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**CITY OF LABELLE
ORDINANCE 2026-11
WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES WORK PLAN UPDATE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LABELLE, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT RELATING TO THE WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES WORK PLAN; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of LaBelle has considered an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan relating to the City's Water Supply Facilities Work Plan; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the City of LaBelle Water Supply Facilities Work Plan ("Work Plan") is to identify and plan for the water supply sources and facilities needed to serve existing and new development within the local government's jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires local governments to prepare and adopt Work Plans into their comprehensive plans within 18 months after the South Florida Water Management District (District) approves a regional water supply plan or its update; and

WHEREAS, The Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Update was approved by the District's Governing Board on December 8th, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit "A" will promote and protect public health safety and welfare and will help accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of the City Comprehensive Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Commission of the City of LaBelle, Florida:

Section 1. Recitals. The forgoing recitals are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and hereby made a part of this Ordinance and adopted as legislative findings.

Section 2. Adoption. The City Commission, after a first reading by title on September 10, 2026 and duly advertised public hearing of the Local Planning Agency on September 10, 2026, Ordinance 2026-11 is hereby adopted, providing for transmittal to the Department of Economic Opportunity and the review agencies of the proposed Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.

Section 3. Severability. In the event that any portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective in accordance with Section 163.3184, F.S.

PASSED AND ADOPTED in open session this ____ day ____, 2026.

THE CITY OF LABELLE, FLORIDA

By: _____
Vince Ross, Mayor

Attest: _____
Tijauna Warner, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

By: _____
Derek Rooney, City Attorney

Vote:	AYE	NAY
Mayor Ross	_____	_____
Commissioner Vargas	_____	_____
Commissioner Spratt	_____	_____
Commissioner Holland	_____	_____
Commissioner Ratica	_____	_____



CITY OF LABELLE
WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES WORK PLAN

Prepared By:

Four Waters Engineering

September 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the City of LaBelle Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (Work Plan) is to identify and plan for the water supply sources, water supply facilities, and implementation strategies necessary to ensure adequate potable water is available to serve existing development and accommodate future growth within the City's jurisdiction. Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes, requires local governments to prepare and adopt a Water Supply Facilities Work Plan as part of their Comprehensive Plan to maintain consistency with the applicable Regional Water Supply Plan prepared by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The SFWMD Governing Board approved the 2022 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Update on December 8, 2022. This Work Plan updates the City's Comprehensive Plan to maintain consistency with the 2022 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Update and applicable state requirements.

Residents of the City of LaBelle receive potable water service from the City of LaBelle municipal water system. The City is responsible for planning, developing, and maintaining sufficient water supply sources and water supply facilities to meet the needs of existing customers and projected future growth.

This Work Plan evaluates existing and projected water demands and identifies the water supply sources, facilities, and capital improvements necessary to ensure adequate potable water is available to serve existing and future development within the City for a minimum 10-year planning period. The Work Plan is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the SFWMD's 2022 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Update.

Consistent with Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, this Work Plan addresses traditional and alternative water supply development, water conservation, water reuse, service delivery, capital improvements, and implementation strategies necessary to support future growth while maintaining a reliable and sustainable potable water supply.

The Work Plan is organized into the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Background Information

Section 3 – Water Demand Projections, Water Supply Analysis, and Facility Needs

Section 4 – Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, Capital Improvements, and Implementation Schedule

Section 5 – Goals, Objectives, and Policies

1.1 Statutory History

Florida's water supply planning framework has evolved through a series of legislative actions that strengthened the coordination between regional water supply planning and local government comprehensive planning. Amendments to Chapters 163 and 373, Florida Statutes, established the requirement for local governments to incorporate Water Supply Facilities Work Plans into their

comprehensive plans and ensure consistency with the applicable Regional Water Supply Plan prepared by the water management district.

Currently, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, requires local governments served by a regional water supply plan to identify the water supply sources, facilities, and capital improvements necessary to meet existing and projected water demands for at least a 10-year planning period. These statutory requirements promote coordinated land use and water supply planning to ensure that adequate water supplies and facilities are available to support existing residents and future growth while protecting Florida's water resources.

1.2 Statutory Requirements

The City of LaBelle has prepared this Work Plan in accordance with the requirements of Chapters 163 and 373, Florida Statutes. The Work Plan is intended to ensure that adequate water supplies and water supply facilities will be available to serve existing development and projected growth while maintaining consistency between the City's Comprehensive Plan and the SFWMD's 2022 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Update.

The Work Plan addresses the following statutory requirements:

1. Coordinate the Comprehensive Plan with the applicable regional water supply plan prepared by the SFWMD in accordance with Section 163.3177(4)(a), Florida Statutes.
2. Ensure that future land use decisions are based upon the availability of adequate water supplies and public facilities, including documentation demonstrating that adequate water supplies and associated public facilities will be available to serve projected growth in accordance with Section 163.3177(6)(a), Florida Statutes.
3. Ensure that adequate water supplies and potable water facilities are available to serve new development no later than issuance of a certificate of occupancy (or its functional equivalent), and coordinate with the City's water utility to confirm that adequate capacity will be available, consistent with Section 163.3180(2), Florida Statutes.
4. Identify the traditional and alternative water supply projects, conservation measures, reuse programs, and water supply facilities necessary to meet existing and projected water demands for a minimum 10-year planning period, consistent with Section 163.3177(6)(c), Florida Statutes.
5. Incorporate water supply, conservation, reuse, and related capital projects into the Capital Improvements Element and Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements, as appropriate, to ensure implementation of the Work Plan.
6. Identify existing and planned public, private, and regional water supply facilities necessary to meet existing and projected potable water demands over the planning period, consistent with Section 163.3177(6)(c), Florida Statutes.
7. Maintain internal consistency among the Future Land Use, Infrastructure, Conservation, Capital Improvements, and Intergovernmental Coordination Elements of the Comprehensive Plan while considering projected water demands, available water supplies, applicable consumptive use permits, and the applicable Regional Water Supply Plan, consistent with Sections 163.3167(9), 163.3177(6)(d), and 163.3177(6)(h), Florida Statutes.

8. Update the Water Supply Facilities Work Plan within 18 months following approval or update of the applicable Regional Water Supply Plan by the SFWMD, consistent with Section 163.3177(6)(c), Florida Statutes.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Included in this section is a brief overview of the City of LaBelle, including information on land use and population.

2.1 Overview

The City of LaBelle is located in northern Hendry County in southwest Florida, approximately 32 miles east of Fort Myers, 50 miles east of the Gulf Coast, and 92 miles west of West Palm Beach. The City encompasses approximately 14 square miles and serves as the county seat of Hendry County. As the largest incorporated municipality in western Hendry County and southern Glades County, LaBelle functions as the governmental, commercial, and service center for the surrounding region.

The City is bounded by Glades County to the north, Lee County to the west, Collier County to the south, and Palm Beach County to the east. Although the municipal boundaries encompass approximately 12 square miles, the City's economic and service area extends beyond the corporate limits into surrounding portions of Hendry and Glades Counties.

LaBelle is served by two major state transportation corridors. State Road 80 (Hickpochee Avenue) provides an east-west connection between Fort Myers and West Palm Beach, while State Road 29 provides north-south access between U.S. 27 and Everglades City. These transportation corridors support regional mobility, commercial activity, and the movement of agricultural products throughout southwest Florida.

The Caloosahatchee River forms the City's northern boundary and serves as one of LaBelle's most significant natural resources, influencing the community's character, recreational opportunities, and water resource planning. The City is characterized by established residential neighborhoods, a historic downtown, commercial corridors, agricultural lands, and a mature urban tree canopy.

Agriculture continues to play a significant role in the regional economy, with citrus production remaining one of the area's principal industries. Hendry County and the surrounding region support extensive agricultural operations, including citrus, vegetable, and sugarcane production, which contribute substantially to the local economy and influence future land use and infrastructure planning.

According to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the City of LaBelle encompasses approximately 9,200 acres and is predominantly residential in character. Residential land use designations account for approximately 68 percent (6,282 acres) of the City's land area, while commercial and industrial land uses comprise approximately 4 percent (431 acres) and less than 3 percent (260 acres), respectively. The Comprehensive Plan also identifies approximately 6,600 acres of land with future development potential, providing substantial capacity to accommodate anticipated residential, commercial, and employment growth. As this growth occurs, demand for potable water and other public infrastructure will continue to increase.

2.2 Relevant Regional Issues

The regional issues identified for 2045 in the 2022 Lower West Coast Planning Region included:

1. Increased withdrawals from the Surficial Aquifer System (SAS) and Intermediate Aquifer System (IAS) are limited due to potential impacts to the resource and existing legal users, as defined in applicable permitting criteria.
2. Surface water allocations from Lake Okeechobee and hydraulically connected surface waters are limited in accordance with the Lake Okeechobee Service Area Restricted Allocation Area (RAA) criteria.
3. Peak freshwater discharges during the wet season affect the health of the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Surface water availability and current storage capacity are insufficient to meet water demands and environmental needs for the C-43 Canal and Caloosahatchee River and Estuary during dry conditions.
4. Withdrawals from the Floridian Aquifer System are expected to increase to meet future demands, requiring monitoring of water levels and water quality to ensure long term sustainability of the resource.
5. Climate change and sea level rise could impact the availability of freshwater resources in the Lower West Coast Planning Area.

The SFWMD is the state agency responsible for water supply planning in the Lower West Coast Planning Area, which includes the City of LaBelle. Through implementation of the Regional Water Supply Plan and administration of the Consumptive Use Permitting (CUP) program, the SFWMD works to ensure that future water demands are met while protecting water resources and existing legal uses.

In order to address the overarching regional issues listed above The City of LaBelle utilizes water from alternative water supplies, such as the Floridan Aquifer for its water system and attempts to reduce the public demand on potable water supplies by implementing numerous water conservation elements in its community. These water conservation elements include restrictions on permitted water usage, use of Florida-friendly planting principles, requirement of ultra-low volume plumbing in new construction, a meter replacement program, rain sensor over-rides for new lawn sprinkler systems, and public educational programs.

3.0 DATA AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Population Information

Population projections used in this Water Supply Facilities Work Plan are based primarily on the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) medium-series population projections, which are generally consistent with the population forecasts used in the City of LaBelle

Comprehensive Plan. Where appropriate, more recent local planning information has been incorporated to reflect current development trends.

The BEBR projections indicate a continued pattern of steady population growth within the City and Hendry County. However, the City is currently experiencing development activity beyond historical trends, including planned annexations, large-scale residential and mixed-use developments, and transportation improvements that are expected to support additional growth. To account for these anticipated changes and to provide a conservative basis for long-range utility planning, the City has developed planning-level population projections using an assumed 2 percent annual growth rate for the period beyond 2025.

The population projections presented in this Work Plan extend through the 2045 planning horizon and include both permanent and seasonal populations. These projections provide the basis for estimating future potable water demands, evaluating available water supply capacity, and identifying the water supply facilities necessary to serve existing and future development.

