



Water system conservation: What does this mean to the city and for residents?

The benefit of individuals practicing water conservation is most often measured in the long-term ability to avoid future costs. The City of Ann Arbor water system, for example, has the vast majority of its costs related to the existing infrastructure: the treatment plant, the storage tanks, the water main pipes, etc., as well as the personnel to run the system. The city refers to all of these costs as "fixed" because they must be covered whether the system is operating at full capacity or not. This means that if less water is used, there are fewer units overall to spread those fixed costs. Using less electricity and chemicals to treat less water provides some savings, particularly for the environment, but these are not big economic savings when considered in the overall operating budget.

Ann Arbor consumers have reduced peak water requirements each summer over the past six years, when landscape irrigation has historically created the largest water demand. This trend has meant that the city has been able to defer, perhaps eliminate, the need to secure additional water sources. Drilling large new wells and building pipelines to bring that water to the treatment plant would be accomplished at considerable new expense, both environmentally and economically, and would mean significantly higher rates in the future. Conservation plays a very meaningful role in the long-term operational costs of our city's water system.

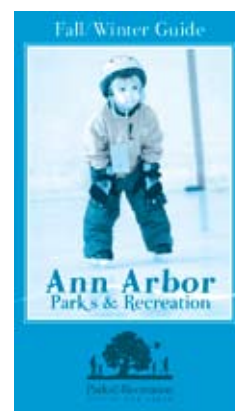
In addition, the city is continuously working to reduce or maintain operational costs to minimize the need to adjust rates. For example, over \$1 million of deferred or permanent expense reductions were made in the 2010 water utility operations budget, which will also carry over to the next fiscal year. These cost-containment steps are taken while continuing to focus on maintaining high water quality and reliable service.

For more information on the environmental and economic benefits of water conservation, please see the city's Web page for the Water Treatment Plant.



Protect water meters and pipes from freezing

Remember to bundle up your water meter and pipes to keep them from freezing during extreme cold spells. The following precautions can help prevent frozen meters, burst pipes, water damage, and avoid plumbing and meter replacement costs: Insulate water pipes in crawl spaces; apply heat tape to the entire pipe in an unheated area (according to manufacturer recommendations); add insulation between the outside wall and meter; set up a space heater near the meter; or simply leave the utility closet door open to circulate indoor heat. Residents may choose to allow a tiny trickle of water to run through one faucet to keep the water lines moving during a cold snap. If leaving town, you may call Customer Service at 734.994.2666 to have the water turned off.



The latest city Parks & Recreation class catalog and online registration are posted at www.a2gov.org/parks.

If preferred, you may pick up a printed catalog from any parks facility, where you may also drop-off or mail-in your program registration payment.

MOVING MADE EASY

The city now offers a way to start or stop water service online. A link to this convenient on line service is available under the "How Do I" section on the City's main webpage www.a2gov.org.



Ann Arbor's recycling program expanded this summer to accept more types of materials, including plastic bottles, tubs, and cups marked #1-7 (except #3/PVC and Styrofoam™). All clean containers and papers are now placed together into new, blue recycling carts. These carts are "counted" each time the cart is picked up for weekly recycling collection. Residents who have signed up with RecycleBank® will receive points from the recycling tonnages collected along the entire neighborhood route. Households can earn hundreds of dollars worth of rewards every year from local and national businesses or choose to donate RecycleBank points to local schools. To sign up for the RecycleBank rewards program (and receive optional sustainable living tips) go to www.RecycleBank.com or phone 1.866.563.0114. Once your account is activated, you may direct your RecycleBank questions to 1.866.727.2978.

New flyover data used for stormwater rate calculations

In July 2007 the City of Ann Arbor started billing stormwater charges based upon a property's impervious areas—those surfaces, e.g., roofs, sidewalks, driveways, patios, etc., that do not allow rainwater to directly drain into the soil. Based upon the new photographic images taken in spring 2009, the impervious areas for some properties may have increased in size and may place these properties into a higher assessment rate tier. To view your property's impervious areas at any time, please go to www.a2gov.org and enter your address under the "My Property" link. Then click the "validate" button and select the "storm water tab" to view your impervious area map. To help reduce your stormwater bill the city offers stormwater credits, described more fully at www.a2gov.org/storm. If you have any questions, concerns, or do not use a computer, please do not hesitate to call the city at 734.794.6320.



Fall leaf management options

Ann Arbor's fall leaf management program is transitioning this year to weekly collection through the Compostables program, provided from April through the end of November. In addition, the city will be accepting unlimited, free leaf drop-off at the Compost Center. Information on fall leaf management options—and the opportunity to subscribe to e-mail updates—is provided online at www.a2gov.org/leaves.

Did you know that drivers must stop for pedestrians approaching or in marked crosswalks? That's the law in Ann Arbor. Please stay alert and be prepared to stop. Details are posted online at www.a2gov.org/WalkBikeDrive. Our safety depends on you!

