

February 10, 2009

TO: Barney & Worth, Inc.

FR: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM)

RE: Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership Focus Groups

I. Introduction and Methodology

On February 1-2, 2010, we conducted two focus groups, one with residents of Lake Oswego and the other with residents of Tigard. The purpose of the focus groups was to determine community knowledge and support of the Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership. Major topics included satisfaction of local drinking water, knowledge and opinion of regional water sources, awareness of local water issues, and opinions of the water partnership. We also discussed with the participants the most important issues in their community, the values that should guide water policy, and funding for the water system upgrades.

Each group had ten people for a total of twenty participants. They were a diverse group and came from throughout each city. The Lake Oswego participants had higher than average levels of education and household incomes. Nine Lake Oswego participants had college degrees or post-college education compared to three of the Tigard participants. And eight of the Lake Oswego participants had household incomes of more than \$75,000 versus five of the Tigard participants. They were split about evenly between males and females and ranged in age from 18-24 to over 75 years old. See Appendix A for complete demographic information.

Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable in giving a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the populations from which the samples were drawn.¹

This memo highlights key findings from the discussions. Each section reviews a major topic from the group discussions and includes representative quotations as well as evaluative commentary. The quotes and commentary are drawn from both written exercises and group discussion.² The referenced Appendices provide complete responses to all written exercises.

¹ The results of some ratings are included in the appendices. Although these are not a statistically valid measurement of views, they help illustrate the range and extent of consistency of views from group to group and within each group when read in combination with written and other comments.

² Quotations were selected to represent the range of opinions regarding a topic, and not to represent quantitatively the expressed attitudes.

II. Summary and Observations

- **Lake Oswego and Tigard participants were generally satisfied with their cities' drinking water.** They rated their drinking water highly on taste, cleanliness, and dependability. When asked about the most important issues for their city government to do something about, no participant mentioned drinking water as a problem.
- **The participants were mostly uninformed about the source of their drinking water and details of the water system.** One-half of the Lake Oswego participants said they didn't know or were not sure where their water came from. Only one said the Clackamas River. More than half of Tigard participants knew their water came from the Bull Run.
- **Very few participants knew or heard anything about the Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership.** For most participants the focus group was the first time they learned about it. They were unclear if the Partnership and decisions about the water system upgrades are finalized or still in development.
- **The participants were ambivalent about the Partnership and were eager to have more information.** They wanted more information about the problems the Partnership aims to address, the cost of system upgrades, alternatives, and long-term viability of the plan. Their skepticism was somewhat driven by their satisfaction with their water. They did not see a problem that needed fixing.
- **About one-half of the participants said they would be willing to pay more to make their drinking water even cleaner.** Those willing to pay more stressed the vital importance of clean water. Those who would not pay more felt that their drinking water is clean enough already. They may be willing to pay more if convinced the water system enhancements are necessary to keep the water from becoming less clean or to ensure sufficient capacity.
- **The participants had many questions about funding the Partnership and water system enhancements.** They wanted more specific information about the total cost to each city and to individuals. They did not understand why Tigard would pay more than Lake Oswego for the upgrades. They suspected it was because Tigard has a larger population or is farther from the Clackamas River.

II. Key Findings

A. Most Important Issues

“My biggest frustration living in Lake Oswego is city planners and misspent dollars. The Safeco building is heavy on my mind.” – Lake Oswego

“I have a problem with the transit project going from Lake Oswego to Portland through people's backyards.” – Lake Oswego

“Probably one of the things that irritates me is the whole Lake Grove congestion. I moved from Beaverton about four years ago and one of the reasons was having to drive Scholls Ferry and that being a nightmare. I've kind of seen something similar in that Lake Grove area.” – Lake Oswego

“The traffic. The traffic lights need to be synchronized better. It's a nightmare.” – Tigard

“Traffic is the main thing. There are areas you just have to avoid. Just because there is so much cut through traffic from three-o'clock on. Highway 99 you just can't get on.” – Tigard

“Here's a pet peeve of mine: mismanagement of funds. I would seriously like to see a private industry come in and go over their accounts and what they are spending their money on. Because I think there is a bunch of waste.” – Tigard

We started each focus group by asking the participants to write what issues they would like to see their city government do something about (Appendix B). Later in the sessions the participants discussed these issues together.

i. Lake Oswego – Most Important Issues

There was not a dominant theme among the Lake Oswego participants, but some of the more frequently mentioned issues were traffic and roads, housing, schools, community services, and government spending.

Issues related to transportation were traffic congestion in the Lake Grove area, general maintenance and pothole repair, and improving street lights. Two participants said they opposed Max or streetcar extensions through Lake Oswego.

A number of people said they would like Lake Oswego to enhance and expand public parks, community centers, and athletic fields. A need for more dog parks was a concern for two participants. Also, mentioned was a desire for more support for local libraries.

In the written exercises, five participants said schools were an important issue. Most of the comments were vague but one person wanted “school funding control” and another was worried about the “high school construction mess.”

A few participants said something about city spending or taxes. Again, their comments tended to be vague but among the things mentioned were “property tax equality,” “spending tax dollars more carefully,” and “better account for spending.” In the group discussions one participant brought up the West end Building as an example of “misspent dollars.”

No participant mentioned drinking water as an issue they would like to see their city government do something about.

ii. Tigard – Most Important Issues

In the written comments, eight of 10 participants mentioned something dealing with transportation that they would like city government to do something about. Traffic congestion, particularly on Scholls Ferry and Barrows Road were top issues. Several participants believed that the traffic signals on Scholls Ferry are not timed correctly and that they could be synchronized better to improve traffic flow. The group also agreed that Highway 99 is a problem. Multiple participants said that more support for alternative transportation—both mass transit and bicycling—was important. And two said that sidewalks need to be improved.

Other issues brought up were public safety and crime, supporting schools, developing downtown, and parks and recreation activities.

No participant mentioned drinking water as an issue they would like to see their city government do something about.

B. City Services

“Police are well trained. Low crime.” – Lake Oswego

“Fabulous library. Makes LO one of the best cities.” – Lake Oswego

“Water and sewer. I hope they are efficient.” – Lake Oswego

“Parks. Enjoy the trails for running and walking.” – Tigard

“Water. I like that it’s not fluoridated.” -- Tigard

To gauge the participants’ awareness and opinion of city services, we asked them to list all the services that came to their mind and any comments about them (Appendix C). Table 1 summarizes the services mentioned in the written exercises.

The most identified city service in both groups was public safety, including both police and fire. Eight participants in each group named these services. The participants said they were important and generally thought they were doing a good job. They felt safe in their communities.

The next most named city service was anything dealing with roads and transportation, including street maintenance. Twice as many Tigard participants (8) named this service than Lake Oswego (4). This is perhaps expected since more Tigard participants complained about traffic congestion in their city.

Parks and recreation was mentioned by about one-half of the participants in each group. People enjoyed the parks and a few specifically mentioned trails for running and walking as positives. A few participants in Lake Oswego mentioned the need for more parks including dog parks.

Table 1
Number of Participants Who Named a City Service

City Service	Lake Oswego	Tigard	Combined Mentions
Police/fire/public safety	8	8	16
Roads/transportation	4	8	12
Parks and recreation	5	6	11
Sewer/water	6	5	11
Library	3	6	9
City planning/codes	4	2	6
Schools	5	1	6
Garbage/recycling	1	3	4
Trees	3	0	3
Electricity/cable/telephone	1	1	2
Housing	0	1	1
Senior services	1	0	1
Special community events	0	1	1

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), February 2010

Water and sewer services were mentioned by one-half (6, Lake Oswego; 5, Tigard) of the participants. They often lumped the two services together. They did not indicate that they had strong feelings about water and sewer services, with one person from Tigard writing he had “very little knowledge.”