Table 1. Population Data

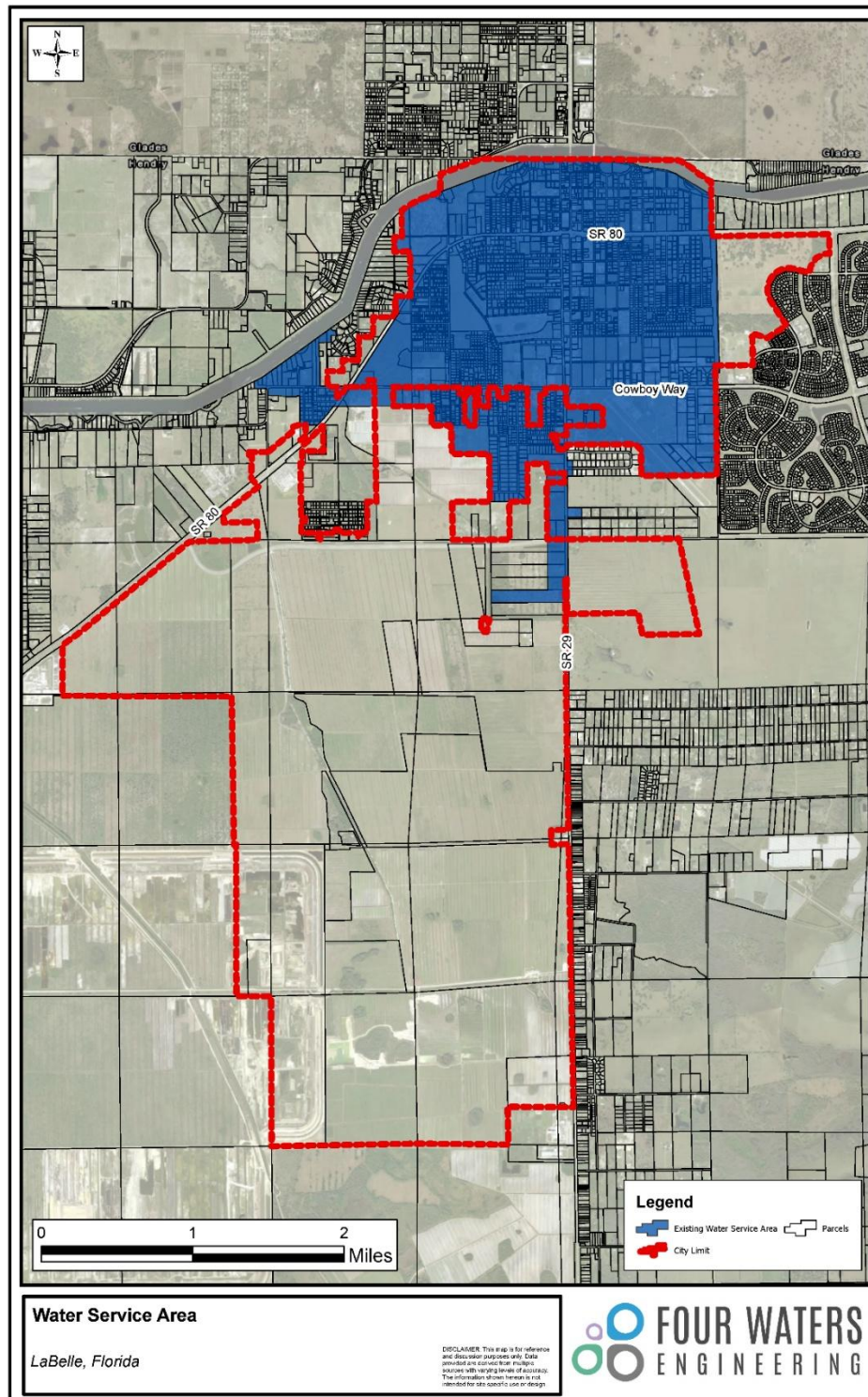
Year	Hendry County Total Population	City of LaBelle Total Population	Seasonal Population
2010	39,140	4,640	393
2015	38,096	4,792	397
2020	40,953	5,151	405
2025	47,085	5,593	426
2026	47,556	5,705	430
2030	49,487	6,175	447
2035	52,011	6,818	470
2040	54,664	7,527	494
2045	57,453	8,311	519

Source: Historical population estimates based on the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) and U.S. Census data, where applicable. Future City of LaBelle population projections beyond 2025 are planning-level estimates developed by the City using an assumed 2 percent annual growth rate to reflect anticipated annexations, planned development, and future transportation improvements. Hendry County projections are based on BEBR medium-series population forecasts.

3.2 Maps of Current and Potential Future Areas Served

The map below depicts the current and future City of LaBelle boundaries served by the City of LaBelle Utility are provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Service Area Overlay Map



3.3 Potable Water Level of Service Standard

The City of LaBelle provides potable water service to customers within the City limits and portions of the surrounding utility service area in unincorporated Hendry County. The City's adopted Level of Service (LOS) standard for potable water is 250 gallons per day (gpd) per Equivalent Residential Connection (ERC), which is used to evaluate the capacity of the City's potable water system to serve existing and future development.

The City currently operates a single Reverse Osmosis (RO) Water Treatment Facility (WTF) located on State Road 29. The facility, completed in 2014, replaced the City's former Main Street Water Treatment Plant, which has since been decommissioned. The RO WTF obtains groundwater from two production wells, treats the water using cartridge filtration, reverse osmosis, degasification, corrosion control, fluoridation, and chlorination, and provides finished water storage and high-service pumping for distribution throughout the City's service area.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has permitted the City's RO WTF for an average annual daily treatment capacity of 1.25 million gallons per day (MGD). Following the decommissioning of the former Main Street Water Treatment Plant, the RO WTF serves as the City's sole potable water treatment facility. As of 2024, the facility's average annual daily demand was approximately 0.77 MGD, with a maximum daily demand of approximately 0.97 MGD, both below the permitted treatment capacity.

The City's 2024 Drinking Water Facilities Plan concluded that the existing treatment capacity was sufficient to meet projected water demands based on the population and demand assumptions used at that time. The Facilities Plan recommends targeted capital improvements to enhance system reliability, resiliency, and operational redundancy, including source and treatment upgrades, additional finished-water storage, transmission and distribution system improvements, and replacement of aging system components. These improvements are intended to improve operational performance and reliability rather than increase the permitted treatment capacity of the facility.

This Work Plan's updated population and demand projections, presented in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 below, refine that conclusion for the later years of the planning period. Under the projected City-served scenario, average daily demand is expected to approach the RO WTF's currently permitted treatment capacity of 1.25 MGD and modestly exceed it by 2045. Under the potential full-service scenario, which conservatively assumes that currently self-supplied properties connect to the City's system, demand could exceed the permitted treatment capacity beginning around 2035 and reach approximately 1.56 MGD by 2045. This anticipated growth is consistent with the factors underlying the City's ongoing water supply planning efforts, including the Consumptive Use Permit modification described in Section 3.5,

which addresses the City's raw-water withdrawal allocation rather than treatment capacity. As demand approaches or exceeds the FDEP-permitted treatment capacity, the City will need to evaluate whether additional treatment capacity—beyond the reliability and redundancy improvements identified in the 2024 Drinking Water Facilities Plan—will be necessary to serve projected growth through the full 2045 planning horizon. Notwithstanding this projected capacity constraint, no revisions to the residential or non-residential potable water Level of Service standards are recommended at this time; however, the City should continue to monitor projected demand relative to permitted treatment capacity as part of future plan updates.

