

**Water Conservation Code Amendments Stakeholder Meeting Summary – Virtual Meeting – Zoom
February 1, 2023 - 3:30pm**

Meeting Summary:

On October 18, 2022, Mayor and Council directed staff to move forward with the following code amendments related to water conservation:

- **Prohibition of non-functional turf**
- **Requirement for WaterSense fixtures**
- **Requirement for separate meters for outdoor irrigation**
- Low Impact Development Standards (long term)
- Net Zero Water (long term)

City of Tucson, Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD) and Tucson Water conducted an online virtual meeting via Zoom, open to the public, on the code amendments related to water conservation: **prohibition on non-functional turf, requirement for WaterSense fixtures, and requirement for separate meters for outdoor irrigation.**

1. Prohibition on Non-Functional Turf (all new commercial development)

Turf regulation located in Section 7.6.4 of the UDC. The definition of non-functional turf from the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) will be utilized. Prohibition of new non-functional turf in new commercial, industrial and institutional developments, and common areas of residential developments. Active recreation is defined as, leisure activities, usually performed with others, often requiring equipment and taking place in prescribed places, sites, or fields.

- Code amendment aims to preserve Active Recreation Turf and attempts to eliminate Ornamental Turf.
- Conversions of existing non-functional turf within the next 3-5 years.

▪ Questions and Responses:

Q: How will the Oasis Allowance affect the 10% open space in areas located in the Infill Incentive District (IID)? 5% public and 5% private.

A: All development in the IID must adhere to the Oasis Allowance. Turf must be for active recreation.

Q: Will the state mandate prohibition of nonfunctional turf more than what the City of Tucson is looking to do? Has there been any push back from commercial developers thus far?

A: This code amendment has been presented to development groups and they have found it to be reasonable. The state has signed into a memorandum with several Arizona cities to reduce turf by 30%. There is currently no state legislature focused on regulating non-functional turf.

Q: Can you elaborate on the Oasis Allowance and what it includes? Can water limits be imposed on existing developments?

A: Mayor and Council can initiate mandatory water restrictions. There are other strategies that can be incorporated prior to mandatory restrictions.

2. Requirement for WaterSense Fixtures (all new developments)

This is a new amendment to the building code to specify WaterSense fixtures with all and any permitting. City staff is currently developing a plan for outreach and implementation to include a process to verify the authenticity of the installed WaterSense fixture. Coordination with local suppliers is key to support.

- Building code change does not require a Planning Commission meeting. Proposed code amendment will be reviewed by the Pima County / Tucson Joint Code Committee.

- Questions and Responses:

Q: What is the difference between water demand for current fixtures and the WaterSense fixtures?

A: The WaterSense fixtures have been certified.

- Toilets: current fixture use 1.6 gallon/flush, WaterSense – 1.28 gallon or less
- Urinals: current fixture use 1 gallon/flush, WaterSense – .5 gallon or less
- Showers: current fixture use 2.5 gallon/minute, WaterSense – 2 gallon/minute or less

Q: Will this building code change also apply to residential?

A: Yes, this will apply to residential and all development.

- Comment:

Having spent time checking model numbers, it is recommended that verification of the WaterSense fixture be conducted through the retailer.

3. Requirement for separate meters for outdoor irrigation (all new commercial development and common areas in new residential developments)

This change is in the building code but may need to be changed in the UDC as there is requirements in the Commercial Rainwater Harvesting Ordinance about submetering. This is a separate utility meter for outdoor irrigation. Existing commercial development plans were reviewed to understand correct landscaping area thresholds for an exception. Exceptions are based on landscape areas or potential water use. Thresholds of 5,000 sqft is typical of California and 10,000 sqft in Phoenix. Expansions will require a separate irrigation meter if: expansion of floor area of 25% or greater, landscape area that meets or exceed area threshold (5,000 sqft, 10,000 sqft, etc.), and change of use.

- Better monitoring of water use and identifying leaks
- Potential reduction of cost over time
 - Questions and Responses:

Attachment B: Summary of February 1, 2023 Stakeholder Meeting

Q: Is this for commercial and residential?

A: This includes commercial and common area of residential. More commercial multifamily common areas and not single family residential.

▪ Comments:

Suggestion that irrigation water stays within the designated landscape area.

In my opinion, since Tucson did not have an impact fee, irrigation meters around the city are oversized, it would help to look at the size of the meters rather than the size of the landscape area. After the system equity fee was implemented it became very cost prohibited for anyone wanting to add a designated irrigation meter to do so. The system equity fee pertains to new meters not new developments. Last checked there were 3,700 commercial properties without a designated irrigation meter in service area.

Sewer charges vary depending on type of business.

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/pimacounty/latest/pimacounty_az/0-0-0-8198#JD_13.24.600

4. Additional Questions and Comments

- Q: Why is the dental office allowed to put so much landscape? Doesn't the commercial rain harvesting put 50% demand to be generated from the rainwater harvesting. Can the code only require irrigation during the time it takes plants to become established?

A: The dental office is on a larger lot requiring more landscaping. The site does utilize 50% rainwater harvesting throughout the irrigated landscape.

- Q: What is your feeling that M&C will adopt these code amendments?
A: M&C directed staff to make changes. The code amendments may change throughout the process but are likely to be approved.
- Q: What is the likelihood for an existing property, the system equity fee be waived because that property has contributed for the rights to use the water outdoors?
Believes it is not fair for the existing customer to pay the system equity fee.
A: Thank you for the comment of the system equity fee. We will make sure it is part of the discussion moving forward.
- Q: How do we get businesses to use less water in their landscaping? Concerns with wasteful use of water.
A: Ongoing strategies are being developed to help address existing non-functional turf.
- Q: Can the slide show be made available?
A: Yes.

A recording of the meeting can be located [here](#).

Any additional questions or comments can be sent to Dan Bursuck at Dan.Bursuck@tucsonaz.gov.

Thank you,