

# CITY COUNCIL REPORT



Meeting Date: July 10, 2023  
General Plan Element: *Public Services & Facilities*  
General Plan Goal: *Ensure renewable, long-term water supplies*

## **ACTION**

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Adopt Ordinance No 4606, AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 49, "WATER, SEWERS & SEWAGE DISPOSAL," OF THE SCOTTSDALE REVISED CODE BY ADDING SECTION 49-248 TO LIMIT WATER INTENSIVE LANDSCAPES/TURF AREAS ON NEW SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES TO REAR YARDS ONLY.

## **BACKGROUND**

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On October 25, 2022, Council approved Scottsdale Water to sign a Memorandum of Understanding by and among Colorado River Basin Municipal and Public Water Providers. The purpose of the MOU was to identify opportunities, commit to reducing water consumption, and address the need for a heightened collaborative approach to reduce demand and commit to water efficiency practices across all providers within the seven Colorado River basin states. One of the measures of the MOU is to "promote an ethic of wise water use through...limitations on new turf".

On April 25, 2023, Scottsdale Water presented to Council several additional water conservation initiatives/options that align with the contents of the MOU and the ability to further Scottsdale's water conservation ethic and culture. Among the items bulleted in the 7-basin state MOU that Council agreed to have staff investigate non-functional turf (grass). The Drought Management Team and Scottsdale Water discussed these items with a number of avenues to consider on how to approach each item. One of the concepts that was presented to the Team was a water conservation customer feedback survey on some of these initiatives.

A survey was prepared and sent out to Scottsdale Water customers on June 15<sup>th</sup> and one of the questions asked was about a prohibition of grass (turf) in the front yards of new homes. The response to the survey was overwhelming supportive with 86% in support of this initiative.

Due to the overwhelming support of this item and the positive message it tells about Scottsdale's commitment to conservation, Scottsdale Water recommends adding language to codify that Water Intensive Landscapes (turf), is restricted to rear yards only for new Single Family Residential homes.

**Recent Staff Action**

Drought Management Team discussed and recommended action.

**RESOURCE IMPACTS**

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**Available funding**

No funding is needed.

**Staffing, Workload Impact**

Current staffing is adequate to implement and manage.

**OPTIONS & STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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**Recommended Approach**

Adopt Ordinance No. 4606

**Description of Option B**

Not approve Ordinance amendment

**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)**

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Scottsdale Water

**STAFF CONTACT(S)**


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Brian Biesemeyer, Executive Director, Water Resources, [BBiesemeyer@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:BBiesemeyer@scottsdaleaz.gov)

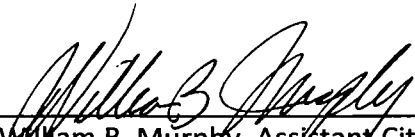
Gretchen Baumgardner, Water Policy Manager, [GBaumgardner@Scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:GBaumgardner@Scottsdaleaz.gov)

**APPROVED BY**

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Brian K. Biesemeyer, Executive Director, Water Resources  
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JUNE 23, 2023  
Date

  
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William B. Murphy, Assistant City Manager  
480-312-7954, [bmurphy@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:bmurphy@scottsdaleaz.gov)

6/23/2023  
Date

**ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Ordinance No. 4606

ORDINANCE NO. 4606

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 49, "WATER, SEWERS & SEWAGE DISPOSAL," OF THE SCOTTSDALE REVISED CODE BY ADDING SECTION 49-248 TO LIMIT WATER INTENSIVE LANDSCAPES/TURF AREAS ON NEW SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOMES TO REAR YARDS ONLY

WHEREAS, as a water provider, the City is committed to comprehensive planning, in order to secure an assured water supply for needs today and those of the future; and

WHEREAS, water waste hampers the City's ability to do so, especially in times of drought, and is a public nuisance; and

WHEREAS, droughts are unavoidable, but their impact can be lessened by implementing drought management plans, restrict the use of water in escalating degrees, as the severity of the situation dictates; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the imposition of restrictions on water intensive landscapes and turf installations can further the drought management policies of the City;

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale that the following amendments to Chapter 49 of the Scottsdale Revised Code are hereby approved:

Section 1. Chapter 49, Article VII, Division 1, regarding Water Conservation is hereby amended to add a new Section 49-248 as follows:

**Sec. 49-248. Limitation on water intensive landscape/turf areas on new Single-Family Residential homes.**

A. For any new Single-Family Residential home issued a building permit on or after August 15, 2023, Water Intensive landscape/Turf shall only be located in rear or side yards that are fully enclosed with a fence or wall that is a minimum of three feet in height.

