Utah's Water Future

Local Perspectives on Water Issues

Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey

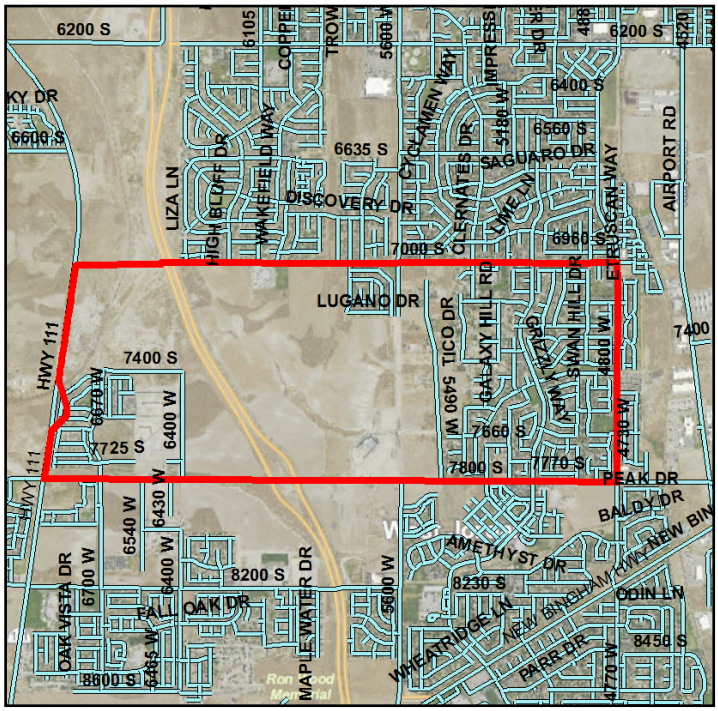
WEST JORDAN HIGHLIGHTS

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 West Jordan (see map below). We received responses from 68% of the households selected to participate (118 total respondents).

Characteristics of survey respondents were similar to the neighborhood and city as a whole based on Census information, though adults responding to the survey underrepresented those in the 18-35 age group and over-represented those over age 65, with 4-year college degrees, and with household incomes over $75,000.

Map of Study Neighborhood In West Jordan



Household Water & Lawns

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

- Over three-fourths of respondents (76%) reported a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but fewer (25%) were familiar with the volume of water they use.

Lawns mainly watered by household residents

- West Jordan respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they water their own lawns (97%).

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 (92%) 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 (74%) and prevent brown spots (71%).
- Majorities said keeping a regular schedule (75%) and minimizing time spent watering (58%) were important considerations.
- Nearly two thirds (62%) 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 of West Jordan respondents felt they could do more to reduce their indoor water use (62%)or outdoor water use (55%).

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

- A small minority of West Jordan respondents reported that they decreased either indoor (11%) or outdoor (16%) water use over the last five years.

People were most willing to conserve water if it:

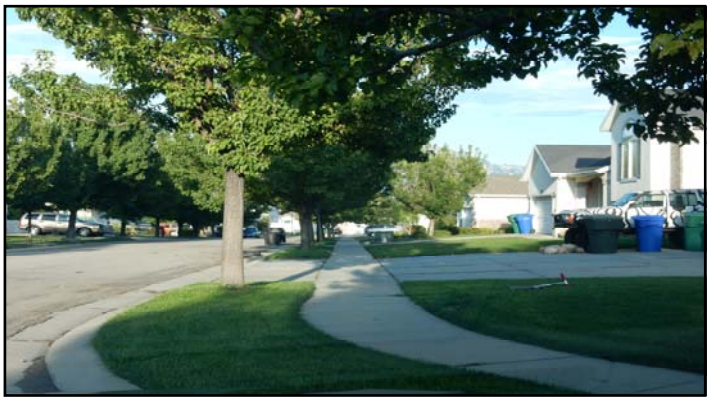
- **Ensures future supply for their home** (75%),
- **Reduces their water bills** (73%),
- **Ensures future supply for farms** (64%),
- **Improves fish & wildlife habitat** (55%), and
- **Improves urban parks and open spaces** (54%).