C. Initial Opinions About Community Drinking Water

“It’s always plentiful, available, and has a good flavor. I trust the quality and how clean it is.” – Lake Oswego

“City water apparently is safe to drink. No rust, no chemicals, etc. that I’m aware of. Never had an interruption. Never got sick from drinking it.” – Lake Oswego

“I’m not sure if Bull Run is still my water source, but if it is, it’s always reliable and I have always felt it was safe and drinkable.” – Lake Oswego

“Water tastes good, but I worry about aging pipes and water system a bit. Not sure about quality testing, but I’ve heard scary stories.” – Tigard

“Water is clean. Tastes better than a lot of other water. No chlorine taste. Feel safe drinking it.” – Tigard

“It tastes horrible. It just doesn’t taste good to me.” – Tigard

“Ownership. Tigard needs to own its own water supply and not be at the mercy of Portland.” – Tigard

Before having any specific discussions about water sources or the water Partnership, we asked the participants what comes to mind when they think about their communities’ drinking water (Appendix D).

i. Lake Oswego – Opinions of Drinking Water

Overall, Lake Oswego participants were very happy with their drinking water. The used words like “clean,” “good,” “pure,” “tasty,” and “safe” to describe it. A few participants mentioned that they never have had a service disruption. One said that he got his water from West Linn and another from a well.

ii. **Tigard – Opinions of Drinking Water**

Overall, Tigard participants were positive about their water albeit less so than those from Lake Oswego. Most liked the taste and said it was better than other places, such as Beaverton, California, or Arizona, but least one participant didn't like the taste. During the group discussion he said it was "horrible," although many of the other participants expressed surprise at the comment.

There was some concern about the water. One participant had heard that the system was aging and that pipes might be leeching lead. Another was skeptical that the city was being honest about the source of the water and wanted a home testing kit to be able to test the water herself. One of the more knowledgeable participants was concerned that Tigard does not control its own water source and was leery of any partnership with the city of Portland.

D. Satisfaction with Community Drinking Water

"Satisfied strongly. I have had no issue with water in any way. I have always felt it was safe and freely available. I also find the price reasonable compared to friends who tell me what they pay for water." – Lake Oswego

"Satisfied strongly. Clean, safe, flavorful, and plentiful." – Lake Oswego

"Satisfied somewhat. I'm satisfied that the water itself won't harm me. We filter the drinking water anyway. My main concern is whether there are chemicals of any type that are harmful."—Lake Oswego

"Satisfied somewhat. I don't have any problems. Just have heard that in some areas the aging pipes may be contaminating drinking water in some areas of Tigard." – Tigard

"Satisfied somewhat. I assume the water is healthy and safe, but would like testing to be positive." – Tigard

"Satisfied strongly. Rates are reasonable, the city provides information on water conservation, no added fluoride, and the city gives good info on water quality." – Tigard

Next, we asked the participants to rate their satisfaction level with their communities' drinking water (Appendix E). Table 2 summarizes their responses.

Table 2
Satisfaction with Community Drinking Water

Satisfaction Level	Lake Oswego	Tigard	Combined Total
Satisfied strongly	6	6	12
Satisfied somewhat	4	4	8
Dissatisfied somewhat	0	0	0
Dissatisfied strongly	0	0	0

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), February 2010

Six people in each group said they were satisfied strongly with their water and none said they were dissatisfied. Again, the reasons they expressed for their high satisfaction were that the water is clean, tastes good, and plentiful. A couple people even mentioned that the cost was relatively low compared to other places.

Those who were only somewhat satisfied said they had some concerns that the system was aging, that there might be some chemicals or other toxins in the water, and high cost. One person mentioned the E. coli incident in Portland's water system as a worry. Another expressed that the city of Tigard should "own" its water supply.

