

Page 9:

## **Improve Groundwater/Drinking Water Quality**

### **Goal 2:**

The footer lists “Budget, Grants” under Funding, however, the Water Utility’s is an enterprise agency whose funding does not come from the City’s budget; it comes from rate money. These rates are strictly regulated by the state Public Service Commission and cannot be used for purposes unrelated to supplying drinking water.

“\*Monitor building activities and new developments...” I believe other city departments have the responsibility of checking construction for compliance with codes.

“\*Assess and address sources of contamination of shallow groundwater.” Not sure what exactly this means. This is more of an environmental protection agency kind of responsibility rather than that of a water utility.

“\*Create a user-friendly method for notifying City staff of water quality issues.” Not sure what this means, either. We have several email links from both City and WU websites for the public to notify us of problems, in addition to phone numbers listed online and in mailings. What would be more “user-friendly”?

Page 11:

## **Increase Water Conservation**

There are a number of problems with this page and the Actions section in particular.

Under the **Goal 4** section:

“Use all building storm water discharge onsite (i.e., watering landscaping) to reduce dependence on potable water.” If this is meant to be a City-wide requirement, it is simply not doable. The Water Utility has no authority to require such measures; it is not a regulatory agency.

“\*Promote water conservation through rebate promotions...” WU already is doing this and will continue to do so.

“\*Work with major industrial customers to develop water conservation plans for their facilities.” This sounds good, but is probably not really needed: the major water industries in Madison have already done this to help their profit margins, plus we have lost some of our large commercial water users recently when dairies closed. Total water pumpage for the entire City has been declining for several years and is now at its lowest since 1968, despite population growth of about 1 percent per year. However, if we were allowed to hire additional staff with this sort of expertise, that could certainly be done. Most water usage in Madison comes from the residential sector, not the industrial sector.

“\*Enact water-saving programs at all City buildings and agencies.” WU cannot really “enact” for other entities. WU can encourage such programs along with the City’s sustainability manager or work with agencies to identify ways to reduce water usage in their facilities.

“\*Investigate and implement through policy/zoning the use of grey water systems.” Again, this is not within the mission or authority of the Water Utility, which is not really a policy-making (nor zoning) agency. Grey water systems, either within individual buildings or community-wide, require a separate plumbing system that cannot cross-contaminate drinking water. Plumbing codes for these systems are regulated by other agencies, not the Water Utility.

“\*Assess the viability of dual water systems to enhance water conservation efforts in buildings. Create large common water catchment cisterns that would replace deep-well drinking water for watering lawns/gardens, washing cars, cooling-tower spray, etc.” Although the WU can and does encourage wise water use and conservation, we do not have the authority to create “water catchment cisterns.” WU is a drinking water utility. Additionally, to transport such water for non-potable use would require a separate system of pipes and water mains and would require a sizeable financial investment by whoever was doing it.

“\*Assess the feasibility of using treated, disinfected, Madison Metropolitan Sewage District effluent to irrigate golf courses and industrial parks.” See reasons in above action item.

What WU is doing to encourage water conservation:

--Continuing to implement our Water Conservation and Sustainability Plan (2008) whose goal is to reduce per capita water consumption by 20 percent by the year 2020.

--Continuing in third year of a ten-year toilet rebate program offered to residential and apartment building customers. Funding authorized by PSC through water rates.

--Considering future expansion of toilet rebates to commercial customers.

--Considering future rebates for low-flow shower heads

--Upgrading water meters to an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system, which will enable customers to view online their water usage and timely results of conservation measures. The AMI system will also enable the WU to bill monthly rather than the current six-month frequency, which will qualify WU to gain PSC approval for conservation rates, inclining rates (higher rates) for customers who use more water.