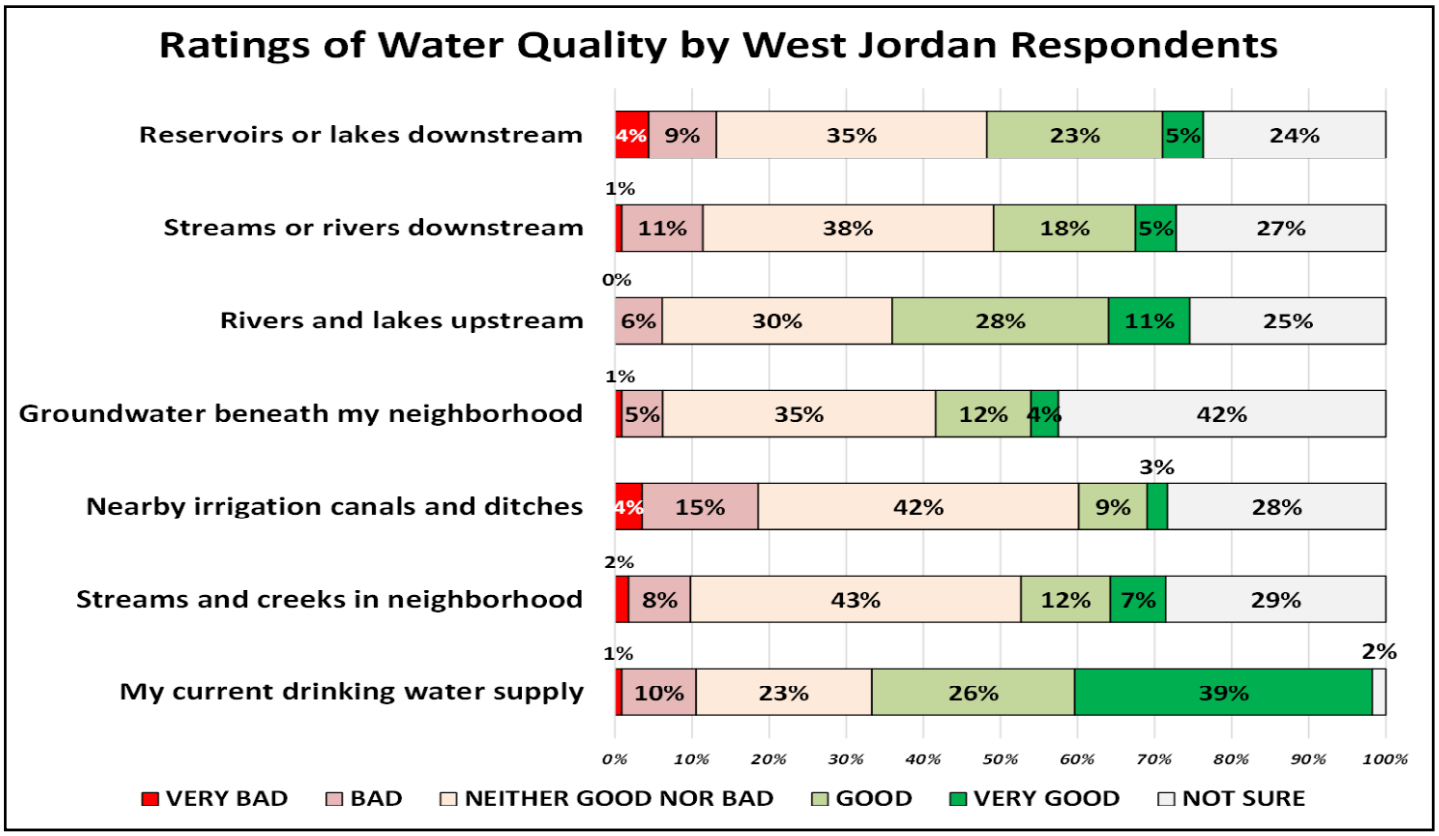
People were least willing to conserve if savings are used to increase development in this area (27%).

Water Quality

Local water quality is generally seen as good.

- Almost two-thirds of West Jordan respondents (65%) rated their drinking water quality as "good" or "very good". Only 11% see it as "bad."
- By contrast 39% rated water in rivers and lakes upstream as good/very good, with 6% rating it as bad.
- A minority of respondents (12%) indicated nearby irrigation canal or ditch water was of good quality, compared to 24-28% who felt downstream waters in rivers and lakes were good quality .
- Many were ambivalent; between 30-43% of respondents rated different types of water as neither good nor bad.





