

Hillsboro Long-Term Water Supply Study

A Community Conversation About Drinking Water: *Summary Report*



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Acknowledgments

Hillsboro Utilities Commission

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Introduction

Hillsboro Water is looking ahead to identify an additional safe and reliable source of water for the City's future. The Tualatin watershed will continue to be Hillsboro's primary water source, but in the next 25-50 years the City anticipates the need for twice the amount of water currently available from the Tualatin.

The complexities of developing a new water source require Hillsboro Water to plan well in advance of the need. Even though Hillsboro's second source of water may not be online for many years, decisions need to be made now. Developing a new source will take at least a decade.

As Hillsboro gets closer to a decision on future supply options, a systematic evaluation of alternatives is underway. When considering water source options, Hillsboro Water and the Utilities Commission used public input to identify key criteria for guiding decisions around water supply planning. Community input on drinking water supports two top criteria in considering a new water source: *water quality* and *cost*.

Multiple source possibilities were evaluated: mid-Willamette River, groundwater, raising Scoggins dam to increase the capacity of Hagg Lake, and purchasing wholesale water from Portland. Savings achievable through water conservation were also evaluated to determine if more conservation could delay the need for a new supply.

As designated by the Utilities Commission, Hillsboro's "*preliminary preferred option*" for a new long-term water supply is ownership of a water treatment plant on the Willamette River near Wilsonville. This option provides for high quality tap water at a lower cost – with less implementation risk (more do-able) – than other alternatives.

The Willamette River is a proven, abundant and affordable water source. The City of Wilsonville has been providing satisfied residents and businesses with water from the Willamette River for over 10 years. Sherwood also recently began drawing on the Willamette as a source. Together with the Tualatin River, this abundant source of drinking water can serve Hillsboro's future water needs.

From September through December 2012, Hillsboro Water embarked on a "Community Conversation" asking utility customers and others to offer input on the preliminary preferred option. The input from the public will be considered by the Utilities Commission when making their decision in early 2013 on whether to conduct further study of the preferred Willamette River option.

Criteria for Selecting a New Water Source

- ✓ Water quality
- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Redundancy
- ✓ Ownership
- ✓ "Do-able"
- ✓ Environmental protection

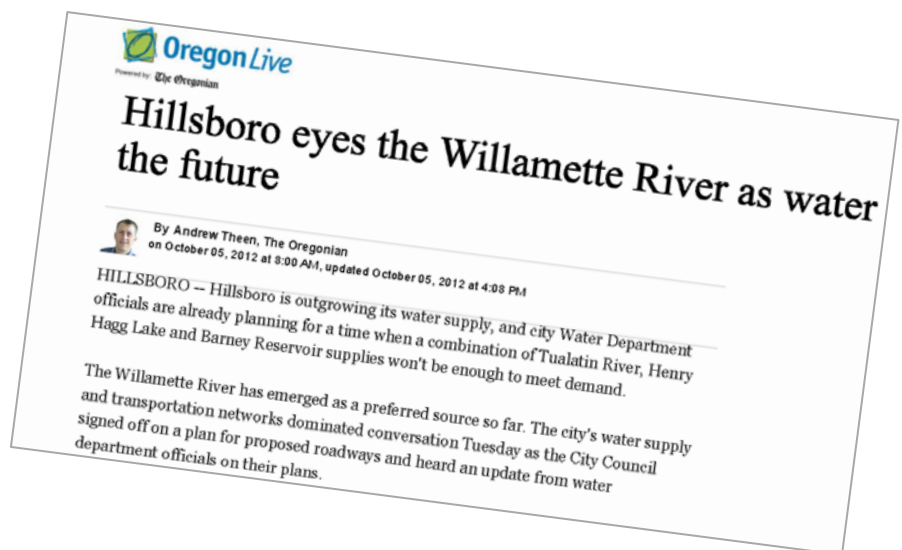
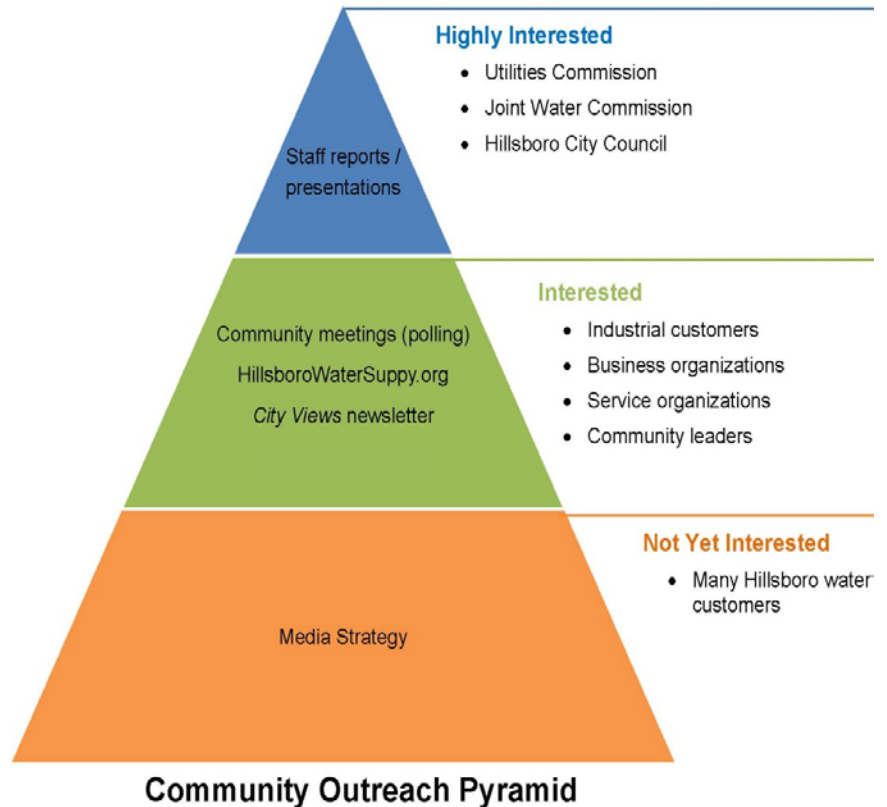
Outreach Process

Methods

Hillsboro Water understands community members contribute an important perspective on water supply options and can serve as a very useful sounding board for issues around water supply planning. To engage Hillsboro Water's customers and other key stakeholders in considering supply options, nine community meetings were conducted.

Meeting attendees were updated on Hillsboro's current water situation and future supply options. Participants were asked to share their views on decision criteria to guide Hillsboro's future water supply, and to express any questions, issues, or concerns with the preferred supply option being considered—the mid-Willamette at Wilsonville.

As Hillsboro's public opinion research shows, not everyone is interested in the long-range water supply planning process. Hillsboro Water strategically engaged and informed a broad spectrum of community members, from the few who are "highly interested" to the many more who are "not yet interested", as shown in the *Community Outreach Pyramid*. Outreach activities included news stories, updating the water supply website—hillsborowatersupply.org, newsletter stories, and presentations to Hillsboro City Council and others.



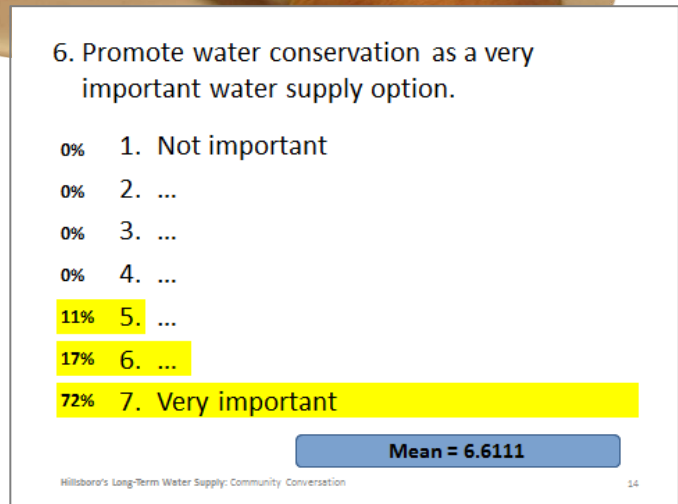
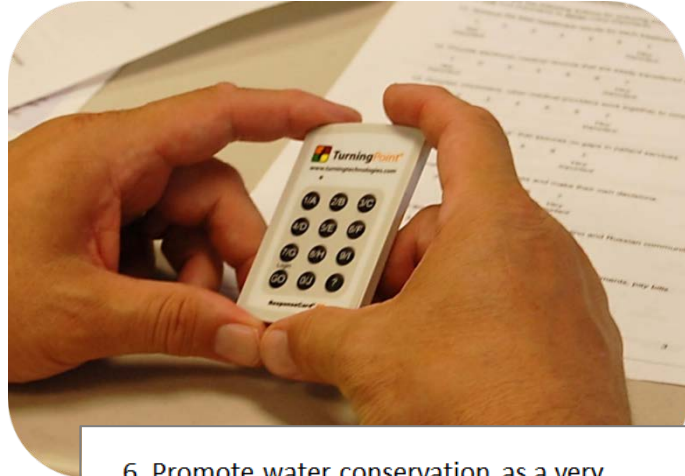
Tools

To gauge participants' views in community meetings, Hillsboro Water Department utilized interactive electronic polling technology.

Electronic polling involves hand-held keypad devices used by meeting participants to respond to a set of questions displayed in a PowerPoint presentation. Advantages of electronic polling are that participants can provide input anonymously, get instant feedback on the questions, and see how their responses compare to the group.

Electronic polling questions were designed to provide useful and timely information to the water supply planning team.

Meeting participants were also asked to complete a feedback form and several opportunities for comments and questions were built into the meeting agenda. Feedback forms were also provided.



Schedule

Hillsboro scheduled nine community meetings that included electronic polling. Hillsboro Water made sure the forums provided diverse representation of Hillsboro's community:

City of Hillsboro Employees	September 19, 2012
Greater Hillsboro Area Chamber of Commerce	September 25
Public Workshop (South)	October 25
Hillsboro Vision 2020 Vision Implementation Committee	October 29
Industrial Users	October 30
Hispanic Community Workshop	November 7
Youth Advisory Council	November 13
Public Workshop (North)	November 14
Top 25 Users	December 4

Meeting Announcements

Substantial effort was taken to publicize the community meetings. Hillsboro Water also used a mix of meeting venues to ensure there were multiple opportunities to attend meetings.

Meeting notices included:

- Utility bill message
- City of Hillsboro *City Views* newsletter
- Meeting announcement cards dispersed at community events, the Civic Center and Library
- Spanish-language flyers (advertising the November 7, 2012 meeting in English & Spanish) were distributed at churches, grocery stores, El Centro Cultural, and the Swap Meet, by a facilitator actively engaged in the Hillsboro Latino community
- Website notices (www.hillsborowater.org and www.hillsborowatersupply.org)
- CPO and Chamber of Commerce newsletters
- News release
- One-on-one meetings with local reporters
- Newspaper ads (Oregonian, Argus and Tribune)
- Invitation letters / emails
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)

Attendance

Total attendance at the nine community meetings was more than 160 community members. Meetings were held in a variety of venues at different times to ensure interested community members could participate. The three community meetings hosted by the City of Hillsboro were held at different locations (Civic Center, Main Library, and Lincoln Street Elementary). Food and refreshments, childcare, and door prizes were advertised to entice participation from those who might not regularly attend community meetings.

A bilingual English-Spanish community meeting format was developed by a Spanish-speaking facilitator who assisted with marketing the workshop to the Latino community and providing translation during the meeting. The bilingual meeting held at Lincoln Street Elementary was recorded by video and is airing on local cable access TV and on Hillsboro's water supply project website (www.hillsborowatersupply.org).

Hillsboro Water also facilitated electronic polling during several community organizations' regular meeting times / locations. Participation and interest in the topic were high at the organizations' meetings (Greater Hillsboro Area Chamber of Commerce, Hillsboro Vision 2020 Vision Implementation Committee, and the Youth Advisory Council).

Attendance was low at the three public meetings, even though they were promoted through a variety of communication channels. Most attendees to meetings hosted by Hillsboro Water had recently moved to Hillsboro and were interested in learning more about the water system.

Results of Public Meetings

Results of the meetings were recorded through electronic polling technology, feedback forms and notes of oral comments. Following are the electronic polling results and a summary of written and oral comments.

Polling Results

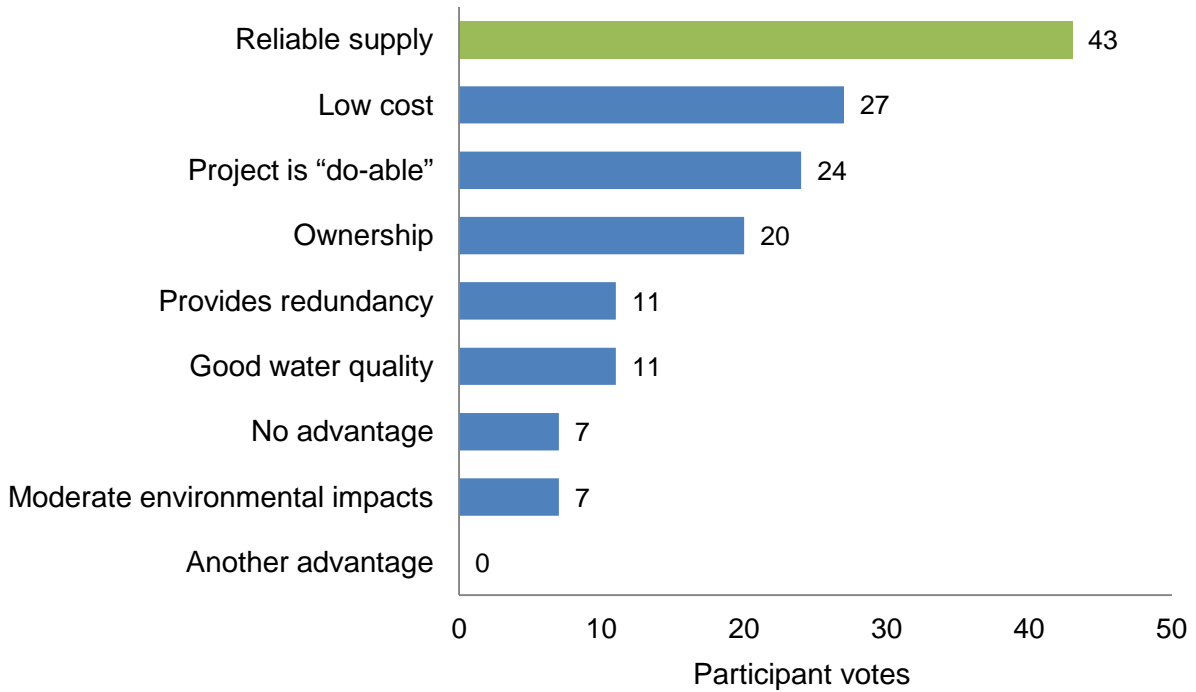
More than 160 community members, business owners, Hillsboro employees and others participated in electronic polling at the nine community meetings.

- 1. On a scale of 1 (not important) to 7 (very important), how would you rate the following values to guide decisions about Hillsboro’s future water source?**

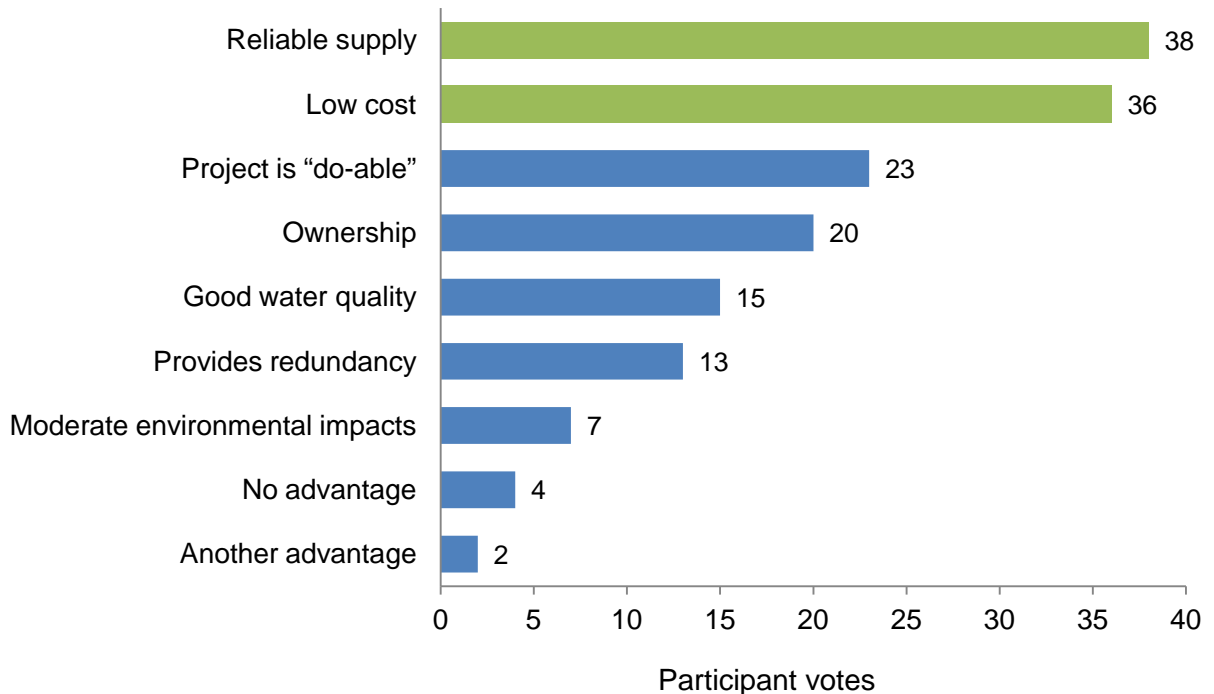
Community Values	Rating
Provide high quality treated drinking water.	6.96
Plan ahead for the long-term drinking water solution.	6.72
Own and control our own water supply.	6.07
Prepare to serve new residential customers.	6.04
Prepare to serve new and expanding business and industrial customers.	6.03
Promote water conservation as a very important water supply option.	5.90
Avoid or mitigate environmental impacts in developing any new water source.	5.62
Diversify Hillsboro’s water sources.	5.63
Partner with other communities to develop regional water sources.	5.30

Providing high quality treated drinking water and planning ahead for the long-term drinking water solution were the most important values for participants. Other values all ranked in the “important” range.

2. Top advantage of developing a Willamette River treatment plant in partnership with other suppliers?

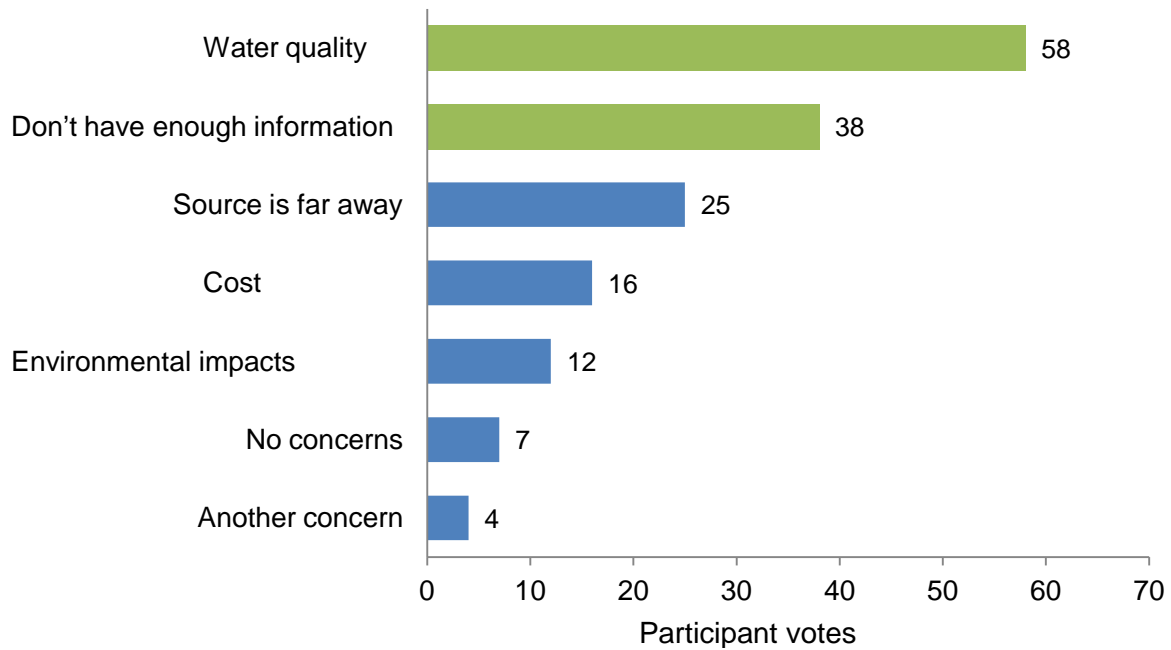


3. Another advantage of developing a Willamette River treatment plant in partnership with other suppliers?

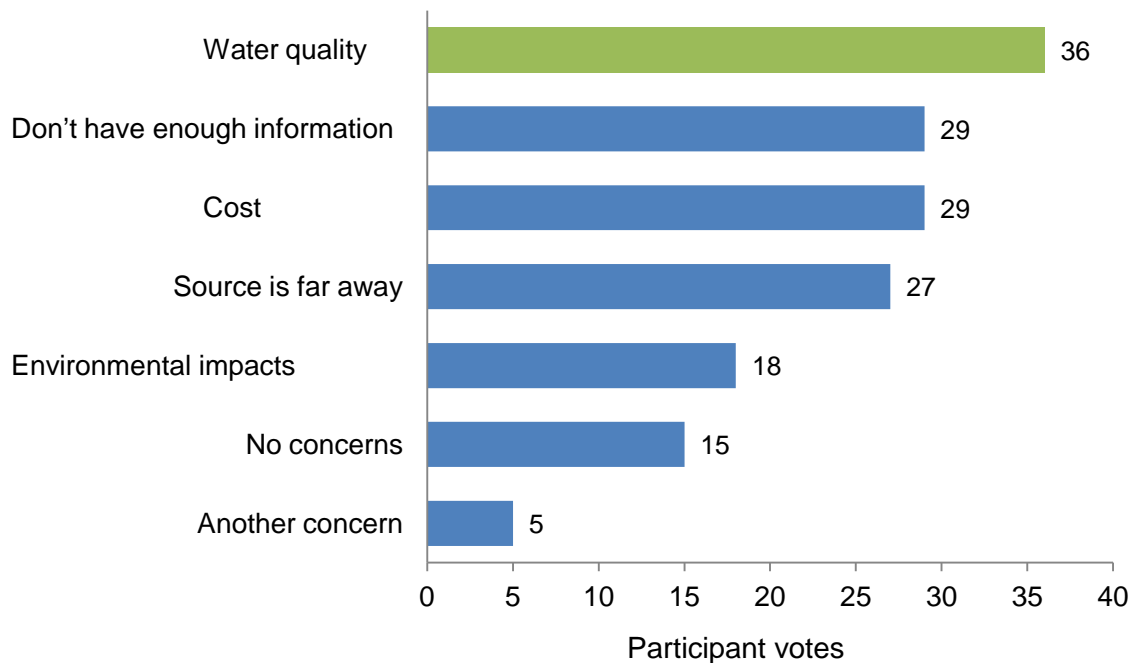


Chief advantages of the Willamette River source identified by the public include "reliable supply" and "lower cost".

