



City of Lamar Public Works Dept.

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To whom it may concern,

The City of Lamar is reaching out to the State of Colorado in an attempt to update the State with a progress report of its Water Efficiency Plan so that grant funding may be released in order to complete that plan. The Water Efficiency Plan, itself, has been fairly complete for some time now. In an effort to make the Plan more relevant, the City would like to update the existing document with information that is also current. Once the remainder of the grant is released, it is the intent of the City to employ the assistance of its water engineers to aid in this endeavor. In order to demonstrate the progress made towards completion of the Water Efficiency Plan, the following items will be addressed: the success of meeting previously identified goals and objectives, obstacles encountered, preliminary findings or accomplishments, and potential need for revisions to the scope of work and timelines.

The City has experienced success in meeting identified goals and objectives by promoting customer awareness related to efficient water use through improved, tiered water rates, and customer educational programs. Numerous portals have been created for our customers so that they may access information regarding rates and educational information. A Communications and Outreach Coordinator has been hired in order to utilize current media sites such as Facebook and Instagram along with producing a citizen newsletter that is distributed via e-mail and through the City's website. The Water Department has also attended school events and hosted tours of the water treatment plant in an effort to educate citizens on the different processes for water and wastewater treatment, distribution and collections. Tiers were also added to the water rate billing structure in 2016. Along with tiers, a facility investment fee was implemented in order to appropriate funding specifically for water/wastewater maintenance and needs. The facility investment fee has experienced three rate increases since its inception. A base water rate increase has also been recently enacted.

The City has also promoted improved water loss management through the planning and implementation of annual water audits and improved data handling and management practices. Information is accumulated monthly to account for water produced and compared against the amount of water that is sold. Weekly reports generated by our

AMI system let us know that the system is functioning correctly and also create reports on the parts of the system that are not. These reports help us pinpoint water leaks and any abnormal water usage which is addressed by advising customers of potential water leaks and by pulling/plugging meters on inactive accounts. The City also promotes institutional water use efficiency enhancements through the technical assessment of outdoor and indoor water use at all City facilities. This has been accomplished by continually moving towards the usage of water efficient toilets, faucets, sprinkler systems, and other devices at all City facilities. The Water Department also monitors water usage for all City-run facilities and notifies the appropriate department head when there are signs of abnormal usage.

The implementation of City mandated watering restrictions and water rates can be linked to drought response management. Tiered water restrictions have been put in place so that the City can choose which level corresponds with the current drought situation. Tiered rates, consequently, help to curb high water usage. Water restrictions are enforced annually and modified as needed according to the severity of existing drought conditions.

Though the City has met a fair amount of success with a number of goals, there have also been obstacles encountered in the process. The economic impact of raising fees for residents that are in a far different income bracket than many other communities in Colorado is a definite challenge. It is important that the proper rates and fees are being assessed so that the water infrastructure is maintained so that water conservation can be a possibility, but we cannot lose sight of the economic impact that rate increases have on a community such as ours. A medium must be found so that both entities can co-exist. Customer engagement, interest, and awareness is always and ongoing issue. Technology also proves to be growing concern. As time progresses, so does technology and the costs associated in order to keep up with it. We have already experienced increased costs in upgrading our remote meter reading system and will also see increased costs continue when our warranty ends on existing MTU's (maximum transmission unit). Water restriction enforcement is also a known point of concern. Due to the overall increase in the amount of daily tasks taken on by the Water Department finding and training people capable of tending to our new needs has also become a large obstacle.

Accomplishments are the results of our efforts coming to fruition and being fully realized. The city has received positive feedback from the community regarding our education events and have been able to communicate with us via new social media outlets. The implementation of tiered water rate structure, a facility investment fee, and base rate increases help with on-going water conservation efforts. Our AMI system plays a major role in water conservation, as it allows for us to discover water leaks, abnormal water usage, water usage on restricted services, and monitors City-run facilities. Information provided by our AMI system allows departments to monitor and adjust water usage as needed in order to become more efficient. We have also been able to convert wells that were considered to be under the influence of surface water, to irrigation wells that now help service areas such as the Spreading Antlers Golf Course and Fairmount Cemetery.

As stated earlier, the City has already found a potential need for revision to the scope of work. Overall, time becomes the biggest enemy regarding the relevance of something like a Water Conservation Plan. This is the case here. Our current plan has already become outdated. It is the intention of the City to update the plan with figures that make it more applicable to the present. It is understood that this Water Efficiency Plan can be utilized as a basis for water conservation, but accurate and current numbers could allow for more meaningful extrapolation of data in the future.