



Water Hardness Advisory Committee

Public Participation Plan

January 12, 2017

Executive Summary:

This plan outline a process to facilitate public input regarding the long-term strategy for water hardness in the SACWSD water supplies. The process will consist of a public survey, appointment of members for an advisory committee, and public meetings.

The survey will occur early in the process to gather baseline information from the public on their desires for addressing water hardness and what cost would be acceptable. This baseline information will help the advisory committee discussions and the SACWSD Board's final decision.

The advisory committee will build agreement on a recommendation to address water hardness in the District. The recommendation will be given to the SACWSD Board of Directors. Members will represent a variety of customer types and locations. Meetings will occur monthly between March and August and be open to the public. These meetings will consist of activities deemed necessary by the committee to formulate a recommendation. This could include identification of needed data, review of available information and identification of potential solutions to the elevated water hardness.

Public meetings will be held prior to the advisory committee's final meeting(s). The meetings will be an opportunity for the advisory committee to get feedback on their work to date, prior to making the final recommendation. More specifically the advisory committee may ask for feedback on the most promising options the committee has been discussing.

The Committee will present its recommendation to the SACWSD Board in August with a potential decision made by the Board in September regarding a path forward for hardness.

Project Description

This project will focus on developing a community-voiced recommendation regarding a course of action for water hardness in the District's potable supply to the SACWSD Board of Directors. Recommendations from this public participation process will be considered by the Board of Directors in decisions related to water-hardness issues.

The public participation plan was developed using the situational assessment contained in Appendix A. This assessment will be revisited, revised, and updated throughout the course of the project.

1. Level of Public Concern or Interest

To determine the appropriate level of public participation, it is important to assess the degree to which the public considers the issue significant. The public will become involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. Therefore, it is important to anticipate the public's level of interest or concern regarding a project or program.

Some sense of the level of public interest has been collected from the public meeting held to inform customers of increased hardness near 104th and Tower Road. This meeting had sixty-five

attendees many of whom were highly interested in the District-wide high hardness issue. It is important to note that many of the attendees were there due to a change in water hardness caused by a necessary temporary operational change. In order to better assess the level of concern of the entire District, a statistically significant survey of the District is recommended as part of this project to address this information gap.

2. Public Participation Goals

The goal of this process is to determine whether and if so, how to balance managing SACWSD water hardness and costs.

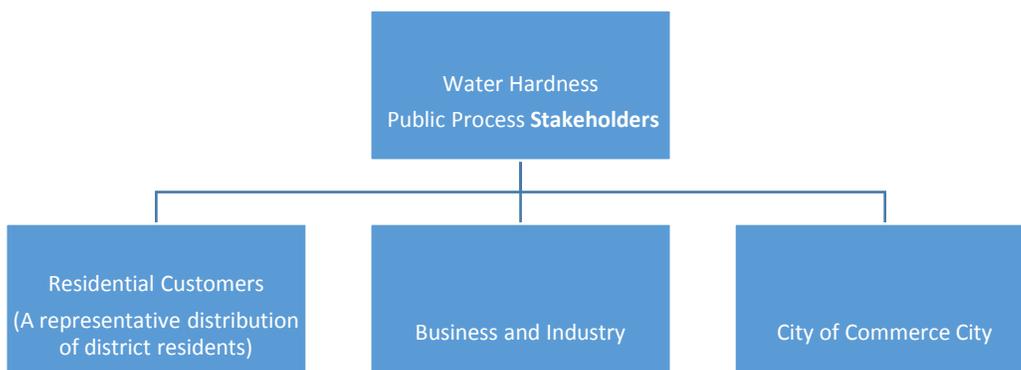
The following is a list of defined goals for inviting public participation into the process.

- Provide a transparent process for how public input is used in developing project alternatives and the final Board decision.
- Gather statistically significant information about community desires for dealing with the high hardness issue.
- Increase the awareness in the community of the hardness issue and implications of hardness reduction options.
- Facilitate public feedback on the hardness issue and potential solutions. Establish realistic strategies for dealing with the hardness issue.
- Ensure community input is part of the SACWSD Board of Directors consideration for resolution of the hardness issue.

3. Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who:

- Are **Impacted** – those who use/get the water, pay for the water, or manage the water (residents, business, District);
- Can **Implement** – those who have the authority and funding to implement/build the solution (District);
- Are **Interested** – those who are interested in impacts of any solution, but may not be impacted (may not apply here; usually environmental or historic advocacy groups); and
- Can **Impede** – those who could stop any solution from being implemented/built.



4. Public Participation Tools

a. Survey of district customers to gather hardness-related information

Purpose: To gather initial data from the public on their desires and knowledge of water hardness abatement, what cost increase they might be willing to accept, and SACWSD in general.

The information from the survey will be provided to the Advisory Committee for their discussions as well as to the District Commission and the District Board.

b. Advisory Committee to explore water hardness issues, possible options and develop a recommendation

Purpose: The Water Hardness Advisory Committee will develop a recommendation to the District Board on whether and if so how to address water hardness in the district.

A committee of people committed to working together over time will be able to build a mutual understanding of all the issues and impacts of water hardness and abatement measures. They will then balance those issues and impacts with public expectations, needs and desire and build agreement on a recommendation that best balances all interests.

Composition: The Water Hardness Advisory Committee will represent the range of perspectives in the district: geographic, residential, business/industry, socioeconomic, gender and race, the SACWSD, and Commerce City. At this time, the expectation is the committee will be comprised of:

1. Residential Customer Representative – Northwest	2. Residential Customer Representative – Northwest
3. Residential Customer Representative - Northeast	4. Residential Customer Representative - Northeast
5. Residential Customer Representative - Southeast	6. Residential Customer Representative - Southeast
7. Residential Customer Representative - Southwest	8. Residential Customer Representative - Southwest
9. Business/Industry Representative	10. Business/Industry Representative
11. Development Representative	

SACWSD Staff including the District Manager, Environmental Programs Manager, and the Environmental Communications Specialist will attend the committee meetings as an advisory role and will provide information and data as requested.

Convening: SACWSD will request all interested public submit a letter of interest online articulating:

- Why they are interested
- How they will represent their area (gather input from constituents and keep them informed of the evolution of the committee)

- Where they live and how long they have lived in SACWSD
- Demographic information – age, gender, ethnicity
- Availability to attend monthly meetings (missing no more than 2 meetings)

This information will help the District staff build a balanced committee, a committee that represents a range of perspectives from across the community, that are committed to meeting over several months. In some cases the staff may need to reach out to additional stakeholders to fill gaps in the balance of the group.

Facilitation: SACWSD will engage a third-party neutral facilitator to organize, run and summaries the meetings. The facilitator will be neutral on the solution, yet focused on developing an open and inclusive process that builds toward understanding and agreement. Having a facilitator organize and run the meetings allows SACWSD to engage fully as an equal partner on the committee.

Meetings: The expectation is the Committee will meet in person 4-5 times to build mutual understanding of the issues and impacts of water hardness, possible alternatives to abate the hardness and the impacts of those alternative (environmental, cost, etc.); and build consensus agreement on a recommended management strategy that balances all interests.

c. Public Meetings

Before the Advisory Committee makes its final decision, they and SACWSD will host public meetings to gather input on one or two of the best options under consideration. There will be 2-3 meetings in different geographic areas of the District. The meetings will be an opportunity for the Committee to gather information from the public on specific questions (if they have any). The Committee will use the input from these meetings as the build agreement on a recommendation.

d. Other tools

- Web page for the Water Hardness issue on the SACWSD page, including information on the Advisory Committee
- A “Notify me” email list will be established to keep interested customers up to date.
- Newsflashes and social media posts will be sent out informing customers of the project progress.
- Update meetings with the joint Water Commission throughout the process
- Present an update to Commerce City Council (if suggested by Commission)
- Outreach to Hispanic community through individual discussions, or small meetings in Spanish

5. Draft Schedule

The following table is a suggested timeline of the planning, program development or decision-making processes as well as the public participation activities within the process.

