

Utah's Water Future

Local Perspectives on Water Issues

Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey

MIDWAY CITY HIGHLIGHTS



In July, 2014, researchers from Utah State University and the University of Utah conducted a survey about water issues of residents in Midway City. We received responses from 70% of the Midway households selected to participate (117 total households). Characteristics of those who responded were somewhat more likely to be female, have college degrees, and have larger households than the city adult population.

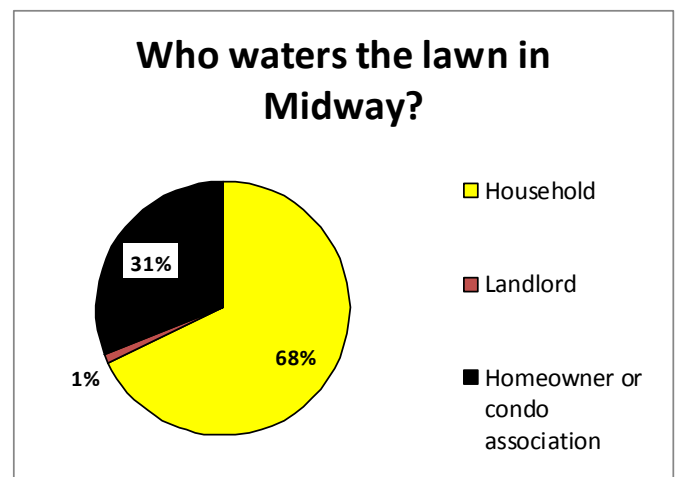
Household Water & Lawns

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

- Most residents (61%) report a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but fewer (23%) are familiar with the volume of water they use.

About a third of lawns are not watered by the resident

- Midway City is distinctive in that 31% of residents report that their lawn is watered by a homeowner or condominium association (see chart to the right).



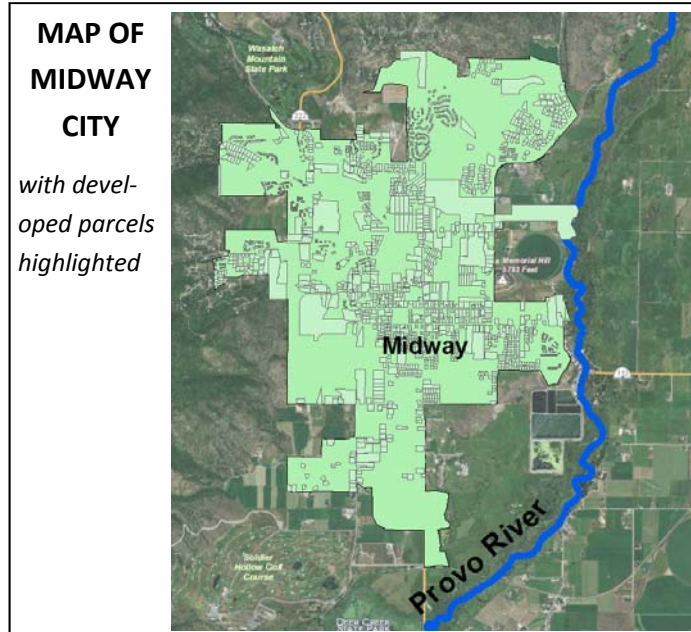
Most residents (over 90%) water lawn in the morning, evening, or at night.

Weather plays a key factor in watering decisions...

- Nearly all of households (91%) 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
- 67% of households think about impacts on their property value and 38% say keeping neighbors happy is important to lawn watering decisions.
- Majorities say keeping a regular schedule (64%) and minimizing time watering (59%) are important considerations.



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Secondary Water Systems

Used by about half of households, mainly for lawn and gardens

- About 56% of Midway City respondents report having access to pressurized secondary water for irrigation.
- Those with access mainly use secondary water for irrigating their lawn and other landscaping (98%), or for vegetable gardens (60%). Relatively few use it for agricultural crops or livestock (13%).

Most users are satisfied

- Residents of Midway City who have secondary water service are generally satisfied with their systems, with about three-quarters indicating they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the water system.
- However, only 41percent of Midway City residents are confident in the future security of their secondary water supply.

