



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Clay Phillips, City Manager

**Date:** April 28, 2015

**Reference:** Discussion Regarding Xeriscape Incentives.

**2030:** Special Place to Live

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### Introduction:

One of City Council's goals for 2014 – 2015 is the development of an incentive program for non-residential users to landscape using xeriscape materials. After performing a review of other xeriscape incentive programs, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) discovered that most programs incorporated more water conserving practices than just the use of xeriscape plant materials. Therefore, the EDC has proposed a comprehensive incentive program for water conservation that includes the use of xeriscape plant materials and the use of more efficient irrigation systems. The incentives are designed to encourage commercial land owners to incorporate these materials in new developments as well as existing developments.

The Planning Department has already incorporated xeriscape plant materials in the City's plant palette. All of those materials are recommended as Texas Smartscaping Plants with Low Water needs. In addition to encouraging the use of these plant materials, Economic Development has worked with the Parks Department to discuss the types of irrigation systems that are most effective for water conservation.

### Analysis:

The proposed incentive package took into consideration providing incentives for new developments as well as incentives for existing developments. The incentives for existing developments are more robust because property owners have already invested money for landscaping and irrigation at the time of development. Retro-fitting a property to incorporate the new water conserving measures is an additional cost for that property owner. For new developments, incorporating water conservation measures into their development plans could result in a higher percentage tax abatement. For existing developments, the incentive would be a one-time cash grant.

If City Council wants to proceed with the proposed incentive program for water conservation, the EDC will develop and market the incentive program to all commercial property owners.

**Legal Review:**

None.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Unknown.

**Recommendation:**

Economic Development would like direction on how to proceed from City Council.