

# Utah's Water Future

## Local Perspectives on Water Issues

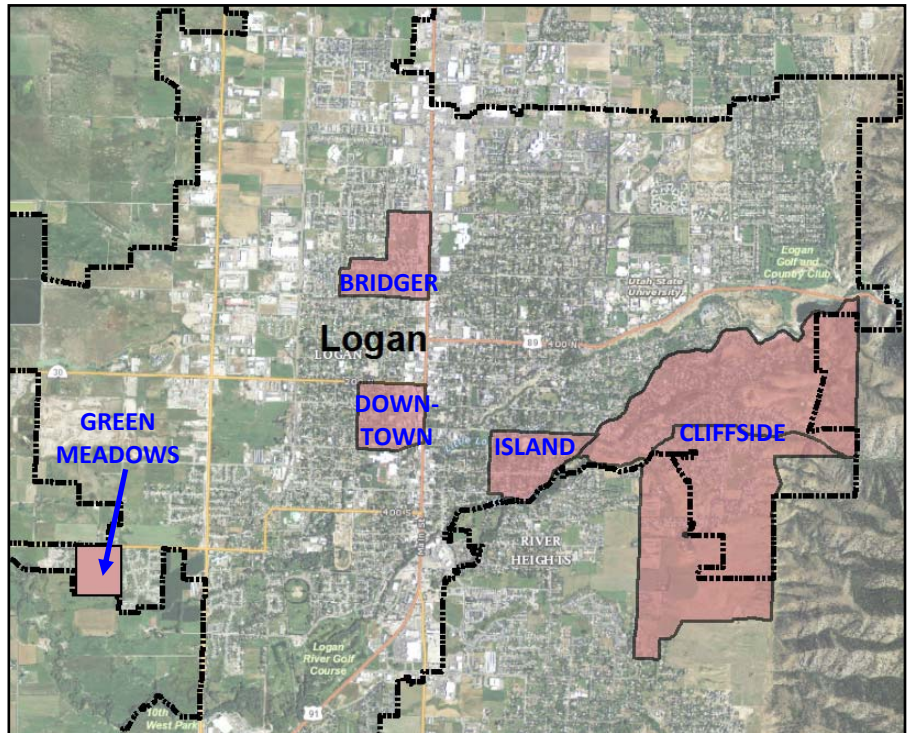
*Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey*

### LOGAN CITY HIGHLIGHTS



#### **Background:**

In July 2014, researchers from Utah State University and the University of Utah conducted a survey about water issues with randomly selected residents of five neighborhoods in Logan City (see map). We received responses from 526 residents (an overall response rate of 72%). Characteristics of combined survey respondents were similar to the city as a whole based on census information, with the survey somewhat under-representing those in the 18-35 age group and those who rent their home, and over-representing those with a college degree and those over age 65.



#### **Household Water & Lawns**

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

- Around half of Logan City respondents (53%) reported a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but fewer (27%) were familiar with the volume of water they use. This did not vary much by neighborhood.

##### **Lawns generally watered by residents, but landlords also important in some neighborhoods**

- Overall, 77% of Logan City respondents water their own lawns.
- Nearly 98% of Cliffside and Green Meadows residents water their own lawn.
- In the Downtown and Bridger neighborhoods, landlords are responsible for watering lawns on 20-37% of properties, respectively.

##### **Few water during the day**

- Most residents (94%) reported watering their lawn mainly in the morning, evening, or at night.

##### **Weather plays a key factor in watering decisions...**

- Nearly all of households (86%) said they try to adjust their lawn watering behaviors to the weather

##### **...but conservation, property values, and time are also considerations.**

- About 70% indicated conserving water and preventing brown spots were important factors.
- Majorities said maintaining property values (65%), minimizing time spent watering (61%), and keeping a regular schedule (55%) were important considerations.

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## Water Conservation

### **Many residents think that they can do more to conserve water...**

- About half (55%) of Logan respondents felt they could do more to reduce their indoor water use, while just over a third (37%) thought they could do more to reduce outdoor water use.
- Cliffside residents were more likely to think they can do more to reduce outdoor water use (51%).

### **...but only a small percentage report have actually decreased their water use**

- A minority (20%) of Logan City respondents reported that they decreased either indoor or outdoor water use over the last five years.
- Respondents in Bridger were most likely to have recently decreased outdoor use; Cliffside respondents were more likely to have decreased indoor use.

### **People were most willing to conserve if:**

- **It ensures future supply for their home** (80%)
- **It reduces their water bills** (79%)
- **It improves fish & wildlife habitat** (71%)
- **It ensures future supply for farms** (67%)

### **People were least willing to conserve if savings used to increase development (32%)**

## Water Quality

### **Local water quality was generally seen as good.**

- Most (76%) of Logan City respondents said their drinking water quality was “good” or “very good”, while just 6% rated it as “bad” or “very bad”
- About two-thirds rated water in rivers and lakes upstream (55%) and streams and creeks in their neighborhood (53%) as good
- Just over a third (37%) rated irrigation canal or ditch water as good quality, while 10% said it was bad quality
- Slightly fewer (31-36%) indicated they felt downstream rivers and reservoirs were of good quality, while 14% rated these as bad quality.

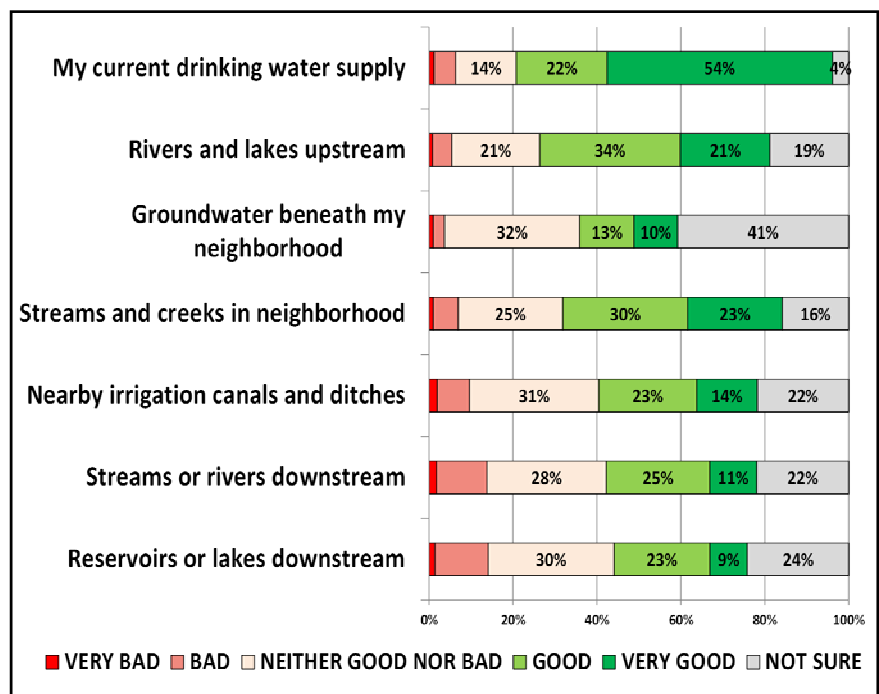
## Secondary Water Systems

### **Used by 14% of respondents, mainly for lawns and gardens**

- Access to secondary water was highest in the Island (33%) and Downtown (12%) neighborhoods.
- Among those with secondary water, 80% receive unpressurized water from an open ditch or canal.
- Those with secondary water indicated they use it for irrigating their lawn and other landscaping (64%) or for vegetable gardens (43%). Very few use this water for agricultural crops or livestock (5-8%)

### **Many users are not satisfied with secondary water systems**

- Respondents who have secondary water service reported low levels of satisfaction with their systems (38%) and 23% said they have attended a meeting with their secondary water provider
- Just under a third (29%) of Logan City respondents with secondary water 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**

