



FEBRUARY 2104

## **Q & A Fact Sheet – Escondido Recycled Water** (Easterly Extension Project)

Q What's this project all about?

A Easterly Reclaimed Mains Extension is a project designed to deliver reclaimed water to agricultural users as well as prepare the City for Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) in the future.

Q Why is this important for the Citizens of Escondido?

A This project will provide a beneficial use of reclaimed water, assist in off loading the City's ocean outfall, and reduce the volume of water required to be purchased and/or treated by an amount equal to the volume of reclaimed water delivered.

Q How does this influence the City of Escondido?

A Agriculture contributes over \$240 million to the City of Escondido economy and supports 2,000 – 3,000 jobs. The City's agriculture also provides eco-system services (open space and carbon sequestration), a buffer for fire, and aesthetic landscape highlights for our valley. Ref. "Agriculture in Escondido, Contributions, Challenges and Opportunities," Nov. 2012, Prepared by M.S. Paggi and Fumiko Yamazaki, Ph.D.s.

Q Will this project also help other business sectors of Escondido?

A The following phrases can be found in Escondido's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report: "Continue efforts to develop reclaimed water for Agriculture." "Agri-business and Ag. Tech" are also included as key components in the City's strategy for preserving and expanding agriculture, which is closely tied to the City's image and basic amenities. By stabilizing the cost of irrigation water and deferring a \$300 - \$400 million dollar outfall pipe upgrade for ocean discharge, the City will be well positioned to continue the development opportunities that may require added ocean discharge capability. Escondido will be in a much improved position to provide potable water at a reasonable cost for a maturing city, when 15 – 20% of the former potable water supplies will be furnished by recycled resources.

Q Why is it critical to facilitate this program when the City has other needs?

A Large recycled water users make the distribution of recycled water more appealing for the City now and for future recycled water applications. It's also important to be able to move large amounts of recycled water during rain events. Avocado Growers have the capability to partner with the City to alleviate storm event challenges with wastewater facilities.

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Q What is the shared challenge between the City and the Growers?

A The big question is, “Will there be a sufficient number of Avocado Acres available for recycled water, when the delivery system is completed?” The growers participating in this program must have a pricing mechanism that will “bridge” the gap between current unstable water pricing and the arrival of recycled wastewater. All utility users in the City benefit from the stakeholders investment in recycled water and the savings realized by all citizens of Escondido. The growers are the key ingredient when developing the foundation of the recycled Easterly Extension.

Q Is recycled water safe?

A Recycled water (Purple Pipe Water) is regulated by the State. The water can be used for a variety of non-potable uses including irrigation, industrial processes, sports fields, etc. Recycled water undergoes treatments that destroy bacteria, viruses and other pathogens. The use of “purple pipe” infrastructure prevents water from mixing with potable sources.

Q Is using recycled water considered a “green alternative” to purchasing water from other sources?

A Recycled water not only supplies needed water to cities and growers, it may also allow for reduced fertilizer use by growers. This will lead to a decrease in the release of water into the Ocean. The expansion of recycled water use will further reduce the potential for fines to the City, (in the millions of dollars) for discharging inadequately treated wastewater into Escondido Creek and the Pacific Ocean. This project is embraced by the green coalition and the regulators for its potential positive impact on the environment.

Q How can the City of Escondido justify the costs associated with the expansion of its recycled water program?

A Due to drought conditions throughout Southern California, a reliable source of water to augment our current resources is vital to sustain our region. We have no choice but to recycle. Escondido’s Capital Recovery is based on the offset cost (approximately \$300 - \$400 million dollars in today’s currency value) of the Ocean Outfall avoidance and revenue from recycled water purchased. For every gallon of delivered recycled water, a gallon of potable water is released for other uses!

Disclosure: This synopsis is for informational purposes only. Please contact the City of Escondido Utilities Department for specific details regarding this project.