Nearly 30% have pressure problems

- About 23 percent of secondary water users in Midway City reported problems with low pressure. Another 5 percent had problems with high pressure.

Water Quality

Local water quality is generally seen as good.

- Three-quarters (71%) of Midway City respondents see their drinking water quality as “good” or “very good”, while just 11 percent rate it as “bad” or “very bad.”
- A majority of respondents rate water in rivers and lakes upstream, in nearby streams or creeks, or in downstream streams or rivers as “good.”
- The water that is most likely to be rated as ‘bad quality’ (by just 9-11 percent of Midway residents) is found in downstream streams, reservoirs or lakes, or in nearby irrigation ditches.

Water Conservation

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

- Over half (56%) of Midway 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 have decreased their water use.

- A minority of Midway City respondents report that they decreased either their indoor (30%) or outdoor (9%) water use over the last five years.

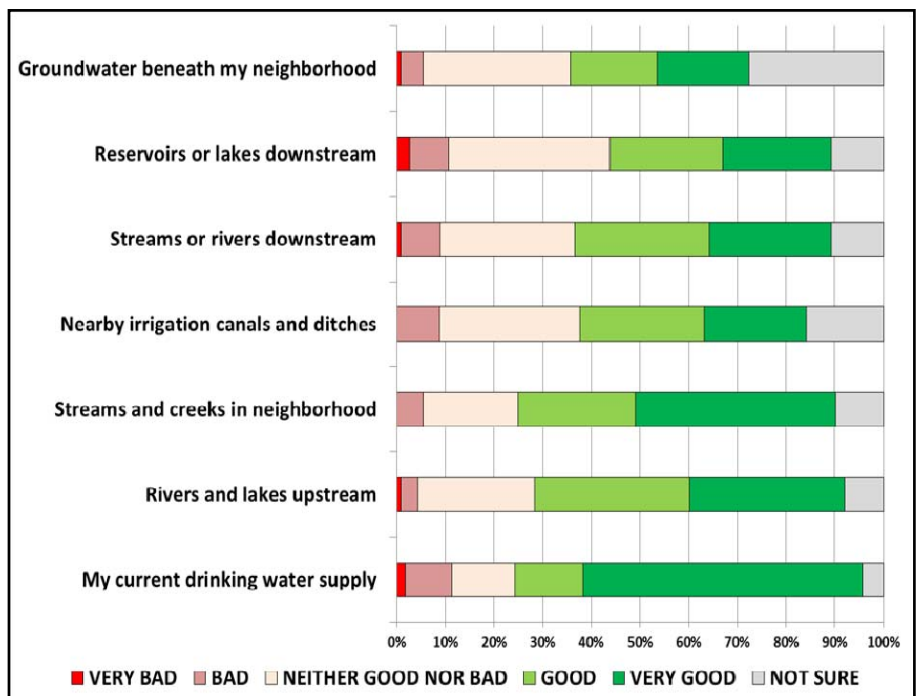
People are most willing to conserve if it:

- **Ensures future supply for their home** (86%),
- **Is used to improve fish and wildlife habitat** (73%), or
- **Ensures future supply for agriculture** (71%).

Residents least willing to conserve if saving used to increase development.

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

- 73% of Midway City residents believe that if they cut household water use by 20%, these savings would likely be sold or transferred to downstream users in Utah County, rather than stored for future use by Midway City.



Concerns about Water and Other Issues

Most residents believe current water supplies are adequate.

- Only 20% think there is not enough water meet current needs in this city.

There is more concern about future water supplies.

