

## For Information Only

### Public Education Campaign: Water/Wastewater Financial Plan

Presented To:	Finance Committee
Presented:	Monday, Mar 28, 2011
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Type:	Follow Up Reports to Parking Lot Items

### Recommendation

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## Background

At the Finance Committee meeting of March 7, 2011, a request was made for information relating to a public education campaign for the water/wastewater financial plan, which plan was presented to Council on March 3.

## Objectives

The goal of this campaign is to inform the public about the Water/Wastewater Financial Plan, to clarify its goals, and to explain what it means and does not mean for our customers. In addition to public information meetings and other communications tactics, a water bill insert will additionally provide information regarding the rate increases recommended to keep pace with inflation and the costs of providing our customers with clean, safe drinking water and sustainable, quality wastewater services.

## Public Education Campaign

A communication plan has been developed to provide the public with information about the water/wastewater ten-year financial plan. The communication plan is based on a four-pronged approach: public information sessions, information on the City's website, a one-page information sheet on the ten-year plan, and an insert in the May/June water bill.

In accordance with the Corporate Communications Strategy, clear and targeted communications can enhance understanding of the City's water and wastewater services, and of emerging issues related to the financing of the city's water/wastewater infrastructure. The communications plan related to the

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Water/Wastewater Financial Plan is focused on the delivery of service excellence with an ongoing regard for long-term fiscal sustainability.

These communications initiatives will take place within currently allocated budgets.

### **Public information sessions**

City staff will hold three public information sessions to provide information to residents about the water/wastewater ten-year financial plan. The sessions will be held in three different locations in the end of April/beginning of May. The aim of these sessions is to provide information and background, and provide residents an opportunity to ask questions and enhance understanding of water/wastewater challenges and opportunities that will be faced by the CGS over the coming years.

### **City website**

Once approved by Council and once details of the public information sessions have been finalized, the Water/Wastewater Financial Plan will be posted to the City's website with additional information regarding the public information sessions.

### **One-page communication**

A bilingual one-page communication piece is in development to provide information about the Water/Wastewater Financial Plan, including: fiscal sustainability process, financial plan process, outcome, results, rationale, as well as challenges and opportunities for the water/wastewater sector. This one-page communication will be posted to the City's website, as well as made available at the public information sessions.

### **Insert in water bill**

A bilingual flyer will be inserted in the water bill for the May/June billing cycle. While the one-page document referred to above will focus more broadly on the Water/Wastewater Financial Plan, the water bill insert will provide information relating to the 2011 water/wastewater rates.

## **Conclusion**

The text for this public awareness campaign is currently being finalized. The material will be circulated to Council prior to release to the public.

These communications tactics will link back to the Corporate Communications Strategy as well as the Toward Fiscal Sustainability plan, and are in conjunction with a comprehensive water/wastewater communications strategy that aims to enhance the public's understanding of water/wastewater issues such

as source control and inflow and infiltration.