



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 10/7/2015

In Control: Transportation, Technology and Utilities Committee

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Community Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Dugan

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources City of San Antonio Water Policy Study.

SUMMARY:

Briefing on the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources City of San Antonio Water Policy Study to analyze policies, procedures and regulations being developed to ensure water security through the year 2060.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City's Water Policy Study currently is in draft form. The Water Policy Study was initiated through a City Council Consideration Request memo from Councilman Nirenberg filed on February 10, 2014. A subsequent memo reflecting the work of Mayor Castro and Councilman Nirenberg was issued to the Mayor and City Manager on April 10, 2014 by Councilman Nirenberg. Councilman Nirenberg's April 10 correspondence provided additional guidance on the scope of work for the Water Policy Study.

City staff had contemplated developing a Request for Proposal to solicit an entity to develop the Water Policy Study. Through our inquiry stages, it was brought to our attention from a water policy expert at the University of California that the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources (IRNR) was the preeminent water policy organization in the State of Texas. Since the IRNR is affiliated with the Texas A&M University System, the City had the option to negotiate an Interlocal Agreement as authorized by the Texas Government Code. City staff's approach to recommend an Interlocal Agreement with the IRNR for the City's Water Policy Study was presented to the City Council's Infrastructure & Growth Committee on May 21, 2014. The Council Committee concurred with this approach.

On October 9, 2014, City Council approved the Interlocal Agreement with the IRNR for the development of the

Water Policy Study in the amount of \$98,096. The study was funded entirely with one-time revenue received in FY 2015 from the City of Fair Oaks Ranch in exchange for the City of San Antonio's release of a portion of our Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to Fair Oaks Ranch. The Study was to have been completed by February 28, 2015; however, a contract extension was requested by the IRNR. The City received the first draft Study on May 1, 2015.

On May 4, 2015 the City shared the draft Study with SAWS. During the months of May and June 2015, City and SAWS staff conducted a peer review of the draft Study and provided a series of recommended edits to the IRNR on June 4, 2015. City and SAWS staff met with the IRNR staff to discuss both City and SAWS recommended edits on June 9 and June 12, 2015.

Subsequently, a second draft of the Study was submitted to the City on July 14, 2015. Planning & Community Development staff has been working with the IRNR since July 2015 to correct continued inaccuracies, outdated information, and opinionated statements within the draft Study prior to its release and presentation to the full City Council

Examples of inaccuracies and omission of current facts within the draft Study include:

- Inaccurate statements suggesting SAWS would reduce its conservation goals due to the Visa Ridge Project.
- Omitted facts regarding the agreement between SAWS and Vista Ridge that allows SAWS to continue to receive water for an additional 30 years beyond the current contract term.
- Omitted facts that SAWS has contractual protections in place to ensure financial security of the Vista Ridge project.
- Inaccurate statements that suggests SAWS Recycled Water System lacks transparency.
- Omitted facts on work to date by SAWS in their addressing of lost water/non-revenue water including the fact that SAWS has had a consultant since 2013 to assist in this area.
- Failed to acknowledge ongoing efforts by SAWS to use the City's and the MPO's population projections for the region within its 2015 Water Management Plan.
- Unsubstantiated statements suggesting that surface water from treatment plants and water from pipelines are more susceptible to contamination than groundwater sources.
- Inaccurate statements suggesting SAWS has not made any advancement in water diversification lessening its dependence on the Edwards Aquifer.
- Omitted facts that SAWS will have the largest inland-water desalination plant in the United States and how the desalination plant and other water supply diversification efforts would reduce reliance on the Edwards Aquifer.
- Inaccurate statements pertaining to the Twin Oaks Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project indicating the project's water capacity was not defined.

As of today, with the input from SAWS, City staff has provided a second version of correction edits to the IRNR covering the 174 page Water Policy Study that pertains to the City San Antonio. The total 235 page Water Policy Study also includes analysis for the City of Fair Oaks Ranch.

ISSUE:

This is a briefing on the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources City of San Antonio Water Policy Study to analyze policies, procedures and regulations being developed to ensure water security through the year 2060.

In a memo dated September 23, 2015, Dr. Roel Lopez, IRNR Director, identified a three-step process to release the final Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources City of San Antonio Water Policy Study: 1) review the July draft report from Dr. Calvin Finch (lead Principal Investigator, now retired) with the latest edits and comments following the July 2015 version; (2) submit the updated draft water report through a scientific peer-review process, and address comments and suggestions from reviewers in a new draft version; and (3) release the final draft report to the City of San Antonio for final comments and submission. Given the significant policy implications of the water report, the peer review process is an added measure of quality assurance and scientific soundness. The anticipated release of the final document is late October 2015.

City staff will provide a subsequent City Council B session to review the findings and recommendations of the final report.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is a briefing for informational purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is a briefing for informational purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is a briefing for informational purposes only.