

# City of La Quinta

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Timothy R. Jonasson, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer

DATE: April 15, 2014

SUBJECT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT FOR MARCH 2014

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1. On March 20, Public Works staff attended a symposium titled, "Running Dry – A Symposium on Drought and Water Scarcity in the West." A summary is provided as Attachment 1.
2. For the month of March, the total for all maintenance expenditures recorded in GOREquest was \$82,345.60 with street sweeping, irrigation work, debris removal, street sign installation, and graffiti removal being among the highest tasks in terms of cost. Public Works maintenance workers recorded over 1,350 task hours associated with this work. A detailed breakdown of tasks and associated costs is presented in the attached pie chart (Attachment 2).
3. Work continues on the County's Fred Waring Drive widening project, between Adams Street and Port Maria Road. The contractor is currently installing stamped concrete on the north side of Fred Waring Drive and is also constructing cross gutter and installing traffic signal cable at the Fred Waring Drive and Adams Street intersection. Pedestrian access will be restricted throughout construction due to the removal of sidewalk on the south side of the street. Ultimately, Fred Waring Drive will be three lanes in each direction. The project is on schedule to be complete in August 2014.
4. The La Quinta Health and Wellness Center project is in final design. The contractor installed wind fence and sand bags on April 7 and 8, and the construction trailer is scheduled to be delivered on April 10. Grading and demolition is scheduled to begin on April 14. The facility will remain open during construction.
5. Bids were opened for both the Miscellaneous Americans with Disabilities Act Improvements Phase II and the Sports Complex Lighting Improvements projects. Both projects are scheduled for City Council award approval on April 15.

