

# MEMORANDUM

## RECYCLED WATER PROGRAM

Community expectations for water quality and community benefits for the recycled water facility

2025



PREPARED BY  
ATLAS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS



## MEMO

**TO:** Haley Falconer, Deputy Public Works Director, Recycled Water  
**FROM:** Atlas Strategic Communications  
**CC:** Steve Burgos, Abby Haydin, Brandon Pechin  
**DATE:** 4/30/2025  
**RE:** Community Expectations for Water Quality and Community Benefits for the Recycled Water Facility

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

Since 1949, all of Boise's treated water has been put in the Boise River to flow downstream and out of our community. As regulations around discharging water to the Boise River have evolved with changing conditions, Water Renewal Services (WRS) recognized the importance of adapting to these changes to secure a reliable water supply for the future and meet the expectations of our community. In 2016, WRS began the effort to consider what our water use future could look like if we prioritized local-level solutions, managed capacity and regulatory challenges presented by staying in the river, prioritized planning for scarcity events and balanced the values of our diverse and ever-growing community. This was the beginning of a multi-year effort to inform the future of Boise's water – how we would conserve it, use it, treat it, and reuse it now and in the future.

Throughout the development of the Water Renewal Utility Plan (WRUP), the City of Boise and technical partners performed rigorous analysis of the potential alternatives the city may consider for its future management of used water. This analysis included assessment of risk (environmental, health, regulatory, etc.), economic modeling, capital and operational cost analysis and collection and evaluation of community expectations presented with various alternatives. WRS engaged with thousands of Boise residents through surveys, focus groups, and an advisory group to gather valuable input on community priorities. This feedback and concurrent technical analysis was instrumental in shaping the recommended approach detailed in the WRUP.

The WRUP marked an important step forward in resource management for our community. The plan proposed combining traditional wastewater management with innovative, sustainable solutions. The city determined that keeping a portion of clean, renewed water within our community instead of sending it downstream can build resilience and better prepare for potential water shortages. As repeatedly expressed in community feedback, Boiseans want more from their water. They want the opportunity to reuse it in different ways and expect the city to plan for uncertain events and periods of scarcity.

In 2020, Boise City Council unanimously approved the adoption of the WRUP, which included recommendations for adopting new methodologies for managing used water in our community. Those methodologies included maintaining current capacity of discharge to Boise River, the re-use of new water in the system for **industrial purposes** and treating used water and **recharging our deep-water aquifer** in order to enhance resiliency of that resource and keep water local. In 2021, Boise voters overwhelmingly passed a bond (82% approval) to fund these and other utility projects needed by the city to maintain level of service expectations of rate payers.

Once the WRUP was approved, the City of Boise embarked on the next effort – to design a Recycled Water Program that protects public health and the environment, prepares our city for growth, drought and climate change, complies with applicable state regulations, and meets the expectations of our diverse community. This memo captures the efforts by the City of Boise to align community expectations with the water quality produced by the Recycled Water Program for various planned uses and the findings from those efforts.

## **APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

As the City of Boise began designing the Recycled Water Program, it was committed to developing a program that protects public health and the environment, balances the costs of building and running the system with the long-term benefits, meets the city's carbon goals and reflects community values. The City of Boise was faced with the challenge of meaningfully, effectively engaging stakeholders and the public to inform these decisions. The topic at hand is inherently complex and nuanced, making it difficult to generate actionable feedback from an audience that may lack technical expertise and background on the program. Many community members, while invested in the outcome, may not have had the necessary knowledge to fully grasp the intricacies of water quality science in order to offer input. Even with that said, having community involvement is essential in designing a successful Recycled Water Program. The City of Boise has been resolute in ensuring this feedback was heard and applied in program design.

To accomplish this, the City of Boise and its consultants designed a feedback effort that would build deep understanding of the Recycled Water Program and the many variables to be weighed in program design. It intended to sincerely explore the values of stakeholders that may meaningfully change outcomes of the program. This effort deployed two mechanisms for gathering input, an **advisory group** comprised of diverse representatives in Boise and a series of **in-depth-interviews** with stakeholders who have more institutional knowledge related to the program and therefore did not require the level of backgrounding offered to the advisory group.

## **GOALS**

The goals of the stakeholder feedback effort for the Recycled Water Program included the following.

- Collect input of purified water quality options for the first Recycled Water Facility, considering community values.
- Explore the balance of risks and benefits of different water quality options under consideration.
- Explore how to extend the impact of the investment by developing programs, trainings, educational opportunities and supplementary infrastructure on the property.



