Utah's Water Future

Local Perspectives on Water Issues

Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey

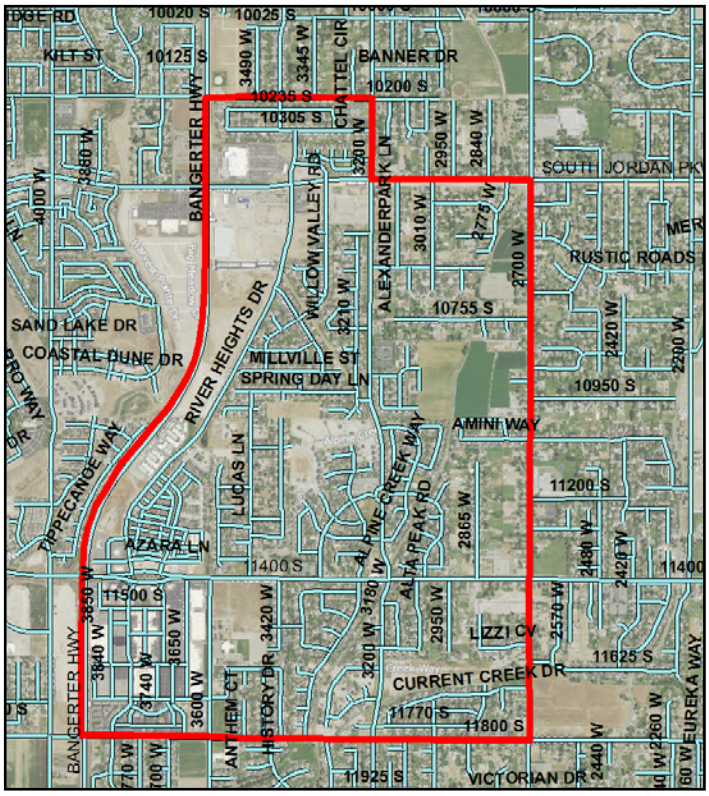
SOUTH JORDAN HIGHLIGHTS

Background:

In July and August 2014, researchers from Utah State University and the University of Utah conducted a survey about water issues with residents in one neighborhood in South Jordan (see map below). We received responses from 48% of the households selected to participate (86 total respondents).

Characteristics of survey respondents were very similar to the neighborhood and city as a whole based on Census information, though adults responding to the survey somewhat underrepresented those in the 18-35 age group and overrepresented those with 4-year college degrees and over age 65.

Map of Study Neighborhood in South Jordan



Household Water & Lawns

People know how much they spend, but not how much they use

- Over three-fourths of respondents (75%) reported a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but fewer (33%) were familiar with the volume of water they use.

Lawns mainly watered by household residents

- South Jordan respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they water their own lawns (86%), though 14% report that watering is done by their homeowners or condominium association.

Few water during the day

- Most residents (97%) reported watering their lawn mainly in the morning, evening, or at night.
- The average household watered the lawn 4 times per week in July.

Weather plays a key factor in watering decisions...

- Nearly all of households (85%) said they try to adjust their lawn watering to the weather.

...but property value, time, and conservation are also considerations.

- Most indicated they water to try to maintain property value (72%) and prevent brown spots (68%).
- Majorities said keeping a regular schedule (67%) and minimizing time spent watering (56%) were important considerations.
- Nearly two thirds (66%) said conserving water was an important factor in their lawn watering decisions.

Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith, Dr. Courtney Flint, Andrea Armstrong and Taya Carothers, Utah State University.
For more information, contact Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith at 435-797-0582 or doug.jackson-smith@usu.edu

Water Conservation

Many residents think that they can do more to conserve water…

- More than half (58%) of South Jordan respondents felt they could do more to reduce their indoor water use, while
- Just over a third (39%) thought they could do more to reduce outdoor water use.

…but only a small percentage report have actually decreased their water use

- A small minority of South Jordan respondents reported that they decreased either indoor (14%) or outdoor (14%) water use over the last five years.

People were most willing to conserve water if it:

- **Reduces their water bills** (83%),
- **Ensures future supply for their home** (73%),
- **Ensures future supply for farms** (67%), and
- **Improves fish & wildlife habitat** (63%).

People were least willing to conserve if savings are used to increase development in this area. (24%).

Water Quality

Local water quality is generally seen as good.

- Almost two-thirds of South Jordan respondents (64%) rated their drinking water quality as "good" or "very good". Only 7% see it as "bad."
- By contrast 35% rated water in rivers and lakes upstream as good/very good, with 12% rating it as bad.
- A minority of respondents (20%) indicated nearby irrigation canal or ditch water was of good quality, compared to 24% who felt downstream waters in rivers and lakes were good quality .
- Many were ambivalent; between 35-46% of respondents rated different types of water as neither good nor bad.

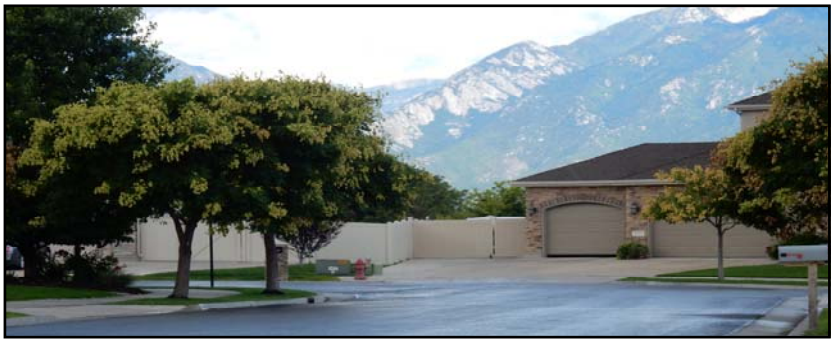
Secondary Water Systems

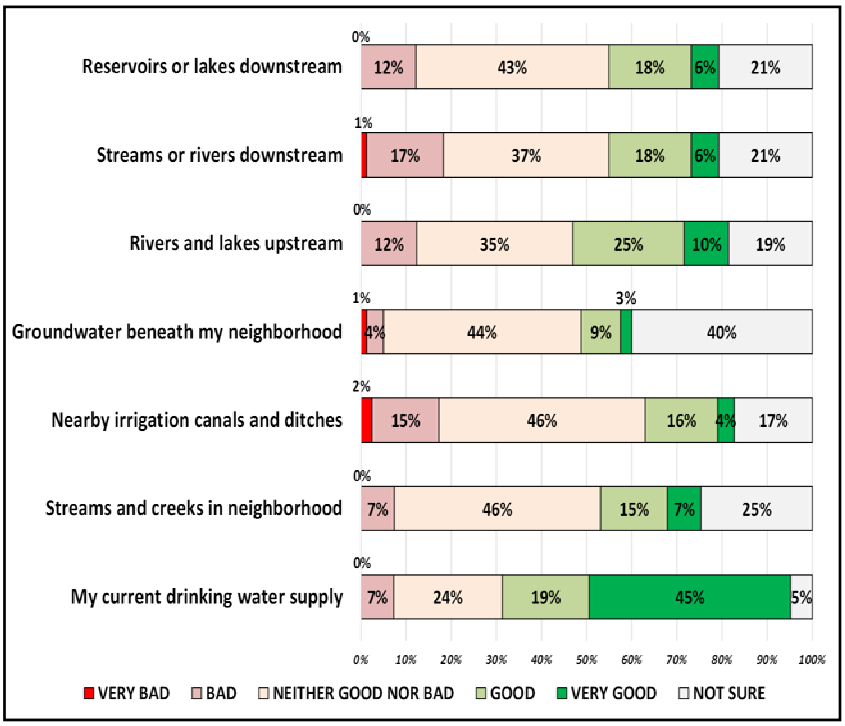
Used by 20% of households, mainly for lawns and gardens

- About 20% of South Jordan respondents reported having access to secondary water for irrigation, of which 27% have a pressurized system and 67% receive water from an open ditch or canal.
- Those with access mainly used secondary water for irrigating their lawn and other landscaping (59%) or for vegetable gardens (47%). About a third used this water for agricultural crops or livestock (29%).

