Water is a precious commodity, sustaining life and allowing communities to grow and thrive. Ready access to clean water is something many people take for granted. But when drought spreads across the United States, it's no longer a guarantee. Municipalities find the need to think and work creatively to fulfill their operational needs while conserving water. In the City of Fontana, California that means "smart watering" city property.

Public works senior analyst Rogelio Matta knew Lucity could help the city do more work with less water. Here's what he has to say:

City of Fontana, California

"Water conservation is a hot topic in California, where drought conditions have brought restrictions. People pay attention to how much we water public spaces, and how much those efforts cost special districts. Our goal — always — is to be responsive and transparent in our city maintenance efforts.

"The amount of data we have at our fingertips within the Lucity system has transformed our methodology. We can approach the task much more strategically." -Rogelio

Our water application management program is large and complicated, with 23 million square feet of irrigated landscape area, 480 water meters, 1,000 electric meters, and 430 irrigation controllers. Just in case that isn't enough to track, our city is split into 78 special districts, all of which are taxed separately. Because of our special district situation, we couldn't always meet that goal when it came to water application management. Tracking each meter's output in a spreadsheet was inefficient; reading utility bills was a mess. We couldn't manage what we couldn't measure.

Lucity and GIS changed everything. We've been able to strip the complexity out of the process. We captured every green space that needs maintenance on one map, then overlapped the special funding districts. With a GPS-equipped camera, we took a photo of every meter, controller and clock. We put those records — and photos — in Lucity's Parks module.

Now, our GIS map of our green spaces, meters and controllers has revolutionized how we determined water application targets. We know what we are watering — turf, bushes, trees or a combination — and the soil type. We know where we have large application sprinklers and where they overlap.

With GIS and Lucity, we track sprinkler precipitation and make minute adjustments to improve efficiency. Our central computer adjusts water timers based on weather information. We can see when a sprinkler head is broken and remotely turn it off. This kind of knowledge allows us place water exactly where it is needed, taking water from shaded areas and applying it to stressed areas.

We know which meter waters each blade of grass… literally. Could you imagine tracking all that information and making all those adjustments manually? It's impossible. Now, we simply visit an app that shows us with one glance if we are meeting our efficiency targets: red for overwatering, blue for underwatering and green for hitting the target.

We're using water more efficiently than ever. We have the data to hold our contractors and water suppliers accountable. For funding purposes, we can accurately track how much water is used in each special district. With the ongoing drought, the focus on issues like this will only increase. Thanks to Lucity, we're prepared."

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In Their Own Words

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The amount of data administrators have at their fingertips within the Lucity system has transformed the city's methodology. They are able to approach the task much more strategically. Because of evapotranspiration (water loss into the atmosphere), runoff and groundwater recharge, the water department must replace 57 inches a year — or almost a billion gallons — to maintain the city's landscaping.