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- Offer feedback and recommendations for prioritizing how Boise could use recycled water in the future.

## ADVISORY GROUP

### Structure and Composition

The city formed an advisory group made up of representatives from various community organizations, groups, and associations. These representatives were selected for their ability to speak on behalf of the larger populations they serve and their topical knowledge in areas of consideration noted above. The approach to the advisory group for the Recycled Water Program was intended to create an invested, knowledgeable group that could digest the challenge before the city and help to inform the decision-making related to water quality. These efforts were also integral in creating community advocates, empowering participants to become ambassadors who could share knowledge and educate their own communities about the Recycled Water Program.

The City of Boise worked with Atlas and other technical consultants to present information and gather feedback throughout this effort. This approach helped to create a safer space for individuals to be more candid, as it removes the direct connection between the feedback process and the entity seeking the information. While the City of Boise was in the room to hear the feedback during advisory group meetings, the indirect structure for gathering input helped to neutralize the discussion leading to better, more accurate feedback and outcomes.



*From back right to left: Abby Haydin, Amanda Waston, Scott Hauser, Steve Burgos, Elaine Clegg, Jake Reynolds, Beth Ineck, Fred Geringer, Haley Falconer, Topher Jones, Brandon Pechin, Jim Szaatkowski, Lynda Puccinelli, Steve Rutherford, Megan Ronk, Mayor Lauren McLean, Jim McNamara, Emily O'Morrow, Mari Ramos, Hannah Roche, Amy Fimbel, Stephanie Wicks, Will Tiedemann.*

The following individuals were nominated and accepted the duty of service for the Recycled Water Program advisory group.

1. Steve Rutherford | Chief Operating Officer, Ada County
2. Josie Erskine\* | District Manager, Ada Soil & Water Conservation District
3. James McNamara | Professor, Boise State University, Watershed Processes Research Group
4. Will Tiedemann | Associate, Idaho Conservation League
5. Isabelle Reis\* | Co-Chair, Youth Climate Action Council
6. Amy Fimbel | Senior Project Manager, Capital Improvements, CCDC
7. Megan Ronk | Economic Development and Innovation Director, Idaho Power



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8. Elaine Clegg | CEO, Valley Regional Transit
9. Mari Ramos | Chief Executive Officer, Idaho Hispanic Foundation
10. Hannah Roche | Project Manager, Global Talent Idaho
11. Scott Hauser | Executive Director, Upper Snake River Tribes
12. Amanda Blanchet | Executive Director, Idaho Clinicians for Climate and Health
13. Stephanie Wicks | Sustainability Manager, SLHS
14. Beth Ineck | Director, Economic Development, Boise Valley Economic Partnership
15. Jake Reynolds | Business Development and Operations Administrator, Idaho Commerce
16. Lynda Puccinelli | President, South Eisenman Neighborhood Association
17. Jim Szatkowski | Director, West Valley Neighborhood Association
18. Erik Berg\* | President, Southeast Neighborhood Association

*\* indicates that advisory group member either resigned or was removed based on missed meetings*

Meetings were held in-person at the Boise Main Library in the Marion Bingham Room on the following dates, except the first meeting, which was held at the Advanced Water Treatment Pilot:

- o Monday, September 16, 10:30 am (at the Pilot)
- o Wednesday, October 16, 10:30 am
- o Wednesday, November 20, 10:30 am
- o Wednesday, December 18, 10:30 am
- o Wednesday, January 15, 10:30 am
- o Wednesday, February 19, 10:30 am

As outlined in the Advisory Group Charter, members were asked to do their best to attend all meetings and arrive on time. Those who missed more than two meetings resigned their seat, as each meeting built upon the information provided in the last and thus required regular attendance for a full-picture view of shared information. To this end, the project team also hosted makeup meetings when multiple members could not attend to offer additional opportunities to submit input and maintain continuity in gathered feedback. The Advisory group began with 20 members and concluded with 15 individuals who remained engaged throughout the process. Among those 15, the group maintained an average attendance rate of 85% across all six meetings.

### **Format, Content and Findings**

Six meetings were held with the advisory group to explore, debate, deliberate and coalesce around a water quality based on the intended use that would be reflective of community values. The intended uses for the new recycled water facility are to treat water for both industrial re-use and groundwater recharge purposes. Given that industry will ultimately establish the required water quality standards for their own uses, advisory group discussions were focused on the water quality criteria for water intended for recharge into the groundwater.