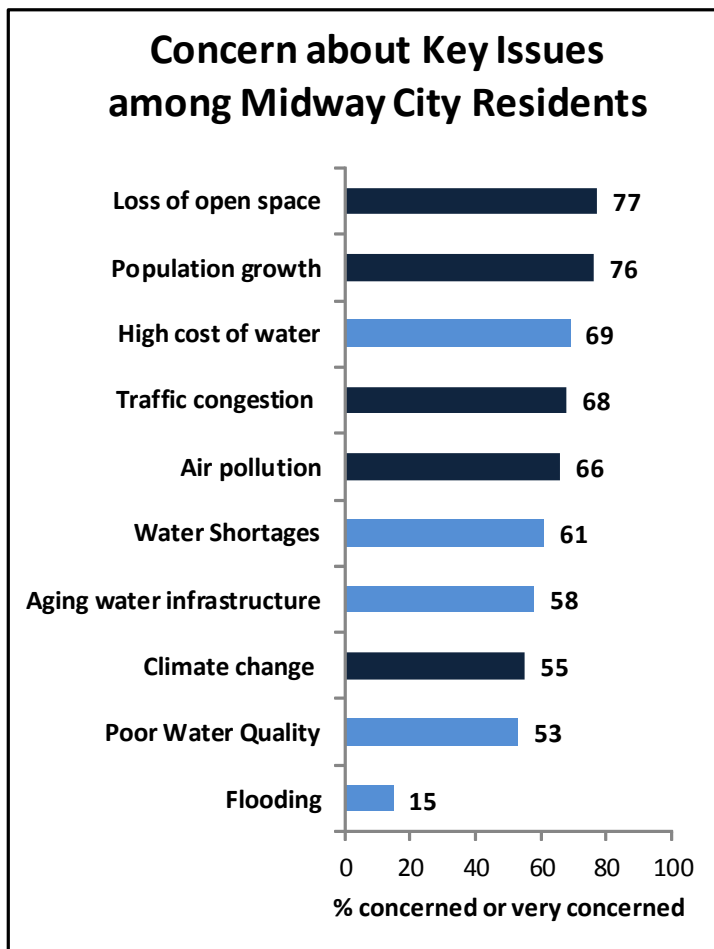
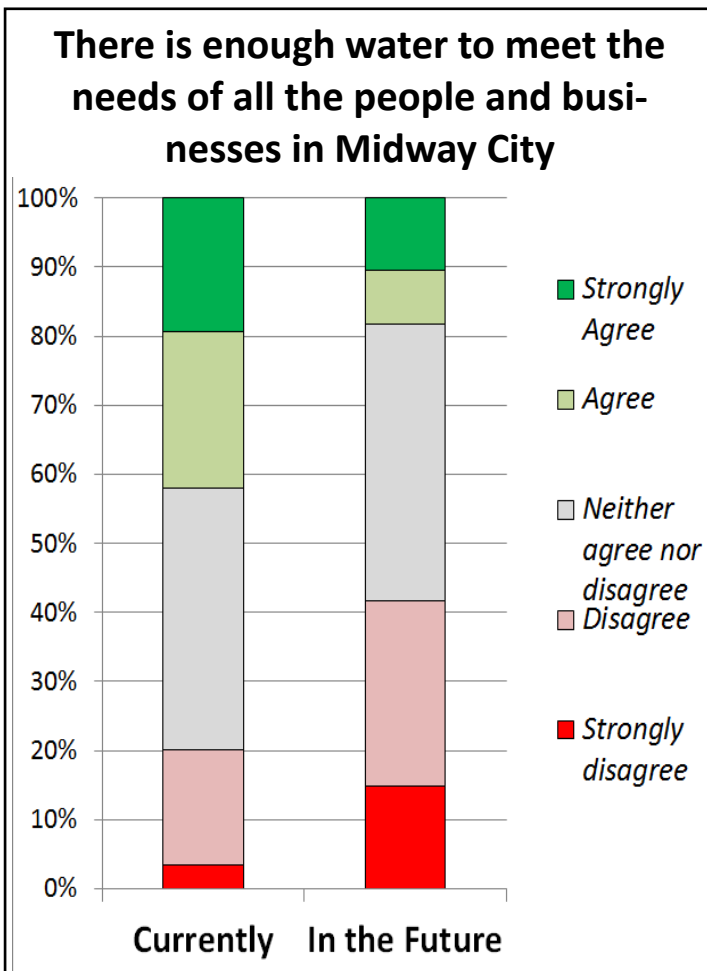
- More than forty percent (42%) of Midway City residents worry about their city's future water supply.

Farm water use is not a big concern.

