Item #63
Revised Draft Resolution
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RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the City of Austin holds some of the most senior municipal run-of-river water rights granted by the State of Texas to divert a maximum of 292,703 acre-feet per year from the Colorado River for municipal use; and

WHEREAS, there are various conditions, typically during dry weather, under which this run-of-river water would not reliably be available to the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, Austin has entered into back-up water supply agreements with Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) for an additional 325,000 acre feet per year to further ensure water availability under a wide range of hydrologic conditions, including droughts; and

WHEREAS, LCRA's 2020 Water Management Plan is designed to ensure that stored water for firm demands is available without shortage through a repeat of the Period of Record, including the Drought of Record; and

WHEREAS, based on evaluation of hydrologic and water supply conditions which include drought duration, inflow volumes, and combined storage conditions (e.g. combined storage volumes below 600,000 AF (30% capacity)), LCRA may require mandatory curtailments of firm water demand that could substantially reduce the available firm water supply through mandatory pro-rata curtailment of firm water; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin approved a Drought Contingency Plan to conserve the available water supply and protect the integrity of water supply facilities, with particular regard for domestic water use, sanitation and fire protection, and to protect and preserve public health, welfare, and safety and

minimize the adverse impacts of water supply shortage during drought or other emergency water supply conditions; and

WHEREAS, the adoption and periodic update of a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) is a requirement of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and this plan was updated in 2019 incorporating applicable revisions to the City's Water Conservation Code; and

WHEREAS, this document provides triggers for the initiation of Drought Stages associated with changes in storage levels; and

WHEREAS, during the years between 2008 and 2016, Central Texas experienced a drought so severe that storage levels of the Highland Lakes, the City's primary source of drinking water, were as low as 37 percent; and

WHEREAS, this drought is now recognized by the LCRA as a drought worse than the 1950s drought of record; and

WHEREAS, Katharine Hayhoe, renowned climatologist and atmospheric scientist, produced a 2014 report for the City of Austin ~~in 2014~~, "Climate Change Projections for the City of Austin," which used local data about ~~to predict, based on~~ historical patterns to project , ~~that~~ areas such as the U.S. Southwest are projected to become drier while drought conditions in summer are likely to become more severe as global temperature increases; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the City Council adopted Resolution No. 20140410-033 creating the Austin Water Resource Planning Task Force to evaluate the City's water needs, to examine and make recommendations regarding future water planning, and to evaluate potential water resource management scenarios for Council consideration; and

WHEREAS, among the key recommendations of the Water Resource Planning Task Force was the development of an Integrated Water Resource Plan (IWRP) with substantial and meaningful public participation and outside consultants to develop water/energy efficiency, reuse, and decentralization strategies; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20141211-119 created the Water Resource Planning Task Force to support the Integrated Water Resource Plan with representation from a broad array of usage sectors and with significant expertise in water efficiency and innovation—this Task Force became known as the Water Forward Task Force; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Council ~~adopted~~ approved "Water Forward: An Integrated Water Resource Plan" in November of 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Water Forward Integrated Water Resource Plan is the culmination of ~~over~~ more than three years of effort by the task force, staff, and consultants, and it represents a transformational plan for Austin that will guide Austin's water future for the one hundred years; and

WHEREAS, the Water Forward Plan models potential climate change effects on Austin's water supplies and rapid population growth and evaluates multiple future scenarios to plan for droughts worse than what we have experienced in the past; and

WHEREAS, the Water Forward Plan ~~and~~ recommends ~~a suite of~~ strategies that include both major water supply projects and incremental solutions to augment Austin's access to water during drought when our core surface water supplies are severely limited; and

WHEREAS, the Water Forward Plan ~~upon adoption in 2018 the plan~~ identifies multiple strategies to be implemented within ~~a~~ 5 ~~-~~years ~~implementation horizon~~of the 2018 Council approval. These ~~, including~~ include the following:

- Alternative water ordinance for new larger commercial and multifamily development
- Dual plumbing ordinance for new larger commercial and multifamily development
- Expansion of current reclaimed water system connection requirements
- Water benchmarking and budgeting for new development
- Monitor existing ordinances related to air conditioning condensate reuse and cooling tower and steam boiler efficiency
- Expand alternative water incentive program
- Expand landscape transformation incentive program
- Expand irrigation efficiency incentive program
- Study and begin design, construction, and testing of an Aquifer Storage and Recovery pilot
- Implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure
- Enhance utility water loss reduction program
- Expand the centralized reclaimed water system
- Explore community-scale decentralized reclaimed water options
- Refinement of Indirect Potable Reuse strategy

• Refinement of Capture Lady Bird Lake Inflows strategy

• Begin preliminary analyses to support five-year Water Forward plan update; and

WHEREAS, several of the above strategies have been implemented by staff and approved by Council, but others were proposed during the Land Development Code Revision Process, which has been stalled due to litigation for ~~over~~ more than a year; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2021 report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, "drier conditions in the Southwest U.S. associated with La Niña and the failed 2020 summer monsoon have been contributing factors to the development and intensification of what represents the most significant U.S. spring drought since 2013, which will impact approximately 74 million people";~~"~~ and

WHEREAS, according to Mary Erickson, deputy director of the National Weather Service, "T~~t~~he Southwest U.S., which is already experiencing widespread severe to exceptional drought, will remain the hardest hit region in the U.S., and water supply will continue to be a concern this spring in these drought-affected areas";~~"~~ and

WHEREAS, LCRA manages the Highland Lakes, including its water supply reservoirs L~~l~~akes Travis and Buchanan, and current storage reservoir levels of Lakes Buchanan and Travis stand at 88 and 60 percent respectively; **NOW THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City Manager is directed to immediately consult with Austin Water staff and seek input from the Water Forward Task Force regarding the implementation of the below strategies of the Water Forward Plan to ensure the most comprehensive diversification of our water supply and conservation portfolio to prepare for impending future population growth and drought conditions:

- Dual plumbing ordinance for new larger commercial and multifamily development
- Expansion of current reclaimed water system connection requirements
- Water benchmarking and budgeting for new development
- Landscape transformation ordinances and incentive programs
- Irrigation efficiency and incentive program;

ADOPTED: _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk