

# Utah's Water Future

## Local Perspectives on Water Issues

Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey

### HEBER CITY HIGHLIGHTS



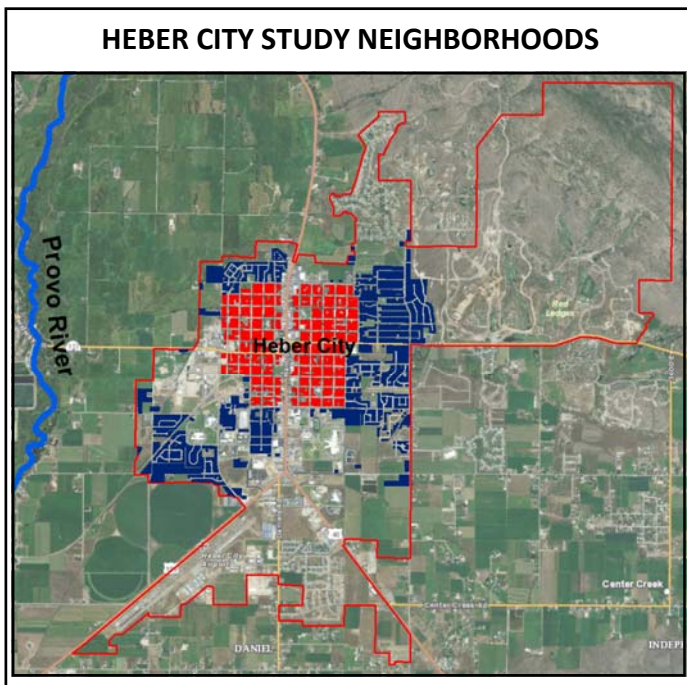
### Background:

In July, 2014, researchers from Utah State University and the University of Utah conducted a survey about water issues of residents in two Heber City neighborhoods: an older 'core' area near downtown (blue on map below) and surrounding neighborhoods (red on map). We received responses from 60% of the households selected to participate (194 total respondents). Characteristics of those who responded were similar to Heber City residents overall.

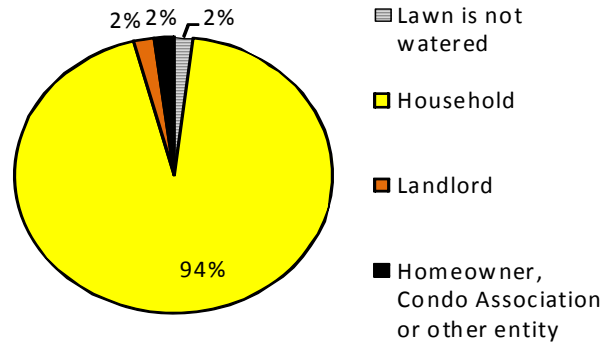
### Household Water & Lawns

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

- Most residents (72%) report a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but only a third are familiar with the volume of water they use.



#### Most Lawns Watered by Resident



**Most residents (over 90%) water their lawn in the morning, evening, or at night.**

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

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

**...but conservation, property value, time, and neighbors are also influential.**

- 73% consider water conservation when making watering decisions
- 69% of households think about impacts on their property value and 32% say keeping neighbors happy is important to lawn watering decisions.
- Majorities say keeping a regular schedule (63%) and minimizing time watering (55%) are important considerations.

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## Secondary Water Systems

### **Access to secondary water is more common and is generally pressurized in Heber's newer neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area**

- About one-third of respondents from the Heber City core downtown neighborhood have access to secondary water for irrigation, compared to almost 70% of those in the surrounding noncore areas.
- While 93% of secondary systems in the outlying neighborhoods are pressurized, only most respondents in the downtown area get secondary water from open ditches.

### **Access to pressurized systems is associated with greater use of and satisfaction with secondary water**

- Nearly all residences in the Heber City outlying areas use their secondary system (if they have access to one), and nearly three-fourths of those residents are satisfied with their system.
- Almost one-fifth of residents with access to secondary water in the downtown area choose not to use that water at all. Less than half of the downtown Heber residents said they were satisfied with their secondary water system.
- About a quarter of residents with pressurized secondary water service report some type of pressure problems.

## Water Quality

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

- Three-quarters (74%) of Heber City respondents rate their drinking water quality as "good" or "very good", while 8% rate it as "bad" or "very bad."
- A majority (55%) of people think that water in rivers and lakes upstream of their neighborhood is of "good" or "very good" quality, while 51% said that streams or creeks in their neighborhood were "good" or "very good."
- Only 10 percent of people rated downstream streams, reservoirs or lakes, or nearby irrigation canals and ditches as "bad" or "very bad."

## Water Conservation

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

- Half (51%) of Heber City respondents felt they could do more to reduce their indoor water use, while about one-third (31%) of residents thought they could do more to reduce outdoor water use.

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

- Nearly 20% of respondents from Heber City report that they decreased either their indoor or outdoor water use over the last five years.

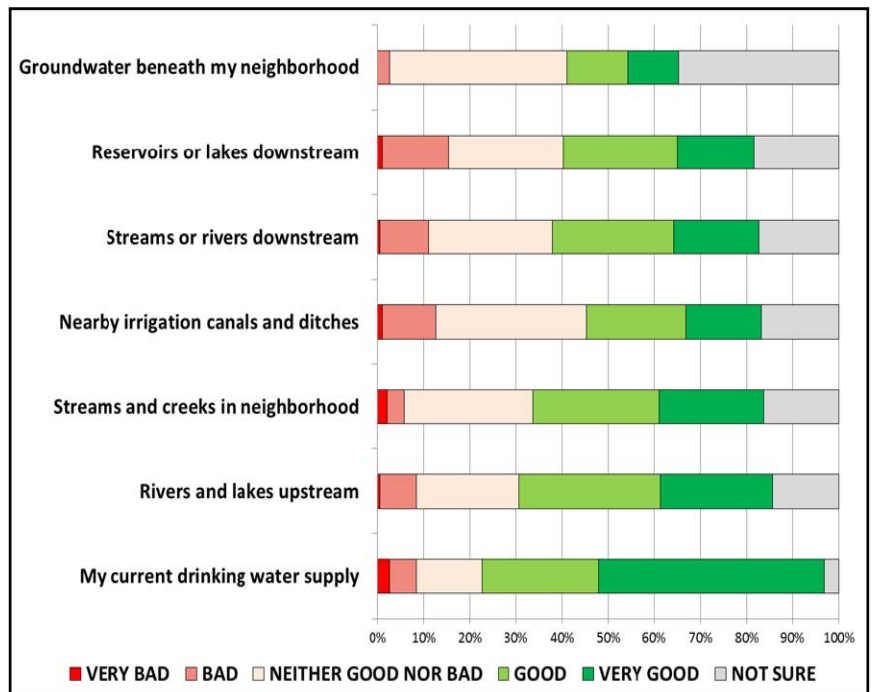
### **People are most willing to conserve if it:**

- Ensures future supply for their home (79%),
- Reduces their water bills (66%), and
- Improves fish & wildlife habitat (65%)

### **People least willing to conserve if savings used to increase development**

### **Generally speaking, residents not convinced saving water will benefit them.**

- 75% of respondents believe that if they cut household water use by 20%, the savings would likely be sold or transferred to users in Utah County, rather than stored for future use by Heber City.



## Concerns about Water and Other Issues

**Most residents believe current water supplies are adequate.**

- Only 15% think there is not enough water to meet current needs in this city.

**There is more concern about future water supplies.**

- Almost 40% of Heber City residents worry about their city's future water supply.

