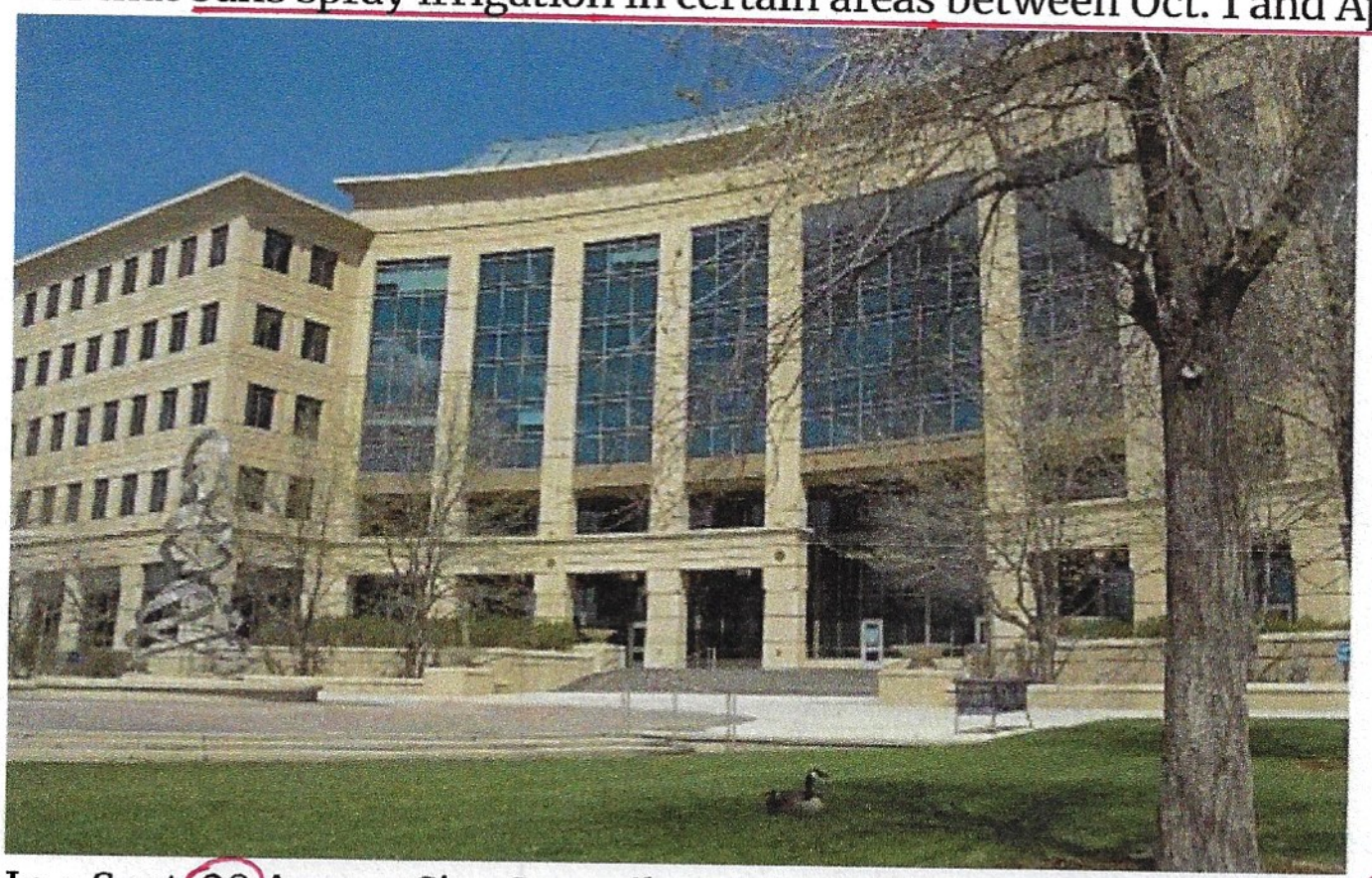
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Aurora irrigation ordinance has 'big impact' on water use

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Aurora is seeing a "big impact" on outdoor water use following the passage of an ordinance in September that bans spray irrigation in certain areas between Oct. 1 and April 30.



In a Sept. 28 Aurora City Council meeting, the council passed an ordinance prohibiting the installation of turf and ornamental water features and banning spray irrigation in nonhigh-use areas in the winter. High-traffic areas include public parks, school grounds, athletic and playing fields and golf courses. The watering ban went into effect Oct. 1 and will remain in effect until April 30.

Already, the ordinance has had a significant impact on water demand, Aurora Water Conservation Manager Tim York said in a water policy committee meeting Wednesday.

In the time frame between Oct. 1 and Oct. 5, the city used about 32 million gallons of water per day on average for outdoor use, York said.

Historically, the city has used an average of 59 million gallons per day during that same time period. The city generally sees a decline in outdoor water use starting in October each year, but this year's use was much lower, he said, attributing the change to the September ordinance.

Aurora has been under a Stage 1 Water Shortage declaration since early April, when the council unanimously approved outdoor watering restrictions.

The city's constant default restrictions limit residential turf irrigation to three days per week. Under Stage 1 restrictions, outdoor irrigation is limited to two days per week, according to the city's Water Shortage Response plan.

This year's drought pushed officials to ramp up enforcement of water restrictions.

Water users who violate the restrictions get one warning. A second violation results in a $250 fine for residential users and $500 fine for commercial users, and a third violation results in a $1,000 fine for

residential users and a $2,000 fine for commercial users.

After that, Aurora Water can continue fining at the third level or shut water off to the user.

Since April, city officials have issued 4,247 warnings, 499 of which were commercial and 2,469 of which were residential. They have also handed out 606 fines totaling more than $286,000. Of those, 110 were commercial and 159 were residential.

City officials have shut off about 10 irrigation meters for continued water use after warnings and fines, York said Wednesday.