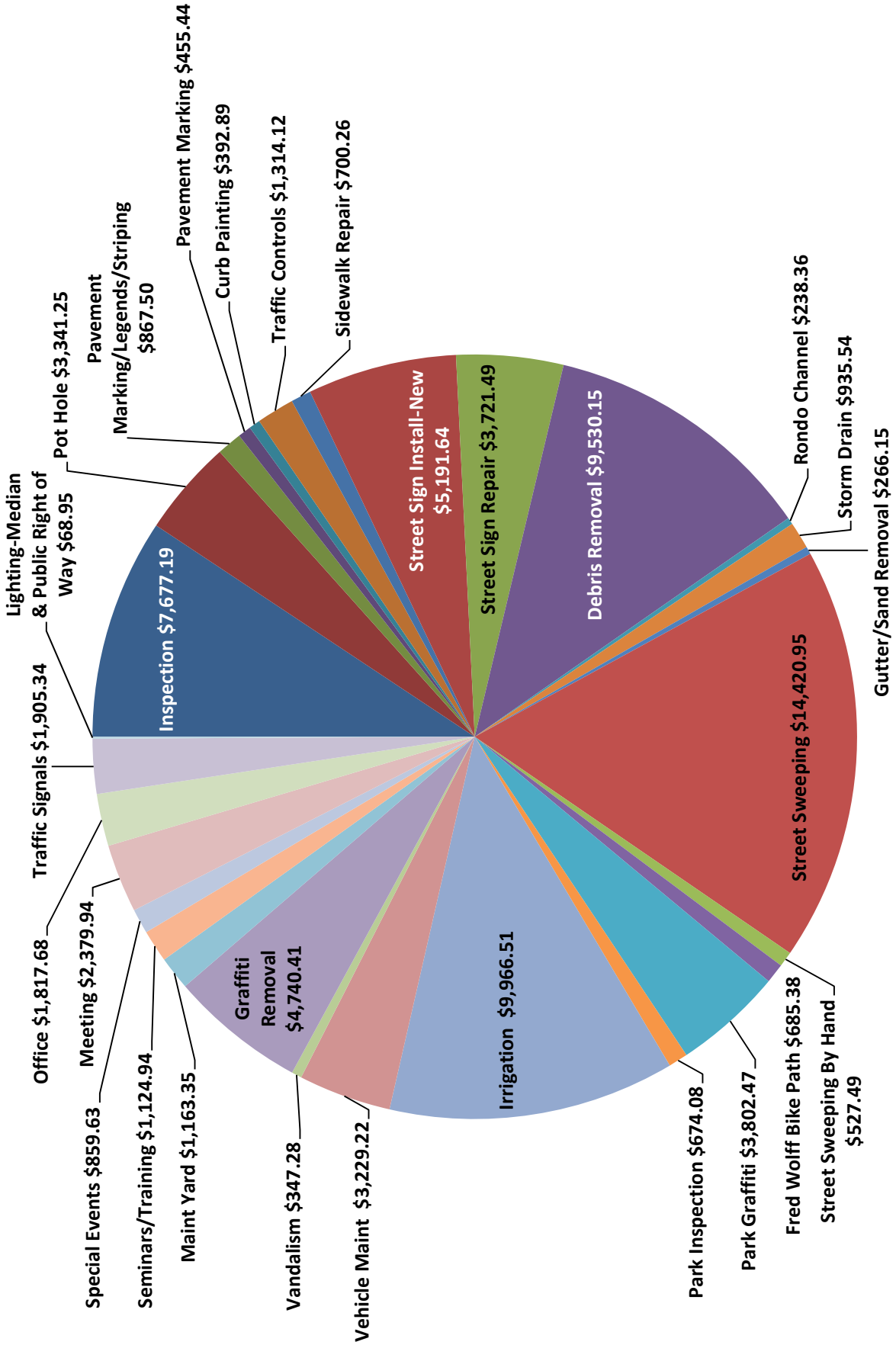


Below is a synopsis of some of the major ideas expressed during the water symposium, which was hosted by *The Desert Sun*, Sunnylands, and the Palm Springs Art Museum. As is the case in any good exchange of ideas, the panelists did not always agree with one another:

- We're on the edge of collapse at the Salton Sea, aquifer levels have been falling in the Coachella Valley and farmers are following some of the most productive fields in America. We need to strategize now on how to cope with shrinking water supplies.
- Water is still too cheap! Wasteful behavior won't change until water is much more expensive. Water agencies should price water much higher so that it more closely matches its intrinsic value and importance.
- Water agencies cannot artificially raise water prices. Water agencies are bound by law to charge no more than what it costs to provide the water.
- In the Coachella Valley Water District's (CVWD) service area, tiered water rates have, to date, been only marginally effective in curbing wasteful water practices. There is about 15,000 acre feet of water per year that is still being wasted since the imposition of tiered water rates. This is water usage over and above CVWD's very generous per-person water allocation. There is plenty of room for improvement in this area. Conservation and education efforts are key.
- If we don't act now, the Salton Sea will be a public health emergency, an economic catastrophe, a social justice issue and a wildlife crisis. In 2018, when the Quantification Settlement Agreement goes into full effect, Colorado River water will be transferred from the region's farms to urban areas. This will accelerate the shoreline recession as the farm return flows will no longer flow to the Salton Sea.
- Golf has historically been an important economic engine in the Coachella Valley. Great strides have been made to reduce the golf course "water footprint" through the use of recycled water (51 golf courses and counting), conversions to desert scape, and irrigation technology.
- Technology has been prominent in water conservation efforts. Over 10,000 irrigation nozzles are monitored by computers to ensure targeted watering at a golf course. Additionally, "smart controllers" monitor real time weather data to alter the days and times that they water plants.
- Senator Barbara Boxer, chair of the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee, is introducing a bill called "W-21" (Water for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) that promotes water conservation in consumer appliances, tax credits for urban and agricultural water efficiency systems, and financing for water recycling and storage programs.
- Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez introduced AB 1896 Non-potable Water, which would prohibit the use of potable water for irrigation for homeowner association landscaping if non-potable water is available (i.e. recycled water).



# Total Maintenance Cost March 2014



**Total Expenditures: \$82,345.60**

