



Strategic Plan
June 2015
Community Survey Results

Introduction

As part of the Soquel Creek Water District's Strategic Plan's community engagement strategy, the planning team developed and distributed an online survey in June 2015. The 24-question survey was designed to gain insight into District's customer understanding, awareness, and level of support for various water conservation concepts, supplemental supply options, and other issues of concern. The survey allowed the respondents to weigh in on approaches they supported or opposed and to provide open-ended feedback on several questions. Basic demographic information was also collected from respondents.

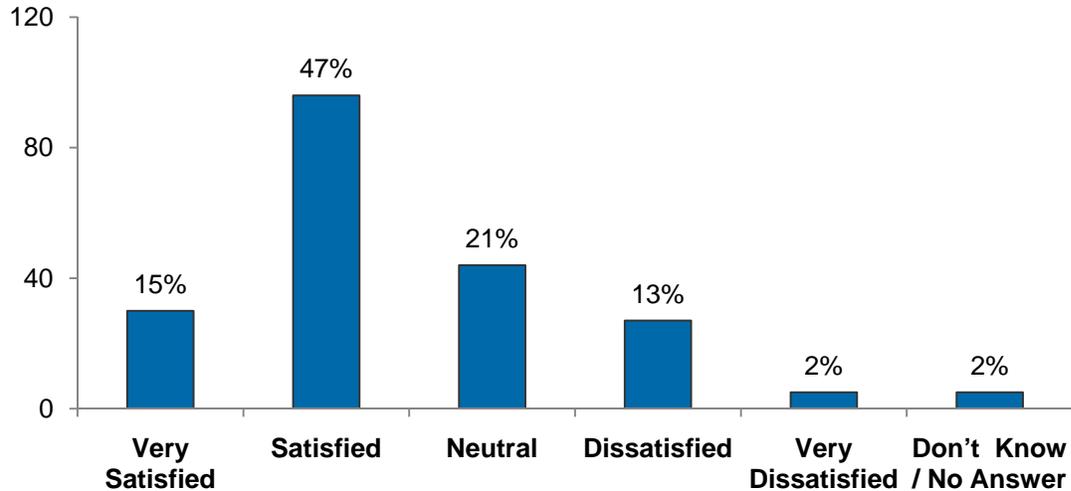
The survey was advertised on the District's website, in monthly e-newsletter, promoted in print ads, a printed newsletter, on postcards, and through social media. Printed surveys were also available at the District and at the June 3rd Community Workshops. Distribution of the survey resulted in 266 survey respondents.

Key findings from the survey that will inform the Strategic Plan and Community Water Plan include the following.

- *The most important services are, by far, providing high-quality, safe water and uninterrupted water service.*
- *The District's poorest rated area is in planning for sustainable water supply for future generations.*
- *Customers favor conservation measures that ask individuals to make voluntary changes to reduce water use.*
- *As a new supplemental water supply source, respondents have the most overall support for groundwater replenishment.*
- *In general, customers overwhelmingly pay their bill without feeling it is too high.*

