

Mini Case Study: City of Pflugerville

1. Please describe your water service area by demographics (i.e. population served, age of properties, average seasonal water use, lot sizes).

City of Pflugerville water service area does not completely align with the city limit. The water service area includes a portion of the City ETJ. A western area within the municipal boundary is served by Southwest Water Company (Windermere). Municipal demographics have a population of approximately 79,600 (avg age 37 yrs.), versus the water service area population 58,870. Municipal demographics can be viewed here: [Pflugerville demographics](#)

The water service area is primarily residential with a majority of single-family connections (SFR). However, multifamily residential (MFR) connections have increased significantly in the past 3 years. Pflugerville has a total 20,656 residential dwelling units (January 2024), with an average of 2.85 persons per household. There are 15,028 SFR connections, vs. 5,628 MFR available units.

SFR lot size cohorts:

- Less than 4,000 sq. ft.: 26%
- 4,001 to 5,000 sq. ft.: 21%
- 5,001 to 7,000 sq. ft.: 43%
- Greater than 7,001 sq. ft.: 10%

Commercial, Institutional, and municipal connections constitute approximately 4% of customers.

2023 May/June/July/September: 172 GPCPD (average).

2023 January/March/April/October/November/December: 104 GPCPD (average).

2. With all the drought tools used, which one do you consider the most effective? Why?

12-month mandatory irrigation schedule. Independent of lake levels or rainfall, customers are restricted to a twice per week irrigation schedule. This moves water supply management away from being triggered by drought stages, potentially easing drought messaging fatigue. We have tied our water supply management strategy to reducing the future need for costly infrastructure projects via a reduction in average demand, as well as the ongoing drought. Maintaining a conservation mindset outside of times of drought is critical to the success of restrictions during drought.

See messaging in “why my rates increased” here:

<https://utilitybilling.pflugervilletx.gov/trash-recycling/rates>

3. What is the response you get from your customers or community, when using this tool?

2024 TAWWA Drought Planning Survey - Effective Drought Tools

Launched mid-drought the DCP was widely accepted. The test will truly come once the drought has eased and restrictions do not seem as necessary. However, our rates are analyzed & updated annually and will maintain a customer awareness of the cost of continued infrastructure expansion. Demand reduction isn't just regarded as an environmental issue, but a fiscally responsible approach.

4. How long has it been in effect?

Since January 2023.

5. Anything else you'd like to add – for instance something different you are thinking of implementing this upcoming summer, what you have determined you will not utilize again, etc.

In Jan 2024 we launched a customer portal, giving water account holder's access to their AMI data. We waited to launch this tool until ~90% of our residential customers had an AMI capable meter. With this tool we are adding transparency of our ability to track water use, which in turn should aid in irrigation schedule compliance. The portal allows us to notify customers of leaks in a closer to "real-time" manner, rather than customers only investigating following the receipt of a larger than expected bill. The built in tools are aimed primarily at water conservation strategies and streamlines the rebate programs we have added in the past 12 months (irrigation & turf removal).

Based upon our customer base, and rapid development (less old homes) our program is focused on:

1. Irrigation, standards & outdoor water use management.
2. Landscape standards for new development (ordinance/code).
3. Water loss management in operations.

Previous conservation initiatives primarily (85%+) focused on the outreach & education portion of the TWDB BMP's. This puts the weight of conservation progress solely onto customers, who have a wide-ranging knowledge base & understanding. We cannot expect every resident to have skilled knowledge on why landscape & irrigation standards directly relate to their ability to conserve water (i.e. soil depth leading to weak turf roots more susceptible to the impacts of drought).

Our HOA's have generally been willing to work with us, invited us to meetings etc. The only time issues have occurred is when the management company has changed and we are unable to contact them when irrigation is off-schedule or when there is a leak. With irrigation meters, our field techs have full authority to turn those meters off until the issue is resolved. Our ETJ customers have City of Pflugerville address, which helps. The MFR management companies are the new HOA's. **Really hard to work with and not very responsive.**

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By focusing on operational elements relating to water conservation, we as the utility take on the majority of the responsibility; in turn, giving customers the ability to succeed. Educating customers on how to reduce indoor water use when they have a home that is less than 15 years old will not produce measurable change. Historically, the majority of conservation initiatives for residential customers & school outreach programs have focused on indoor water use. Education & outreach will be focused on leak detection and efficient outdoor water use.

We are only 16 months into the re-framed approach to water conservation, and we are open to changing or shifting priorities. Our program cannot be static by reviewing data & outcomes and adjusting accordingly.