B. Subsection A shall not apply to Single-Family Residential homes already permitted or constructed prior to August 15, 2023. However, for any such homes, the amount of Water Intensive Landscape/Turf that is located in an area other than a rear or side yard that is fully enclosed with a fence or wall that is a minimum of three feet in height shall be limited to the extent that such Landscape/Turf is already installed or in existence as of August 15, 2023.

Section 2. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance or any part of the Code adopted herein is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Scottsdale this \_\_\_\_\_ day of July, 2023.


ATTEST:

CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
an Arizona municipal corporation

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Ben Lane, City Clerk

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David D. Ortega, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
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Sherry R. Scott, City Attorney

By: Eric C. Anderson, Senior Assistant City Attorney

# Limitation on Water Intensive/turf Landscape for NEW Single Family Residential home in front yards



July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023



# Agenda

- October 2022 Colorado River Basin MOU
- Commitments associated with the MOU
- April 2023 Presentation to council on several additional water conservation conceptual initiatives
- Survey
- Recommendation



# The MOU calls for the following commitments:

- Continue and expand our programs to increase indoor and outdoor water use efficiency.
- Introduce a program to reduce the quantity of non-functional turf grass by 30% through replacement with drought- and climate-resilient landscaping.
- Increase water reuse and recycling programs.

Memorandum of Understanding  
by and among Colorado River Basin Municipal and Public Water Providers  
August 24, 2022

Over the past two decades, the Colorado River basin has experienced the worst drought in the last 1,200 years, which has reduced storage levels in Lakes Powell and Mead to unprecedented and critical levels. Water users throughout the basin must reduce demands to bring supply and use back into balance.

For over 20 years, communities have adapted to persistent and intensifying drought and reduced water supplies by achieving significant efficiencies in water use through direct and indirect conservation programs, including improved technology for indoor water fixtures, changes to landscapes and watering practices, conservation-oriented rates and fees, reuse and recycling programs, marketing and education campaigns, and efficient land use and development policies. Yet, climate change and the resulting hydrological shifts we are experiencing require all water users in the basin to redouble our efforts to conserve our water resources.

Our customers have demonstrated their commitment to conserving our essential water resources by reducing per capita water use by the following amounts since 2000.

- Aurora Water – 36%
- Denver Water – 36%
- The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – 33%
- Pueblo Water – 32%
- Southern Nevada Water Authority – 39%

Together, since 2000 we have decreased annual water use by 1,153,000 acre-feet while also adding 3.7 million people to our communities.

Much of this savings has been achieved through indoor and outdoor water use efficiencies. Recognizing that a clean, reliable water supply is critical to our communities, we can and must do more to reduce water consumption and increase reuse and recycling within our service areas. We pledge to be part of the solution.

Specifically, we commit to take the following actions:<sup>1</sup>

1. Continue and expand our programs to increase indoor and outdoor water use efficiency.
2. Introduce a program to reduce the quantity of non-functional turf grass by 30% through replacement with drought- and climate-resilient landscaping, while maintaining vital urban landscapes and tree canopies that benefit our communities, wildlife, and the environment.

<sup>1</sup>Water wholesalers, including The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, do not have regulatory authority over the use of water by end users and may only commit to develop incentive programs and model ordinance language to provide assistance to their Member Agencies in support of the phase out of non-functional turf within their service areas to help achieve this goal.



## To support this commitment of and further a water conservation culture

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- A survey was prepared and sent out to Scottsdale Water customers on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- One of the questions asked was about a prohibition of grass (turf) in the front yards of new homes.
- The response to the survey was overwhelming supportive with 86% in support of this initiative.





# Single Family Residential New builds

- Ordinance 4606 would limit turf (grass) on Single-Family Residential homes built or permitted after August 15, 2023, to rear/side yards.





## Staff Recommends:

**Adopt Ordinance No. 4606** an ordinance of the council of the City of Scottsdale to approve amendment to Chapter 49. “Water, Sewer & Sewage Disposal” of the Scottsdale revised code by adding section 49-248 to limit Water intensive Landscape/turf areas on New Single-Family Residential homes to rear yard only.



# THANK YOU

