

Water Forward Ordinances

What are alternative waters?

Alternative waters include centralized reclaimed water or decentralized onsite rainwater, storm water, graywater, blackwater and air conditioning condensate to meet non-potable water needs. Non-potable water needs do not require drinking water for uses such as outdoor watering, decorative water features, toilet flushing, clothes washing, pavement and building washing, and cooling tower make-up water.

For more information visit austintexas.gov/waterforward or contact

Marisa Flores Gonzalez
Water Forward Program Manager
marisa.flores@austintexas.gov

Austin's 100-year water plan, [Water Forward](#), was approved by the Austin City Council on November 29, 2018. The plan calls for increased conservation, use of alternative waters, and storage strategies for use during drought.

On May 2, 2019, the Austin City Council directed staff to work on an accelerated schedule, where feasible, to include regulatory requirements for developments >250,000 square feet related to water benchmarking, dual plumbing, alternative water, and landscape transformation in the Land Development Code Revision that is scheduled for adoption in December 2019.

Stakeholder Engagement

In response to Council direction, Austin Water began a stakeholder engagement process to help inform development of ordinance language. Public workshops were held on June 25, 2019 and July 23, 2019.

Presentations and videos from the stakeholder workshops are available at austintexas.gov/waterforward.

Key takeaways from the workshops included:

- ◆ Stakeholders suggested creating an incentive program for alternative onsite water systems to inform future requirements.
- ◆ Clarification on the definition of a development project is needed.
- ◆ More information about alternative onsite water system costs vs. benefits is needed. There is a desire for developer incentives to offset system costs.
- ◆ Stakeholders would like to see more interdepartmental coordination during review of their development projects and not additional regulatory barriers.

Summary of Proposed Ordinance Changes

Austin Water considered input from stakeholders and the Water Forward Task Force in developing the draft Water Forward ordinance changes that were submitted for inclusion in the Land Development Code Revision. Austin Water staff has proposed the following ordinance changes:

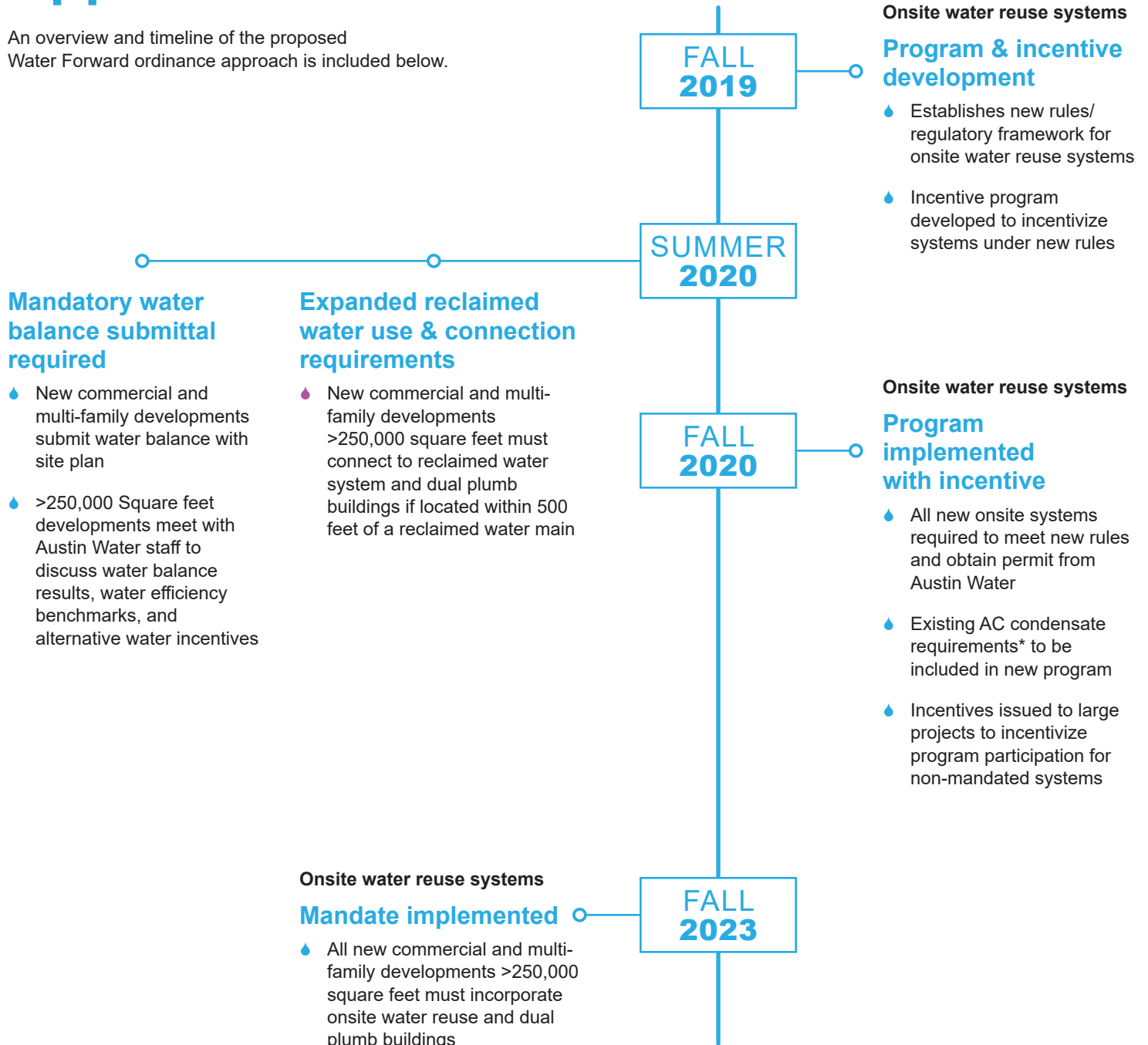
- ◆ Mandatory water balance submittal for new commercial and multi-family development and expanded reclaimed water use and connection requirements in Summer 2020
- ◆ Onsite water reuse systems and dual plumbing
 - Regulatory framework for onsite systems and incentive program to be implemented in Fall 2020
 - Mandatory requirements for commercial and multi-family developments over 250,000 square feet to be effective in 2023

Austin Water staff have also coordinated with City staff leading the revision of the City's Landscape Ordinance to work toward reducing water demand.



Proposed Ordinance Approach

An overview and timeline of the proposed Water Forward ordinance approach is included below.



**Existing A/C Condensate Recovery Rules for Cooling Systems*

New facilities with 100 tons or more cooling capacity must offset at least 10% of make-up water with alternative water.
New facilities with 200 tons or more cooling capacity must reuse A/C condensate onsite.