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Subject: Ashland water, wastewater and greenhouse gas emissions.

Message: We are in the City budget season, and the budget process very much impacts city infrastructure and planning projects. Just as water conservation is an important element in the CEAP, so are the construction projects that are contained in the public works capital improvement proposals. Unfortunately, Ashland has a history of over building many of these projects and underestimating the long term consequences of not choosing smaller and more cost effective alternatives when it comes to water and wastewater projects. At the same time, Ashland has an excellent and robust water conservation program that has significantly reduced our water use over the last decade to the point where, with continued focus on already planned conservation goals, we can provide water for increased population without long term increases in water supply. The EPA has long recommended counting "conservation as a water source", and now it is time for Ashland to officially adopt this concept in its infrastructure planning. It is up to the conservation commissions and city council to insist that Public Works staff make use of "conserved water" in all water and wastewater planning documents and instruct consulting engineers who author these documents to incorporate best conservation and climate resiliency practices when projecting future water needs. These practices include 1. Incorporating water conservation goals into projections for future water and wastewater maximum use 2. Looking at new technologies for minimizing electrical energy used for water and wastewater purification 3. Coordinating with Ashland Planning to work towards building code changes to require the most efficient plumbing as well as incentives for developers to adopt climate friendly water conservation measures such as rainwater capture and graywater use for irrigation. 4. Staff should investigate more fully automated operation of water and wastewater facilities which could possibly preclude costly and very greenhouse gas intensive construction projects such as the new water treatment plant proposal. Most importantly, all of Ashland's current and future master planning documents should be subject to close scrutiny with the goal of finding cost effective ways of reducing negative climate impacts from our capital projects. This review should also include the various citizen and community based organizations that are working toward achieving positive climate goals. The best way to achieve good results from this review process is to open up planning discussions to include all interested citizens and organizations in a community DISCUSSION of the costs and climate impacts of our capital plans. In the past, the city has, for the most part, not done this. Instead, the public is typically not invited into the process until the planning documents have been written and most capital plans set. We can do much better than we have up to now and end up with appropriately scaled projects which move us toward reduced use of resources and energy while still supplying all the water we need for homes, businesses, and fire emergencies. Questions about this? Please contact Larry Cooper lcooperashland@gmail.com