**Farm water use is not a big concern.**

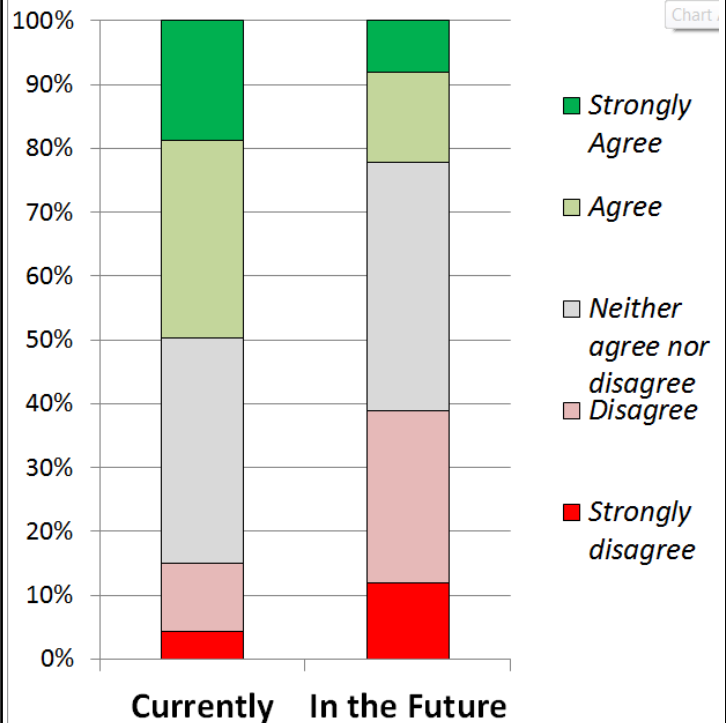
- While 49% of respondents believe that residential lawns use too much water, only 18% felt that agriculture in their area was currently using too much water.

**Water related issues take a back seat to growth concerns.**

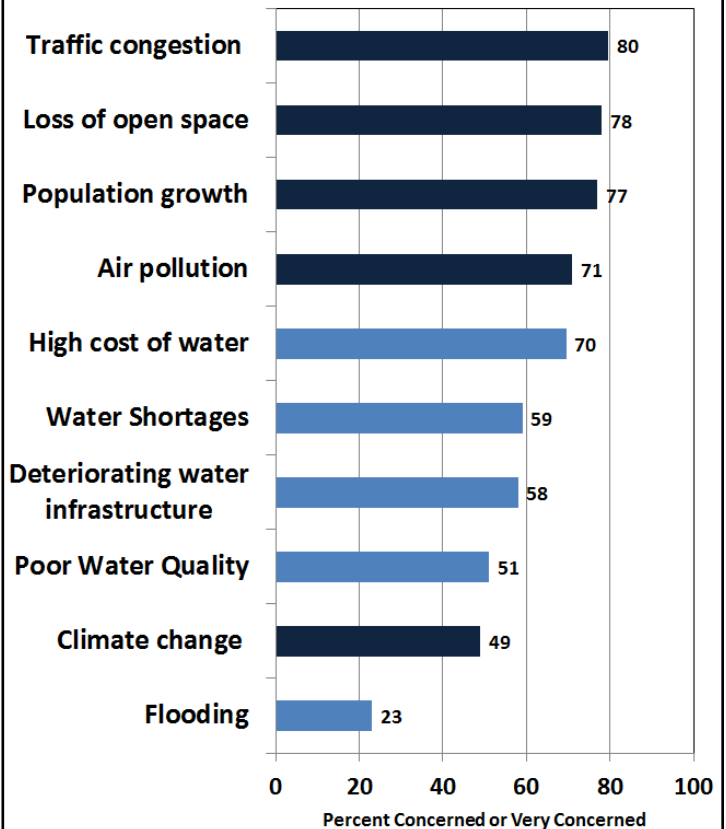
- The most pressing concerns among Heber City residents are traffic congestion, loss of open space, and population growth, followed by air pollution (see chart).
- The greatest concern about water issues is the high cost of water. Concerns about water shortages and infrastructure are higher than about climate change and water quality. By far the lowest level of concern if expressed about flooding.



