



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Zone 7 Launches New, User-Focused Website**

LIVERMORE, Calif. (June 17, 2021) – Zone 7 is debuting a newly redesigned website today as part of the Agency's 5-Year Strategic Plan. The new website features a new vibrant design, upgraded cybersecurity protocols, a streamlined site navigation structure, and refreshed content.

Zone 7 used website data and looked at how its community members had interacted with the site over the past 3 years to identify the content that users access most frequently. The fully redesigned website leverages those insights and aims to be easier and more user-friendly to navigate, increase district transparency, and ensure accessibility to all users (including users with disabilities) across all platforms. Zone 7 is committed to users now being able to easily find what they need, from browsing the site for rebate applications to catching Water Wise Wendy's latest tip. Users can now access the website from a desktop, phone, or tablet at [www.zone7water.com](http://www.zone7water.com).

### **An ADA-accessible website for all**

Just as buildings must have wheelchair ramps, modern websites must also accommodate all users, including those with motor, visual, auditory, or cognitive disabilities. Special attention was given to ensure the new website would function smoothly across devices especially for users with screen readers or other assistive technology. The new Zone 7 website was designed to meet WCAG 2.1 AA — the gold standard for accessible websites — bringing the site into compliance with Section 508 and California's AB 434.

The accessibility enhancements will also benefit Zone 7's search engine optimization, or SEO, to ensure that community members can quickly find official information from the district. This will help the district's popular website pages to rank higher in search engines for the terms the community members use most often to find information.

### **Enhanced cybersecurity**

In the process of the website redesign, Zone 7 also upgraded its hosting platform to reflect best practices, especially given the increasing demands of cybersecurity on critical infrastructure. Encrypted and secure connections will now be enforced for all traffic (using HTTPS with enhanced HSTS headers) and the content management system will be locked down and run on Pantheon, an industry-leading and affordable hosting platform used by Harvard University, the World Bank, and other uptime-critical

institutions. The goal is to protect the integrity and availability of information as well as the privacy and security of Zone 7's community members when using the site.

### **Resources for the community**

"Zone 7 is committed to providing the Tri-Valley community with multiple platforms to learn more about the Agency and take part in the decision-making process," said Zone 7 Board of Directors President Olivia Sanwong. "The website will provide a more user-friendly, transparent, and accessible space for the whole community."

The new website has lots of water wise resources for the Tri-Valley community and now features education resources for educators as well. Its virtual Kid Zone Schools' Program offers free exclusive lessons that are fully remote, and teachers can assign lessons to their students remotely, all on their own schedule.

### **Continuous improvement**

The new website will give the staff a number of new tools to quickly adjust the site's architecture if needed to respond to the changing needs of the community, and feedback from website users is encouraged using the "Website Feedback" link in the footer or by visiting [zone7water.com/feedback](https://zone7water.com/feedback).

"Our website will continue to evolve based on what we're hearing and seeing from our community," explained Alexandra Bradley, communication specialist. "It will always be, and should always be, a work in progress. We feel that this new site will be a big step forward in providing the community with the resources they need."

Zone 7 is committed to providing the Tri-Valley community with multiple platforms to learn more about the Agency and engage with the community. Please visit the new website at [www.zone7water.com](https://www.zone7water.com).

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### **About Zone 7 Water**

Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion, and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of over a quarter-million residents. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.