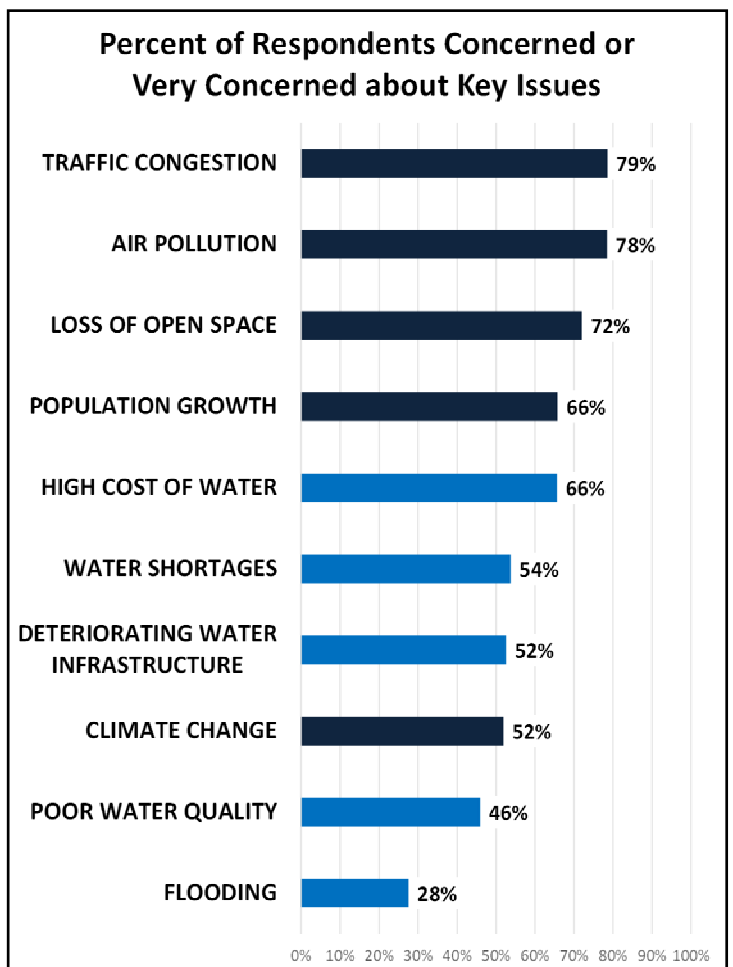
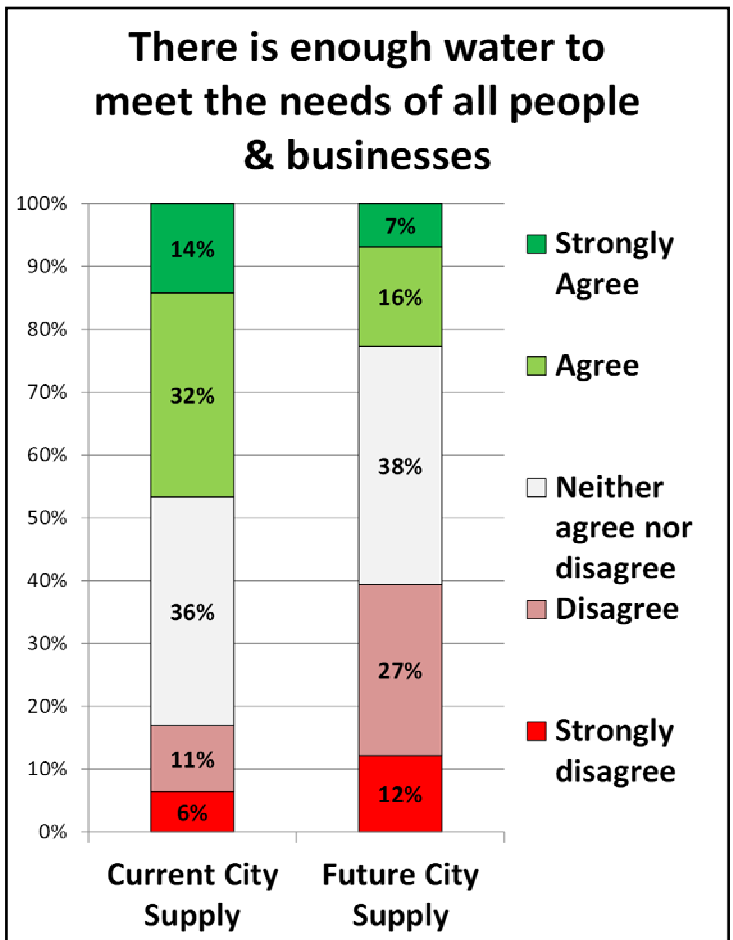
- Just under half of Logan City respondents (46%) thought there was enough water to meet current needs in this city
- Only 23% were confident in Logan City's future supply, and 39% of respondents were concerned about the city's future water supply.
- Cliffside respondents were more likely to agree current supply is adequate (61%); Bridger and Island respondents were less optimistic about future supply.

### **Farm water use was not a big concern.**

- Over half (54%) of respondents believed that residential lawns use too much water, yet just 12% felt that agriculture currently uses too much water.
- Cliffside and Green Meadows respondents were less likely to think too much water is used for residential uses (42-50%)

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

- Traffic congestion (79%) and air pollution (78%) were of greatest concern to Logan City respondents, followed by loss of open space (72%) and population growth (66%).
- Among water issues, the greatest concern related to the high cost of water (66%), water shortages (54%) and deteriorating water infrastructure (52%).
- Just under half (46%) were concerned about water quality. Water quality concerns were cited by fewer respondents (41%) in the Cliffside neighborhood.
- Concerns about some issues were higher among respondents in the Island neighborhood: loss of open space (80%), deteriorating water infrastructure (64%) and climate change (61%).
- By far the lowest level of concern was expressed about flooding (16%); however, almost half (49%) of Green Meadows respondents listed flooding as a concern.





## How Should Logan City Respond to Short-Term Water Shortages?

### Voluntary approaches most popular

- Logan City respondents indicated a very high level of support for educational efforts (88%) and voluntary water restrictions (84%).

### Majority support mandatory limits

- To deal with short-term shortages, most Logan City respondents also supported watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (73%) or mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (66%).

### Some slight neighborhood differences

- Support for mandatory restrictions was highest in Downtown (71%) and Cliffside (70%) neighborhoods, but lowest in the Bridger (59%) and Green Meadows neighborhood (61%).
- Opposition to mandatory restrictions was highest among respondents in the Downtown (11%) and Island (16%) neighborhoods.

## Support for Long Term Water Policies in Logan City

### Support for water reuse

- Reusing treated wastewater for residential irrigation was the most popular option, with support from 74% of Logan City respondents. (and only 6% opposed).

### Most supported having development pay for itself

- Limiting future housing unless water supplies are secured by developers was supported by 63% of respondents.

### A majority supported building storage and managing storm-water

- Over half supported local funding to build new water storage (62%) and building structures to reduce stormwater runoff (57%)