3.4 Population and Potable Water Demand Projections by Each Local Government or Utility

The population projections and the potable water demand projections are presented below in Table 2. The projections are through the year 2045. The population projections are consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan. The water demands are for finished water.

The unincorporated residential population is estimated based on the current number of outside the city limits water accounts with an average of 3.5 people per home. The future unincorporated residential population was projected to grow at 1.5 percent per year. The self-served areas consist of any lands within the current water service area but are outside the city limits. These areas are mainly located south of Cowboy Way in between SR 80 and SR 29. Much of the land is developed residential areas utilizing personal wells and the remaining portion of the land is zoned agriculture and utilizes non-potable water. Although these areas are not currently connected to the City's public water system, they fall within the City's designated utility service area and are included in the water supply demand projections as a conservative planning assumption reflecting their potential to connect to the system within the 20-year planning horizon.

Table 2. Population and Water Demand Within the City's Utility Service Area

WATER SUPPLY UTILITY SERVICE WITHIN CITY OF LABELLE												
Utility Service Area	Population Projections						Water Supply Demand (MGD)					
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
City of LaBelle Residential Population ¹	5,151	5,593	6,175	6,818	7,527	8,311	0.66	0.72	0.80	0.88	0.97	1.07
Unincorporated Residential Population ²	860	926	998	1,075	1,158	1,247	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.16
Seasonal Population ³	405	426	447	470	494	519	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.07
Projected City-Served Total (Excluding Self-Served Areas)	6,416	6,945	7,620	8,363	9,179	10,077	0.82	0.89	0.99	1.08	1.18	1.30
Potential future connections currently self-supplied ²	1,364	1,469	1,582	1,705	1,837	1,978	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.22	0.24	0.26
Potential Full-Service Total (Including Self-Served Areas)	7,780	8,414	9,202	10,068	11,016	12,055	1.00	1.08	1.19	1.30	1.42	1.56

¹Based on 2% growth rate for years after 2025

²Based on 1.5% growth rate

³Based on 1% growth rate

As described in Section 3.5, the demand projections presented in Table 2 are based on an average finished-water use rate of 129 gallons per capita per day (GPCD), consistent with the rate derived from 2022 treatment-plant production data presented in the City's 2024 Drinking Water Facilities Plan. The projected City-served total includes the population within the City, existing customers in unincorporated Hendry County, and the seasonal population. Under this scenario, average daily demand is projected to increase from approximately 0.89 MGD in 2025 to 1.30 MGD in 2045.

The potential full-service scenario also includes properties within the City's designated utility service area that currently rely on private wells or other self-supplied sources. These properties do not currently contribute to the City's potable-water demand but are included as a conservative planning assumption because they may connect to the public water system during the planning horizon. With these potential connections included, projected average daily demand reaches approximately 1.56 MGD by 2045.

The potential full-service projection provides the basis for evaluating future raw-water allocation and treatment-capacity needs and supports the Water Use Permit modification application submitted to the SFWMD in May 2026. Actual demand will depend on the timing and extent of annexation, development, and conversion of self-supplied properties to City water service.

3.5 Water Supply Provided by Local Government

The City of LaBelle water utility operates under the SFWMD WUP No. 26-00105-W, which was issued on June 27, 2011, and is scheduled to expire on June 27, 2031. The WUP authorizes the use of groundwater from the Water Table Aquifer and Upper Floridan Aquifer for public water supply with a total annual allocation not to exceed 385.65 million gallons (MG) and a maximum monthly allocation that does not exceed 38.56 MG. The City submitted a Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) modification application to the SFWMD in May 2026 to address future water supply needs and planned system improvements. At the time of preparation of this Work Plan, the requested modification remains under SFWMD review and the existing permit allocations remain in effect. Currently, there are no required offsets for available flow capacities.

The following limitations to annual and maximum monthly withdrawals from specified sources are stipulated in the WUP as follows:

- Annual -
 - Water Table: 50.13 MG
 - Upper Floridan Aquifer: 335.52 MG
- Maximum Monthly -
 - Water Table: 5.01 MG
 - Upper Floridan Aquifer: 33.55 MG

These allocations represent the amount of water required to meet the water demands as a result of a rainfall deficit during a drought with the probability of recurring on year in ten. The City shall not exceed these allocations in hydrologic conditions less than a 1-in10 year drought event. Compliance with the annual allocations is based on the quantity withdrawn over a 12-month time period. Compliance with the maximum monthly allocation is based on the greatest quantity withdrawn in any single month.

If the rainfall deficit is more severe than that expected to recur once every time years, the withdrawals shall not exceed that amount necessary to continue to meet the reasonable-beneficial demands under such conditions, provided no harm to the water resources occur and:

1. All other conditions of the permit are met; and
2. The withdrawal is otherwise consistent with applicable declared Water Shortage Orders in effect pursuant to Chapter 40E-21, F.A.C.

The existing withdrawal facilities for groundwater are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Withdrawal Facilities

Existing Withdrawal Facilities		
Quantity	Description	Status
1	8" x 45' x 300 GPM Well Cased to 20 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	8" x 45' x 300 GPM Well Cased to 20 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	6" x 47' x 220 GPM Well Cased to 22 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	6" x 24' x 140 GPM Well Cased to 20 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	6" x 32' x 100 GPM Well Cased to 25 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	8" x 45' x 110 GPM Well Cased to 20 Feet	Decommissioned / Abandoned – (plugged 4/2026)
1	10" x 696' x 1,500 GPM Well Cased to 600 Feet	Active – Upper Floridan Aquifer production well
1	8" x 30' x 250 GPM Well Cased to 18 Feet	Pilot well
1	8" x 632' x 1,500 GPM Well Cased to 631 Feet	Active – Upper Floridan Aquifer production well

As required by the WUP, the City of LaBelle shall provide appropriate mitigation to offset any harm that could adversely affect wetlands or other surface water that could be attributed to water use withdrawals.

