Summary of Views from a PureWater Soquel Survey

Key Findings from a Survey of Customers Conducted January 13-20, 2020
Methodology

✓ 427 interviews with Soquel Creek Water District voters
✓ Conducted January 13-20, 2020, online and via landline and cell phones
✓ Margin of sampling error of +/-4.7% at the 95% confidence level
✓ Due to rounding, some percentages do not add up to 100%
✓ Selected comparisons to prior research conducted by Goodwin Simon Strategic Research in 2015
Issue Context
While majorities rated water-related issues at least “somewhat serious problems,” they fell far behind traffic and housing as concerns.

I would like to read you a list of some problems facing your area of Santa Cruz County that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a serious problem at all in your community today.

**Traffic congestion:**
- Very Ser. Prob.: 61%
- Smwt. Ser. Prob.: 33%
- Total: 94%

**Not enough housing:**
- Very Ser. Prob.: 52%
- Smwt. Ser. Prob.: 30%
- Not Too Ser. Prob.: 10%
- Not a Prob.: 6%
- Total: 82%

**Inadequate water supplies for current and future needs:**
- Very Ser. Prob.: 40%
- Smwt. Ser. Prob.: 36%
- Not Too Ser. Prob.: 11%
- Not a Prob.: 6%
- Don't Know: 7%
- Total: 76%

**Drinking water being contaminated by saltwater from the ocean:**
- Very Ser. Prob.: 32%
- Smwt. Ser. Prob.: 29%
- Not Too Ser. Prob.: 14%
- Not a Prob.: 14%
- Don't Know: 11%
- Total: 61%
Traffic congestion has emerged as a near-universally shared concern over the last five years.

*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic congestion</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water being contaminated by saltwater from the ocean</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>^61%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
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<td>Inadequate water supplies for current and future needs</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>*76%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
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Q1 a, b & d. I would like to read you a list of some problems facing your area of Santa Cruz County that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a serious problem at all in your community today. *Included “protecting our” language ^ Without “current” language
While three-quarters said they drink tap water, most filter it first.

Thinking about the water that you drink at home, do you most often drink _________?

- Unfiltered water straight from the tap: 16%
- Tap water that is filtered in your home, either at the sink, through the refrigerator, or through a pitcher: 61%
- Bottled water: 16%
- Other: 6%

Total Tap Water Drinkers: 77%
Views of the District
Impressions of the water district overall are consistent with 2015, with nearly two-thirds rating them “excellent” or “good.”

The Soquel Creek Water District is the local agency that is responsible for your water. From what you know, would you say that in general the Soquel Creek Water District is doing an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

- **2015**
  - Excellent: 16%
  - Good: 48%
  - Only fair: 21%
  - Poor: 8%
  - Don’t know: 7%

- **2020**
  - Excellent: 14%
  - Good: 50%
  - Only fair: 19%
  - Poor: 11%
  - Don’t know: 6%

*Excellent/Good 64%*
Two-thirds have at least “some” trust in the District to find a responsible solution to water supply issues, similar to the share in 2015.

How much do you trust the Soquel Creek Water District when it comes to finding a responsible solution to the water supply issues facing your area?

Do you trust them a great deal, some, only a little, or not really at all?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a little</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not really at all</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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While two in five believe their water bill is “too high,” just one-quarter feel the average cost of $80 per month is “too high.”

An average water customer pays approximately $80 per month, which is less than 2 cents per gallon of water. Do you feel that cost is _____?

- Too high: 39%
- About right: 46%
- Too low: 2%
- Don’t know: 13%

Do you feel that your water bill is_____?

- Too high: 26%
- About right: 59%
- Too low: 6%
- Don’t know: 8%
Those in unincorporated areas and more-affluent households are more likely to see their bills as too high, as are people of color.

Water Bill Perception by Race/Ethnicity, Household Income & Geographic Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Too High</th>
<th>About Right/Don't Know</th>
<th>Too Low</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Respondents of Color</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$60,000</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$100,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$150,000</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000+</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitola</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated Area</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. Do you feel that your water bill is_____?
Views of Local Water Issues
Three in five understand that the District gets water from groundwater.

Please tell me if your area does, or does not, get water from each of the following possible sources. You can answer yes or no to each one. (% Yes)

From groundwater pumped up from underground wells: 59%
From local creeks or rivers: 40%
From recycled water that has been purified: 21%
From the Sierra Nevada mountains: 14%
From a desalination plant: 7%
A majority believes we need new sources of water to solve long-term supply problems.

Please tell me which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view on the issue of water supplies for your area of Santa Cruz County.

- We need new sources of water if we are going to solve our long-term water supply problems
  - 2015: 62%
  - 2020: 50%
- We can solve our long-term water supply problems by just using less water
  - 2015: 20%
  - 2020: 13%
- Both/Neither/Don't know
  - 2015: 18%
  - 2020: 37%

The switch to a hybrid of phone and online interviews this year, where “don’t know” is displayed as an answer choice, inflated the number choosing that option.
They overwhelmingly agree that investment is needed now to ensure reliable, safe water supplies, and that the District should act.

- **Investment is needed now to ensure we have a reliable, safe water supply for the future**
  - Strongly Agree: 64%
  - Somewhat Agree: 27%
  - Total Agree: 91%
  - Total Disagree: 7%

- **Soquel Creek Water District needs to take strong action now to address the over-drafting and seawater contamination of our local groundwater**
  - Strongly Agree: 56%
  - Somewhat Agree: 33%
  - Total Agree: 89%
  - Total Disagree: 5%

- **I’ve already cut back on water use for my home as much as I can; there is not much more I can do to save water**
  - Strongly Agree: 44%
  - Somewhat Agree: 36%
  - Total Agree: 79%
  - Total Disagree: 20%

- **Seawater is already contaminating our groundwater**
  - Strongly Agree: 32%
  - Somewhat Agree: 37%
  - Total Agree: 69%
  - Total Disagree: 17%

Q10. I am going to read you a list of statements about local water supplies. Please tell me whether you generally agree or disagree.

^Not Part of Split Sample
Exploring Recycled Water and Pure Water Soquel
The next questions focus specifically on “recycled water.” Recycled water is already-treated wastewater that goes through additional treatment so it can be used again.

There are two types: the first type is recycled water that is treated for use in park irrigation, gardening, food crops, and landscaping.

The second type, purified recycled water, goes through multiple advanced treatment processes to meet the highest safety levels required by the California division of drinking water. Once it is purified, it is pumped into the ground and stored, joining existing groundwater. The purified water is further filtered naturally through soils underground. After it is pumped back up, the water is then additionally tested and treated to ensure it meets or exceeds drinking water standards. It is then sent to homes and businesses for all uses, including drinking.
Nearly three in five are at least “somewhat familiar” with purified recycled water.

How familiar would you say you are with the second type of purified recycled water I mentioned: very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar, or not at all familiar?

- Very familiar: 10%
- Somewhat familiar: 47%
- Not too familiar: 22%
- Not at all familiar: 19%
- Don't know: 2%

Total Familiar: 57%
Total Not Familiar: 41%

More Likely to Be Familiar:
- Democratic men
- Men ages 50+
- HH income $60K-$150k
- Non-college educated men
One-third are not sure how much of this water is currently used in their community; about three in five said at least “some” is.

How much purified recycled water do you think is currently being used in your community: a great deal, some, only a little, or none at all? If you are unsure, you can tell me that, too.

- A great deal: 7%
- Some: 21%
- Only a little: 15%
- None at all: 16%
- Unsure: 34%
- Don't know: 9%
Next, respondents heard or read a description of the Pure Water Soquel project.

The Pure Water Soquel project will put already-treated wastewater through an advanced water purification process, and then use that purified water to replenish our groundwater supply. Recharging our groundwater basin will prevent seawater from entering the basin. This purified recycled water will be pumped and treated again, eventually becoming part of the water supply delivered to customers in your area for all household uses, including drinking. Would you say you are comfortable or uncomfortable with the Pure Water Soquel project?
More than seven in ten say they are comfortable with the project – and more are “very comfortable” than at all uncomfortable.

Would you say you are comfortable or uncomfortable with the Pure Water Soquel project?

- Very comfortable: 32%
- Somewhat comfortable: 41%
- Somewhat uncomfortable: 11%
- Very uncomfortable: 13%
- Don't know: 4%

Total Comfortable: 73%
Total Uncomfortable: 23%
Customer Relations
Half report using Water Wise home fixtures, and two in five have used rebates.

I will read you a list of some of the District’s free programs to help manage water use. Please tell me whether you have used it. (% Yes)

Water Wise home fixtures such as showerheads, hose nozzles, shower timers, and moisture meters 53%

Rebates for installing water-efficient upgrades like toilets, washing machines, pool covers, sprinklers, and rain barrels 40%

Water Wise Home and Business Calls, where a trained specialist visits you to provide customized water efficiency and irrigation tips and to identify leaks 15%

Personal review of your water bill with a customer service representative 15%
### Information in the water bill, friends and neighbors, and District emails are the best platforms for communication.

I am going to read a list of ways you may receive information about Soquel Water District. Please tell me whether you would definitely pay attention, maybe pay attention, or definitely not pay attention to information about the District if it were presented to you in that way.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends and neighbors</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information enclosed with your water bill</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soquel Creek Water District emails</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local monthly and bi-weekly newspapers</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such as <em>Aptos Times</em>, <em>Aptos Life</em>, and the <em>Capitola Times</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emails and websites other than the District’s</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations from Soquel Water District spokespeople</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They are less likely to report paying attention to information about the District from newspapers and social media.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information from community organizations of which you are a member</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local television news shows</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local radio news shows</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soquel Creek Water District website</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media sites such as Nextdoor and Facebook groups like <em>Aptosia</em></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soquel Creek Water District social media</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Santa Cruz Sentinel</em> newspaper</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
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Q19. I am going to read a list of ways you may receive information about Soquel Water District. Please tell me whether you would definitely pay attention, maybe pay attention, or definitely not pay attention to information about the District if it were presented to you in that way. Split Sample
Conclusions
Conclusions

✓ Job ratings for the District are steady, with more than three in five giving an “excellent” or “good” rating.
  - Overall trust in the District to find a solution to water supply issues is also similar to five years ago.
✓ Most see their water bills as “about right,” though nearly as many believe they are “too high.”
  - Provided the context that the average water bill is $80 per month, more are likely to say that figure is “about right.”
✓ Respondents show uncertainty about where water comes from, though most understand groundwater is a source.
✓ Three in five are concerned about saltwater intrusion (when explained in plain language). There is broad agreement the District needs to take strong action to address it.
✓ Most believe they’ve already cut back on water use as much as they can.
✓ More than half say they are familiar with recycled water after an explanation; fewer than three in ten think it is being used already.
✓ They find gardening and irrigation were broadly acceptable uses; a slim majority say it’s acceptable as drinking water as well.
✓ Given the description of Pure Water Soquel, 73% are comfortable with the idea.
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