



CITY OF BEND

City of Bend WaterWise Program

Environment & Climate Committee Engagement Summary

December 2021

The City of Bend is updating its award-winning WaterWise Program to build on current successes and continue to improve water-use efficiency. Prior to implementing updated measures, City staff sought policy-level advice from the Environment and Climate Committee (Committee) on the best-suited strategies to implement new water efficiency codes/standards.

This summary highlights advice from the Committee to the City's WaterWise Program team and documents the engagement process completed in fall 2021.

Background

The City's WaterWise Program uses national standards to establish water efficiency measures best-suited to Bend's community and climate. In 2021, the City prepared a state-approved Water Management and Conservation Plan that identified and modeled cost-effective water efficiency measures and related incentives. This included potential changes to better align existing codes/standards across the City. Along with reducing water waste, implementing these conservation measures can potentially save \$21 million by delaying the need for three new wells and a large reservoir.

As part of the engagement process leading into updates to the City's WaterWise Program, City staff shared information and collected feedback from the Committee. The nine-member Committee serves as an advisory body to City Council with a primary focus on providing input and recommendations related to environmental stewardship.

Meeting Series Overview

The discussion topics for the three-part meeting series with the Committee are outlined below.

- [Oct. 14, 2021: Part 1: Water Supply & Conservation Overview](#)
- [Nov. 10, 2021: Part 2: WaterWise Program History & Progress](#)
- [Dec. 9, 2021: Part 3: WaterWise Program Future & Next Steps](#)

Key Questions

The key questions posed to the Committee are noted below.

1. Do you think Bend should continue focusing on education or shift to enforcement to promote existing water waste regulations (Bend Code 14.20 Use of Water)?
2. Where do you think Bend should fall on the spectrum of voluntary to mandatory adoption of new indoor water efficiency standards? (Think faucets, showerheads, toilets, dishwashers, and other appliances.)
3. Where do you think Bend should fall on the spectrum of voluntary to mandatory adoption of new outdoor water efficiency standards? (Think outdoor irrigation equipment and controllers.)
4. Which perspectives do you think are most important to have at the table when the City forms the Conservation and Efficiency Technical Work Group in 2022?



Committee Advice

Themes from the advice provided by the Committee are highlighted below, including a selection of quotes from individual Committee members shown in italics.

Augment current methods to increase awareness and adoption of water efficiency

- *“Education is always a place where we can do better.”*
- *“It’s a great program, but like many conservation efforts it’s hard to get people’s attention. Perhaps increased incentives and enforcement will get that attention.”*
- *“Education/training AND incentive/rebates will make the transition to mandatory more accessible for the community.”*
- *“People need to know that it’s worthwhile, for a good reason. And also how to do it most cost-effectively themselves.”*

Balance education with enforcement for existing water waste regulations

- *“Education and enforcement go hand in hand, and both should be used appropriately to make sure it’s most effective without being draconian.”*
- *“Don’t give up on education, that’s by far the first piece. But once people are educated, enough with the excuses.”*
- *“Enforcement actions don’t need to be large for them to be effective.”*
- *“I thought of it as a three strikes you’re out sort of policy. Using those first two strikes for education, letting them know third strike here comes the enforcement.”*

Set a path toward mandatory water efficiency codes/standards

- *“Codes and standards work—they lower the baseline and give contractors, builders, homeowners, retailers a clear directive.”*
- *“If outdoor water use is the primary driver of demand and if demand is the long term issue, then mandatory adoption is necessary.”*
- *“For new construction or new permits for existing development, no reason efficiency should not be imposed.”*
- *“A period of incentives and rebates is a reasonable step to transition to new standards and codes, giving folks an opportunity to help off-set the costs.”*

Use data to prioritize new codes/standards on areas of greatest return

- *“Data-driven as much as possible, on costs, benefits, performance.”*
- *“Use the tools and policies to address the places where you get the most effectiveness. If it’s outdoor water use, then focus on that.”*
- *“Some of the ways the program has been effective so far is using meter data to do direct outreach to consumers.”*
- *“Think about new ways and new targets for information... that 10 percent that are going way over their water budgets, that would seem like a logical place to start.”*

Keep equity and affordability front and center when evaluating new requirements

- *“Perspective of environmental justice is critical any time mandates are discussed. Citations and upgrades affect community members differently.”*
- *“Make sure enforcement doesn’t become something that has an impact that’s inequitable for people who are not able to easily make fixes.”*



- *“Incentives would help. There is an equity piece to be aware of, and grandfathering buildings too.”*
- *“Smart mandatory adoption and enforcement of standards can be much more effective than simply voluntary standards... It’s a balance and all factors must be considered, including equity, affordability.”*

Engagement Process

Over the course of a three-part meeting series, City staff shared information and collected input from the Committee on four key questions. The following section summarizes the engagement process with the Committee. Additional meeting materials are provided in the appendix, including read-ahead resources and presentation materials.

Participants

Participants included the City team and Committee members listed below.

