

Utilities

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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 29, 2021

TO: Mayor Arndt and Councilmembers

FROM: Liesel Hans, Interim Utilities Deputy Director DS
LH

THROUGH: Kelly DiMartino, Interim City Manager DS
KD
 Theresa Connor, Interim Utilities Executive Director DS
TC

RE: November 23, 2021 Work Session Summary – Exploring a Local Graywater Ordinance

The purpose of this item was to seek Council feedback on the proposed approach for a local graywater ordinance, which is necessary to enable installation of graywater systems. Staff proposed creating an enabling ordinance to allow graywater systems for toilet/urinal flushing in the portion of the City within both the Fort Collins Utilities water and wastewater service areas.

Feedback:

Overall: All Councilmembers expressed support for creation of a local graywater ordinance.

Specific:

- The discussion covered Colorado water law issues, our own water rights constraints, how the other water districts might be affected, and issues like return flows and consumptive vs. non-consumptive use.
- Several Councilmembers indicated desire to have graywater be allow across the entire city, not just within the Utilities service areas. They indicated support to collaborate with the other water and wastewater districts and, if districts are not comfortable participating at this time, to create the ordinance with flexibility to easily add these geographical areas in later.
- Staff clarified the types of systems that would be allowed, indicating that sink-toilet combination fixtures would not be eligible under the state regulations.
- Several Councilmembers commented about whether graywater was the best place to put staff time and resources in terms of water conservation outcomes.
- One Councilmember asked if there is risk if we create an ordinance before Regulation 86 is updated and staff relayed that there could be some risk if the state makes Regulation 86 more stringent.
- One Councilmember asked about potential impacts to return flows. Staff collaborated with Colorado State University in 2014 on a study to assess this very issue and staff will



revisit that research and provide an update when an ordinance is brought for Council consideration.

- Council suggested to explore what would encourage folks to install graywater systems as part of the stakeholder engagement process.

Next Steps:

- Follow up memo: Staff will provide broader information about the Water Efficiency Plan goal, current progress toward that goal, discussion of creating a more ambitious goal, and information about some of the key water conservation and efficiency programs like toilet replacements, irrigation management, and xeriscape.
- Project timeline:
 - Q1 2022: Draft ordinance and other related documents
 - Q2 2022: Internal and external stakeholder engagement, including Boards and Commissions
 - Q3 2022: Bring ordinance to Council for consideration