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County of San Diego

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May 25, 2017

The Honorable Jeffrey B. Barton
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Judge Barton,

The San Diego County Grand Jury recently filed a report with recommendations requiring a response from the County of San Diego. Those responses, which are enclosed, correspond to the following report:

- San Diego County Waterfront Park – Water Use

I thank the Grand Jury for their commitment to this process. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at (619) 531-5250.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen N. Robbins-Meyer".

HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors

REPORT NAME

San Diego County Waterfront Park - Water Use

DATE FILED

January 31, 2017

DUE DATE

May 1, 2017

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

FINDING(S) BY NUMBER

Finding 01: In the event of a declared water emergency, the County has no formal water-conservation plan for the Waterfront Park.

Response: The Chief Administrative Officer agrees with this finding.

Finding 02: The County has not maximized its potable water conservation opportunities at the Waterfront Park.

Response: The Chief Administrative Officer disagrees with this finding.

The Waterfront Park design optimized water conservation in landscaping and recreational fountain recirculation and filtration.

Finding 03: Insufficient data is available to accurately measure and manage fountain water conservation.

Response: The Chief Administrative Officer agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY NUMBER

17-04: Prepare an emergency drought-response plan for the Waterfront Park that reduces the current recreational operating hours of the fountain system and turns off the fountains when not in use for recreation (ornamental mode). The plan should be invoked at any time the City Department of Public Works declares a water emergency that restricts residential water consumption and ornamental fountain operation.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Explanation:

During the declared water emergency of 2015-16, the County remained in compliance with City of San Diego conservation requirements as applied at the Waterfront Park. In the future, should the City of San Diego require actions to be implemented in response to a declared water emergency, the County will continue to comply with the City of San Diego's conservation requirements as

those requirements are applicable to the County at the Waterfront Park. In addition, the County has voluntarily implemented water conservation plans through its Board Policy A-106 and its drought response action plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2015.

- 17-05: Implement a proactive, ongoing water-conservation program for the Waterfront Park that reduces potable water consumption through landscape alternatives and active fountain-operation management.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Explanation: Water conservation and efficiency was one of the main factors incorporated into the design of the Waterfront Park. Plant species, including those located in the large specialty gardens, were selected for being drought-tolerant. Landscaping beds and trees throughout the park incorporate drip irrigation and large portions of the park were covered in stabilized decomposed granite (DG) in order to minimize landscaping and save water. In addition, the irrigation system for the park is managed by “smart” irrigation controllers which monitor water use, shut irrigation down when problems are detected, and provide the ability to monitor and adjust water usage in each area of the park. Lastly, the recreational fountain was designed to minimize water use by treating and recirculating its water which is stored in an underground tank. Water loss at the fountain is mainly a function of evaporation and heavy use by the public. Fountain hours of operation already vary throughout the year due to factors such as length of day, popular public use times, planned events and weather.

The Waterfront Park also includes grass areas that are functional in nature and are used for general public recreation and special events. The grass surfacing is critical to the functional use of these areas. While replacing this grass with alternative surfacing materials would reduce the amount of irrigation required, it would also restrict or eliminate the ability of the areas to be used for their intended purpose.

- 17-06: Develop a means to measure fountain water consumption at the Waterfront Park allowing water usage conservation actions to be tracked.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

Explanation: A dedicated meter has been installed to measure fountain water consumption at the Waterfront Park. Data collection began on March 20th, 2017. The meter is being integrated into the County’s Centralized Building Automation System (BAS) to provide trending data, which will enhance the County’s ability to manage fountain operations.

- 17-07: Develop for the Waterfront Park a public recreational usage profile of the fountain system to allow plans to be established during declared water emergencies and for normal conservation.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented.

Explanation: The County will perform an analysis of use of the recreational fountains over the next year to identify use levels for the north and south fountain basins. This information will be used when considering adjustments to the recreational fountain schedules in response to declared water emergencies or when evaluating modifications to scheduled fountain operating hours.