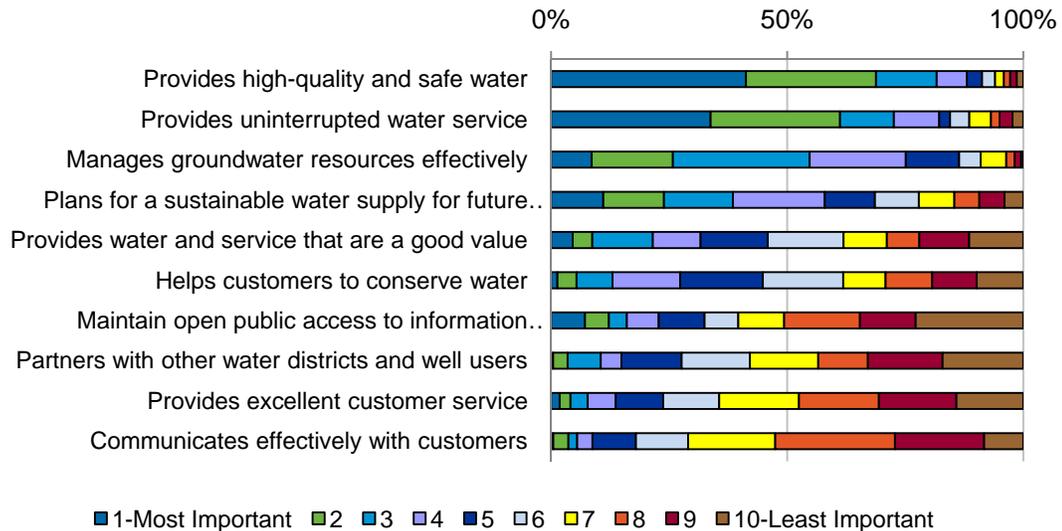
Survey Questions and Findings

1. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Soquel Creek Water District.



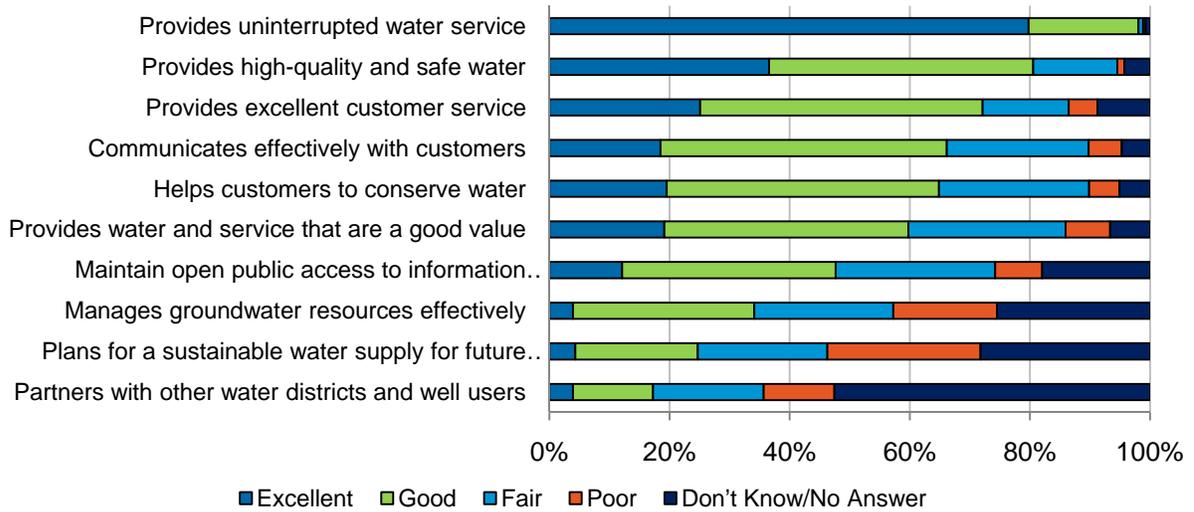
Finding: 62% of respondents report that they are satisfied or very satisfied service with the Soquel Creek Water District.

2. Which of these District Services are most important to you? Please rank the services below with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.