### There is enough water to meet the needs of all the people and businesses in Heber City



### Concern About Key Issues Among Heber City Residents





## Local Water Policy Preferences

### *In Response to Short-Term Shortages*

#### **Voluntary approaches most popular**

- Heber City respondents indicate a very high level of support for educational (90%) and voluntary water reductions (83%).

#### **Majority support mandatory limits**

- Most respondents support watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (75%) or mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (63%).

### *Local Long-Term Water Management*

#### **Most support having development pay for itself**

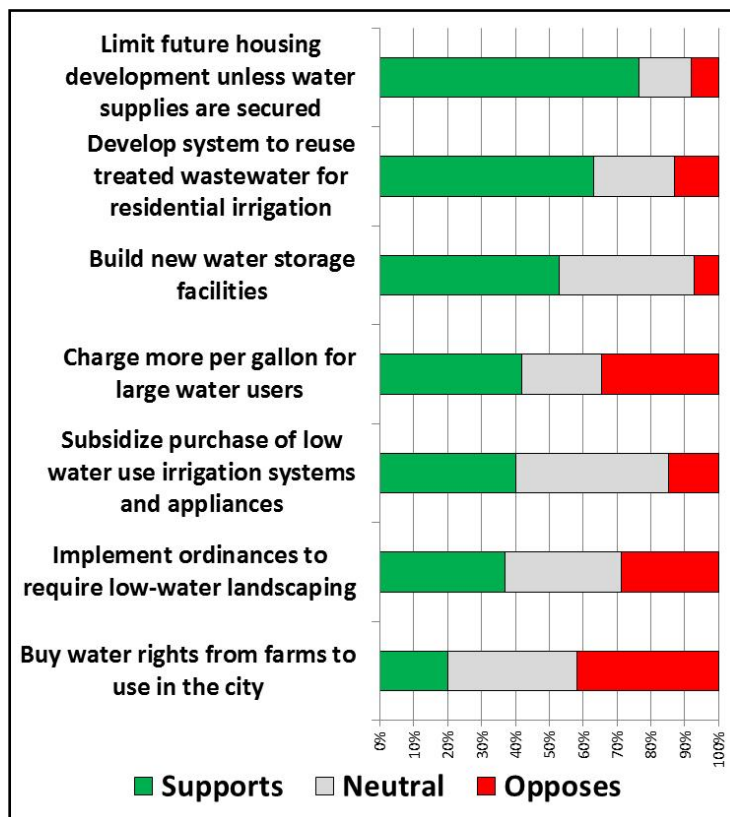
- The most popular policy is to 'limit future housing development unless water supplies are secured,' supported by 76% of Heber City respondents.
- Two-thirds support reusing treated wastewater to supply residential irrigation.

#### **A majority supports building storage**

- Over half support local funding to build new water storage—especially residents in newer developments surrounding the downtown core area.

#### **There is modest support for incentivizing conservation**

- Under half (42%) of respondents supported charging higher rates for large water users, and 37% supported implementing low-water landscaping ordinances.
- Forty percent of respondents support subsidies for use of low-water use systems and appliances.
- There was very little support for buying water rights from farms to get water for urban uses.



## State Water Goals & Strategies

### **Residents think the state should ensure supply while protecting water quality, agriculture, and environment**

- Nearly all support state goals of ensuring a supply of drinking water (95%) and protecting water quality (96%).
- Strong majorities support ensuring water supplies for agriculture (86%) and protecting wetlands and wildlife habitat (77%).
- There is moderate support for a state goal of saving taxpayer money (63%).

### **There is support for wide range of state policies and strategies**

- The highest support is for the use of state funds to replace aging city water infrastructure (63%).
- Majorities support state efforts to:
  - Build new reservoirs (59%)
  - Establish minimum flow requirements for fish habitat (58%)
  - Set minimum standards for new construction to reduce water use (57%)
  - Pay for improvements in agricultural irrigation system efficiency (56%)
- Few support transferring water from agriculture to urban users (23%)

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

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