



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-3245, **Agenda Item #:** 30.

11/9/2023

Posting Language

Set a public hearing to consider an ordinance amending City Code Section 25-9-411 (Reclaimed Water Connection Requirements) to extend the variance for reclaimed water connection requirements in large development projects with a multifamily component. (Suggested date: November 30, 2023, at Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street, Austin, Texas).

Lead Department

Austin Water.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

November 29, 2018 - City Council approved the Water Forward Plan on a 10-0 vote.

December 11, 2019 - City Council approved an ordinance on first reading adopting a comprehensive revision to the Land Development Code on a 7-4 vote.

February 13, 2020 - City Council approved an ordinance on second reading adopting a comprehensive revision to the Land Development Code on a 7-4 vote.

May 20, 2021 - City Council adopted a resolution directing staff to prepare an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-9 (Water and Wastewater) to establish water benchmarking, expand reclaimed water connection requirements, and add onsite reuse requirements on an 11-0 vote.

June 10, 2021 - City Council adopted an ordinance waiving Planning Commission review of Land Development Code amendments in order to expedite implementation of water conservation strategies in the Water Forward Plan.

September 30, 2021 - City Council adopted an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-9 (Water and Wastewater) establishing new requirements for water conservation in the implementation of the Water Forward Plan, including expansion of the reclaimed water connection requirement, water benchmarking, and mandatory onsite water reuse for certain new developments and requiring an affordability report, on a 10-1 vote.

For More Information:

Inquiries should be directed to Blanca Madriz, Austin Water Program Coordinator at 512-972-0115 or blanca.madriz@austintexas.gov.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

November 12, 2019 - Planning Commission adopted Planning Commission Land Development Code amendments.

Additional Backup Information:**Reclaimed Water Connection Requirements**

Austin Water continues to expand its centralized reclaimed water infrastructure (known as “purple pipe”) throughout Austin. This system delivers non-potable water for irrigation, cooling towers, and virtually any use not requiring higher-quality drinking water. Reclaimed water is a renewable resource that is less expensive to treat, resulting in rates lower than those charged for drinking water. Since 2015, City Code has required new commercial developments or redevelopments within 250 feet of a reclaimed water main to connect to Austin Water’s reclaimed water system for irrigation, cooling, and other significant non-potable water uses. The September 2021 amendments expanded the mandatory connection distance from 250 feet to 500 feet for development projects with a gross floor area of 250,000 square feet or larger. The expanded requirements also require developments that fall within the mandatory reclaimed water connection range to use reclaimed water for toilet flushing, which requires dual plumbing.

Connection Requirement Variance for Multifamily Development

City Code Section 25-9-411(D) currently requires that the Austin Water Director grant a variance from reclaimed connection requirements for large developments (250,000 square feet or more gross floor area) with a multifamily component located more than 250 feet from (but within 500 feet of) a reclaimed water line. This variance as currently codified expires on December 1, 2023.

Austin Water staff will propose an amendment to extend the variance to April 1, 2024, in order to allow more time to consider further Code changes related to both on-site water reuse systems and connecting to Austin Water’s reclaimed water system and to consider exemptions for affordable housing. By March 7, 2024, additional ordinance changes will be submitted for Council consideration to further refine reclaimed connection requirements and exemptions for certain affordable housing units.