As previously stated, the City's former Main Street Water Treatment Facility (WTF), which held an FDEP-permitted capacity of 999,999 gpd, has been decommissioned and is no longer in service. The Main Street WTF's former ground storage tanks – an older 200,000-gallon steel shell tank and a newer 300,000-gallon prestressed concrete tank – have also been decommissioned; the site is planned to be redeveloped as the location for a new ground storage tank. The RO WTF, permitted by FDEP for an average annual daily treatment capacity of 1.25 MGD, is the City's sole active water treatment facility and has one prestressed concrete ground storage tank with a capacity of 1.0 MG.

A water system interconnect between the City of LaBelle and Port LaBelle exists, but is only used in emergency situations. This interconnect is in place to provide water to Port LaBelle if needed in the event of an emergency.

The City's 2026 SFWMD Annual Water Balance Report indicates total water loss percentages ranging from approximately 6 to 28 percent across the reported months, notably higher than the 6 percent unaccounted-for loss reported in 2018. A separate portion of the reported losses reflects treatment losses associated with the RO process, which are inherent to RO treatment technology and distinct from real and apparent losses within the distribution system. The City is actively working to identify and address the sources of the elevated losses, including distinguishing actual distribution leakage from billing, meter, and reporting discrepancies.

Minor compliance issues were noted in the 2022 Sanitary Survey inspection pertaining to corrosion on the high service pumps, valve operability and minor casing leaks at the well which the City has actively worked to repair.

3.6 Water Supply Provided by Other Entities

There are no other water utility providers within the City of LaBelle.

3.7 Conservation

The City of LaBelle implements water conservation measures addressing public education, outdoor and indoor water use, utility rates, metering, and water-loss reduction. The following sections summarize the City's existing conservation regulations and programs, as well as additional initiatives identified in the Water Conservation Plan submitted with the City's Consumptive Use Permit amendment application.

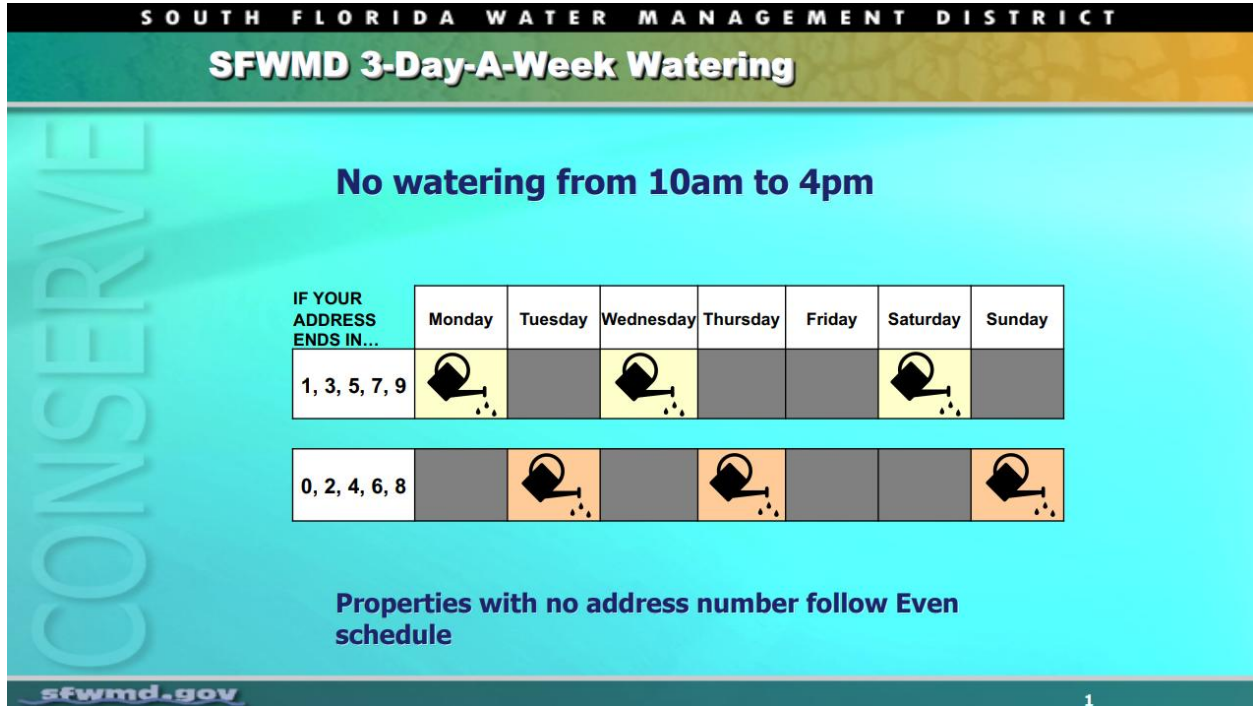
3.7.1 Local Government Specific Actions, Programs, Regulations, or Opportunities

The City's water conservation program includes restrictions on landscape irrigation, Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles, water-efficient plumbing requirements, an increasing-block water rate structure, meter replacement and leak-detection activities, rain-sensor requirements, and public education. The City's Water Conservation Plan also identifies expanded customer outreach, water-use audits, conservation information distributed through utility bills and electronic communications, and participation in community events. These measures are summarized below.

Restrictions on Permitted Water Use

The City maintains landscape irrigation restrictions consistent with Chapter 40E-24, Florida Administrative Code, and City of LaBelle Ordinance No. 2025-01, adopted June 12, 2025, which establishes mandatory year-round landscape irrigation measures, superseding the previously Daylight Saving Time-limited schedule under Ordinance 2025-01. Landscape irrigation is limited to a maximum of three days per week and is prohibited between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., year-round. The applicable watering schedule is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2. SFWMD Three-Day-a-Week Landscape Irrigation Schedule



Properties with addresses ending in an odd number may irrigate on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Properties with addresses ending in an even number, as well as properties without an address number, may irrigate on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Irrigation must occur before 10:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. Hand watering with a hose equipped with an automatic shutoff nozzle is permitted as needed for landscape stress relief. Low-volume irrigation systems, including drip and micro-irrigation systems that apply water directly to plant root zones, are not subject to the same scheduling restrictions but should be operated efficiently.

The City's Water Conservation Plan also includes regular distribution of information regarding irrigation restrictions through utility-bill newsletters, email communications, the City's website, and information provided to new utility customers.

Use of Florida-Friendly Landscape Principles

City of LaBelle Ordinance 2011-04 establishes landscape standards for new development that promote native vegetation and preservation of existing natural areas requiring minimal maintenance and irrigation. The ordinance also requires appropriate Parks and Recreation and grounds-maintenance personnel to receive training in Florida-Friendly Landscaping Green Industry Best Management Practices.

The City's Comprehensive Plan further encourages water-efficient irrigation and Florida-Friendly or xeriscape landscaping techniques for new development. Developers are also required to consider the City's 2017 Standards and Guidelines for Low Impact Development and Conservation Criteria,

including rainwater harvesting, bioretention, swales, infiltration practices, permeable pavement, revegetation, reduced turf use, and appropriate canopy and landscape coverage.

Requirement of Ultra-Low Volume Plumbing in New Construction

The City requires plumbing fixtures and equipment installed in new construction to comply with the applicable Florida Building Code requirements. These requirements promote the installation of water-efficient plumbing fixtures as a condition of building approval and utility service. The City's conservation program also includes customer education regarding indoor leak detection, toilet leaks, efficient showerheads, and other opportunities to reduce indoor water use.

Water Conservation Based Rate Structure

The City's water rate structure consists of a monthly fixed charge based on meter size and a uniform commodity charge based on water use, pursuant to Section 18-116 of the City Code of Ordinances. Although the current rate structure does not include increasing consumption blocks, customers' bills increase with water use, providing a general financial incentive to conserve water. The City's Water Conservation Plan proposes providing customers with monthly water-use information, including a water-use bar chart on utility bills, to improve awareness of consumption trends.

Meter Replacement Program

The City reads residential and commercial water meters monthly and continues to replace aging meters with electronic meters capable of wireless communication. Meters reporting no consumption for three consecutive months are inspected and replaced if found to be inoperable. The City's Water Conservation Plan also provides for replacement of approximately 10 percent of residential meters that are more than 10 years old or have registered more than 1 million gallons.

The City's 2026 Annual Water Balance Report identifies monthly water-loss percentages ranging from approximately 6 to 28 percent, which is notably higher than the approximately 6 percent unaccounted-for loss reported in 2018. However, the reported totals include treatment losses associated with the reverse osmosis process, which are inherent to RO treatment and are distinct from real and apparent losses within the distribution system.

The City is actively working to improve the accuracy of its water-use accounting and identify potential sources of loss through meter replacement, monthly meter reading, automated high-use alarms, customer leak notifications, water audits, and inspection of system valves and other utility infrastructure. Continued review is recommended to distinguish actual distribution-system leakage from treatment losses, meter inaccuracies, billing discrepancies, and other reporting issues.

Rain Sensor Overrides for New Lawn Sprinkler System

City Ordinance 2025-01 requires newly installed automatic landscape irrigation systems to include properly installed and maintained technology that inhibits or interrupts irrigation during periods of sufficient moisture, consistent with Section 373.62, Florida Statutes.

Public Information and Customer Assistance Program

The City's Water Conservation Plan establishes an expanded public education and customer-assistance program to be implemented throughout the CUP duration. Planned activities include:

- Monthly conservation tips distributed through the City's website and social media.
- Quarterly conservation information distributed through utility bills and email.
- Information regarding irrigation restrictions provided to new customers.
- Florida-Friendly Landscaping, irrigation-efficiency, indoor conservation, and youth-education resources posted on the City's website.
- Conservation materials distributed at City offices, the local library, site visits, and community events.
- Public outreach associated with Fix a Leak Week, Water Conservation Month, Smart Irrigation Month, and other conservation campaigns.
- Assistance for customers experiencing unusually high water bills, including meter rereads, leak-detection information, and irrigation-system checkups.
- Customer contact or notification when monthly usage increases by more than 20,000 gallons.

3.7.2 Identify any Local Financial Responsibilities as Detailed in the CIE or CIS

Table 4 shows any local financial responsibilities per the Schedule of Capital Improvements related to water conservation projects for the next 5 years.

Table 4. Conservation - Schedule of Capital Improvements

Conservation - Schedule of Capital Improvements							
Project Name and Description	Project Funding	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5-Year Total
Helms Road Water Transmission Loop	DEP and utility revenues	~\$3,000,000					~\$3,000,000
SR 80 Water Transmission Loop	DEP and utility revenues		~\$4,000,000				~\$4,000,000
Source and Treatment Upgrades: Install backup generators at the City production wells; upgrade chemical storage and pumping systems; add cartridges and replace membranes on the existing RO treatment skids; and complete associated pumping and treatment improvements.	FDEP DWSRF and utility revenues		\$4,190,000				\$4,190,000
Distribution and Storage Upgrades: Construct a new storage tank; install the State Road 80 and Zone B water mains; and implement a valve exercising and replacement program.	FDEP DWSRF and utility revenues		\$26,206,000				\$26,206,000
Large Commercial Service and Production Meter Upgrades: Replace commercial service and production meters 1.5 inches and larger and replace associated advanced metering infrastructure endpoints.	FDEP DWSRF and utility revenues			\$262,000			\$262,000
Zone G, H and I: Septic Tank Conversion to Central Sewer Project - Water Main	DEP and utility revenues				~\$3,000,000		~\$3,000,000

3.8 Reuse

Florida law recognizes water conservation and the beneficial reuse of reclaimed water as statewide objectives that are in the public interest. Section 373.250, Florida Statutes, identifies reclaimed water as an alternative water supply and encourages its consideration in regional water-supply planning. Section 403.064, Florida Statutes, further recognizes reclaimed water reuse as an important component of meeting existing and future water-supply needs while sustaining natural systems. Accordingly, reclaimed water should be evaluated where it is environmentally, technically, and economically feasible. § 373.250, Florida Statutes; § 403.064, Florida Statutes.