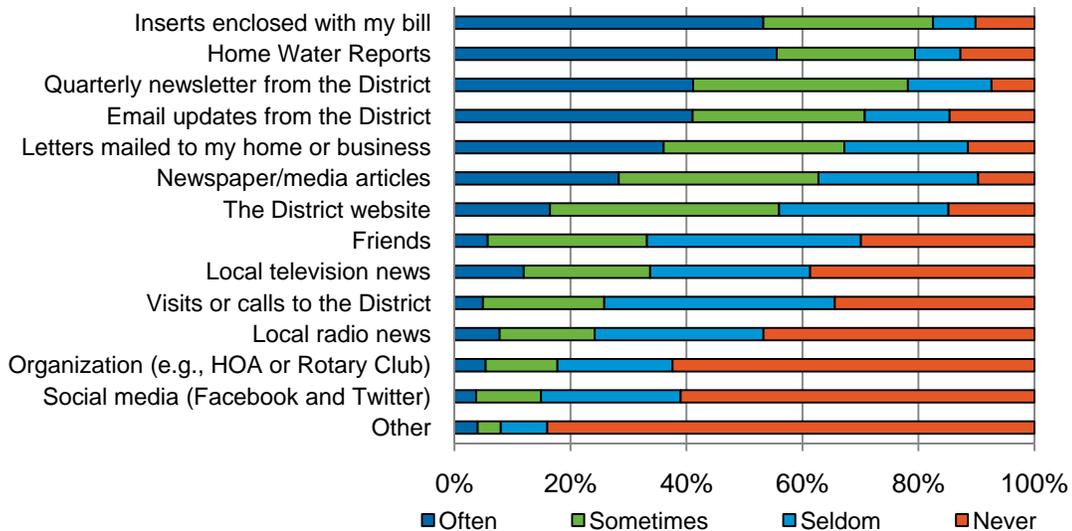
Finding: The most important services to respondents are, by far, providing high-quality, safe water and uninterrupted water service; the least important service (with the most scores of '10', meaning least important) was maintaining public access to information and transparency.

3. In your opinion, how well does the District do each of the following?



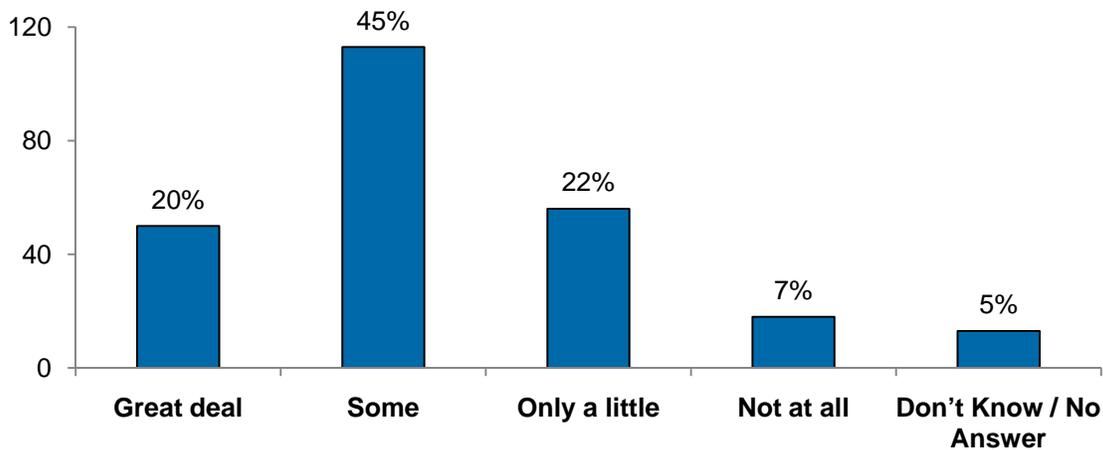
Findings: The District is rated highest in providing uninterrupted water service; the District's poorest-rated area is in planning for sustainable water supply for future generations. The recent Strategic Plan effort and community workshops reflect SqCWD's interest in being proactive on this issue. The District rates high on providing uninterrupted water service and high-quality and safe water, which were rated the most important services to respondents in the previous question. More than half of all respondents feel the District provides excellent or good customer service, communicates effectively, and helps customers conserve.

4. Here is a list of ways that our customers may receive information about the District. Please tell us how often you rely on each one for information.



Findings: The District reaches most survey respondents through inserts enclosed with their paper bills and other traditional print communication; there is room to expand use of social media, present at local organizations/clubs, and increase radio spots to share District information.

