



# ***Agenda Report***

## ***Fullerton City Council***

**MEETING DATE:** MARCH 3, 2026

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL / SUCCESSOR AGENCY

**SUBMITTED BY:** STEPHEN BISE, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

**PREPARED BY:** DELANEY FELIX, WATER QUALITY SUPERVISOR

**SUBJECT:** CITY HALL WATER CONSERVATION PROPOSAL

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### SUMMARY

Options to address City Hall front lawn area as it relates to California Assembly Bill 1572.

### PROPOSED MOTION

1. Determine status of City Hall front lawn area as it relates to California Assembly Bill 1572.
2. Provide direction for improvements, if any, to the City Hall front lawn area and fountain.
3. Approve application submittal for Metropolitan Water District grant / rebate funds for a City Hall Front Lawn Area Improvement Project and authorize Public Works Director, or designee, to administer and / or execute grant / rebate administrative documents.
4. Authorize accepting and appropriating any awarded grant / rebate funds from the Metropolitan Water District to the City Hall Front Lawn Improvement Project.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Approve the Proposed Motion
- Other options brought by City Council.

### CITY MANAGER REMARKS

None.

### PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statements:

- Fiscal and Organizational Stability
- Infrastructure and City Assets.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Proposed Motion.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The City has no funds budgeted for City Hall front lawn area improvements. If directed to implement improvements, staff would request a Water Non-Rate Revenue funds budget transfer and appropriation for City Hall front lawn improvements.

Staff would also pursue Metropolitan Water District grant / rebate funds for design and improvements. However, staff may have to identify another funding source to complete the project if it does not receive grant or rebate funding.

If City Council directs staff to keep and restore the fountains, the City would incur ongoing annual costs to operate and maintain the fountains.

## BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

California Assembly Bill 1572 (AB 1572), signed into law in 2023, prohibits using potable water to irrigate non-functional turf, defined as grass that serves no recreational purpose, on commercial, municipal, institutional and multifamily residential properties. The law is part of California's broader effort to conserve water amid worsening drought conditions and climate change impacts.

AB 1572 introduces a phased timeline for compliance:

- *January 1, 2027*: Municipal and institutional properties (excluding those in disadvantaged communities)
- *January 1, 2028*: Commercial and industrial properties
- *January 1, 2029*: Multifamily residential properties and HOAs (excluding disadvantaged communities)
- *January 1, 2030–2031*: Affordable housing and municipal properties in disadvantaged communities.

Staff seeks City Council direction on how best to address the future of the City Hall lawn and fountain and asks City Council to determine whether the City Hall front lawn is subject to California Assembly Bill 1572 or designate this area as functional turf. The City must comply with the potable water irrigation ban by January 1, 2027 for any lawn deemed non-functional.

The City must certify use for lawn deemed functional with the State Water Board starting January 1, 2027. While guidance is pending, staff anticipates the lawn would need to host multiple activities or events annually to qualify as functional turf.

Fullerton is currently under Tier 2 Conservation actions, limiting irrigation to three days per week and prohibiting the filling of ornamental fountains.

*Options for Consideration*

*City Hall Lawn*

1. Designate the lawn as Functional Turf and leave grass as-is
2. Designate the lawn as Non-Functional Turf and apply for grant funds to replace grass.

#### *Fountain*

1. Repair fountain to operational status
2. Repurpose fountain into a planter
3. Leave fountain as-is
4. Other options as proposed by City Council.

Staff conducted a community survey to identify what changes residents prefer in front of City Hall. The feedback indicated that most respondents were open to change and many expressed a desire for a space where people could congregate. Some community members felt the front lawn should remain functional turf to provide an area for gatherings and peaceful demonstrations.

Survey results also showed strong interest in adding shade trees and seating areas, with a preference for replacing the grass with either California native plants or pollinator-friendly vegetation. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department noted that the front of City Hall could host more City events if it had a larger, level area to accommodate vendors and live activities.

Staff recommends designating the turf as non-functional and repurpose the existing fountain into a planter. The City has not used the front lawn in recent years for community activities and, unless the City plans additional activities, it should designate the lawn as non-functional.

Repurposing the fountain would reduce future general fund costs for operation, repairs and ongoing maintenance. Redesigning the City Hall lawn with low-maintenance landscaping would create a community activity space while reducing future labor costs. This approach aligns with California conservation regulations and supports City long-term conservation efforts.

#### *Preliminary Cost Estimates*

- Approximately \$200,000 to repair and refurbish the fountain
- Approximately \$50,000 to repurpose the fountain into a planter
- Approximately \$370,000 to remove the turf and renovate the landscape.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) offers turf replacement rebates for government-owned properties to assist with removing grass and installing drought-tolerant landscaping. The current rebate is \$4 per square foot when landscapes meet MWD terms and conditions. The City can apply for up to \$64,000 in grant / rebate funding.

#### Attachments:

- Attachment 1 - PowerPoint Presentation

- Attachment 2 – Community Survey Response

cc: Interim City Manager Eddie Manfro