



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 22, 2010

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Progress Report on Implementation of the City/County Water and Wastewater Study Phase II Report and Other Water Initiatives**

The Phase II Report (Report) of the City/County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Supply and Planning Study (WISP) was completed in December 2009 after 20 months of study and public deliberation. The Report, which is available on the Study website at www.tucsonpimawaterstudy.com, includes 19 goals and 56 recommendations for how the City and County can cooperatively work toward a sustainable water future. The Report's goals and recommendations are grouped into four integrated water resource planning areas: 1) Water Supply, 2) Water Conservation (or Demand Management), 3) Respect for Environment and 4) Comprehensive Integrated Planning.

On January 12, 2010, staff presented the Phase II Report at a joint meeting of the Pima County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the City of Tucson Mayor and Council (M&C). The BOS unanimously approved the Phase II Report and directed staff to develop an action plan to implement the Report's recommendations (Resolution No. 2010-16). Subsequently, on February 17, 2010, the M&C also approved the report and adopted a separate but identical Resolution (No. 21478) directing City staff to implement the Report's recommendations.

Phase II Action Planning Update

Interdisciplinary teams of staff from both jurisdictions were formed for each of the four water resource areas listed above to develop the joint action plan. The action plan will span a five year planning horizon and will include a prioritized list of projects or actions to implement the recommendations, resource needs, timelines, responsible departments and success indicators.

A draft action plan is scheduled for public review and comment in August 2010. Staff will hold peer review sessions on the draft plan with key stakeholder groups followed by more formal presentations to the respective citizen advisory committees of Tucson Water and the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) and the Planning and

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Zoning Commissions of the City and County. Additionally, staff will hold an open house, post the draft action plan on the Study website and send notification of the open house and public comment period to the BOS and M&C, the stakeholder mailing list and the media. Editorial Board meetings also will be conducted, and presentations will be provided to interested groups or individuals upon request.

The final action plan will be presented to the BOS and M&C in late October or early November 2010, and an annual progress report will be provided thereafter to the City and County's governing bodies and to their respective citizen advisory committees and Planning and Zoning Commissions.

Regional Process Update

A separate, parallel effort is also underway to identify a process for regional water sustainability planning. The WISP Scope of Work (available online at www.tucsonpimawaterstudy.com) identified Phases III through V as being regional in scope but did not specify in detail the activities that were to occur or who should lead them. The Phase II Report also identified 14 recommendations as being germane to a regional dialogue. The City and County's Resolutions identified the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) as a potential organizer of the regional process.

PAG responded positively and over the past few months has conducted interviews with a wide range of regional stakeholders to identify needs and opportunities for a regional study process. The dialogue is continuing, and at this time, there are at least two other entities interested in serving as co-conveners of the regional process, including The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRRC) and the Southern Arizona Water Users Association (SAWUA). Ms. Melaney Seacat, Project Coordinator, is in communication with these entities and will continue to maintain communication and coordination between the City/County Action Planning effort and the regional effort.

Blue Ribbon Panel

Staff from the City and County are participating on the State's Blue Ribbon Panel for Water Sustainability. The Governor has empowered this panel to recommend policy, rule or even statutory changes to foster improvements by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Arizona Corporation Commission that will contribute to a sustainable water future – a goal that is in alignment with objectives of the WISP. This represents a unique and timely opportunity to facilitate WISP Phase 2 recommendations related to regulatory change in the areas of policy or rule to optimize use of reclaimed water, gray water and remediated groundwater consistent with public health and safety.

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The Blue Ribbon Panel is scheduled to produce draft work group conceptual resolutions to issues identified by the Panel in the near future, with a final report expected by November of this year.

City of Tucson Specific Actions

Following the adoption of the City's Resolution in February, the M&C instructed City staff to immediately begin development of an updated water service policy and to address questions regarding the Conservation Effluent Pool. These topics were discussed at subsequent meetings of the M&C resulting in direction to 1) include clarification in the intergovernmental agreement for the Conservation Effluent Pool regarding the decision making process for allocating effluent for the environment; and 2) M&C approval of the updated water service policy on June 15, 2010 following a 30-day public comment period.

Summary

Various aspects of appropriate water sustainability for our region are being reviewed, deliberated and evaluated for policy recommendations. Pima County staff will remain engaged with these various initiatives and provide updates to the Board of Supervisors as appropriate.

CHH/mjk

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Michael Gritzuk, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation
Melaney Seacat, Project Coordinator, City/County Water and Wastewater Study
Kathleen Chavez, Water Policy Manager, Regional Wastewater Reclamation