### **MEETING 1**

#### **Content**

In the **first meeting**, advisory group members toured the Advanced Water Treatment Pilot and were given an introduction to the Recycled Water Program. The concept of "fit for purpose" water quality was discussed with the group, which means treatment will meet the specific requirements for its intended use. Instead of adhering to a one-size-fits-all standard, this approach considers the varying needs of different water applications. During the first meeting, the advisory group was presented with



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an overview of the water purification processes at the Advanced Water Treatment Pilot, which tested various methodologies to remove substances and purify water. These methods were designed to meet water quality expectations for the purpose of recharging the groundwater with recycled water.

The desired outcome of the meeting was to build the Advisory Group's understanding of the program, confirm members' commitment to engagement through a formal chartering of the group and provide a visual for the research and testing that had been done at the Advanced Water Treatment Pilot while it was in commission.

## Findings

Thirteen advisory group members toured the Advanced Water Treatment Pilot and participated in an open Q&A session following program introductions. This kickoff discussion delved into the location of the full-scale facility, the types of water being processed, clarifications on the purification process (such as removing contaminants like PFAS), groundwater impacts, and the potential uses for the purified water.

## MEETING 2

### Content

In **meeting two**, the advisory group explored the topic of the value of water. This meeting encouraged advisory group members to share details about how they interact with water, their value system related to purifying or filtering water they drink, recreate in or use for other purposes and begin connecting how value systems can drive project implementation. Case studies from other communities who have successfully implemented recycled water programs were presented. Advisory group members discussed various values they hold that could be relevant to water quality. These values included protection of public health, minimizing environmental impact, feasibility and affordability, and adaptability of the system to account for changing conditions.

The desired outcome for this meeting was to capture values as expressed by the advisory group and to begin building a knowledge foundation from which members could build from in subsequent meetings.

## Findings

In meeting two, several important points were raised about Boise's water systems and their future. It was pointed out that Boise's water systems—canals, groundwater, and rivers—are interconnected, making it challenging to balance water needs without affecting other parts of the system. The group discussed the need for Boise's water systems to adapt to climate change, expressing that more frequent extreme weather events could require a need for building resilience in the water resources Boise has access to (such as the groundwater). There was discussion around the system as a whole, and a desire for Boise's growth to incorporate environmental features, like restoring foothill watersheds and increasing shade and water retention in urban spaces. Education was another key topic, with a suggestion for a city-led program to teach the public about water reuse and conservation. Industry representatives also showed interest in using recycled water to reduce reliance on potable water. Advisory group members indicated that their values related to water quality may fluctuate or be inconsistent – with some members mentioning that they began paying more attention to water quality once they had children or were caring for a sick relative.



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## MEETING 3

### Content

In **meeting three**, the advisory group detoured from the water quality discussion to explore the city's commitment to extending the impact of the investment of the recycled water facility. This brief departure from water quality allowed consultants to analyze and align value systems articulated in meeting two with more tangible options for water quality for the group to consider in upcoming meetings. Because the investment being made by the city for this facility is substantial, the discussion in meeting three offered members to chance to consider additional community benefits that could be achieved through the infrastructure. Members explored the concept of the Recycled Water Program being a multi-benefit solution, meaning that the program can serve multiple needs that extend well beyond its primary function.

The desired outcome was to meaningfully brainstorm additional benefits for the community and explore how we might create spaces, partnerships or programs that serve multiple functions with the facility being the catalyst to have lasting, positive impact on our community.

### Findings

In meeting three, advisory group members were asked a series of personal and professional questions to better understand their values and connections to Boise in a way that might be able to be reflected through programming or infrastructure. Common values held by the group included a strong appreciation for outdoor access and activities, an inclusive and kind community, safety, cultural heritage, and opportunities for both professional growth and support of personal hobbies. Quality of life, ongoing investments in critical systems, and an attractive business environment emerged as important themes to group members.

The group then brainstormed ideas for maximizing the investment of the recycled water facility. Suggestions included creating open community spaces such as parks and walking paths for nearby employees and residents, as well as green spaces around the facility to beautify the area, featuring native plants and walking paths. A mental health garden or therapy forest was proposed for wellness and horticultural therapy. The group also discussed the importance of workforce development through training, upskilling for underemployed residents, including immigrants, and apprenticeship programs. The idea of an educational center open to the public, including elected officials, was proposed to showcase the technology and innovation behind the Recycled Water Program and emphasize the ongoing importance of water issues. Other ideas included highlighting the region's tribal heritage through the facility's design, incorporating renewable energy sources like a solar farm, and exploring partnership opportunities with researchers, healthcare organizations or government relations organizations to enhance the understanding and importance of the facility.