3.8.1 Local Government Specific Actions, Programs, Regulations, or Opportunities

The City of LaBelle supports reclaimed-water initiatives undertaken by the South Florida Water Management District and Hendry County, as well as regulations and programs intended to increase the beneficial use of reclaimed water where feasible.

In 2013, the City received state-appropriation grant funding administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to upgrade its existing Wastewater Treatment Facility to produce public-access-quality reclaimed water. The project also included facilities to convey off-specification and excess treated effluent from the Wastewater Treatment Facility to the disposal injection well located at the City's Membrane Water Treatment Facility.

Completed in 2015, the project included two disk filters; a submersible reject pump station; site piping; instrumentation and controls; automated valves for routing reclaimed water and reject flows; and approximately 19,000 linear feet of 8-inch pipeline connecting the existing Wastewater Treatment Facility to the concentrate storage and injection-well system at the Membrane Water Treatment Facility.

Although the improvements were intended to support public-access reuse, the reclaimed-water system does not currently function as intended and is not in active use. Accordingly, the City does not presently distribute reclaimed water or serve reclaimed-water customers.

As part of the City's planned wastewater improvements, the existing 8-inch reject pipeline is being evaluated for repurposing to convey effluent from the existing Wastewater Treatment Facility to the planned new Wastewater Treatment Facility. Its ultimate use will be determined through the design and permitting of the new facilities. Reuse opportunities may be reconsidered as part of that process based on the proposed treatment capabilities, projected reclaimed-water availability, customer demand, regulatory requirements, and economic feasibility.

3.8.2 Identify any Local Financial Responsibilities as Detailed in the CIE or CIS

The City's current Capital Improvements Element and Capital Improvements Schedule do not identify any specifically funded reclaimed-water projects or associated local financial responsibilities. The City is evaluating potential future wastewater treatment, reclaimed-water, and effluent-management improvements, which may include a deep injection well. The scope, schedule, cost, and funding

sources for these potential improvements have not yet been finalized. Any future financial responsibilities will be incorporated into the City's capital planning documents, as appropriate.

3.9 Sector Plans

This section is not applicable.

4.0 WORK PLAN PROJECTS/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ELEMENT/SCHEDULE

This section summarizes the potable-water improvements identified to support the City of LaBelle's water-supply system through the 2045 planning horizon. Although the City's existing permitted treatment capacity is sufficient to meet near-term demands, projected growth may cause demand to approach or exceed the current capacity during the later years of the planning period. Capital improvements are therefore planned to expand system capacity and address reliability, redundancy, storage, water pressure, treatment performance, aging infrastructure, and meter accuracy.

4.1 Work Plan Projects

The City's existing Membrane Water Treatment Facility has an FDEP-permitted average annual daily treatment capacity of 1.25 MGD. The City's current Water Use Permit authorizes annual withdrawals of 385.65 million gallons and maximum-month withdrawals of 38.56 million gallons. Recent higher-demand months and projected growth indicate that additional raw-water allocation will be needed to meet future demands.

To address these needs, the City submitted a Water Use Permit modification application to the South Florida Water Management District in May 2026 requesting an allocation of approximately 1.568 MGD. The requested allocation is intended to support projected demand through the 2045 planning horizon.

The City is also advancing water-system improvements that are currently at approximately 60 percent design. The planned improvements include:

- Expansion of the installed water-treatment process capacity to approximately 2.25 MGD, subject to applicable FDEP permitting;
- New finished-water storage and distribution-system improvements; and
- Provisions for future expansion as system demands increase.

The additional treatment components are intended to improve capacity, reliability, and operational redundancy. The facility's permitted treatment capacity will remain 1.25 MGD unless and until an increase is authorized by FDEP.

The improvements are currently anticipated to be completed by December 2028, subject to final design, permitting, funding, procurement, and construction. Selection of a Construction Manager at Risk contractor is pending. The improvements are intended to accommodate anticipated growth over

the long-term planning period while allowing the City to adapt the system as actual development and water demands occur.

The associated capital improvements and anticipated implementation schedule are summarized in Section 4.2.

4.2 Capital Improvements Element/Schedule

Table 4 identifies the City's Schedule of Capital Improvements related to water supply and treatment for the next 5 years, including the Helms Road and SR80 Water Transmission Loops, source and treatment upgrades (including the Water Treatment Facility expansion described in Section 4.1), distribution and storage upgrades, and large commercial/production meter upgrades. Anticipated funding sources include a combination of FDEP Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loans and utility revenues.

5.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies related to potable water, water conservation, reclaimed water, and capital improvements were reviewed for consistency with this Water Supply Facilities Work Plan and the applicable regional water supply plan.

The goals, objectives, and policies incorporated through the City's previous Water Supply Facilities Work Plan were also evaluated to determine whether revisions are needed to reflect current water-supply conditions, projected demands, conservation and reuse initiatives, and the capital improvements identified in the December 2024 Drinking Water Facilities Plan. Recommended revisions are presented below:

Objective 4.1: Level of Service Standards

To achieve and maintain acceptable levels of service standards for water quality and availability through both short-term periods of strain and long-term increases in demand.

Policy 4.1.1

The following Level of Service standards shall be used to determine the demand generated by a new development and the availability of facility capacity:

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard
Wastewater Treatment Facilities	200 gpd/ERC
Potable Water Facilities	250 gpd/ERC

Policy 4.1.2

All improvements for replacement, expansion, or increase in capacity of facilities shall be compatible

with the adopted level of service standards for the facilities.

Policy 4.1.3

The City will coordinate with the Future Land Use map to ensure that development and building permits are issued based on adequate potable water availability and an adopted level of service standard.