Concerns about Water and Other Issues

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

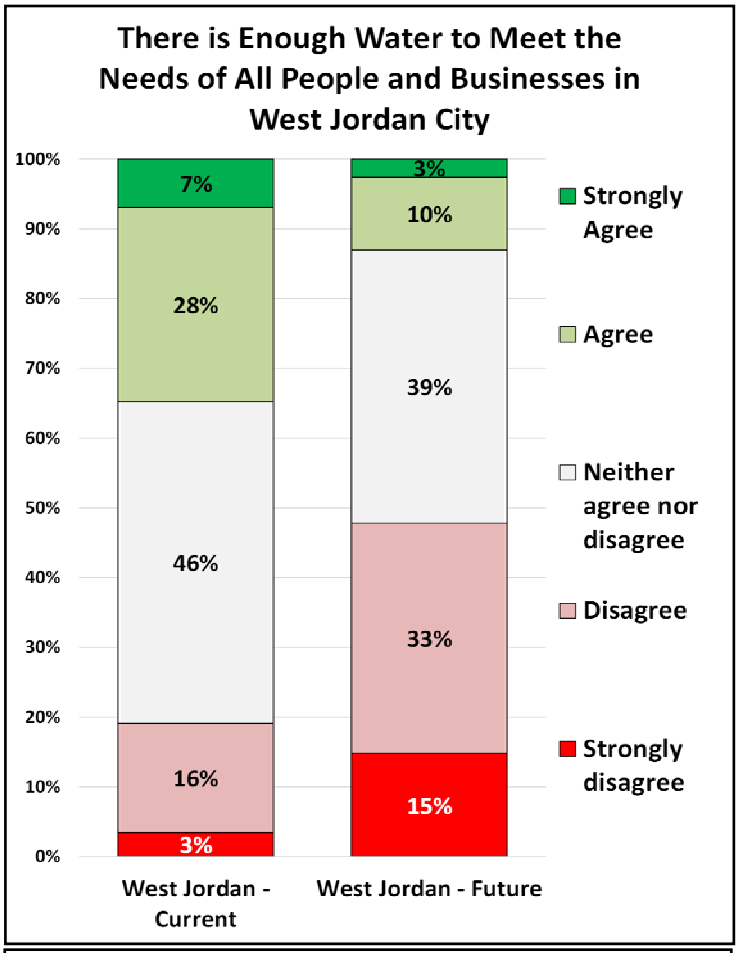
- Just over a third of West Jordan respondents (35%) thought there was enough water to meet current needs in the city; 19% disagreed.
- Only 13% were confident in West Jordan's future supply, and 48% of respondents were concerned about the city's future water supply.

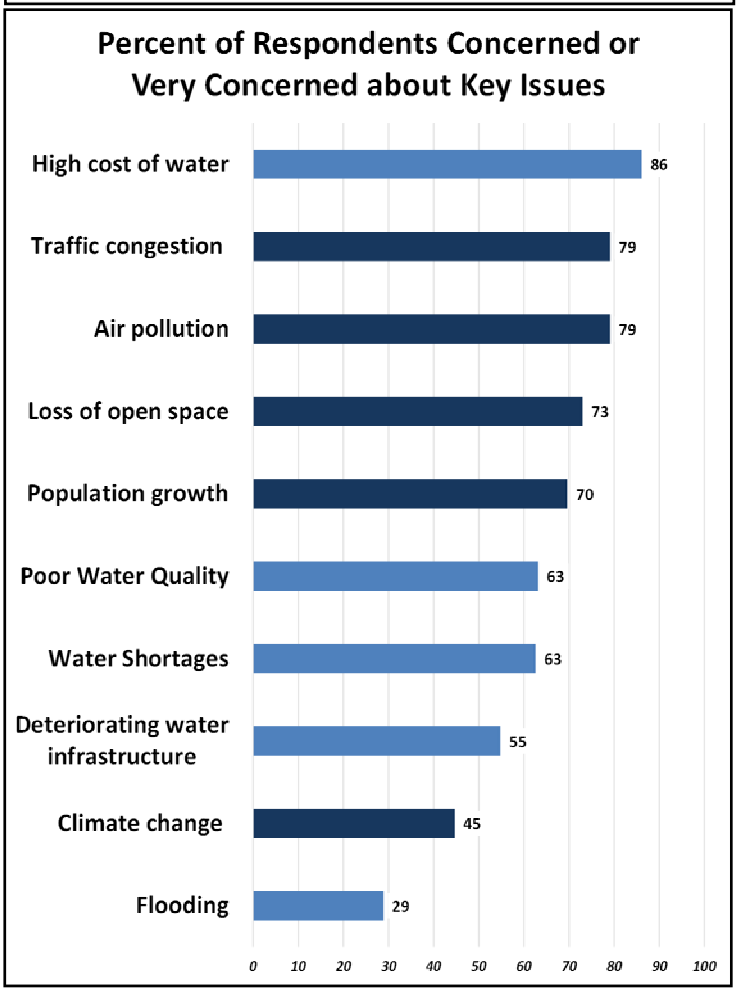
Farm water use was not a big concern.

- While 57% of respondents believed that residential lawns use too much water,
- Only 2% felt that agriculture was currently using too much water.

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

- The top concern of respondents in West Jordan was the high cost of water (listed by 86%).
- Traffic congestion(79%), air pollution (79%), loss of open space (73%), and population growth (70%) were the next four issues of greatest concern to respondents.
- Among the other water issues, over half were concerned about water quality (63%), water shortages (63%), and deteriorating infrastructure (55%).
- By far the lowest level of concern was expressed about flooding (29%).





How Should West Jordan Respond to Short-Term Shortages?