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## MEETING 4

### Content

In **meeting four**, four potential water quality options were introduced for discussion and deliberation by the advisory group. These options spanned a spectrum, beginning with drinking water standards as a baseline and extending to exactly matching background water quality as an endpoint. This spectrum was representative of feedback provided in meeting two and that the range of water qualities was appropriate.

In this meeting, we focused on “Option A” which represents a water quality that will meet drinking water regulation standards. Advisory group members learned about what is removed from the water to reach or exceed drinking water standards — pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, and protozoa can be entirely removed from the water. Naturally occurring substances, including minerals like calcium and magnesium, and metals such as lead, arsenic, and copper, can also be reduced through various treatment methods. Human-caused pollutants, such as microplastics from plastic waste, PFAS (“forever chemicals”) used in products like non-stick cookware, water-proof equipment and makeup, can also be filtered out using specialized techniques.

The goal of this meeting was to understand advisory group members’ perspectives on the merits and shortfalls of Option A fitting the purpose intended (groundwater recharge) and explore differences in opinions based on conveyed values and tolerance for risk.

### Findings

Feedback gathered in meeting four included consensus that thorough treatment before recharge is critical to ensuring safety, as once injected, the recycled water mixes with the existing groundwater which we eventually drink. Members also acknowledged that treating some unregulated emerging contaminants could incur additional costs without a known benefit, compared to more established contaminants which are well understood and studied. The group expressed opinions that matching the background water quality of the groundwater could reduce unintended consequences, but it was recognized as a costly approach that would not warrant the perceived expense. No advisory group members expressed support for matching background water quality exactly.

Instead, the group agreed that designing systems with flexibility to adapt to future discoveries about contaminants and advancements in water treatment technologies would be critical. There was also concern that public trust could be eroded if contaminants like microplastics or PFAS were found in recharged water, highlighting the need for transparency and public education about treatment processes. Members debated the balance between higher treatment costs and the long-term benefits of highly treated water, with some willing to accept slightly higher bills if the environmental and public health benefits were substantial and others expressing concern about costs that could disproportionately burden ratepayers. The conversation in meeting four was indicative of the challenge in front of the city – how to right-size treatment levels to meet public expectations while balancing different priorities.

The group also discussed the importance of source water control and the shared responsibility between industrial contributors and the city, including whether certain industries should be excluded if their wastewater doesn't meet required standards. Finally, when asked whether they would drink



the recycled water they saw at the pilot facility during their tour, every member of the advisory group expressed confidence in its safety and shared they'd be comfortable drinking the water directly.

## MEETING 5

### Content

In **meeting five**, the advisory group revisited the four potential water quality options discussed in the prior meeting, this time focusing on the attributes of Options B, C and D. Members discussed the differences between the options, indicating that Option B mostly addresses aesthetic standards most commonly expected if the water will be drunk directly (potable re-use), Option C plans for removal of substances not currently regulated but some which are potentially under consideration to be regulated or are currently being studied, and finally Option D, which would exactly match background water quality of the groundwater.

After reviewing the water quality profiles, discussion recentered on values and began exploring which, if any, of the four water quality options (devoid of cost information) most aligned with personal and representative value systems.

### Findings

Tribal representation shared the values held by tribal leadership that emphasize the desire to protect natural systems, indicating that any efforts made by the city to protect these resources is appreciated. Affordability was identified as a top priority for many members, while others highlighted environmental protection and public health as the most critical considerations due to their potential long-term implications. The group acknowledged the need for careful, thoughtful decision-making regarding actions that will impact the future.

When discussing potential paths forward, Options A and Option C emerged as the preferred choices. Option C was seen as the best balance of expressed values, while Option A was favored for its flexibility, allowing for adaptation and scaling over time without compromising affordability. There was also a consensus that the city should avoid overbuilding or overinvesting, instead prioritizing the ability to iterate and adjust as necessary. Of note, no one in the advisory group saw value in matching background water quality exactly (Option D), given that the highly treated water would be in a very large system and further substance reductions don't come with an added public health benefit. Most discussion in Meeting 5 revolved around the two favored alternatives A and C.

To better understand the group's priorities, each member was given 10 sticky dots to allocate to the values most important to them. The results showed that **affordability** and **resilience** each received 33 votes, **public health** received 32 votes, and **environmental protection** garnered 30 votes, confirming that a balanced approach would be the best path forward for the City of Boise.



#### CITY OF BOISE RECYCLED WATER PROGRAM ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 5: WATER QUALITY 2.0



## MEETING 6

### Content

Finally, in **meeting six**, the advisory group deliberated on how advisory group perspectives on water quality may change when trade-offs, such as cost, are introduced. Water quality options were compared along various spectrums, considering values articulated early in our effort such as protecting public health and the environment, feasibility and affordability of the program, adaptability of the system and adherence to current and anticipated regulation. Boise Mayor McLean was in attendance to thank members for their contributions. To close out our efforts, facilitators also asked advisory group members for feedback and value of the process of participating in this effort.

### Findings

With new cost information, the group again discussed various treatment options for the new recycled water facility, with a focus on balancing future water quality standards, cost, and potential risks. Interestingly, the advisory group's opinions as expressed in meeting five devoid of cost information did not change in any significant way when cost was introduced in meeting six.

Also of note, throughout the advisory group process members consistently used the presented alternatives as a starting point to evaluate how each option aligned with their personal values and which one they believed best represented those values. They recognized that there was a spectrum of choices between options A and D, each with its own set of implications. The consultants were diligent in reassuring the members that they were not being asked to commit to a specific water quality option as presented by the available alternatives. Instead, the focus was on understanding the risks and benefits associated with each option and how these options reflected their values discussed in Meeting 2. This approach allowed members to engage in a more nuanced and thoughtful deliberation, considering the broader implications of each choice rather than feeling pressured to make a definitive commitment.

The advisory group members tended to lean on the alternatives as a reference point to consider how each one did or did not reflect their values. They discussed attributes such as lower costs, less or more risk to public health, how an option may build better resilience in the resource, risk of over or under building the system, and the ability to adapt the technology quickly as information is learned. Consultants encouraged this framing rather than focusing group member discussion on the actual chemical composition of the water. This allowed for a more comprehensive evaluation of the options, taking into account the broader implications and potential impacts on the community.

As mentioned, no one in the advisory group saw value in matching background water quality exactly (Option D) during our discussions in Meeting 5. Members felt that, given the highly treated water would be in a very large system with natural and other processes that may immediately change the quality and had few to no added public health benefits offered, the alternative did not align with values expressed. Option D became even less favored when cost was introduced in Meeting 6. Most discussion in Meeting 6 revolved around the two favored alternatives, Option A and Option C.



### *Values Reflected in Option C*

Option C was seen as a safe, conservative option as it not only meets drinking water standards but also considered potential additional protections for public health beyond current regulations. This option was favored because it accounts for potential future regulations and the reduction of compounds that could potentially pose a risk to public health, a priority expressed by some members who have had health problems themselves or within their family. These members emphasized the importance of proactively addressing risks associated with emerging pollutants that may not yet be regulated. They believed that by treating these pollutants now, the city could prevent future health issues and regulatory challenges, given the group's perception that regulation moves slowly.

The concern about overtreatment was raised, but members of the group reiterated that the greater risk lies in contaminating the groundwater with substances that could later be found harmful. They argued that it is better to err on the side of caution and ensure that the water quality considers emerging public health science to protect public health and the environment. The group recognized that water quality standards are likely to become more stringent in the future as new contaminants are identified and studied. By choosing Option C, the city would be better prepared to meet these future standards without needing to make costly upgrades to the treatment system. This forward-thinking approach was seen as a way to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the water supply.

### *Values Reflected in Option A*

Option A, with its flexibility and relative affordability, saw similar support from members of the advisory group for its ability to adapt over time. This option was seen as a practical choice for several reasons. First, it allows the city to design a system that can be easily modified or expanded as new information is learned and new technologies become available. This adaptability was viewed as a crucial advantage, as it enables the city to respond effectively to emerging challenges and advancements in water treatment technologies.

Several water experts and public health experts expressed their support for Option A, noting its flexibility and adaptability. They highlighted that the system could be quickly adjusted in response to new information, bolstering ongoing protection of public health and the environment. This adaptability was seen as an attractive advantage. Advisory group members indicated their support for allowing the city to respond effectively to emerging challenges and advancements in water treatment technologies.

Additionally, Option A was favored for its relative affordability. Designing for high costs in anticipation of unknown future needs seemed premature to several group members. They argued that it is more prudent to invest in a flexible system that can be upgraded as needed, rather than committing to a more expensive option that may not provide additional benefits. This approach was seen as a way to balance the need for high-quality water with the need to keep costs manageable for ratepayers.