Policy 4.1.4

Review all land use amendments, zoning changes, or utility service area extensions to determine the availability of utility system capacity.

Policy 4.1.5

Prior to approving a building permit or its functional equivalent for new development, the City shall consult with the applicable water supplier to ensure that adequate water supply will be available by the anticipated date of issuance of a certificate of occupancy or its functional equivalent.

Policy 4.1.6

Deny the issuance of Certificates of Occupancy or its functional equivalent for new development that would result in exceeding the adopted potable water level of service standards.

Objective 4.2 Capital Improvement Coordination

A five-year schedule of capital improvement needs for public facilities shall be annually updated and maintained, in conformance with the review of the Capital Improvements Element.

Policy 4.2.1

The City hereby adopts by reference the 2026 Water Supply Facilities Work Plan as part of its Comprehensive Plan. The Work Plan addresses a planning period of at least 10 years and identifies the water-supply facilities, conservation measures, and capital improvements needed to serve existing and projected development within the City through the 2045 planning horizon. The City shall maintain consistency between the Work Plan, the applicable regional water supply plan, and other relevant utility and capital-planning documents.

Policy 4.2.2

The City will review and update the Water Supply Plan every five years to meet present and projected needs of the planning period established by the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 4.2.3

Projects needed to correct existing deficiencies shall be given priority in the formulation and implementation of the annual work programs of the City.

Policy 4.2.4

Proposed capital improvement projects shall be evaluated and ranked according to the following priority level guidelines:

Level One: The project is needed to protect public health and safety, to fulfill the City's legal commitment to provide facilities and services, or to preserve or achieve full use of existing facilities.

Level Two: The project increases the efficiency of existing facilities, prevents or reduces future improvement costs, provides service to developed areas lacking full service, or promotes in-fill development.

Level Three: The project represents a logical extension of facilities and services within a designated service area.

Objective 4.3 Potable Water Supply

Provide potable water supplies for the residents of LaBelle.

Policy 4.3.1

The City will protect or improve the quality of raw water supply sources.

Policy 4.3.2

The City will not approve development proposals which will result in the deterioration of public surface or groundwater supply sources.

Policy 4.3.3

The City will review its regulations to determine their adequacy to protect its current and future potable water wellfields and related facilities.

Policy 4.3.4

The City will provide adequate water supply facilities for the future population and associated growth of LaBelle.

Policy 4.3.5

The City will continue to require development proposals to meet City level of service standards for potable water as specified in this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 4.3.6

Potable water facilities will be in place and available to serve new developments consistent with the requirements of Section 163.3180(2), F.S.

Policy 4.3.7

The City will improve the operation of the entire potable water system.

Policy 4.3.8

The City will maintain a water supply facilities work plan that is coordinated with SFWMD's District Water Supply Plan by updating its own work plan within 18 months of an update to SFWMD's Water Supply Plan that affects the City.

Policy 4.3.9

The City shall seek the assistance and cooperation of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the South Florida Water Management District, and other appropriate public and private agencies and groups to accomplish Policy 4.3.6.

Policy 4.3.10

Efforts to improve the operation of the potable water system shall include the identification and correction of all system deficiencies and equipment problems with emphasis on the reduction of unexplained water loss.

Policy 4.3.11

The City of LaBelle will develop conservation measures to assist in decreasing water consumption on a per capita basis.

Action 4.3.11.1

Through utility flushing automation, the City will reduce the amount of water used for system flushing by an estimated .40 million gallons per year.

Action 4.3.11.2

Through an automatic water meter reading system, the City will save an estimated 1.5 million gallons per year of potable water by increasing its ability to profile data and leak detection and notification of such to its customers.

Action 4.3.11.3

Through established landscape standards, the City will promote the use of native vegetation and the preservation of existing natural areas in order to reduce the need for irrigation.

Action 4.3.11.4

The City will require installation of fixtures and equipment that comply with today's building codes as a pre-condition to water service.

Action 4.3.11.5

The City will use its website to educate the community on water supply and water shortage notifications.

Policy 4.3.12

The City will adhere to the following planning principles regarding utility extensions.

- Continue to plan for the delivery of potable water services to facilitate a compact and contiguous urban growth pattern.
- Utility extension over the next planning period will involve consideration of proximity to existing urbanized areas for the effect on the efficient use of existing and planned utilities infrastructure, the City's future land use needs, and the desire to encourage compact and contiguous growth.

- Water and sewer line extension proposals will be reviewed for compact and contiguous development and provision of services to land uses encouraging or increasing economic development efforts.
- Deny the issuance of permits for new development that would result in exceeding the adopted water level of service standards.

Policy 4.3.13

The City of LaBelle will continue to evaluate and implement conservation measures to decrease per capita demand.

Action 4.3.13.1

The City will provide efforts in public education and outreach to raise the awareness of its residents on the importance of water conservation and will provide special educational programs for high water use customers.

Action 4.3.13.2

The City will implement regulation that requires water conserving architecture and landscaping.

Action 4.3.13.3

The City will seek out plumbing and fixture rebates and retrofits that will aid in the conservation of water.

Policy 4.3.14

At the time that a proposed development demonstrates a potable water demand of a minimum of 365 ERC's, the City will evaluate the technical, financial, and regulatory feasibility of a water reuse system to offset demands on the potable water system.

Policy 4.3.15

The City shall evaluate the feasibility of requiring new development to accommodate future reclaimed-water service where reclaimed water is reasonably anticipated to become available. Any such requirement shall be based on adopted City standards, planned reclaimed-water service areas, technical feasibility, and the availability of supporting infrastructure.

Policy 4.3.16

The City will identify sources for reuse, such as City landscape areas and parks and other future public improvements, where appropriate.

Policy 4.3.17

The City shall continue to implement and maintain Land Development Regulations that promote water conservation, Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles, preservation of native vegetation, and water-efficient irrigation practices. The City shall periodically review these regulations and revise them as appropriate to remain consistent with applicable state requirements and water-conservation objectives.

Policy 4.3.18

The City will continue to educate residents of water conservation use by providing updates in City communications.