



## Legislation Text

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*Report Prepared by: Leah Brown, Water Conservation Specialist, Public Works - Water*

**SUBJECT:** Consider an Application to the Institutional Turf Program for the Applegate Rose Garden

### REPORT IN BRIEF

Consider applying to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and California Conservation Corps (CCC) for the Institutional Turf Program for a pilot project at the Rose Garden in Applegate Park to enhance the water efficiency of the garden.

### RECOMMENDATION

**City Council** - Adopt a motion authorizing Staff to apply for a project for water efficiency upgrades at the Rose Garden funded by the DWR and CCC up to \$20,000 in materials and labor; and if accepted, authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents.

### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or
2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff, or
3. Deny, or
4. Refer to staff for further reconsideration of specific items, or
5. Continue to a future meeting.

### AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200 - Powers

### CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2015-16 Adopted Budget

### DISCUSSION

During the midst of this historic drought, the state DWR implemented a *Residential* Turf Replacement program to encourage home owners to replace existing grass landscaping with water efficient plants, ground covering and more efficient irrigation systems. In December 2015, DWR, in partnership with the CCC, launched the *Institutional* Turf Replacement program for public areas to save water and serve as an example to the public.

The program targets underserved counties, like Merced. They aim to have potential project partners with school districts, city and county governments, water agencies, and integrated regional water management groups. They have \$3 million available in Prop 1 Water Efficiency funds to work with.

Each project should be ¼- to ½-acre in size and no more than \$20,000. The number of projects that can be funded depends upon the size of each project and number of projects submitted. Currently the state has projects ongoing in Fresno and one pending in Dinuba. They are interested in working with the City of Merced and are actively seeking our projects. The city is encouraged to submit multiple projects, and smaller project areas can be pulled together to meet the size and budget criteria of a standard project.

Staff has prepared a pilot project for the Applegate Park Rose Garden. Currently, the garden is flood-irrigated and has many older bushes needing replacement. Attached is the project area and scope of work. We propose to remove approximately 10,700 square feet of turf, replacing that with decomposed granite, eliminating the need for this area to be watered. The removal of the grass line was planned in accordance with the existing needs of a typical wedding set up at the rose garden, allowing for grass to remain where chairs are usually set up. We will replace 150 to 170 older rose bushes with new ones to refresh the overall garden. We will install drip irrigation to each bush. A new Sentinel Irrigation Timer that integrates with our current Sentinel Central Irrigation Control System will be included.

Labor and materials for the project will be provided by the CCC and they will coordinate the project implementation and management with Staff. Staff is being asked to provide some on-the-job training to the CCC crew. This will be via tailgate meetings with the crew. Topics to be covered include safe work practices, water conservation, and career opportunities in Public Works. The project is expected to take approximately one week.

This is a pilot program. Staff is investigating other city sites for turf replacement projects.

## **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

Because the City of Merced is considered a Disadvantaged Community, we are eligible for no-cost share on this project. Each project can be funded up to \$20,000 and this pilot project at the Rose Garden comes in under that amount. Staff has discussed advertising to highlight the project and a border or concrete mow-strip to surround and set aside the project area. No appropriation of funds is needed for this and any needed expenditure can be covered in the current operations, maintenance, and advertising budgets from Parks, Streets, and Water.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Project area photo and scope of work
2. Application
3. Planned Water Use/Savings