Most users are satisfied

- Respondents from South Jordan who have secondary water service were generally satisfied with their systems (53%) and 29% said they have attended a meeting with their secondary water provider.
- Less than a third of South Jordan respondents with secondary water (29%) indicated confidence in the future security of their secondary water supply.





Concerns about Water and Other Issues

Respondents believed current water supplies are more adequate than future water supplies

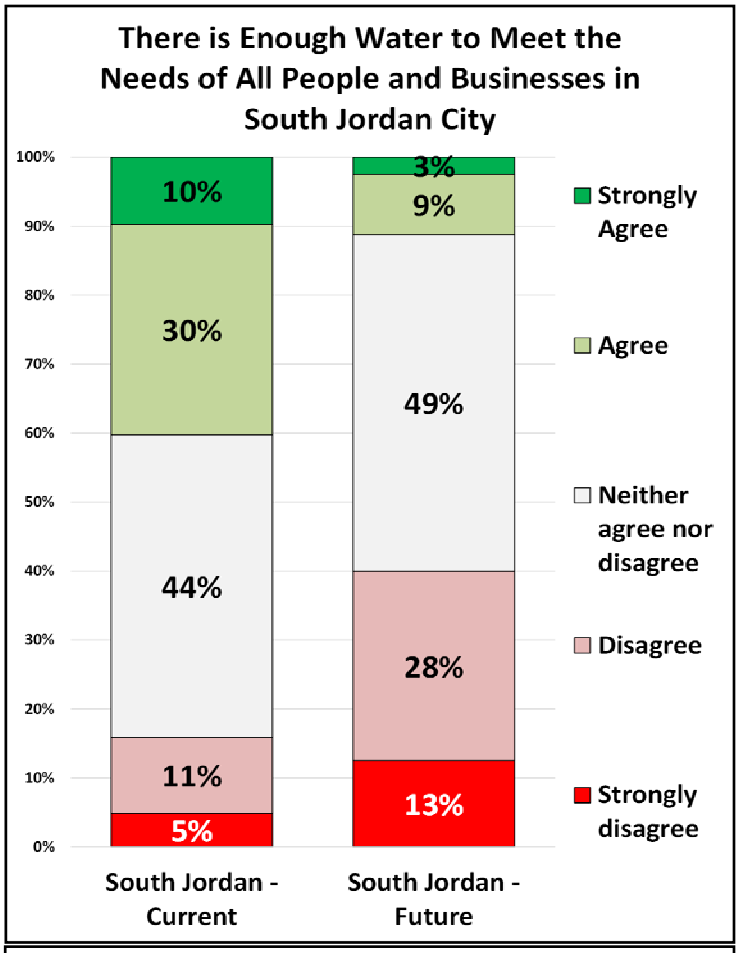
- Just under half of South Jordan respondents (40%) thought there was enough water to meet current needs in the city; 16% disagreed.
- Only 11% were confident in South Jordan's future supply, and 41% of respondents were concerned about the city's future water supply.

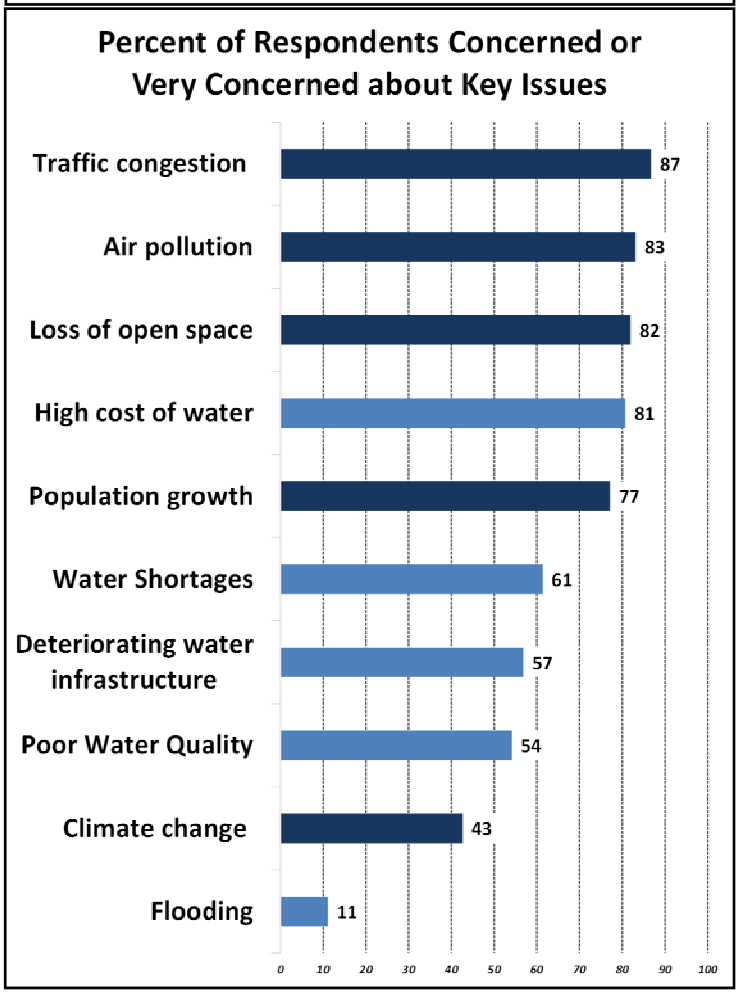
Farm water use was not a big concern.

- While 48% of respondents believed that residential lawns use too much water,
- Only 5% felt that agriculture was currently using too much water.

Water related issues take a back seat to growth concerns, except for cost.

- Traffic congestion(87%), air pollution (83%), and loss of open space (82%) were the issues of greatest concern to respondents.
- Among water issues, the greatest concern related to the high cost of water (81%).
- Over half were concerned about water shortages (61%), deteriorating infrastructure (57%) and poor water quality (54%).
- By far the lowest level of concern was expressed about flooding (11%).





How Should South Jordan Respond to Short-Term Shortages?

Voluntary approaches most popular

- South Jordan respondents indicated a very high level of support for educational efforts (88%) and voluntary water restrictions (77%).

Majority support mandatory limits

- Most respondents supported watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (70%) and mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (61%)