Date	Task	Responsibility
January	Solicit Advisory Committee Volunteers Through use of website, social media, lobby monitors, word-of-mouth, etc.	Staff/Commission/Board
January	Contract for Customer Survey	Staff/Consultant

	To fill data gap on softener use, willingness-to-pay, public perceptions Projected completion – April (in time for insertion into Advisory committee analysis)	
February	Select Advisory Committee Members Selection of member representatives of District customers and locations.	Staff/Commission/Facilitator
March	Advisory Committee – #1 - Data Identify the key interests or concerns that any solution must balance Build mutual understanding of: District, water quality, history of hardness, impacts of hardness, taxes Identify additional data needs	Facilitator/Advisory Committee
April	Advisory Committee Meeting – #2 - Data Provide additional data requested Build mutual understanding of possible hardness abatement options – treatment level, financial costs, environmental impacts Identify possible additional options Evaluation options using list of interests	Facilitator/Advisory Committee
May	Advisory Committee Meeting – #3 - Analysis Evaluation options using list of interests Review of hardness-related customer survey data	Facilitator/Advisory Committee
June	Advisory Committee Meeting – #4 – Build Agreement Evaluation options using list of interests Build agreement on 2 options for public input	
July	Public Meetings (2-3) – Gather input Provide Information – District 101, water 101, Committee work, positive options Gather public input	Facilitator/Staff,/Advisory Committee/Public
August	Advisory Committee Meeting – #4 - Agreement Build agreement on a recommendation to Board Presentation of Recommendation to Board	Facilitator/Advisory Committee/Board
September	Board Decision on Hardness	Board
October	Inform Public of Decision and Influence of Input	Staff/Public

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Water Hardness Advisory Committee – Group will review/request information needed to make a recommendation to the Board on a path forward regarding hardness. The group will formulate a recommendation to the Board based on analysis of information. The group will work to relay Advisory Committee activities and progress from and to the public.

Board of Directors – Will review the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and public meeting input to make decisions about the path forward related to water hardness.

Joint Water Commission – The joint SACWSD and Commerce City Water Commission will be kept informed of the work of the Advisory Committee and public meetings.

SACWSD District Manager – The District manager will serve as an advisory member of the committee. He will be there to answer questions, inform the committee of available resources, and listen to committee and public input.

SACWSD Environmental Programs Manager – The Environmental Program manager will serve as an advisory member of the committee. Environmental Program manager will be responsible for overall coordination of the public participation process. This team member will work with the Board of Directors, Joint Water Commission, Advisory Committee, and customers to ensure the transparency and effectiveness of the public participation process.

SACWSD Environmental Communications Specialist – The Environmental Communications Specialist will serve as an advisory member of the committee. The Environmental Communications Specialist will assist with the public process components and meetings. Will participate in information dissemination to the public and Board of Directors. This will include administration of the webpage and email groups involved in the process.

District Staff – Staff will provide information and data requested by the Advisory Committee and provide review and recommendations to the Board as related to the project. Staff will work in partnership with Advisory Committee members to keep the community informed about the progress of the effort and results.

Survey Consultant – The survey consultant will be responsible for developing the public survey methodology and instrument. They will be responsible to ensure the survey is conducted in a fair and representative manner. They will write a report with an analysis of findings for stakeholders.

Facilitator – A third-party neutral facilitator will be engaged to ensure an open, transparent and inclusive public participation process that builds mutual understanding and moves towards resolution. The facilitator will work with the Advisory Committee: be in communication with members on their needs, draft agendas and meeting summaries, and help the District prepare data presentations to be as useful as possible to Committee members deliberations. The facilitator will also design, facilitate and summarize the public meeting in consultation with the Advisory Committee and District staff.

7. Tools Disseminate Results and Inputs impact

In order to ensure two-way communication, dissemination of public input to the Board and input's impact back to the public at large, the following items will be included in the project feedback loop.

- The SACWSD Board will receive monthly informational reports related to committee status, issues, and progress
- Newsflashes and social media posts will be sent out informing customers of the project progress.
- Web page of Advisory Committee discussions, including discussions of public input
- Publically available summary input from the public participation process – on the web site make all meeting summaries available (Advisory Committee and public meetings)
- The SACWSD Board final decision will include a summary of the key public desires and concerns and how the final decision from the Committee and Board works to address them.

Questions or comments related to the Hardness Advisory Committee public participation plan may be directed to Amanda Thomas, SACWSD Communications Specialist at athomas@sacwsd.org or 720-206-0560.