### There was modest support for incentivizing conservation

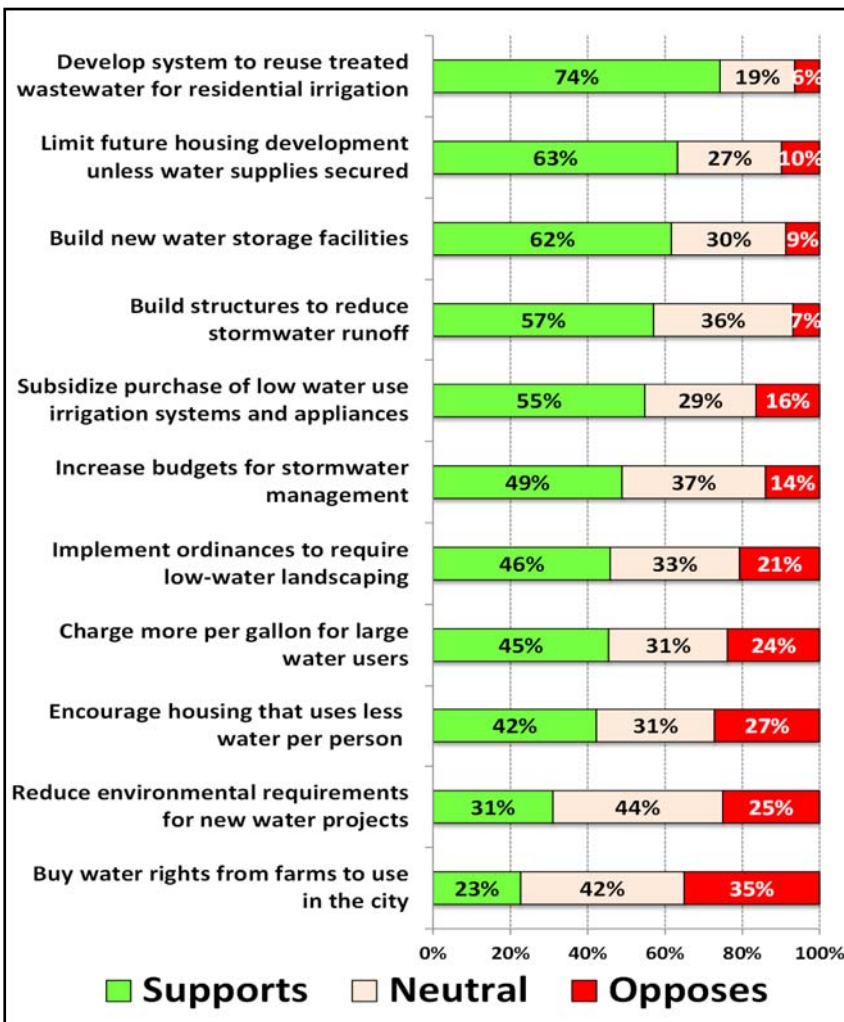
- Over half (55%) supported city subsidies for low water irrigation systems and appliances.
- Just under half (49%) supported increasing budgets for stormwater management.
- Roughly 45% supported ordinances to require low water landscaping or charging more for large water users.

### There was less support for city policies to

- Encourage forms of housing development that uses less water per person (42%), reduce requirements for environmental protection to facilitate new water projects (31%), or buy water rights from farms for city use (23% support, with 35% opposed).

### Neighborhood differences

- Support for most policies was highest among Downtown respondents
- Green Meadows respondents had lower levels of support for all long-term policy options, and much lower for policies that increased regulation or spending.