Voluntary approaches most popular

- West Jordan respondents indicated a very high level of support for educational efforts (88%) and voluntary water restrictions (81%).

Majority support mandatory limits

- Most respondents supported watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (72%) and mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (60%)

Support for Long Term Water Policy in West Jordan

Most supported having development pay for itself or expanding supply

- Limiting future housing development unless water supplies are secured was supported by 71% of respondents.
- Over two thirds supported building new water storage facilities (69%) and reusing treated wastewater for residential irrigation (70%).

Many supported storm-water management

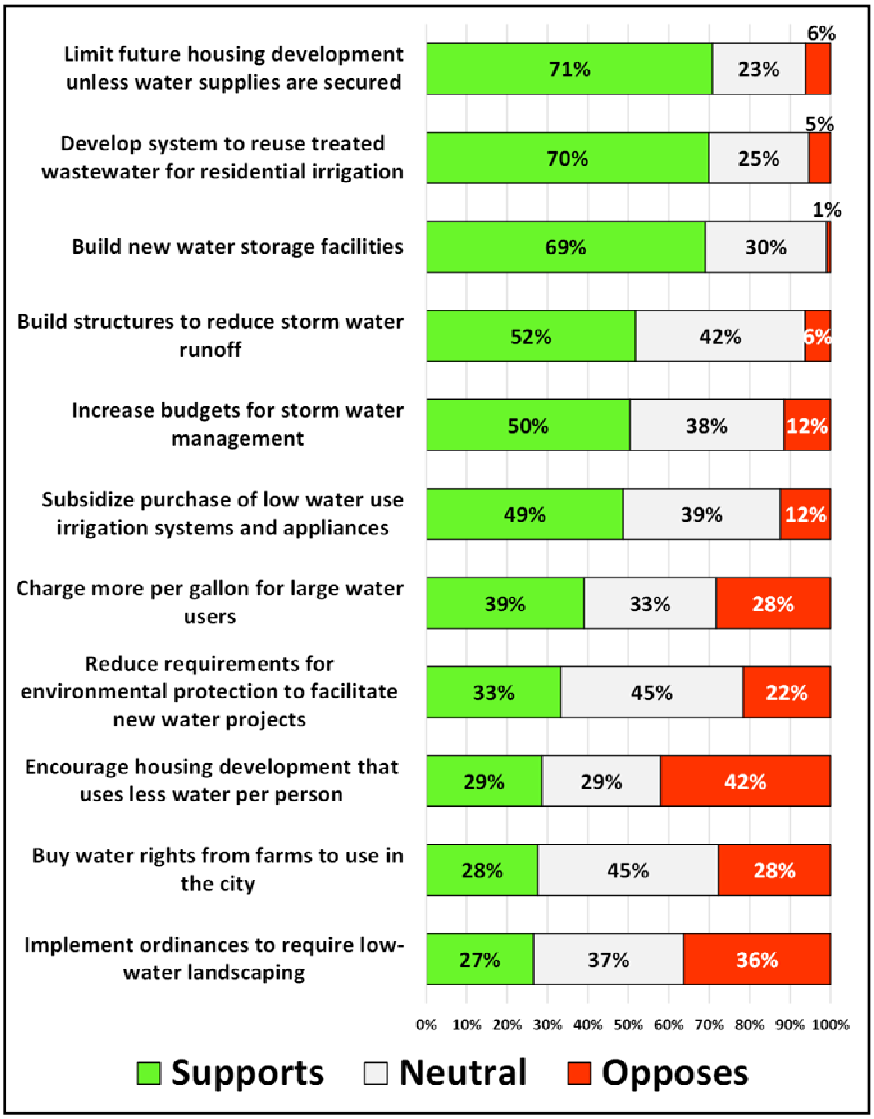
- Over half supported local funding to build structures to reduce stormwater runoff (52%) and supported increasing budgets for city stormwater management (50%).

There was mixed support for incentivizing conservation

- About half supported subsidizing purchases of low water efficient irrigation systems or appliances (49%).
- Fewer than 40% supported charging large water users more per gallon (39%), encouraging forms of housing development that use less water (29%), and implementing ordinances to require low water landscaping (27%). Significant numbers of respondents opposed these policies (28%, 42%, and 36%, respectively).
- There is little support to buy water rights from farms for city use (28%).

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 (94%) protect water quality (92%), and ensure water supplies for agriculture (88%).
- There was moderate support for state goals to save taxpayer money (64%), protect wetlands and wildlife habitat (60%), 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 (64%) or build new reservoirs or storage (60%), with significant support also for state policies to invest in research on conservation (54%), set minimum standards for new residential construction to reduce water use (51%), and use state funds to pay for efficiency improvements in agricultural irrigation systems (47%).
- Fewer supported prioritizing efficiency over water rights (31%) or transfers of water from farms to urban users (22%).