### **Recommendations**

The conversation in Meeting 6 delved into the challenge of balancing higher quality treatment with operational complexity and cost. Group members highlighted that while Option A offers flexibility



and affordability, Option C provides a more conservative approach to public health and accounts for potential future regulations. This balanced approach was seen as a way to address emerging pollutants that may not yet be regulated, thereby proactively protecting public health and the environment. The group strongly recommended that the city design the system to be adaptable, allowing for quick iteration as new information is learned and advancements in water treatment technologies are made. This adaptability was viewed as crucial for maintaining public trust and ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of the water supply. Through analysis of advisory group feedback, a recommended “middle-ground” approach emerged as a favored option with water quality for the Recycled Water Facility landing somewhere between Options A and C. Group members felt strongly that it was important and “who we are” in Boise to not just meet regulatory requirements for drinking water but also ensure a level of responsibility that goes beyond mere compliance.

At the closure of our final meeting, advisory group members also provided feedback on the process they just participated in. Members were generous in their feedback to consultants and the city, sharing that our efforts effectively distilled a very technical topic and made it accessible to participants with varying levels of familiarity and expertise in the topic. Numerous members expressed gratitude for the opportunity to sit around the table with a diverse, opinionated group of people, and make connections with those individuals. This finding is a testament to the approach by the City of Boise to meaningfully engage residents in problem solving. Many were appreciative of the different viewpoints represented in the room, which they felt that the make-up enriched the discussions and led to more well-rounded solutions. Members also shared their feeling that the City of Boise is building trust with the community through a thoughtful and organized approach. The intentional balance between presentation and discussion was highlighted as an effective way to manage the content and ensure all participants could engage, regardless of their technical background. The members expressed gratitude for having a seat at the table, valuing the chance to directly contribute to decisions that will shape the city’s Recycled Water Program efforts.



## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

When designing the feedback mechanisms for water quality, the project team (City of Boise staff, Atlas Strategic Communications, and Brown and Caldwell) identified that there was a contingency of interested stakeholders that had enough institutional knowledge based on their relationship to the program that the significant backgrounding required for the advisory group was not necessary, but their input was still desired. For this group of stakeholders, the city's consultant team planned individual interviews to review the approach and findings from the advisory group effort and collect additional input. The following stakeholders were scheduled for in-depth interviews:

1. Neil Jenkins, Eagle Sewer District.
2. Crispin Gravatt, PWC & Idaho Smart Growth
3. Mattie Cupps, Micron
4. Brittany Sanders, Micron
5. Tom Coles, Idaho Department of Labor
6. Bert Browen, Farmers Union Ditch Company
7. Kendra Kaiser, Idaho Water Center
8. Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association
9. David Johns, Veolia

### Format, Content and Findings

The interview format for soliciting feedback on the water quality approach for the City of Boise's Recycled Water Program was structured by scheduling hour-and-a-half sessions called in-depth interviews. The first half of each meeting was dedicated to presenting the material and findings that had been explored by the advisory group in order to provide a comprehensive review of the key discussions and conclusions reached by the advisory group. Atlas Strategic Communications and Brown and Caldwell updated these stakeholders on the progress of the program and facilitated a discussion, during which participants were encouraged to ask questions, articulate any feedback they have and validate the process the City of Boise undertook to collect input on water quality.

The goal was to capture additional feedback that could further inform the program's development and decision-making process and ensuring critical stakeholders were invited to the conversation and given the opportunity to provide feedback.

### Findings

Interviewees expressed broad support for the City of Boise's Recycled Water Program and commended its proactive, transparent, and adaptable planning approach. This viewpoint was also reflected in advisory group feedback. Multiple interviewees encouraged striking a balance between achieving high water quality and maintaining affordability, favoring a pragmatic path to meet safe drinking water standards without excessive treatment. This was the outcome reached by the advisory group as well. Some interviewees wondered if the integration of multiple treatment levels or treatment trains would reduce over-investment risk. Only one interviewee was unable to provide substantive feedback related to water quality or community benefits of the facility based on their belief that the Recycled Water Program does not directly benefit their represented group. At least two interviewees suggested that direct potable reuse might be more financially viable and carry less risk than groundwater injection. Interviewees from Micron, Veolia, and the Idaho Water Users



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Association expressed appreciation for the program's flexibility in exploring multiple water quality options.

Several interviewees emphasized the importance of preparing for future environmental and regulatory changes. They encouraged collaboration among stakeholders, agencies, and industries to ensure the program remains adaptable and resilient. Recommendations were made to plan for unforeseen disruptions (like COVID-19), explore on-site solar energy, and leverage the facility as a public educational and recreational space.

Like the advisory group, interviewees validated the recommendation that the new facility serve as a hub for community education around water value and resource management. They highlighted the importance of educating the community, lawmakers, regulators and even researchers about water in the Treasure Valley. The proactive approach of the Recycled Water Program was praised by several interviewees. Some made offers of future partnership and support to the city as they embark on this new approach to recycled water. Interviewees shared their motivation to ensure monitoring systems and public education regarding groundwater injection were carefully done by the city and shared publicly through a dashboard or display online and at the facility itself. Some interviewees in the water space felt that consistent public messaging and cross-agency collaboration were critical, given that different entities talk in different terms which further confuses an already technical and dense topic. Several participants, especially from academia, offered their support for long-term education and community outreach efforts.



## ANALYSIS

The City of Boise's Recycled Water Program engaged a diverse group of stakeholders in a comprehensive and inclusive process to establish water quality standards for the new Recycled Water facility. The approach was designed to ensure active participation and transparent communication, particularly in recognizing the varying levels of expertise among community members and industry representatives. Through a series of advisory group meetings, as well as individual in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, the city sought to gather a range of perspectives on water quality and community benefits of the new recycled water facility.

Throughout the process, the advisory group and other stakeholders were presented with technical information on water purification methods and treatment options, followed by discussions on their positions, concerns, and recommendations. The group explored various water quality options while weighing the affordability, public health benefits, environmental protection, and long-term resilience of each option. Stakeholders expressed their preferences for adaptable solutions that could evolve with future advancements in technology and changes in regulatory standards.

The approach the City of Boise's Recycled Water Program took to coalescing around a water quality for the new Recycled Water facility was unique in that stakeholders took an active, front-seat role to developing the approach. Our residents are invested in our future and they don't just want to be informed about these decisions, they want to help drive them forward. Specifically, our community expects the following:

- **High Water Quality Balanced with Affordability:** The community favors a balanced approach that achieves high water quality while maintaining affordability. They support meeting safe drinking water standards and treating for contaminants that are known to impact public health.
- **Future-Proofing the System:** There is a strong emphasis on preparing within reason for future environmental and regulatory changes. The public encourages collaboration among stakeholders, agencies, and industries to ensure the Recycled Water Program remains adaptable for quick iteration as new information is learned and advancements in water treatment technologies are made.
- **Community Education:** The new facility should serve as a hub for community education and training around water value and resource management. Educating the community about water conservation and resource management is seen as crucial. The community expects careful monitoring systems and public education regarding groundwater injection.

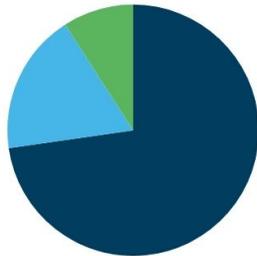


# ADDENDA



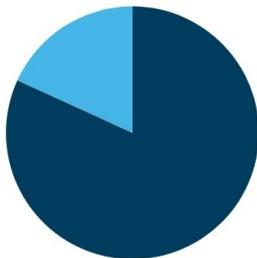
## CITY OF BOISE RECYCLED WATER PROGRAM ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 2: THE VALUE OF WATER

1) How important to you that the City of Boise adopt and implement programs to help address the impacts of climate change?



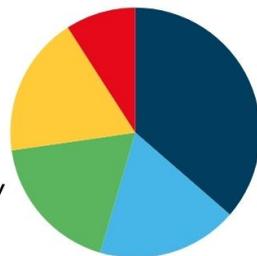
■ Critically important ■ Somewhat important ■ Neutral

2) How important do you think the city's recycled water program is in serving that goal?



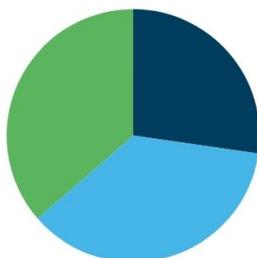
■ Somewhat important ■ Critically important

3) How often does your organization have a discussion around water?



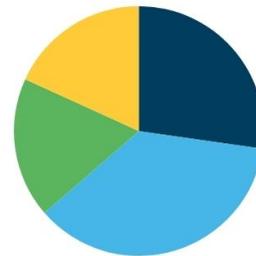
■ Very frequently ■ Somewhat frequently ■ Occasionally ■ Infrequently ■ Never

4) How often do you think about water conservation when you use water in your household?



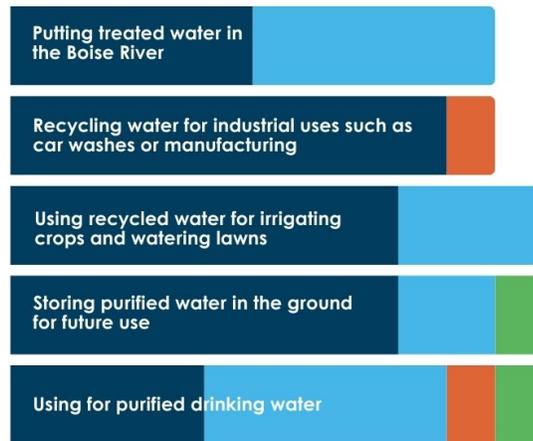
■ Every time ■ Often times ■ Occasionally

5) How often do you think about the quality of water you interact with at home, at work, as you recreate?



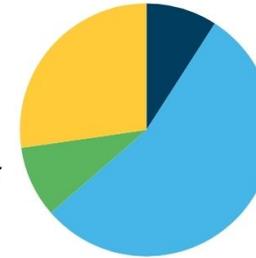
■ Every time ■ Often times ■ Occasionally ■ Infrequently

6) Below is a list of potential water opportunities the city of Boise may choose to provide in the future, for each, please mark your level of support.



■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Not sure ■ Strongly oppose ■ Somewhat oppose

7) Which treatment solution listed in question 6 is the most important to you?



■ Putting treated water in the Boise River ■ Recycling water for industrial uses ■ Using recycled water for irrigating crops and watering lawns ■ Storing purified water in the ground for future use

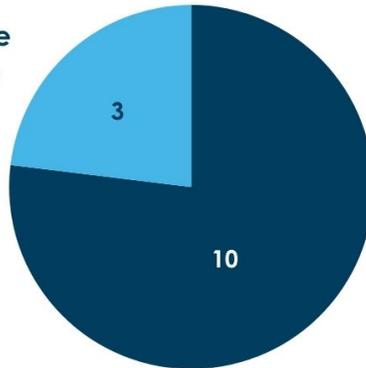




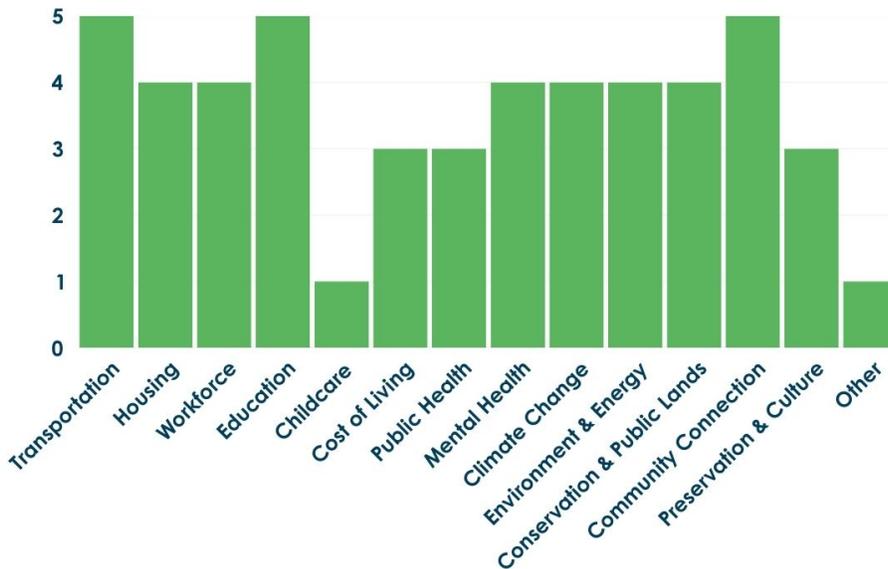
**CITY OF BOISE RECYCLED WATER PROGRAM**  
 ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 3: COMMUNITY BENEFITS

1) How important is it that infrastructure investments made by the City of Boise serve multiple purposes?

- Critically important
- Somewhat important



2) When considering your daily life, what are the top three priorities for you or the group you represent?



3) In your opinion, which statement is truest?

- Inherent benefits (those that happen naturally, like environmental improvements) are sufficient to justify infrastructure investments on their own
- Additional benefits (those requiring active planning) are important to ensuring long-term success of infrastructure projects