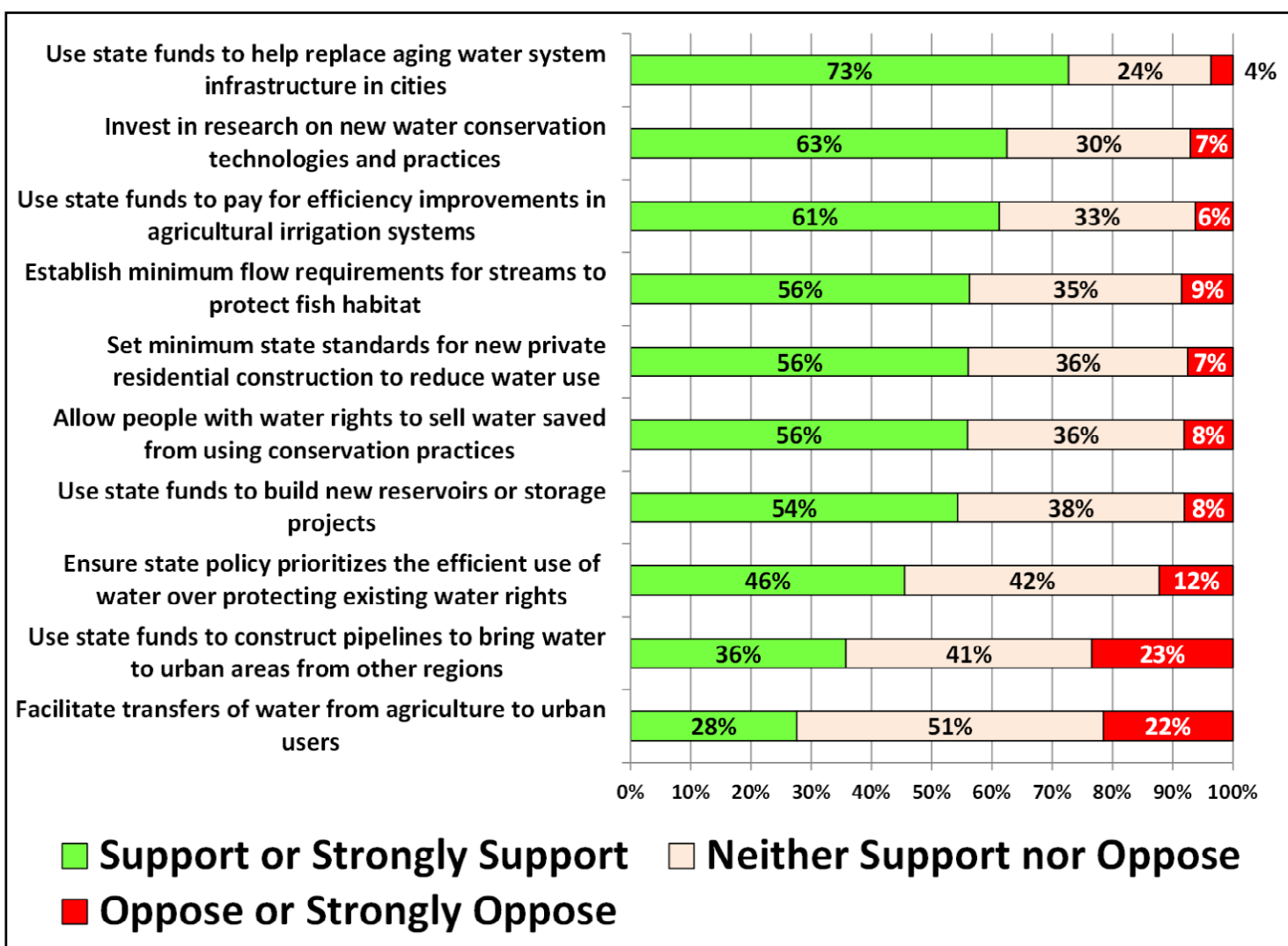
## Support for State Water Goals & Policies

### **GOALS: State should ensure supply while protecting water quality and agriculture**

- Nearly all supported state goals to ensure a supply of drinking water (97%) and protect water quality (94%).
- Most supported a goal of ensuring future water supplies for agriculture (85%).
- There was moderate support among Logan City respondents for state goals to protect wetlands and wildlife habitat (73%), save taxpayer money (57%), and ensure the supply of water for economic development (48%).

### **POLICIES: There is support for wide range of state policies**

- The highest support was for the use of state funds to replace aging city water infrastructure (73%)
- Nearly two-thirds supported using state funds to do research on water conservation technologies (63%) and to pay for efficiency improvements in agricultural irrigation systems (61%).
- Over half supported establishing minimum flow requirements to protect fish habitat (56%), setting minimum state standards for new residential construction to reduce water use (56%), allowing sale of water saved from conservation (56%), and using state funds to build new reservoirs or storage projects (54%).
- About a third (36%) supported constructing pipelines to bring water from other regions to urban areas, and only 23% supported state policies to facilitate transfers of water from farms to urban users. The highest levels of opposition were also cited for these two policies (22-23% opposed).



## **Information Sources**

### **Mass media, the internet and friends or neighbors were the most important sources of information about water issues**