5. How much do you trust the Soquel Creek Water District when it comes to finding a responsible solution to the water supply issues facing our Mid-County area?



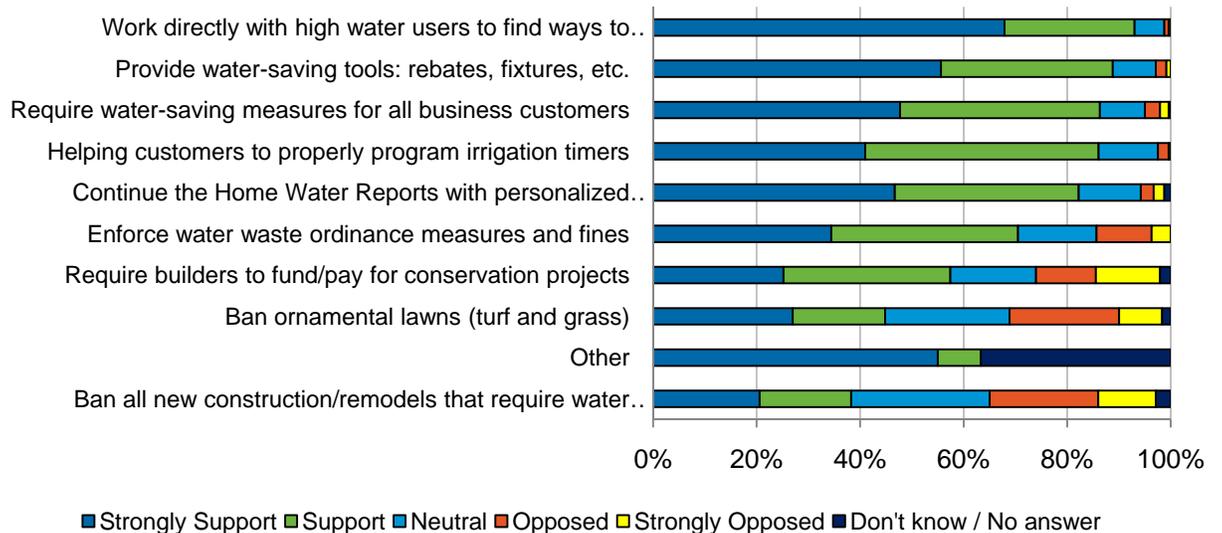
Finding: 65% of survey respondents have some or a great deal of trust in the District to find responsible solutions to water supply issues.

6. Is there anything else you would like us to know on the topic of customer satisfaction and communication? (open-ended)

Responses to this question covered a broad range of ideas and interests. Comments related to customer education and communications that were echoed by several respondents included:

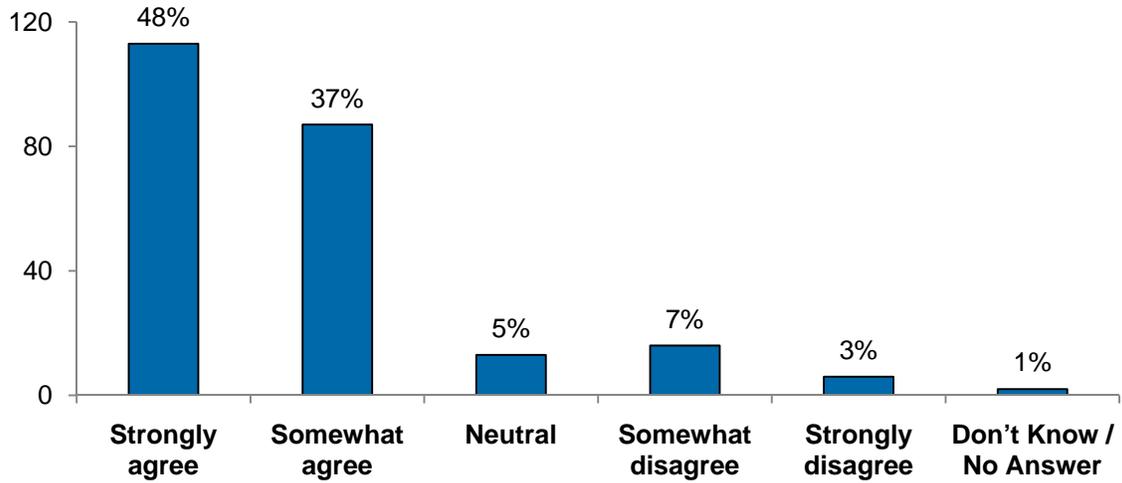
- Electronic communications are appreciated.
- More explanation of rates is needed, both related to tiered pricing and the reason rates are increasing.
- More information about supplemental water supply options and the plan for moving these projects forward is needed.
- The District has provided good communication and resources related to residential conservation.
- Consolidate communications when possible.