E. Values that Should Guide Decisions about Drinking Water

"Of utmost concern is the safety of the citizenry." – Lake Oswego

"Devotion to health and safety." – Lake Oswego

"Sense of duty to the rate payers. They work for us." – Lake Oswego

"Upkeep to avoid loss of service." – Tigard

"Transparency. Publish results publicly." – Tigard

"Availability. Make sure source is going to be available as growth occurs." – Tigard

We asked the participants to list the values they feel should guide local government officials in providing drinking water to residents (Appendix F).

It was expressed in different ways (purity, cleanliness, healthy, chemical-free, etc.) but safety was the most named value among participants from both cities. The water supply should be free of impurities, chemicals, bacteria, and anything that could make a person sick. They were concerned about immediate illnesses (e.g., from E. coli) and chemicals that could cause problems like cancer many years down the road. They said that the water should be "as clean as possible," that there should be a "devotion to health and safety," and that there should be "no way for contamination to occur."

Participants in both cities said that ensuring an adequate supply and conservation were important values. There should be sufficient supply to meet the needs of today's residents and enough to support community growth. The water delivery system should also be sufficient and well-maintained to ensure that there are no disruptions in service. A few participants mentioned conservation both for general environmental benefits and to make certain that there will be enough water for the years to come.

Other important values were cost effectiveness, transparency in planning and decision-making, and honesty.

F. Rating of Regional Water Sources

"Bull Run. It's always seemed reliable and clean." – Lake Oswego

"I had the Clackamas River as number one. I think any water source coming out of the mountains is going to be cleaner, something that moves faster." – Lake Oswego

"I put it [Clackamas River] as two. I thought it is pretty clean. But again, depending on where you get it." – Lake Oswego

"I'm concerned about groundwater because you know in some parts of the country the water table has been depleted to the point where it's not good for the environment." – Lake Oswego

“I had the Clackamas River at the top. I guess you'd be partnering with Lake Oswego to get that water. At the bottom was the Tualatin. You don't want that water.” – Tigard

“Well water is the only thing that people don't talk too bad about. It might just be because it's on their property.” – Tigard

“[Bull Run] Good, clean source. Pure.” – Tigard

We presented the participants with a list of seven regional water sources. From the list, we asked the participants to choose the source that was best, second, and third best in terms of quality (Appendix G). Table 3 summarizes their ratings. In interpreting the ratings, it should be noted that the participants generally did not have much knowledge or awareness of these water sources.

**Table 3
Ratings of Regional Water Sources***

Source	Lake Oswego				Tigard			
	Best	2 nd Best	3 rd Best	Combined	Best	2 nd Best	3 rd Best	Combined
Bull Run	15	6	1	22	12	2	2	16
Clackamas River	3	2	1	6	3	6	2	11
Columbia River	3	2	1	6	3	0	0	3
Groundwater wells	3	6	1	10	12	2	2	16
Trask River	3	6	1	10	0	10	0	10
Tualatin River	0	3	2	6	0	0	2	2
Willamette River	3	0	1	4	0	0	1	1

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), February 2010

*Weighted rankings based on three points for best source, two points for second best source, and one point for third best source.

Bull Run was the top rated source for both groups. It was the clear favorite among Lake Oswego participants and tied with groundwater wells with the Tigard group. Participants described it as “clean,” “pure,” “safe,” and “renewable.” On the negative side, some thought it was too far away, were worried about it having open reservoirs, and that it is controlled by the city of Portland.

Groundwater wells were near or at the top for both groups, however, the feelings were mixed among individual participants. They said that the quality and safety varied by location and individual well. One person said that it “can be wonderful, but can be toxic. Depends on what’s around there.” Some felt that it could be a safe source, but only with regular testing and “strict compliance laws for contamination.”

The Clackamas River was the second highest rated source for Tigard and near the bottom for Lake Oswego, but the opinions about it varied. On the positive side, some said that it is a “good source” and has “clean runoff.” On the negative side, it was described it as “unsafe” and that “all other sources are good in comparison.” It is a bit surprising that Lake Oswego participants didn’t rate the Clackamas River higher considering that they were satisfied with the city’s drinking water, which comes from the Clackamas River. But as it is discussed below most of the Lake Oswego participants did not know the source of their drinking water.