- While 41% of respondents believe that residential lawns use too much water, only 11% felt that agriculture in their area was currently using too much water.

Water related issues take back seat to growth concerns

- Most concern is for loss of open space and population growth (see chart to right)
- Two thirds of residents report concern about traffic congestion and air pollution,
- Among the water-related issues, the greatest level of concern relates to the perceived high cost of water.
- Concerns about water shortages and infrastructure tend to be higher than concerns about climate change and water quality. By far the lowest level of concern is expressed about flooding problems.



Local Water Policy Preferences

In Response to Short-Term Shortages

Voluntary approaches most popular

- Midway City respondents indicate a very high level of support for educational (95%) and voluntary water reductions (90%).

Majority also support mandatory limits

- Most respondents support watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (69%) or mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (67%).

Local Long-Term Water Management

Most support having development pay for itself

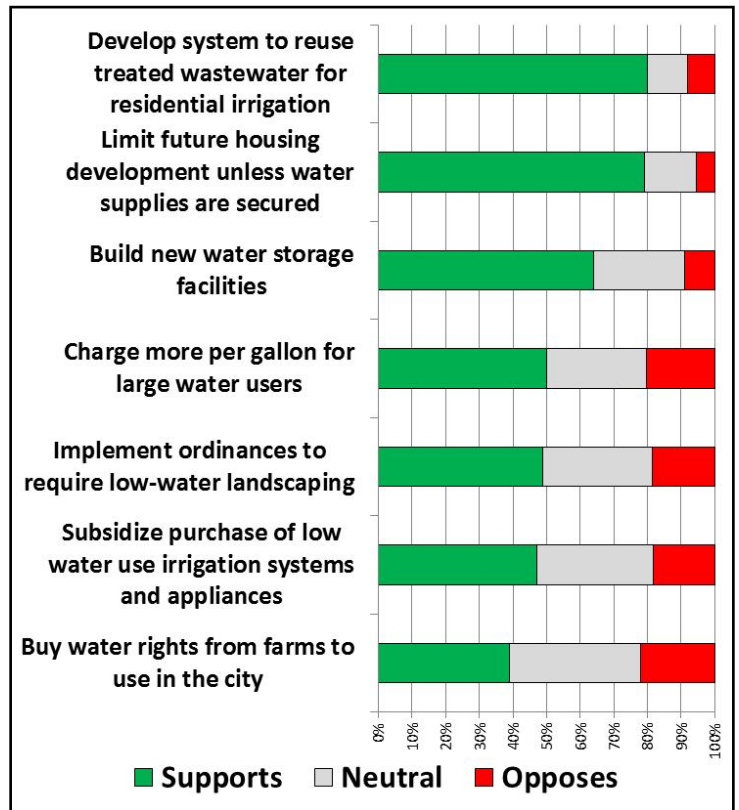
- The most popular policies are:
 - Reusing treated wastewater for residential irrigation (80% support), and
 - Limiting future housing development unless water supplies are secured (79%).

A majority supports building storage

- Nearly two-thirds support local funding to build new water storage (64%).

There is modest support for incentivizing conservation

- Roughly half of respondents support charging higher rates for large water users, implementing ordinances to require low-water landscaping, and subsidizing the use of low-water use irrigation systems and appliances.
- There was less support for buying water rights from farms for urban uses (39% support) and increasing budgets for stormwater management (36%).



State Water Goals & Strategies

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

- Nearly all support goals of ensuring a supply of drinking water (94%) and protecting water quality (97%).
- Strong majorities support ensuring water supplies for agriculture (86%) and protecting wetlands and wildlife habitat (74%).
- There is moderate support for a state goal of saving taxpayer money (53%).

There is support for a wide range of state policies and strategies

- The highest support is for the use of state funds to replace aging city water infrastructure (72%).
- Majorities support state support for:
 - Building new reservoirs (70%)
 - Setting minimum standards for construction (67%)
 - Paying for improvements in agricultural irrigation system efficiency (63%)
 - Establishing minimum flow requirements for fish habitat (61%)
- Relatively few support transferring water from agriculture to urban users (30%)

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

www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey