

Mini Case Study: City of Buda

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

The City of Buda's doesn't serve all portions within the City. There are several other water providers that serve within the city limits. Buda Water serves approximately 14,000 people with approximately 85% of houses being built after 2000 on lots less than 0.25 acres. Residential annual average household water use is approximately 7,000 gallons. Winter avg use is around 5,000 gallons and summer avg use is around 13,000 gallons. Outdoor water use as a percentage of overall water use varies from 45% in older areas not typically equipped with automatic irrigation to 72% in a newish subdivision with lots closer to 0.25 acres.

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

Noticeable changes in restrictions when moving to a different drought stage. Our old Ordinance only had minor adjustments to outdoor watering schedules. Our new ordinance cuts in half the amount of time allowed to water with each change in stage. We were able to see targeted water use reductions going from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Stage 3 we didn't see as much of a reduction, but we were only in it for 2 months (during winter as well).

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

I would say we had overall good compliance with our drought restrictions. HOAs and new home builders are the worst offenders.

4. How long has it been in effect?

New changes to Drought Ordinance went into effect July 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.

We plan on being more active in education and enforcement with our HOAs and new home builders. We will be evaluating how best to handle new builds this summer and make corrections as needed. We utilize drought yard signs at entrances to subdivisions and also near neighborhood mailboxes which I find to be very effective in reminding the public on drought stages (signs are color coded for different stages: yellow, orange, red, black). AMI data and our customer portal has also been very helpful for us monitoring compliance and as supporting evidence when violations are issued. We aren't using AMI for enforcement, but definitely using it to help support visual enforcement.