The lowest rated sources were the Willamette, Columbia, and Tualatin rivers. The participants described them as polluted and dirty.

G. Awareness of Drinking Water Source

We asked the participants to name the source of their drinking water (Appendix H). Table 4 lists their responses. One-half of the Lake Oswego participants said they did not know where their water comes from and only one person identified the Clackamas River. For Tigard, three participants did not know, but six said that it comes from Bull Run.

Table 4
Reported Source of Drinking Water

Sources Named	Lake Oswego	Tigard
Don't know/not sure	5	3
Bull Run	2	6
Clackamas River	1	--
Willamette River	--	1
Groundwater wells	1	--
Trask River	--	--
Tualatin River	1	--

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), February 2010

H. Home Treatment of Water

“Filter through a Brita filter for better flavor and to remove any chlorine or other impurities.” – Lake Oswego

“Let it run for fifteen to thirty seconds because it comes out off color to start.” – Lake Oswego

“Filter in refrigerator. Water flows faster when filter is in place.” – Tigard

“Carbon filter to protect our family from contaminants in the water.” – Tigard

We asked the participants if they do anything to their water at home before drinking it (Appendix I). About one-half of the participants in each group said that they filtered their water, including drinking filtered water from their refrigerators. Some of those who did, did so to remove chemicals and other “impurities” from their water. A few more participants ran their water for thirty seconds or so before drinking it.

However, not all the participants who filtered their water (or bought bottled water) did so because they worried about cleanliness or safety. A few participants of the participants who drank water from taps on their refrigerators said the refrigerator tap worked better with the filter on and another said she preferred the water from the refrigerator because it was colder than drinking from the faucet. Another participant admitted to having a mild phobia about drinking water from a bathroom tap but said that other family members regularly drink unfiltered tap water at home.

I. Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership

i. Awareness and Knowledge of the Partnership

Before any group discussion or presenting the participants with a description, we asked them if they had heard anything about the Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership, and if they had, to note the source of their information (Appendix K).

Only three participants in each group were aware of the Partnership. If they knew anything at all about it, they thought that the two cities were planning to partner on water delivery to save money. Lake Oswego participants said they heard about it either from the *Lake Oswego Review* or the *Hello, LO* newsletter. Tigard participants heard about it from the city's newsletter and the *Tigard Times*.

ii. Opinion of the Partnership – Lake Oswego

"My only question was there really wasn't anything identifying what are the chances that Lake Oswego will run out of water because we're sharing with Tigard. Is there enough water from the source if Lake Oswego continues to expand?" – Lake Oswego

"It really doesn't address cost. It doesn't say what it's going to cost. Are the water rates going to go up?" – Lake Oswego

"It would be nice if there were a little elaboration about capacity. I mean are we going to run out next year? Twenty years from now? In other words, how urgent is it?" – Lake Oswego

"I think it's a great idea, as the two can share the cost. We need to upgrade our system as we will outgrow it in the near future and Tigard needs a reliable water source. So it's a win-win." – Lake Oswego

We gave the participants a description of the Lake Oswego-Tigard Water Partnership and asked them for their comments and if they thought it was a good or bad idea (Appendix L).

The Lake Oswego participants were ambivalent to mildly supportive about the Partnership. Some did comment that the plan was well conceived and designed. People who supported the plan mostly said that it made sense for the two communities to share resources. They felt it would benefit both cities since Lake Oswego needs to upgrade and enhance its water systems and Tigard is seeking a new water source.

But many of the participants had questions about the Partnership. For some it stemmed from the fact that they are satisfied with their drinking water now and felt the Partnership was a solution in search of a problem. Some of their questions were: Why is this needed? What are the problems with the system? How old is it? Are there immediate health concerns? How near capacity is the system? Is Lake Oswego near a water shortage?

