



CITY OF TUCSON
RECEIVED

2015 FEB 10 PM 2:59

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE
CITY CLERK

DATE: February 9, 2015

TO: Roger Randolph
Clerk, City of Tucson

FROM: Regina Romero
Council Member, Ward 1

SUBJECT: Low Income Revolving Loan & Assistance Fund and Neighborhood Demonstration Projects

Two of the largest barriers to residential water conservation in the Tucson region are the lack of awareness of ratepayer conservation strategies like rainwater harvesting and the fact that many Tucson families lack the ready funds to invest in those strategies. Despite the fact that conservation ultimately saves ratepayers' money, oftentimes it entails prohibitively expensive initial investments.

My office has long expressed concerns over the unequal distribution of tree canopy in Tucson and the associated beautification, quality of life, water conservation and financial benefits of said canopy. Almost all of the Extreme Heat Event Vulnerable Populations reside in low-income neighborhoods and a quick look at the Pima Association of Governments' Heat Island Effect map shows the tree canopy's greatest deficits are in low-income westside and southside neighborhoods. Mitigating the Urban Heat Island Effect and reducing the occurrences of Extreme Heat Events in disproportionately affected low-income neighborhoods is a stated goal of the voter approved Plan Tucson, a high priority for me personally and ultimately will cut water demand and ground water extraction through reduced energy use. Low income constituents throughout the city will benefit greatly from a program that will provide the upfront capital to take advantage of the incentives offered by Tucson Water.

I hope that Tucson Water continues to work with reputable and knowledgeable organizations like Sonoran Environmental Research Institute (SERI), the Community Food Bank, the Community Water Coalition and Watershed Management Group to improve our conservation programs and Tucson Water in general.

Recently, in a meeting with Tucson Water Director Alan Forrest, I suggested that Tucson Water create a \$300,000 fund to address the difficulty that low-income participants have in paying the upfront costs of a rain water harvesting system. This fund could provide interest free loans to low-income rate payers or address the funding difficulties in other creative ways.

Also discussed with Director Forrest was the creation of a small \$350,000 fund for neighborhood scale rainwater harvesting demonstration projects to beautify neighborhoods, address Urban Heat Island Effect and Extreme Heat Event issues and, most importantly, demonstrate the effective use and best management practices of rainwater harvesting.

Director Forrest expressed that both of these projects would be excellent projects to fund with the Tucson Water Conservation Fund. I am requesting that we include these concepts in the already scheduled February 18th study session items (progress report on rainwater harvesting and discussion of Tucson Water's financial plan).

CC: Alan Forrest, Tucson Water Director
Mayor & Council
Martha Durkin, City Manager
CWAC Conservation & Education Subcommittee