

Incentivizing water conservation in the Western U.S.



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Conservation to help address the Western water crisis



Irrigated turf in the Western cities and suburbs



- While a small portion of total water use in the West, outdoor irrigation makes up 50% or more of a city's total water use in Colorado
- “WaterWise” landscaping would save at least 65%
- Replacing turf is costly but it is seen as a necessary contribution
- Some cities restrict turf in new development

Municipal water conservation upgrade programs

- Cost sharing is a typical (but not universal) business model. Why?
 - Customers realize savings on their water bills and other benefits
 - We want customers who are motivated to follow through and realize the water savings
 - Covering some of the cost likely increases the number of customers who make upgrades
- Examples of cost-sharing:
 - \$100 rebate for a ultra-low-flow toilet (WaterSense); typical price is \$150 to \$200
 - Cover up to \$750 of total cost for turf replacement; a homeowner with 500 square feet to replace would pay \$500 and the city would cover \$750
- Some programs are give-aways (or nearly so). Examples include:
 - City pays the entire cost of a professional irrigation system audit
 - Turf replacement rebates that generously cover the entire cost (e.g., SNWA)
- Communications and outreach about scarcity and conservation
- Water pricing (block rate structures, water budgets)

Some questions to consider

- Is cost-sharing the most effective approach to drive successful uptake of water conservation upgrades? Are some upgrades more or less suitable for cost-sharing or give-away?
- Many (maybe most) people love having a lawn - what approach would best incentivize them to remove and replace some turf?
- What kinds of communication and messaging would best convince residents and businesses to replace turf? Or to change their behavior around irrigation timing and amounts?
- Are there ways to auto-enroll customers in some programs? Will this be acceptable to residents and businesses?