

Downtown Berkeley Water Conservation Measures - May 2015

The Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) has made significant water reductions to its watering and cleaning programs. These reductions are in direct response to California's critical drought status. Cleaning and Beautification are key water use components of the long term strategic plan of the district. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) declared a Stage 4 critical drought and set a community-wide goal to reduce water use 20% compared to 2013. To achieve this goal, EBMUD adopted new water use rules that affect all customers.

The DBA looked hard at its water usage practices and looked for areas of improvement. The two main areas of water usage are Sidewalk Pressure Washing and Flower Basket watering, which are consistent with the key deliverables of the long term strategic plan. In 2014, the DBA made some drastic changes and upgrades to reduce its water usage.

Street Cleaning

In September of 2014 an Advance Cyclone Surface Cleaner was purchased. The Cyclone simultaneously blasts and scours away dirt and grime, reclaims the cleaning water, and filters out contaminants allowing for the repetitive use of the reclaimed water.

Call it pressure washing—with a twist. The patented Cyclone cleaning head provides deeper cleaning than spinner head or wand pressure washing and creates a controlled vortex that fully recovers water. Although not as fast as wand cleaning, the Cyclone's chemical-free cleaning and water recovery/recycling reduces water use, aids EPA compliance and offers environmentally friendly outdoor surface cleaning available. The Cyclone's water conservative system is 80% more efficient in reducing water usage than traditional wand watering.



It is important to note that there are areas where the Cyclone can not access. In these cases, wand cleaning will be deployed for health and safety purposes.

Sidewalk & Public Area Cleaning				24 Weeks		
	Quantity	Gallons	Frequency	Total	Difference	% Reduction
2012	N/A	1200	4	4800		N/A
2013	N/A	1200	4	4800	0	0.0%
2014	N/A	1200	4	4800	0	0.0%
Current***	N/A	480	4	1920	-2880	-60.0%
Night	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

***Maximum 240 Gallons used by reclaiming cleaning systems, 240 Gallons for hazardous waste & inaccessible areas

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Flower Basket Watering

The Downtown Flower Baskets have provided much needed color to the hardscape of the Downtown. Unfortunately, it takes water to keep these flowers at their brilliant bloom. Again in 2014, the DBA made some significant changes to how, and more importantly when, it waters these beautiful ornaments.

The first significant change made was, watering was reduced from 5 days per week to four. This alone accounted for a significant (20%) reduction in the use of water. The DBA did not stop there, the watering of the flower baskets was switched to being done overnight. Overnight watering presented many significant benefits/opportunities:

- Less Evaporation - During the day it is warmer and the water evaporates quickly
- Minimizes Possible Sun Scorching – Scorching happens because water droplets can act like small lenses, concentrating the light of the sun. The plants would then need more water to repair the sun scorch.
- Eliminate A Day – Since there is less evaporation, the DBA is taking the chance of eliminating an additional day of watering, bringing the number of watering days to three.

Downtown Flower Baskets				32 Weeks		
	Quantity	Gallons	Frequency	Total	Difference	% Reduction
2012	190	0.6	5	570	N/A	N/A
2013	190	0.6	5	570	0	N/A
2014	190	0.5	3.5	332.5	-237.5	-41.7%
Current	190	0.5	4	380	47.5	14.3%
Night	190	0.5	3	285	-95	-25.0%

Downtown Landscaping Changes

In addition to changing its schedules and procedures to reduce water usage, the DBA also changes the landscape to plants that need less water to survive. Interesting and Beautiful Succulents are the plant of choice. Succulents come in many varieties, shapes and colors while being relatively maintenance free. In coordination with Target Express, Ruth Bancroft Gardens & The Berkeley Project, the DBA landscaped 5 planters with succulent designs that will save an estimated 6,800 gallons of water even when healthily maintained.



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Other succulent landscaping projects completed in the downtown are: University Avenue Median Succulent Planters, Peet's Succulent Planters at Kittredge & Shattuck, BART Stairs Planters on Shattuck and Shattuck Avenue Median Finger Succulents. By installing and managing these projects, the DBA brings freshness to the downtown and relieves the City Parks & Recs Dept. of some very high maintenance water dependent foliage.



These overall measures taken by the DBA to minimize its water use during this critical period is important to us as an organization. We urge all Downtown residents and businesses to visit the EBMUD website (<http://www.ebmud.com/water-and-wastewater/watersmart-center>) for ideas, tips and products on how you too can join us in the movement to conserve water.