City Team

- Mike Buettner, City of Bend Utility Director
- Patrick Griffiths, City of Bend Water Resources Manager
- Dan Denning, City of Bend Water Conservation Program Manager
- Aubrie Koenig, Communications Support (Barney & Worth)

Committee

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|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Bill Welch | • Mark Buckley | • Serena Dietrich |
| • Kavi Chokshi | • Neil Baunsgard | • Tess Gardner
(alternate) |
| • Kellie Jensen | • Peter Grube | |
| • Kersey Goodwin | • Rory Isbell | |

Part One: Water Supply & Conservation Overview

At the October 14, 2021, Committee meeting, City staff introduced the WaterWise Program topic and the ask of the Committee, then addressed some of the common questions about water conservation before taking a closer look at the WaterWise Program.

Meeting Topics

- Planning for a Reliable Water Future: Water Supply Myths & Facts
- Regional Collaboration: Bend’s Role in the Deschutes Basin
- Managing Our Slice: Bend’s Best Opportunities to Improve Water Efficiency

Part Two: WaterWise Program History & Progress

At the November 10, 2021, Committee meeting, City staff described goals and opportunities for the WaterWise Program moving forward and asked for the Committee’s initial input on policy-level implementation strategies for new codes/standards.

Meeting Topics

- Bend’s Water Use Demands and Conservation Opportunities
- Current Water Waste Regulations
- Home Water Use Efficiency Standards: Voluntary or Mandatory
- Landscape and Irrigation Standards: Voluntary or Mandatory
- Next Steps: Policy-level Advice



Survey Highlights

After the second meeting, Committee members were asked to respond to an 8-minute online survey. A selection of write-in comments to the survey are incorporated in the Committee Advice section of this document. Additional abbreviated highlights from the survey responses are noted below, and a detailed summary of survey feedback is provided in the appendix.

Policy-level Advice: Current Water Waste Regulation

The Committee was asked for policy-level input regarding the City's existing water waste regulations, which include provisions for runoff and approved irrigation hours and days. The Committee suggested now is an appropriate time to start introducing more enforcement for existing regulations.

1. Do you think Bend should continue focusing on education or shift to enforcement to promote existing water waste regulations (Bend Code 14.20 Use of Water)?
 - o **Average: 4.4** on scale of 1=stick with education to 5=start enforcement.

Policy-level Advice: New Codes/Standards

The Committee was asked for policy-level input related to potential new codes/standards for indoor and outdoor water efficiency measures. The Committee suggested moving towards mandatory water efficiency codes/standards for indoor and outdoor water use.

- Where do you think Bend should fall on the spectrum of voluntary to mandatory adoption of new indoor water efficiency standards?
 - o **Average: 5.3** on scale of 1=all voluntary to 7=all mandatory.
- Where do you think Bend should fall on the spectrum of voluntary to mandatory adoption of new outdoor water efficiency standards?
 - o **Average: 6.0** on scale of 1=all voluntary to 7=all mandatory.
- If new standards/codes are mandatory, how quickly do you think those should be implemented?
 - o **Top ranked:** 'after a period of more education/training,' 'phased in over time,' 'after a period of incentives/rebates.'

Conservation and Efficiency Technical Work Group

The Committee was asked for feedback related to a future Technical Work Group that will work with City staff to consider code alignment and other implementation details of updates to the WaterWise Program. The Committee suggested including a cross-section of professional and community perspectives and emphasized the importance of using an equity lens to evaluate potential updates.

1. Which perspectives do you think are most important to have at the table when the City forms the Technical Work Group in 2022?
 - o **Top ranked:** landscape and irrigation contractors, large water users, ECC.
 - o Additional perspectives: equity, homeowner groups, water resources, conservation habitat, multi-family residences, youth, behaviorist, economist.

Part Three: WaterWise Program Future & Next Steps

At the December 9, 2021, Committee meeting, the City team and Committee discussed survey responses and advice for the three policy-level areas and the future Technical Work Group.



Meeting Topics

- Survey Feedback Highlights
- Advice on Three Policy-level Areas
- Advice for Technical Work Group
- Next Steps: Dec. 16 Subgroup Meeting to Finalize Memo

Subgroup Meeting

A subgroup of five Committee members met with the City team on December 16, 2021, to review and finalize this summary document.

Additional advice from the subgroup discussion is noted below.

- Establish a roadmap to achieve mandatory water efficiency codes/standards that allows time for ramping up education/training and a period of incentives/rebates.
- Use the engagement with the Technical Work Group to help identify clear, measurable outcomes to guide potential new water efficiency codes/standards.
- Consider implications for non-City water when looking at updates to the WaterWise Program and potential new water efficiency codes/standards.

Summary

The Committee's advice to the City's WaterWise Program team will inform next steps in the planned public engagement process. In 2022, the City plans to form a Technical Work Group with 8 to 10 members representing a cross-section of perspectives who will meet regularly over the course of 12 months. This summary of the Committee's policy-level advice will be shared with the Technical Work Group as a starting point. The Technical Work Group will consider code alignment and other implementation details for updates to existing water waste regulations as well as new indoor and outdoor water efficiency codes/standards and incentives.