

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: JUNE 14, 2021

SUBJECT: 2020 UPDATE TO WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN

ISSUES:

Conduct a public hearing to review the 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan; and recommend that the City Council adopt the 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board of Public Utilities:

1. Conduct a public hearing to review the 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan; and
2. Recommend that the City Council adopt the 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

Each urban water supplier must develop and adopt a Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) as part of its Urban Water Management Plan every five years. Defined by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as “a strategic plan developed by and for a water supplier to prepare and respond to water shortage”, the 2020 WSCP brings forth new prescriptive requirements mandated by Senate Bill 606. Among the new requirements is that the 2020 WSCP be a stand-alone document to be included and submitted along with water suppliers’ 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) by July 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND:

A WSCP provides a roadmap for a water supplier to follow when a water shortage occurs due to any number of conditions, such as drought, natural forces, system interruptions, regulatory action, or emergency events.

There are 12 elements required in the 2020 UWMP WSCP. These are included in the following table with a brief description.

	WSCP Requirements	Description
1	Water Supply Reliability Analysis*	Summarizes Chapter 7 of UWMP
2	Annual Water Supply and Demand Assessment Procedures*	A written decision-making process to determine annual water supply reliability
3	Six Standard Water Shortage Percentage Levels*	Adopt six standard shortage levels or cross-reference existing stages
4	Shortage Response Actions*	Specify supply augmentation, demand reduction, operational changes, local waste prohibitions, and shortage reduction for each action
5	Communications Protocols*	Description of how shortage levels and response actions will be communicated to customers and stakeholders
6	Compliance and Enforcement	Reference Code Enforcement procedures
7	Legal Authorities	Describe legal authority to declare water shortages
8	Financial Consequences of WSCP Activation	Description of potential revenue impacts for shortage response actions
9	Monitoring and Reporting	Description of monitoring and reporting customer response to mandatory shortage response actions
10	WSCP Refinement Procedures*	Description for evaluating and improving WSCP
11	Special Water Feature Definition*	Define water-supplied features (i.e., ponds, lakes, fountains)
12	Plan Adoption, Submittal, and Availability	Documentation of steps taken to adopt and submit WSCP
*Denotes new 2020 WSCP requirements.		

Although the new requirements are more prescriptive than the analysis required in prior UWMP WSCPs, many of the elements have long been included in a water suppliers' WSCP. The State's new requirements strive to standardize some aspects of the WSCP, though the details are left to the supplier to consider local conditions.

DISCUSSION:

The components of a WSCP provide urban water suppliers pre-planned guidance for managing and mitigating a water shortage. It is a roadmap for how to proceed through various levels of shortage. The first components are analyses—assessing water supply versus demand. If a water shortage is anticipated or RPU is faced with an actual water shortage, shortage responses will be implemented, including protocols on how customers will be informed of an expected or actual shortage and demand reduction actions that will be asked of them.

Below are the City of Riverside's proposed 2020 water shortage levels and their correspondence to the DWR's six standard shortage levels.

Riverside's Shortage Levels	Supply Condition	Supply Reduction		State's Standard Level	Shortage Level
1	Normal Water Supply	0%		1	≤10%
2	Minimum Water Shortage	15%		2	10-20%
3	Moderate Water Shortage	15-20%			
4	Severe Water Shortage	20-50%		3	20-30%
				4	30-40%
				5	40-50%
5	Emergency Water Shortage	>50%		6	>50%

Riverside's Water Shortage Levels are described in the Water Conservation Ordinance (Chapter 14.22 of the Riverside Municipal Code), which is a component of the City's WSCP. The Ordinance also describes permanent water waste prohibitions (i.e. hosing off sidewalks or watering during a rain event) and describes shortage response actions. Each water shortage stage has requirements and water use restrictions to reduce customer water demand to stave off more severe water shortage levels.

If conditions warrant, the City Council has the authority to declare a water shortage stage by resolution. If a water shortage is anticipated or is declared, the WSCP also describes a communications protocol that lists communication tools that can be employed to promote immediate behavioral changes. The intensity of communication efforts will increase to match the severity of shortages and water use restrictions.

As an adaptive management tool, the WSCP also contains provisions to revise and refine the document if an urban water supplier finds that its shortage actions are ineffective or have not produced the desired results. This provision will allow City Council the ability to make adjustments to refine the plan in the midst of a water shortage, should more action be needed by residents and customers to reduce water usage.

Impact to Customers

The elements of the WSCP, specifically those found in the City's Water Conservation Ordinance, identify, communicate, and limit wasteful water use practices while providing enforcement provisions to protect the City's water during a shortage. Ultimately, the WSCP is meant to improve preparedness for droughts and other water shortage conditions to minimize the impacts to customers.

RPU staff will file a copy of the WSCP with the California Department of Water Resources as required by the July 1, 2021 deadline following the WSCP and UWMP adoption by City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the approval of the required 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

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Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Certifies availability
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Attachments:

1. 2020 Water Shortage Contingency Plan
2. Presentation