7. What do you think are the best ways for the District to encourage and support year-round water conservation? Indicate your level of support for each item below.



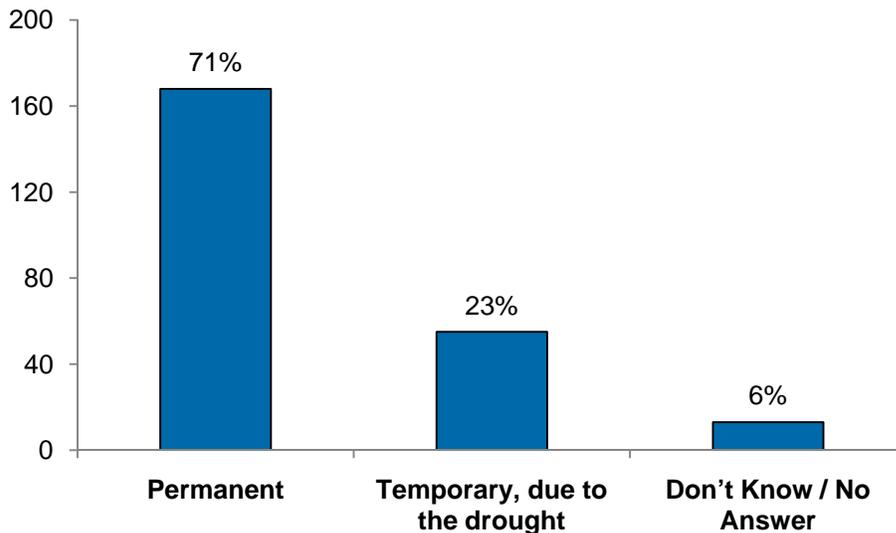
Finding: Survey respondents favor measures that ask individuals to make voluntary changes to water use as opposed to outright bans and restrictions on development. Focusing on high water users was strongly supported (with the most scores of '1', meaning strongly supported).

8. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: “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.”



Finding: 85% of survey respondents feel that they have made all the voluntary changes possible to cut their water use. Ten percent feel there is room for additional cut backs.

9. Do you consider the cutbacks that you’ve done over the last year to be permanent or temporary changes in your water use?



Finding: Based on the survey response, it is foreseeable that most District customers will continue to observe recent practices that have reduced their water use. About one quarter (23%) understand the recent practices as temporary in nature.

10. Do you have any specific questions or concerns and/or would you like to know more about water conservation? (open-ended)

Respondents' questions and concerns in response to this question generally fall into the following themes:

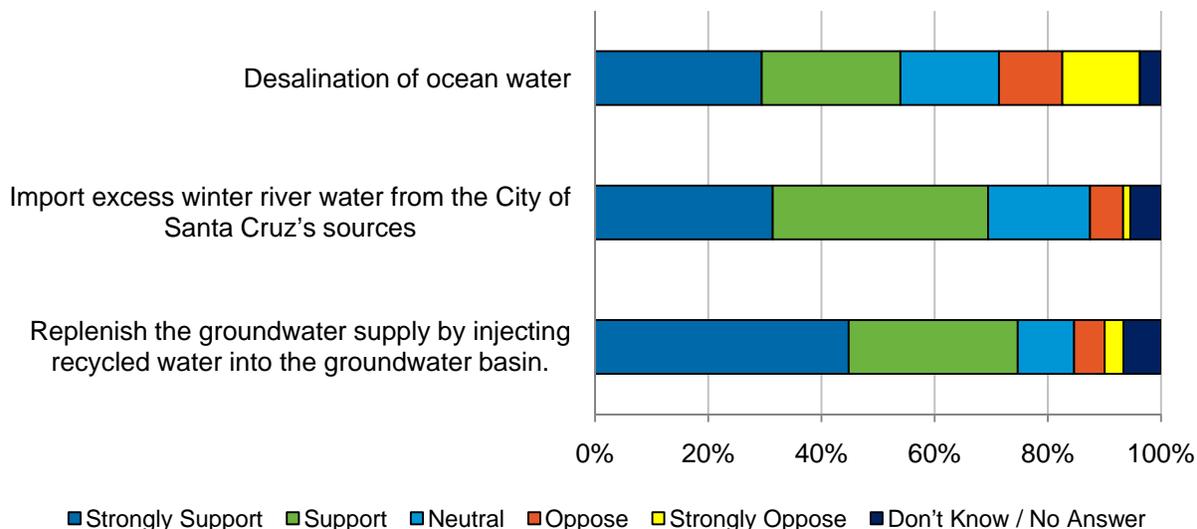
- Many respondents were interested in greywater systems for their homes. They expressed that they need more information and help with materials.
- Some respondents feel that they have conserved all that they can possibly conserve.
- There were suggestions to work with landscapers and contractors to help disseminate information on conservation techniques and tools and to offer discounts and rebates.

11. Which of the following two statements comes closer to your point of view on the issue of water supplies for the Mid-County area of Santa Cruz County?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
We need to find new sources of water if we are going to solve our long-term water supply problem	173	71%
We can solve our long-term water supply problems by everyone permanently just using less	35	14%
Neither	20	8%
Don't Know / No Answer	16	7%

Finding: A strong majority (71%) of survey respondents think that a supplemental supply is needed to address the water supply program, while only 15% think conservation alone is adequate.

12. The District is evaluating options for new supplemental water supplies to meet our long-term needs. For each item on the list, please indicate if you support it, oppose it or are neutral.



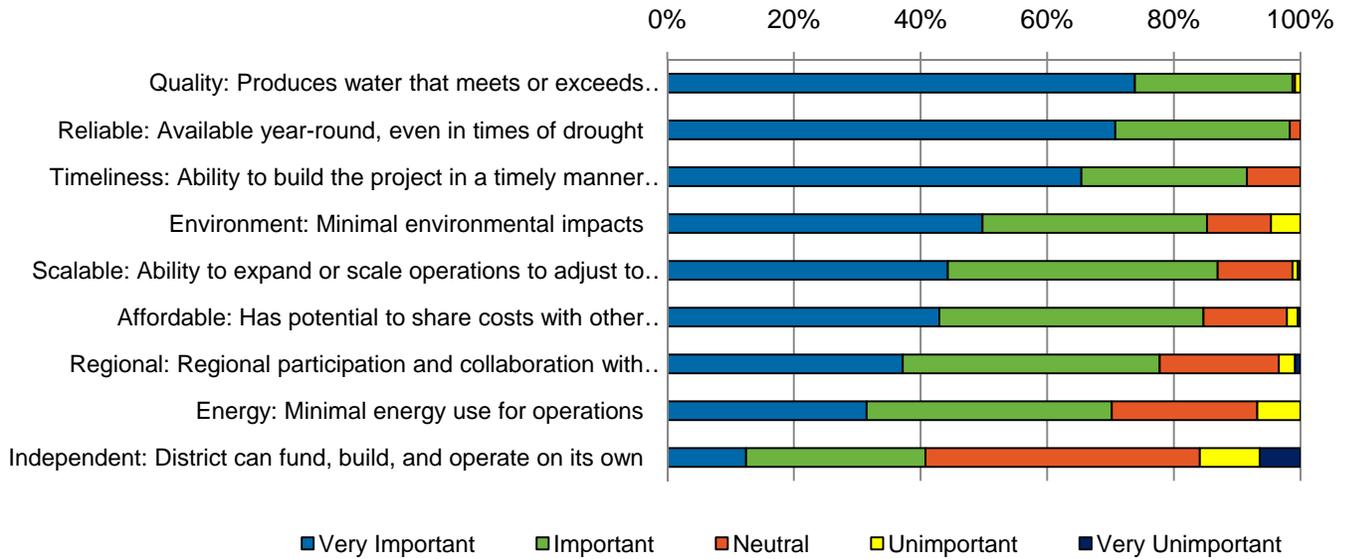
Finding: Respondents have the most overall support for groundwater replenishment. Desalination has the most opposition, though this is still a minority of respondents. Among respondents, there is more than 50% support for each of the three options.

