs will continue their focus on water conservation education.

**Television (Public/Cable)**

Strong statewide viewer response rates for four previous "Straight from the Tap" episodes about California Friendly homes, gardens and how-to landscaping indicate the effectiveness of including the cable television series in our media mix. "Straight from the Tap" broadcasts throughout California on 135 public and leased access cable outlets, including Comcast, Cox, Charter and Time Warner, as well as the Comet Network and numerous other city and government channels, representing a potential viewing audience of more than 17 million. Relatively low rates for prime-time slots as well as hundreds of free weekly broadcasts provide a cost effective vehicle for raising awareness and educating the public about California Friendly landscaping, homes and appliances in easy, accessible how-to formats.

To date, program broadcasts have generated more than 4,000 requests for the Garden Heritage CD-ROM. Anecdotal responses indicate a strong receptivity and acceptance of California Friendly message and motivation to implement the desired behavior.

We recommend the production of a new English and Spanish "Straight from the Tap" episode featuring the top 10 water saving tips inside and outside the home. These tips will be produced in four-minute segments – an ideal length for web streaming. The short segments also will combine to create two 30-minute episodes that will be broadcast statewide on public and leased access English and Spanish cable outlets.

**Film***"Running Dry: The American Southwest Documentary Project"*

To further enhance Metropolitan's community education and outreach efforts related to conservation, Metropolitan would support the production of a full-length feature film sequel to "Running Dry," that was previewed at the Board retreat in April.

The Chronicles Group, under the direction of James Thebaut, is currently developing this production. The proposed sequel will include a historical overview of the region, current water supply and demand issues, current and projected population projections and climate change. Metropolitan would join the Southern Nevada Water Authority as a lead sponsor of this endeavor and match their \$150,000 sponsorship.

## **Water Conservation Toolkit**

### *Web site*

Bewaterwise.com would further enhance its mission as Metropolitan's key resource for Southern Californians to find information on rebates and incentives, water-saving tips, educational programs, and information on California Friendly landscaping and products. The site will be revamped with info on the immediate call to action and easy tips to save water now. A Spanish language version will be created.

### *Collateral Materials*

#### California Friendly e-mail newsletter

Develop an e-mail newsletter devoted to California Friendly programs, water conservation tips and news. Develop a list of stakeholder e-mail addresses and distribute on a quarterly basis. Allow visitors to bewaterwise.com as well as YouTube site to subscribe.

#### Brochures

Metropolitan has developed a large library of conservation-related brochures, and these will continue to be available to member agencies, non-profits and other partners through the campaign. In addition, it is recommended that the following new materials be developed and distributed.

- One-sheet publication on dry year water-saving tips with information about this year's weather conditions
- California Friendly Landscape Designs (using City Makeover gardens as examples)
- How to buy rotating sprinkler heads for your irrigation system
- Tuning up your sprinkler system
- How to buy artificial turf

#### Sample Newsletter Articles

Several 150- to 250-word articles on the current water supply conditions as well as easy tips to save water will be drafted and provided to chambers, community organizations and legislators for inclusion in upcoming newsletters.

#### Presentations

A standardized presentation on the dry weather conditions and easy ways to save water will be created in PowerPoint as well as in talking points, and provided to representatives from Metropolitan and its member agencies who are asked to speak to the community.

### **Enlist support of the news media, civic and community leaders to spread the message**

Southern California residents will hear Metropolitan's call for action to save water through the steps outlined above. It will be made more effective through its reinforcement from the news media and community leaders who make the same call to action.

## **Media relations campaign**

Staff will target news media in three categories: news/water/environmental beat reporters/editors; home and garden writers/editors; and business writers/editors. A breakdown of specific media outreach actions by categories follows:

### News/water/environmental reporters/editors

Activities will include:

- ◆ Conduct editorial boards during summer months
- ◆ Place opinion pieces authored by Board members in multi-lingual community newspapers and community newspapers
- ◆ Regular press releases on supply conditions and coming events
- ◆ Conduct media inspection trip highlighting dry-year conditions
- ◆ Outreach to television weathercasters regarding dry year conditions and encourage use of watering index in report
- ◆ Book MWD spokespersons on public affairs shows on radio, television

### Home/garden reporters/editors

- ◆ Publicize smart sprinkler controller giveaways
- ◆ Promote garden contest winners
- ◆ Media events promoting City Makeover gardens as public examples of good landscaping – Barnsdall Park opens in July 2007
- ◆ Announce artificial turf rebate

### Business reporters/editors

- ◆ Publicity for business rebates and pay-for-performance programs like the large landscape program
- ◆ Memorandum of Understandings or press events with CalTrans, universities, LAUSD, cities, large businesses
- ◆ Publicity for EPA WaterSense programs

## **Community Partnerships**

### *Conservation Forum*

Residents will be influenced in their choices and/or abilities to save water by the following groups: property owners, landscape contractors, landscape designers, nurseries, retail irrigation outlets, irrigation manufacturers and distributors, plumbers, home developers and water suppliers. Representatives of Metropolitan and its member agencies will develop and maintain relationships with the appropriate trade, industry or community groups to encourage their support of water conservation.

Metropolitan will convene a summertime Conservation Forum to bring these influencers together for discussion of conservation messaging and a demonstration of the latest water-saving technologies. Invitees will include representatives from:

- ◆ California Nurseryman's Association
- ◆ California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
- ◆ Irrigation Association
- ◆ California Landscape Contractor's Association



- ◆ Building Operations Management
- ◆ Homeowners' Associations
- ◆ Environmental groups
- ◆ Gardening groups including Master Gardeners
- ◆ Native plant groups
- ◆ Building Industry Association
- ◆ Garden Writers Association
- ◆ Member water agencies
- ◆ Plumbers and pipefitters unions
- ◆ Artificial turf purveyors

*Outreach to regional civic leaders*

Community leaders can play a key role in promoting water use efficiency messages to their constituents through their speeches and newsletters. Their endorsement and inclusion of water conservation messaging in their own materials will provide further reinforcement and motivation for residents to save water. Sample newsletter articles and a one-sheet on tips to save water during this dry year will be provided to community leaders. Metropolitan's Government Affairs staff will ask for their support through:

- ◆ One-on-one meetings with city councils, legislative staff and others
- ◆ Community leader breakfast briefings
- ◆ Presentations to business and local government associations, such as chambers of commerce and Southern California Association of Governments
- ◆ Networking at local and regional events
- ◆ Redeployment of speakers' bureau to speak at community gatherings

***Partner and collaborate with large landscape users to create visual demonstrations of water use efficiency***

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Residents either will be encouraged by the actions of large landscape users, such as Caltrans, universities, golf courses and others to save water...or they will be discouraged by the perception of institutional inaction. Consumer research conducted in June 2006 for Metropolitan highlighted the skepticism of residents who are asked to save water while perceiving water waste from government agencies.

Water Resources Management staff will bring to the Board this summer new programs that will help large landscape users and owners save water. These include new audit programs for high-water-use customers and an increase in specialized landscape irrigation efficiency training for landscape maintenance professionals. External Affairs staff will work closely with WRM staff to pursue partnerships with high-profile organizations like Caltrans, municipalities and large businesses to participate in these programs.

It is recommended that these partnerships be highly visible to the general public. To this end, Metropolitan and its member agencies should pursue written pledges or agreements with these types of organizations to visually demonstrate water efficiency by turning off sprinklers during the day, installing new smart controllers and installing water-wise landscaping. These agreements should be publicized through the news media and on [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com).

For those large landscapes using recycled water, it is recommended that member agencies look into signage placed in a visible location signifying recycled water is being used. This signage will alert residents that it is not potable water and is reducing demand on drinking water supplies during dry conditions.

The 2003 and 2005 City Makeover program has created 31 examples of highly-visible public landscapes in cities such as La Mesa, Fullerton, Oceanside, San Jacinto and Altadena that were sustainably designed and use a minimal amount of water. It is recommended that these 31 sites, nearly all of which are now completed, be highlighted through press releases, collateral materials and on the Web site as stellar examples of public landscaping.

***Partner and collaborate with government agencies and others conducting resource efficiency campaigns***

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It is recommended that Metropolitan explore synergies between resource efficiency campaigns conducted by other government agencies, businesses and non-profit organizations and Metropolitan's water conservation message. These include the Flex Your Power energy-saving campaign, slated to begin in mid-June and run through September; the sanitation districts with run-off reduction campaigns, and the Vector Control agencies promoting mosquito abatement through removal of standing water. Retailers like Home Depot and Lowe's have also advanced environmental programs promoting resource conservation. Possible actions could include:

- ◆ Sponsorship of joint advertising campaign
- ◆ Joint messaging placed on resource materials

***Multi-Agency Climate Change Outreach Campaign***

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission invited Metropolitan to participate in and contribute to a multi-agency effort to begin a public education and outreach campaign on the effects of climate change on water utilities. The campaign would educate and coordinate efforts among water utilities, their customers and other stakeholders such as legislators and government officials regarding the potential impacts of climate change on water utility operations and mission.

In addition to Metropolitan, participants include Denver Water Agency, New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection Commission, Portland Water Bureau, San Diego County Water Authority, Seattle Public Utilities and Southern Nevada Water Authority. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission was the sponsor of the January Water Utility Climate Change Summit and has taken the lead in organizing the steering committee that will oversee the outreach campaign. Both the PUC and Southern Nevada Water Authority have pledged \$100,000 each to the effort.