Moreover, they were sensitive about the cost. They wanted more information about what the system enhancements would cost the city and them as rate payers. There was also some frustration that the description of the plan did not include any other alternatives. It wasn't clear to them if the Partnership was a "fait accompli," as one person put it, or just a proposal.

A couple participants were concerned that the Partnership amounted to giving up control of the Lake Oswego's water source. One participant asked, *"If there is a vote and Tigard has more people all of a sudden they are going to decide what to do with the water that we've got here. Why would we give that up long-term?"*

iii. Opinion of the Partnership – Tigard

"Good. Anything is better than Portland." – Tigard

"It seems like a good idea. Does LO add fluoride to their drinking water? If so, I don't like it." – Tigard

"When I think Lake Oswego I always think high quality." -- Tigard

"Could be a good idea if it keeps costs down and water quality up, and provides a secure, dependable water source. How will Tigard customers benefit?" – Tigard

"I would want to know how pure and protected the water source is." – Tigard

Tigard participants were also mildly supportive of the Partnership, but like Lake Oswego, had many questions about it. Several wanted to know why switching systems was necessary. Again, they were generally happy with their water service and unaware of any problems that require action. They wanted to know if there is a problem with their current water source, Bull Run, or their relationship with Portland. For most, this was the first they had heard of the Partnership and were reluctant to support it without more information.

They especially wanted to know more about cost. They wondered if their water rates or taxes would increase to pay for transferring to Lake Oswego and for the system upgrades. And because they learned that the Partnership would change their city's water source, they wanted to know more about the Clackamas River and Lake Oswego's treatment facilities. Some questions they had were: Is the Clackamas River clean and pure? Does water from the Clackamas River taste good? How does Lake Oswego treat their water? Do they filter it or add chemicals to it? Does Lake Oswego fluoridate their water? Not everyone was concerned, however. A participant who described herself as very practical said, *"If it's good enough for Lake Oswego--which I think is a community that probably keeps an eye on things as busy body as those people are--it would probably be protected."* Another person was pleased that the Partnership would mean that Tigard would no longer "be at the mercy" of Portland.

A participant opposed to the Partnership was concerned about the Clackamas River as a long-term source of water for Tigard. He felt that because the Bull Run watershed is in the Mt. Hood National Forest and not accessible to the public it would be the least contaminated in the future. He contrasted that to the Clackamas River, which he described as flowing through an increasingly urban area and therefore more prone to pollution. He also said that the Clackamas River is fed by snow melt, which may not exist in the future because of global warming.

J. Willingness to Pay More to Make Drinking Water Cleaner

"[No] If cleanliness is the only consideration I feel that it is very clean. Hopefully, I'm right." – Lake Oswego

"I would not pay one dime more. Absolutely not. The water I drink out of the tap in Lake Oswego has met every standard that there is, I'm sure. Otherwise there would be a problem." – Lake Oswego

"Modest increase. Water is already good in my opinion and does not need much more cleaning." – Lake Oswego

"Not for the cost we're paying now." – Tigard

"I feel like our taxes are very high already and would need a compelling explanation for the extra expense." – Tigard

"I'd be willing to pay more for the sake of my children's health." – Tigard

We asked the participants if they knew how much their household pays per month for drinking water (Appendix M) and if they would be willing to pay anything more if it was possible to make their drinking water even cleaner than it is today (Appendix N).

About one-half of the participants in each group said they knew their monthly water costs. For Lake Oswego the perceived cost ranged from \$12-\$105/month and for Tigard it ranged from \$20-\$100/month.

With regards to willingness to pay more for cleaner water, both groups were split with about one-half saying yes and the other half no. Among the half who would pay more, they stressed the importance of clean water for health. But they also indicated that the increase should be "modest" because they felt their water was already quite clean. Some also said to them "cleaner" meant more treatment. They did not want to pay to have their water treated with more chemicals.

People opposed to paying more for cleaner water said that it was unnecessary. They believed their water is perfectly fine now and saw no reason to do anything more to make it even cleaner. Some also felt that their taxes and water bills were already too high.

