

Recycled Water Conversion Project – FAQ

What is recycled water and what are the benefits of converting to this usage?

- Reclaimed water is former wastewater that has been treated to standards that allow for safe reuse for non-drinking purposes. It serves as an alternate source of irrigation water that reduces the demand on potable water sources.
- Water recycling, also known as reclamation or reuse is a reliable, economical and environmentally sensitive means to maximize California's water resources.
- It's a great method for sustainable landscaping irrigation, costs less than most other water sources, and even reduces the need for fertilizers as some nutrients remain in the water.
- It will beautify our community by enhancing the appearance of our landscaping while not being subject to the mandated watering restrictions imposed for potable water usage.

How is recycled water distributed?

- Recycled water is distributed via its own dedicated pipeline system.
- The recycled water distribution system uses purple pipes to distinguish that system from the drinking water system.
- SCWD will bring recycled water to our property from the main located across Golden Lantern.

Why is Sea Ridge investing in the Recycled Water Conversion Project?

- When we learned of this program and the opportunity to begin using recycled water for the majority of our common-area landscape irrigation, our Board of Directors knew this was the right thing for our community to do.
- Using recycled water will reduce costs and will not subject us to the water restrictions of the current drought, thus enabling us to keep our community attractive and save our greenbelt.
- Converting to recycled water allows us to significantly reduce our dependence on imported potable water for irrigation, reduces the amount of treated wastewater discharged into the ocean, and makes beneficial reuse of the locally-sourced recycled water supply.
- This is our opportunity to take advantage of receiving assistance in funding the project through rebate programs and potential additional grant funding.
- Converting to reclaimed water reflects the Board's continuing efforts to improve the community while remaining fiscally responsible.

Why is it necessary for us to convert to using reclaimed water?

- The reality is that drought conditions are the new norm. Homeowner Associations are subject to the requirements of their local water supplier and, like all Californians, are subject to the existing emergency regulations and Executive Orders.
- Homeowner Associations that can connect to recycled water are required to design and install an irrigation system that is capable of delivering recycled water. The SCWD has determined that the recycled water main is readily available for connection and must be utilized by Sea Ridge.
- We are facing rapidly increasing, and often alarming, water rates and fines. Any delay in taking action with regard to landscape water conservation efforts would compound the situation and result in a loss or reduction of funding resources. The worst thing our Board could do would be to ignore the situation or continually put off making a hard decision.

What steps have been taken to prepare for the use of reclaimed water?

- A Landscape Irrigation Survey was conducted in March 2014. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California recommended that we check into converting to reclaimed water with SCWD as one way to curb our excessive water use.
- Over the last couple of years, some members of the Board and of the Landscape Committee participated in the “H2O for HOAs” programs addressing water conservation needs and solutions.
- RFPS were sent out, and in May, 2015, the Board reviewed five proposals and conducted interviews for the water reclamation project. Harvest Landscape Enterprises was vetted and selected as our contractor to manage this project and a contract with them signed.
- Harvest has been helping Sea Ridge in planning this project from the ground up— from applying for rebates, to construction and planting, to maintaining our landscapes into the future. With their relevant experience, they are familiar with the challenges involved and with solutions available to us.
- The Association has and continues to participate in rebate programs that are offered for irrigation controllers, sprinkler heads, and turf removal. We are currently pursuing additional grant funding.
- The Association has been providing ongoing education of our members through newsletters, e-blasts, Board Briefs, flyers, and our community website. We have held Town Hall meetings on this topic in March, July, and November of 2015 and presented information as it became known at each of our monthly meetings of the Board of Directors.

What does it cost and how is the Association paying for the project?

- The total cost of the project was estimated and approved for no more than \$232,000.00 in a Pro Forma provided by Harvest. Subsequently the \$12,000 allocated for architectural plans was deducted as this is not being required by the water district.
- We will utilize a variety of funding sources to pay for the project, including rebates, potential grant monies, and our reserve and operating accounts.
- We have an agreement with Harvest for a 36 month, interest-free payment plan at approximately \$4500 per month after a 10% deposit.
- Savings are projected to be over \$22,000 per year in reduced water costs.
- It should be noted that the project initially was not included in this year's capital improvement budget and adjustments to our financials will be made to reflect these changes.
- Any dollar saved in water costs can help bolster our reserve account, can guard against increases in the future and even ultimately lower current homeowner obligations.
- Our annual budget for potable water irrigation for fiscal year end June, 2016 was \$122,000.00.
- Year to date figures for the period ending December 2015 show the monthly budgeted amount for potable water irrigation at \$61,000 while actual expenditures during this period were \$20,478. The variance was \$40,522.
- We expect continued savings on our utility bill and even further reductions as the conversion to less expensive reclaimed water is completed.

As with most things, the water reclamation project will take some time to come to fruition —current estimates are for a nine month completion date in October. When finished, however, our neighborhood will be a beautiful example of drought tolerant landscaping using recycled water, which will significantly benefit our community both visually and monetarily in the future.