4. Top concern for developing a Willamette River treatment plant in partnership with other suppliers?

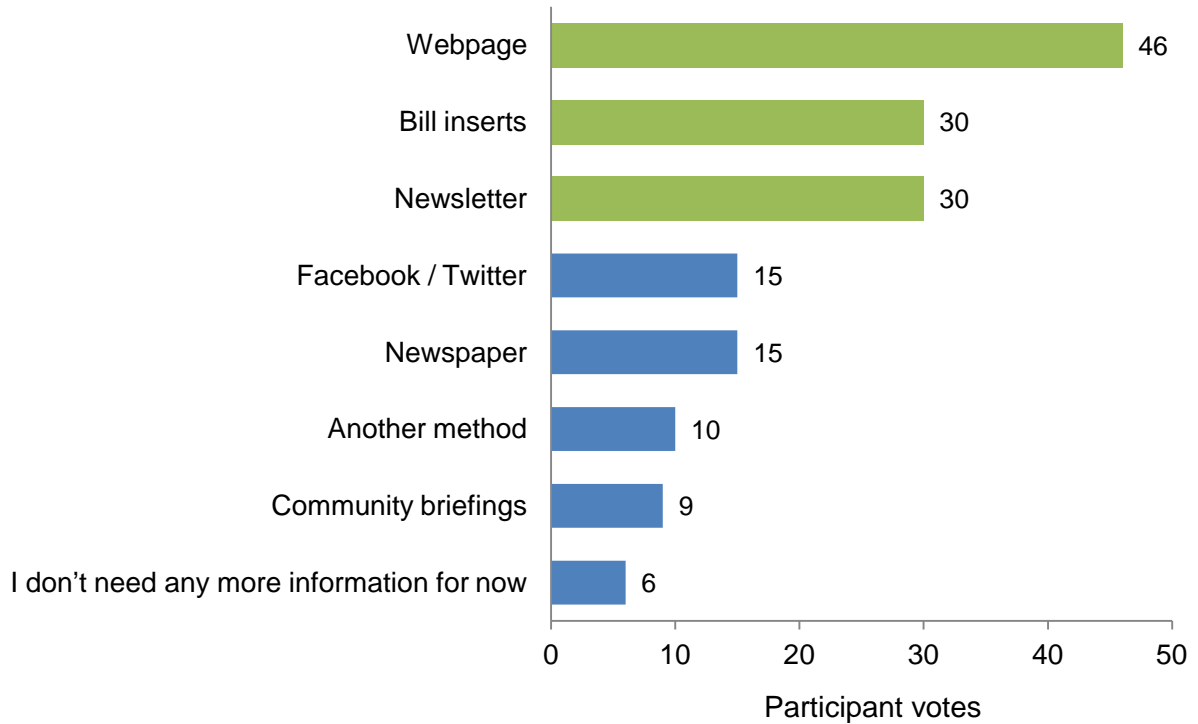


5. Another concern for developing a Willamette River treatment plant in partnership with other suppliers?



Water quality and the need for more information are top concerns for participants regarding the Willamette River source.

6. *The best way to keep me informed:*



Most participants prefer to stay informed via the webpage. Utility bill inserts and the City's newsletter also rank higher than other communication methods.

Questions and Comments

Questions and comments were collected from feedback forms and facilitated discussion periods during community meetings. The comments below are from the comment forms submitted by participants or are notes of verbal comments at the meeting.

Values to Guide Decisions

- Protecting public health is a top priority.
- Keeping as much local control as possible is important.
- Ownership is a big issue.
- Pay more if needed to ensure high quality and local control. Water quality for Intel is very important—hard to take out fluoride.
- Source proximity to customers is a high value in emergency situations.
- Security of water source is important.
- Hillsboro has great water. Some surrounding communities don't. We need to protect that.
- Redundancy, reliability and partnerships will save us money.
- We need adequate and multiple elevated storage facilities.
- Keep moving forward!
- Quality of source is important.

- Protect the environment.

Sources

Water Conservation

- Cheap prices are known to be the #1 reason for water waste. How are you going to attempt to find the median between too cheap and too expensive?
- Can we raise rates even more to make people use less?
- We live in a condo and pay for water through an association. When you are not paying for the water, there is a tendency to use more. Anything being done about that?
- Conservation is a big deal. Water bill seems like we are paying a lot in flat fees. If bill was rated on how much you use, it might help.
- What are the barriers to increasing water conservation? Can't we get any more?

Willamette River

- Do you have to purchase any right-of-way to get water to Hillsboro?
- Is there a natural path to get that water to Hillsboro?
- How close is Wilsonville?
- If you are bringing water from 30 miles away, where are you going to put it back?
- Would like to ensure there is water from the Willamette River for other communities.
- What about using the Willamette for agriculture only?
- Agriculture needs the same basin.
- Are other communities looking to tap into the Willamette? How do you keep the river from being over-allocated?
- What about water rights?
- Do you have Willamette River water rights?
- Does Hillsboro have Willamette River water rights? Is there a certain amount that can be withdrawn?
- Will there be enough water in the Willamette River even in a multiple year drought?
- Have there been any discussions about controlling / protecting the Willamette watershed? What other development will pollute this source?
- Are there any concerns from City of Wilsonville industrial users?
- Will there be a new / separate treatment plant in Wilsonville?
- Will you be taking treated water from the Wilsonville's plant?
- Will the water consistency be the same?
- Have decisions about treatment been made?
- What would be the long-term capacity?
- What size pipe will be needed?
- How big is the intake on the Willamette?