A few participants opposed to spending more to make the water cleaner said they might change their mind if new evidence came out that their water was not as clean as they believe it to be. They also said that they may be willing to pay more for their water system if it needed upgrades to make the system more efficient or it is near capacity and will soon not be able to serve the community. A participant from Lake Oswego said, *"If you tell me that it's fine now but we're going to run out next year, then we got to do something. But just for cleanliness, that's not very persuasive"*

K. Funding Water System Improvements

“Increase the rates by how much? What is the projected timeline of repayment to cover the costs?” – Lake Oswego

“This leaves a lot of questions. How much do we need a new system and how much would rates increase?” – Lake Oswego

“I’m pleased that it isn’t fifty-fifty, since Tigard has a larger population. I do think it is good to share costs, since it means each of us will have to pay less.” – Lake Oswego

“Do not rely on SDC to fund a major portion of the project. Everybody uses the water, everybody should pay.” – Tigard

“It seems like the city is always trying to push another bond through. I would need more information before I agreed to a rate increase.” – Tigard

“My question is once all the initial bonds setting up the system have been paid off, how is the continued maintenance going to be split?” – Tigard

“I have questions and need more information.” – Tigard

We gave the participants general information about how the water system improvements would be funded and asked for their comments (Appendix O).

Participants in both groups wanted more information than the description provided. Specifically they wanted to know how much the improvements would cost their cities and them personally. How much would taxes go up? How much would water bills increase? Just how large would the system development charges be? Without this information they were unwilling to make clear declarations of support or opposition to the funding plan.

They had a number of other questions and concerns about why the costs would be allocated so that Tigard would pay 57% and Lake Oswego 43%. Several guessed it was because Tigard’s population is larger than Lake Oswego. Others thought it might be because Tigard is farther away from the Clackamas River and it would cost more to deliver water there. One Tigard participant said that she assumed it had to do with “water rights and it was Lake Oswego’s tax on Tigard.” No participant was strongly against the split but wanted more information explaining it. As one participant said, *“I just want to know why. If they come up with a perfectly good reason, I want to see that kind of information to support the difference.”*

Another question that came up multiple times was the long-term costs of the system upgrades and responsibilities for paying them. It was unclear to them when the initial bonds are paid off who would pay for maintenance and at what rate. Would the same 57/43 split apply? Would it be 50/50? Would the cities negotiate a new arrangement?

L. Final Messages

"I want much more, much more information on the specifics as how to lessen the financial impact on Lake Oswego." – Lake Oswego

"They need to be transparent and let us know what the effect will be to each city's residents." – Lake Oswego

"The most important thing is to be up front about costs and specific who/how it's being paid for/by." – Lake Oswego

"Make sure the quality, flavor, and cleanliness standards are maintained. Keep in mind that the cost does matter and keep unnecessary expenses down." – Lake Oswego

"Tell us why and give us the other alternatives with the reasons we decided to go with the route." – Tigard

"Please be careful when you are spending my money that I entrust you with to make decisions on behalf of my family's quality of drinking water. Is this really necessary?" – Tigard

"I think it is crucial for the city of Tigard to have a secure, dependable source of water now and looking fifty years down the road. Exploring all the options including cost is important as well." – Tigard

At the conclusion of the focus groups we asked the participants for their most important message they had for Lake Oswego and Tigard city officials about the water system improvement project (Appendix P).

Ultimately the participants were reluctant to strongly support or oppose the Partnership or system upgrades without more information, and their final messages reflected this. They said they want city leaders to give them more specifics: How much will it cost? Are there any other options? Is there an urgent problem? How will the partnership between Lake Oswego and Tigard be maintained and managed? What will the water quality be? How will the water be treated?

Prior to the focus groups, most of the participants were uniformed about their water supply, although they were generally positive about its quality, taste, and cleanliness. This perhaps biased them towards the status quo. They were unsure why this is necessary and worried about the costs.