Imperial IRWMP Scoping and Review of DWR Resources Management Strategies

Reduce Water Demand – Urban Water Use Efficiency Findings

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1.1 Urban Water Use Efficiency Findings and Recommendation [1]

1.1.1 *Urban Demand Management Findings*

- Urban water use efficiency improvements are consistent with IRWMP Plan goals and objectives; could serve to reduce current or potential conflicts in the Imperial Region by demonstrating that the MCI users, such as geothermal plants, are committed and investing in demand management measures (DMMs) to conserve water.
- Additional programmatic evaluation and design, including economic analysis of costs and benefits, is needed to allow for comparison of costs for implementing DMMS needed for water conservation to other alternatives.
- Urban water use efficiency achieved through implementation of DMMs is an important water management strategy that can be used in the Imperial Region to lower demand, help meet future needs, and stretch existing water supplies.
- The State has set aggressive urban water use conservation goals and increased the requirements for urban water conservation, especially in areas like Imperial Region that are reliant on imported supplies.
- IID, as a wholesaler, is not required to produce UWMP, and the agency's role in urban water conservation has not previously been well defined. The greatest return on investment can be achieved by IID working with the Cities to target urban water use efficiency and conservation by future water uses, while playing a supporting role for water conservation efforts targeted towards existing users.
- Review of existing UWMPs demonstrates that there has been limited implementation of the DMMs in Imperial Cities who are ultimately responsible these programs.
    - The Imperial Region Cities' 2005 UWMPs do not fully addressed the Best Management Practices (BMPs) or DMMs as approved and promoted by the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC)[2] and required by legislation.
    - The IID Cities' UWMPs that were prepared for the 2005 update cycle were written prior to the QSA/Transfer Agreements, and therefore do not recognize the current limitations of the available IID supply. As a result, the currently adopted UWMP may not help Imperial Region Cities meet the State requirements related to use of the UWMP during evaluation of new development or proposed projects and when making environmental determinations.
    - Imperial Region Cities have not been as aggressive as other desert communities in implementing DMMs or making investments in urban water conservation.
- 2010 UWMP updates need to be consistent with the new state requirements and with the Imperial IRWMP.
    - Urban water use efficiency measures (DMMs) should be undertaken to ensure MCI users are reasonably and beneficially using the water; that MCI users are being held to the

[1] This language is from the IID Draft Plan Chapters 6 and 7/
[2] The City of Calexico is the only city in the Imperial Region that is a member of the CUWCC.

same high standards as agriculture; and that all practical conservation measures are being implemented.
    - Project funding is tied to having and approved UWMP and documented implementation of DMMs.
    - Consistent between the Imperial IRWMP and UWMP will support streamlining the development review and permitting process, reduce costs for environmental review, and help to integrate land use and water supply plans consistent with state law.
- The IRWMP can help to define regional opportunities to cost effectively support programs to implement DMMs and regional opportunities to comply with requirements.
- Constraints to implementing DMMs include the administrative costs to develop and implement programs since many communities in IID are disadvantaged; lack of financial incentives to support program implementation; relatively low cost of wholesale water; program costs or rates; political acceptability for changing lifestyles and resistance to making investments in water savings so that future growth can be supported; and concern that conservation would reduce the community's ability to respond to a drought or shortage year, resulting in unnecessary hardships imposed on the community if straight line water conservation quotas are imposed.
- Urban Water Use Efficiency enables local agencies to both adapt to increased dryness and to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by reducing water and energy use. The IRWMP will seek to be adaptable to impacts associated with climate change. Improving water use efficiency is a mitigation strategy because of the relationship between GHG emissions and the use of fossil fuels that create the energy required to produce, convey, treat, and distribute water. This required energy varies from community to community, depending on local circumstances. Increasing water use efficiency serves as a way to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

1.1.2 *Urban Demand Management Recommendations*

UWC 1) IID should plan to have a moderate degree of involvement in the urban water conservation program targeted to existing and future MCI users, assuming a stewardship role, providing support to the municipal purveyors responsible for developing their urban water conservation program, and by coordinating regional efforts if resources are provided for this purpose.

UWC 2) Work with the cities to coordinate the 2010 UWMP updates.
- Define urban water conservation regional funding mechanisms and approach
- Develop a Regional UWMP (near-term action)
- Develop drought management/contingency and catastrophic supply interruption plans
- Implement a water conservation public information and outreach campaign
- Review and track progress in implementing DMMs and implementing local or a regional 2010 UWMP
- Prepare and annual report to document regional progress
- Develop an in-school education program in English and Spanish

UWC 3) IID and Imperial Region Cities should target future MCI water uses, emphasizing development of standards that would minimize future water demands and ensure

measurable savings when agricultural land is converted to MCI uses consistent with existing land use plans.

- Streamline the development review and permitting process and ensure that water conservation best management practices and demand management measures are implemented at the time of project development and approval
- Work with Cities and Imperial County as part of the Imperial IRWMP to specifically consider using the Draft CDWR California 2010 Plumbing Code as a standard for new development and development of local ordinances
- Work with the Cities and Imperial County as part of the Imperial IRWMP to specifically consider using the Draft CDWR Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Draft July 15, 2009) as a standard for new development and development of local ordinances
- Identify opportunities and define requirements for dual plumbing new development such that raw or recycled water could be provided to large landscapes in lieu of treated water

UWC 4) Imperial Cities should implement a conservation rate structure (increasing block rates)

UWC 5) Imperial Cities should develop standardized MCI water use categories to support aggregation of data by use category for purposes of tracking changes in water use; and to develop unit water requirements or duty factors for forecasting future demands and preparing water budgets, UWMPs, and future land use or water supply plans.