Support for Long Term Water Policy in South Jordan

Most supported having development pay for itself or expanding supply

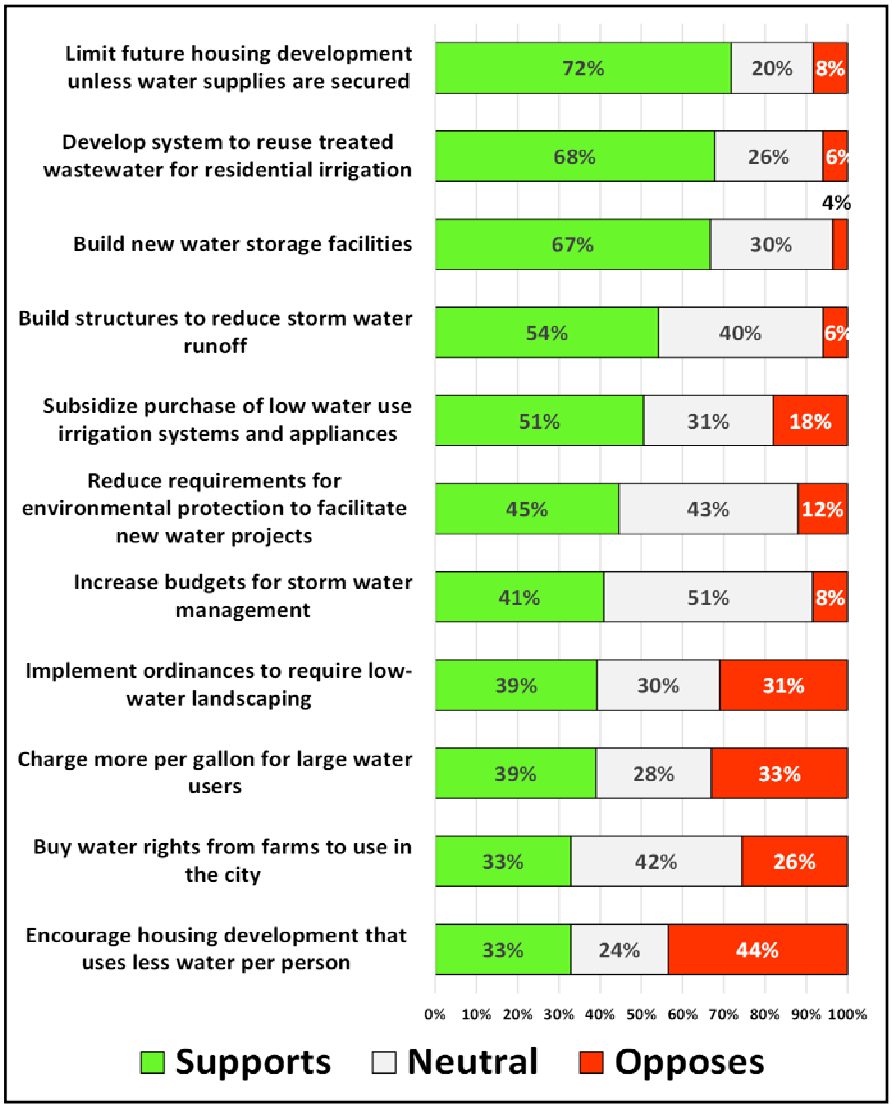
- Limiting future housing development unless water supplies are secured was supported by 72% of respondents.
- Roughly two thirds supported building new water storage facilities (67%) and reusing treated wastewater for residential irrigation (68%).

Many supported storm-water management

- Over half supported local funding to build structures to reduce stormwater runoff (54%) and 41% supported increasing budgets for city stormwater management.

There was mixed support for incentivizing conservation

- About half supported subsidizing purchases of low water efficient irrigation systems or appliances (51%).
- Roughly 40% supported charging large water users more per gallon (39%) and passing ordinances to require low water landscaping (39%). Smaller but significant numbers of respondents opposed these policies.
- There was less support for city policies to encourage housing development that uses less water per person (33%), or buy water rights from farms for city use (33%).



If you would like more information about the survey results, full reports are posted on our website:

www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey

Support for State Water Goals & Policies

Residents said state should ensure supply while protecting water quality and agriculture

- Nearly all supported state goals to ensure a supply of drinking water (99%) protect water quality (93%), and ensure water supplies for agriculture (77%).
- There was moderate support for state goals to protect wetlands and wildlife habitat (61%), save taxpayer money (54%), and ensure the supply of water for economic development (46%).

There was support for wide range of state policies

- The highest support was for the use of state funds to replace aging city water infrastructure (75%) or build new reservoirs or storage (70%), with significant support also for state policies to set minimum standards for new residential construction to reduce water use (60%), invest in research on conservation (60%) and use state funds to pay for efficiency improvements in agricultural irrigation systems (60%).
- Fewer supported prioritizing efficiency over water rights (38%) or transfers of water from farms to urban users (35%).