- Will there be pump stations along the way?
- Would it be raw water brought to Hillsboro?
- Would there be another reservoir?
- When will it take effect?
- Who are your partners?
- Is there a timeframe for the Willamette hook-up?
- Get more water quality data for industrial customers.
- Is the project doable today?
- This should be a Washington County effort.
- If there is any way to get water without using the Willamette, that would be the first choice. It bothers me to be forced in one direction.
- I would prefer any source besides the Willamette.
- People should have a choice instead of having it shoved down their throats—this is déjà vu from 1998.
- Last preferred option is the Willamette River.
- Think the public would not like the history of the Willamette.
- The Willamette flows through big agricultural area—there are a lot of contaminants.
- During the rainy season, the Willamette turns into a mud pool.
- Why was the Willamette the last source that was tapped into? Nobody wanted it.
- People are confused where the Super Fund site is located.
- The source is upstream from Portland—a good thing.
- Willamette has stuff dumped into it—Salem, Corvallis, Eugene. How are you going to pull out the medical waste? Don't they pull five-legged frogs out of the Willamette?

Other Source Options

- Is the groundwater option just a supply limitation or are there other reasons it was sidelined?
- Are there other reservoir sources beyond Hagg Lake and Barney?
- There is no redundancy with the Hagg Lake option.
- What would industry think of Portland water without treatment?
- Know Portland has been difficult to work with and understand why we are moving away from PDX supply.

Cost

- How close is the cost of the Willamette to raising Hagg Lake?
- How much will it cost? Will it make rates as much as Portland's?
- Sherwood's water rate is high. Is that because of the Wilsonville plant?
- How much money are we talking?
- If water rates double, our company may move to Taiwan.

- It is obvious that you are going to the Willamette. How will you pay for it and will it go to a public vote for funding?

General Questions and Comments

- What is the City of Beaverton doing?
- How much current / future demand is residential versus industrial?
- How much water is used in Hillsboro?
- If the capacity at the treatment plant is 75 mgd, why do we need to look for more water?
- Will attracting new businesses that use water impact decisions?
- Is fluoride added to the water in Hillsboro?
- Do you have to buy the water before you use it?
- How does the Clackamas River go into your analysis?
- Water is under-appreciated.
- Reduce fire use of water by up to 80%; require residential fire sprinkler systems.
- How much population are we planning for?
- Coordination with planning—make sure growth efforts are in conjunction with water resource planning.
- Some types of dioxins can't be filtered out.
- No pump back of Tualatin into Hagg from JWC intake.
- Use high quality materials / equipment to reduce the risk of failure and lower maintenance costs.
- Look at reuse if you are looking out 50 years.
- While you are thinking about 50 years out, keep thinking further ahead. We will run out of water sometime. There won't always be sources to tap.

Public Outreach

- Others are affected. Get their input as well.
- Make people feel like they are involved with the decision itself—not just a survey on their values.
- When rolling out to the public, be sure to say “mid” or “upper” Willamette.
- Use public television for information.
- We need more information about cost and quality.
- Feel like the decision has been made and don't have facts to confirm or deny. We pay you to do this and don't understand the point of this meeting.
- The information is too general to approve or disapprove a decision.
- I came here to learn. I don't have enough information to make a decision, but appreciate the work done.
- Nicely done—thanks!
- Good job and thank you.
- Very impressed with work already done. Smart to involve the public.
- You are doing a very good job!
- Applaud the City's water planning. Getting input from community is very well done.
- Great job!
- Very informative presentation. Thank you!
- Great presentation! Niki and Tacy know their stuff!

Communications Recommendations

Based on the feedback from the community meetings, Hillsboro Water should consider the following priorities in communications moving forward with the long-range water supply planning.

1. There is a need for a long-term public education program about the mid-Willamette source:
 - > Advantages of the supply, highlighting those that resonate with the public
 - > Location of source
 - > Data on water quality (raw and treated water)
 - > Tell the Wilsonville Willamette River water treatment plant story; compile summary data on source water quality and plant performance; interview industrial customers
 - > “Show me” tools (video, photo library)
 - > Demonstrate commitment to water quality by joining watershed protection efforts now
2. Demonstrate the need and timing for a second supply of water.
3. Be clear about the project milestones and interim supply steps.
4. Continue to strongly promote water conservation and let the community know about conservation successes.
5. Continue to provide basic information and educate customers on Hillsboro’s water system.
6. Tell the partnership story in conjunction with the rate impacts (when known).
7. Re-engage with the “highly interested” stakeholders when treatment decisions are being made.
8. Continue to promote the website as the best way to get up-to-date project information.
9. Coordinate communications with supply partners.
10. Use a speakers bureau rather than open house format for ongoing community outreach.



City of Hillsboro Water

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