

Gilbert Water Resource Management Strategy Report

Background

As the water provider and platting authority, the Town of Gilbert has significant responsibility and authority to guide responsible water stewardship and land uses. Recognizing that land and water resources are finite in nature, Gilbert plans for their productive, conjunctive uses to ensure orderly and long-lasting development within the Town. This Water Resource Management Strategy outlines Gilbert's steps for safeguarding current water users while also providing adequate resources for future customers.

Gilbert's Framework

Gilbert's buildout water supplies are identified in the 2018 Integrated Water Resources Master Plan (Master Plan) and will be sufficient to meet estimated build out demands based upon existing and future land uses. Understanding that future water demands may not replicate past water demands, Gilbert is updating Town Code to establish a "Water Use Allocation" for every new non-residential water customer to ensure that the Town has sufficient water resources to provide to every future water customer through buildout, without infringing on existing customers' needs. These new Town Code sections build upon existing Code provisions that require water conservation measures for residential and non-residential customers. Additionally, Gilbert has implemented many water conservation programs that target residential customers. The new additions will only impact a few potential large non-residential water users whose water demands could disrupt the delicate balance of water supply and demand for all of Gilbert.

Gilbert's Sustainable Water Allocation Policy has three water supply tiers:

- **Tier I Water** sets the Water Use Allocation for non-residential customers using a gallons per 1,000 square feet of building space formula for three separate zoning categories: Commercial, Industrial and Public Facility/Institutional. These limits are currently set at three times the Town-wide average use according to the 2018 Master Plan and will be reviewed periodically and with each Master Plan update. It is estimated that nearly all new developments will be able to operate under the Tier I Water allocation. For the rare instance in which a proposed development needs more than Tier I water, Tier II or Tier III Water could be available.
- **Tier II Water** is the amount of additional water supply that Gilbert has identified will be available from the Town's portfolio above projected Town-wide demands. Tier II Water will be allocated on a case by case basis using the Gilbert Key Industries of Focus as the guide, as discussed below.
- **Tier III Water** is water that is available on the open market, should Tier I and II water not be sufficient or available for the proposed development. Gilbert may assist the proposed customer in identifying sources of supply for the customer to acquire and contractually transfer to Gilbert, through the Sustainable Water Development Agreement, to meet the user's demand above Tier I and any Tier II water supplies allocated to the user.

All Tiers of water are linked to the water meter and specific use at the site as specified in the Sustainable Water Service Development Agreement and cannot be transferred or joined with another use without authorization by Gilbert.

Zoning Category	Tier I Water Use Allocation (Gallons per day per 1,000 square feet)
Commercial	660
Industrial	345
Public Facility/Institutional	625

Gilbert's Key Industries of Focus

Through the General Plan, economic development priorities and other planning documents, Gilbert has outlined its key industries of focus. The Water Resource Management Strategy supports and aligns with these goals through the allocation of Tier II water upon consideration of the following areas:

1. **Redevelopment**- As portions of Gilbert age, they can become underutilized for employment, recreational or social benefits to the community. While Tier I water supplies will be sufficient for existing as well as most future uses, an existing site may need additional water to support a new use that presents additional employment, recreational or social benefits in excess of the previous use. Tier II water may be allocated by Gilbert, at its discretion, for opportunities that provide a substantial economic, recreational or social benefit in exceedance of the investment.
2. **Economic Development & Employment**- High wage, STEM focused employment is the focus of this goal. Nearly all expected employment uses will have sufficient water dedicated from Tier I. However, in the instance of a new use that provides high wage jobs in knowledge-based fields such as technology, aerospace & aviation, manufacturing or bio technology & life sciences that require more water, Tier II water may be allocated by Gilbert, at its discretion, for opportunities that provide continued, long term benefits in exceedance of the investment.

Gilbert's Sustainable Water Allocation Policy provides a strong foundation for continued growth. It supports the three focus areas of Prosperous Community, Strong Economy and Exceptional Built Environment by providing water assurance for the Town on its journey to become the City of the Future.