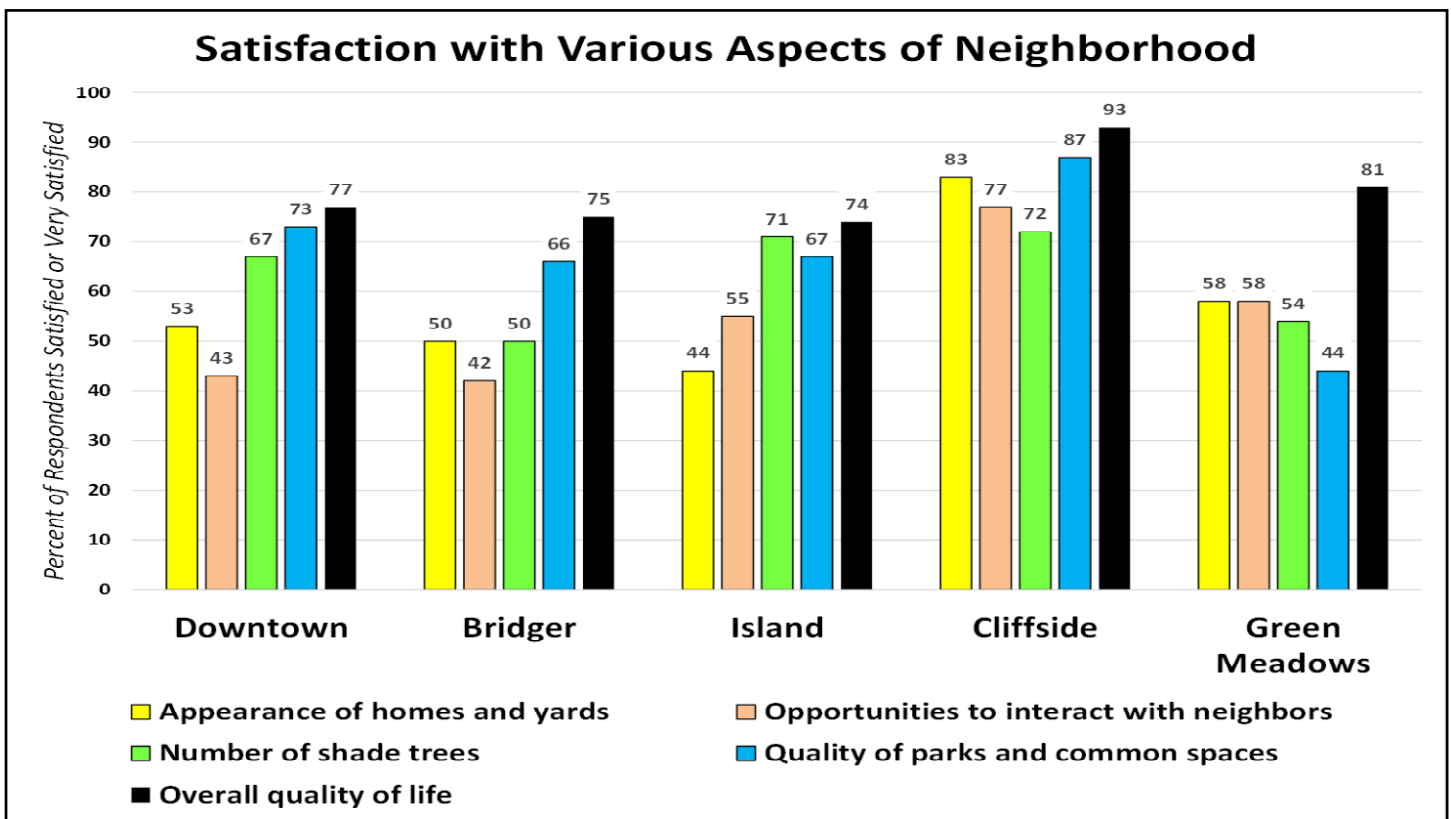
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents said they get information from TV or Radio;
- Over half (54%) said they use internet or social media to get water information; a similar proportion (54%) said friends and neighbors were important sources of water information.
- Almost half (49%) said they get water information from a newspaper (43% listed Herald Journal, 13% Salt Lake Tribune, and 10% Deseret News).
- The least cited sources of water information are mailings from providers (40%) and homeowner or neighborhood associations (7%)

## **Satisfaction with Neighborhood**

### **Most Logan City residents satisfied with their neighborhood**

- Over 70% were satisfied with the quality of their neighborhood's parks & open spaces.
- Majorities were satisfied with the number of shade trees (64%), appearance of homes and yards (58%) and opportunities to interact with neighbors (55%).
- Over 80% of respondents said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their overall quality of life.

### **Satisfaction varies by neighborhood—see chart below**



If you would like more detailed information about the survey results (overall and by neighborhood), full reports are posted on our website:

**[www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey](http://www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey)**