13. Replenishing the groundwater supply by injecting recycled water would take wastewater, purify it through multiple advanced treatment processes, and then inject it into the ground. This would replenish the groundwater basin and help prevent further seawater intrusion. Eventually, this water would become part of the water supply delivered to customers. This option sounds like:

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
An excellent idea	123	51%
A good idea	62	26%
An okay idea	25	10%
Not a very good idea	11	5%
A poor idea	10	4%
Don't know / No answer	11	5%

Finding: Survey respondents overwhelmingly (87%) see groundwater replenishment as an idea to consider that addresses water supply conservation. Just 9% of respondents feel it is not a very good or poor idea.

14. How important are these qualities to you when you envision a successful water supply project?



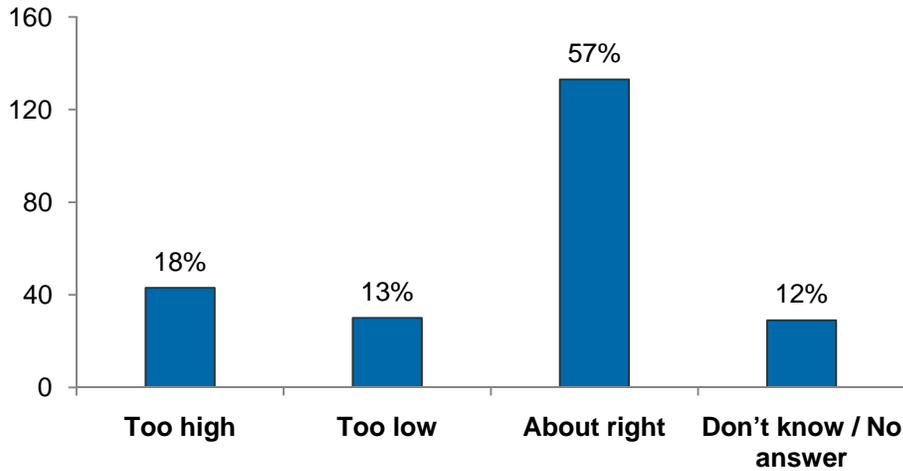
Finding: Over 60% of all survey respondents feel that the aspects of quality, reliability, and timeliness are important for a successful water supply project. The quality “independent” had the highest share of neutral responses and the greatest share of unimportant or very unimportant scores.

15. Is there anything else you would like us to know on the topic of supplemental supply? (open-ended)

Respondent’s comments in response to this question about supplemental supply generally fall into the following themes:

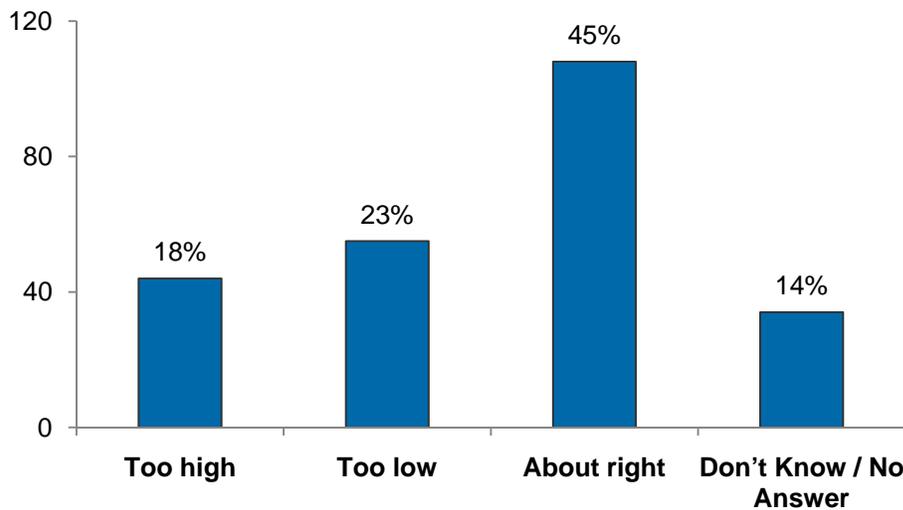
- There is a sense of urgency; supplemental supply projects should be implemented as soon as possible.
- There is interest in *all* supplemental supply options, with all options given more support than opposition.
- Respondents observe run-off water flowing into the ocean and question how more of it can be captured, both on household and District-wide scales.

16. Do you feel that your water bill is:



Finding: 70% of survey respondents pay their bill without feeling it is too high.

17. An average water customer pays approximately \$80/month which is less than two cents per gallon of water. Do you feel that this cost is:



Finding: 68% of survey respondents feel an average bill in the amount of \$80 per month is not too high. Almost one-quarter (23%) respondents feel this is too low.

18. Have you taken advantage of the District’s free water-wise house call service to help you reduce your water use and bill?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes	53	23%
No	176	74%
Don't know / No answer	8	3%

Finding: There is room for the District to increase participation in the free water-wise house call service given only 23% of respondents reported having used the service.

19. Is there anything else you would like us to know on the topic of water rates and pricing? (open-ended question)

Responses to this question echoed many earlier comments and generally fell under the following themes:

- Many respondents expressed that water is priced too low, although a couple respondents also stated that rates are too high for their families.
- Respondents would like clearer guidelines for multi-family rates.
- Leaks can be extremely costly and it would be helpful if there was a better system to identify a leak before the water bill came.
- Respondents raised concerns about groundwater users who are not District customers.

20. Are you a customer of Soquel Creek Water District?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Yes, I am a residential customer	227	96%
Yes, I am a business or institutional customer	2	<1%
No, I am a customer of another water agency	8	3%
No, I own a private well	3	1%

Finding: Almost all respondents are residential customers.

21. Do you own or rent your home?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Own	230	96%
Rent	10	4%

Finding: Almost all respondents own their homes.

22. Which of the following best describes your home?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Single-family house	204	86%
Townhouse	14	6%
Duplex or triplex	8	3%
Condo	6	3%
Apartment	3	1%
Don't know / No answer	2	1%

Finding: Almost all respondents live in single-family houses: 14% of respondents live in a residence of another description.

23. What is your age?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Under 18	1	<1%
18-29	1	<1%
30-39	13	5%
40-49	20	8%
50-59	38	16%
60-69	100	42%
70+	57	24%
Don't know / No answer	9	4%

Finding: Survey respondents are overwhelmingly older adults - 81% report being 50 years or older and 24% are 70 or older.

24. What is your gender?

Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percent
Male	107	44%
Female	119	50%
No answer	15	6%

Finding: Survey respondents were relatively balanced between the genders, with half of respondents identifying as female.