

Crafting Campaigns to Win Support for Water

April 11, 2014

Water Resources Education Center

Vancouver, WA

Introductions

Libby Barg, Barney & Worth

Justin Finestone, City of Bend

John Lewis, City of Oregon City



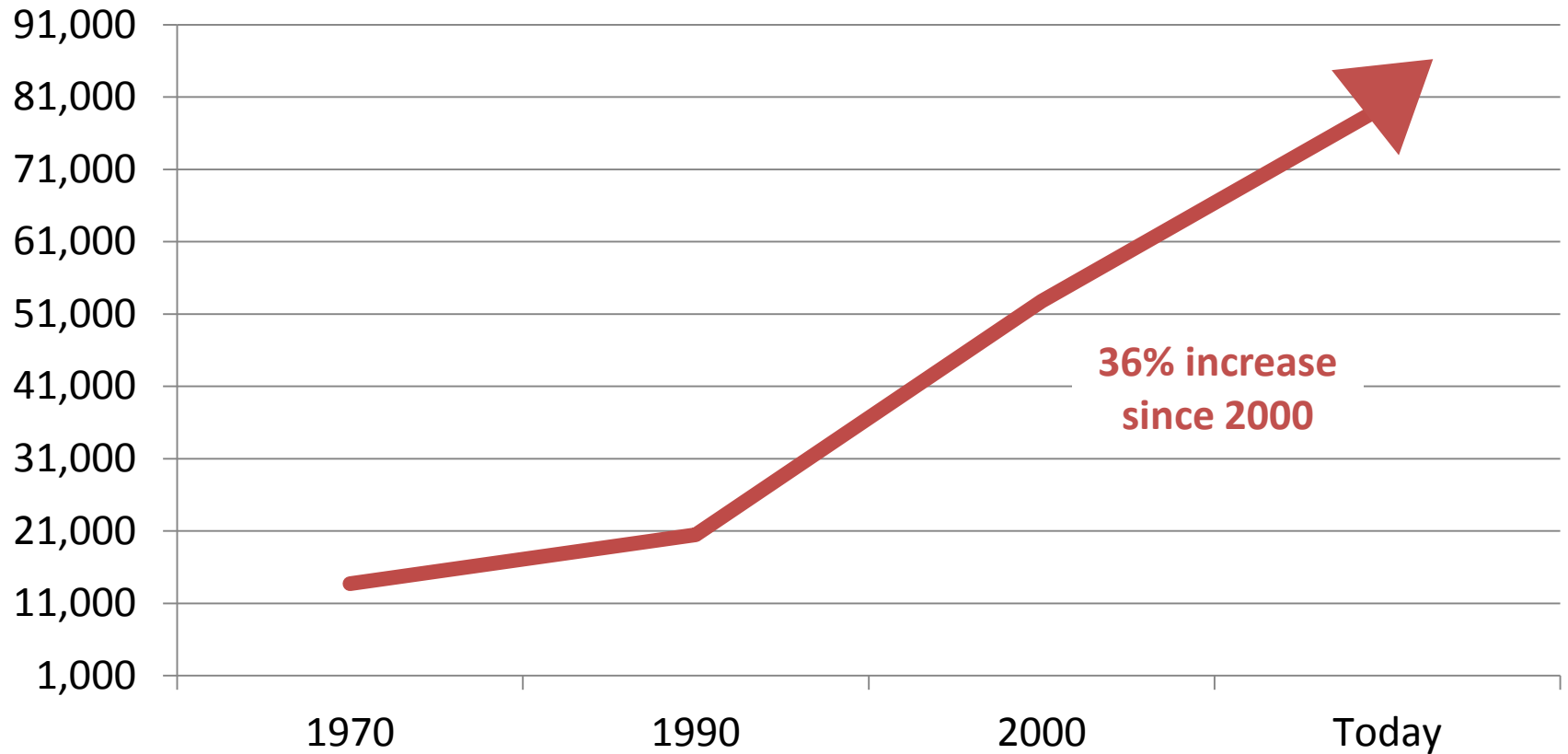
The Situation—Bend

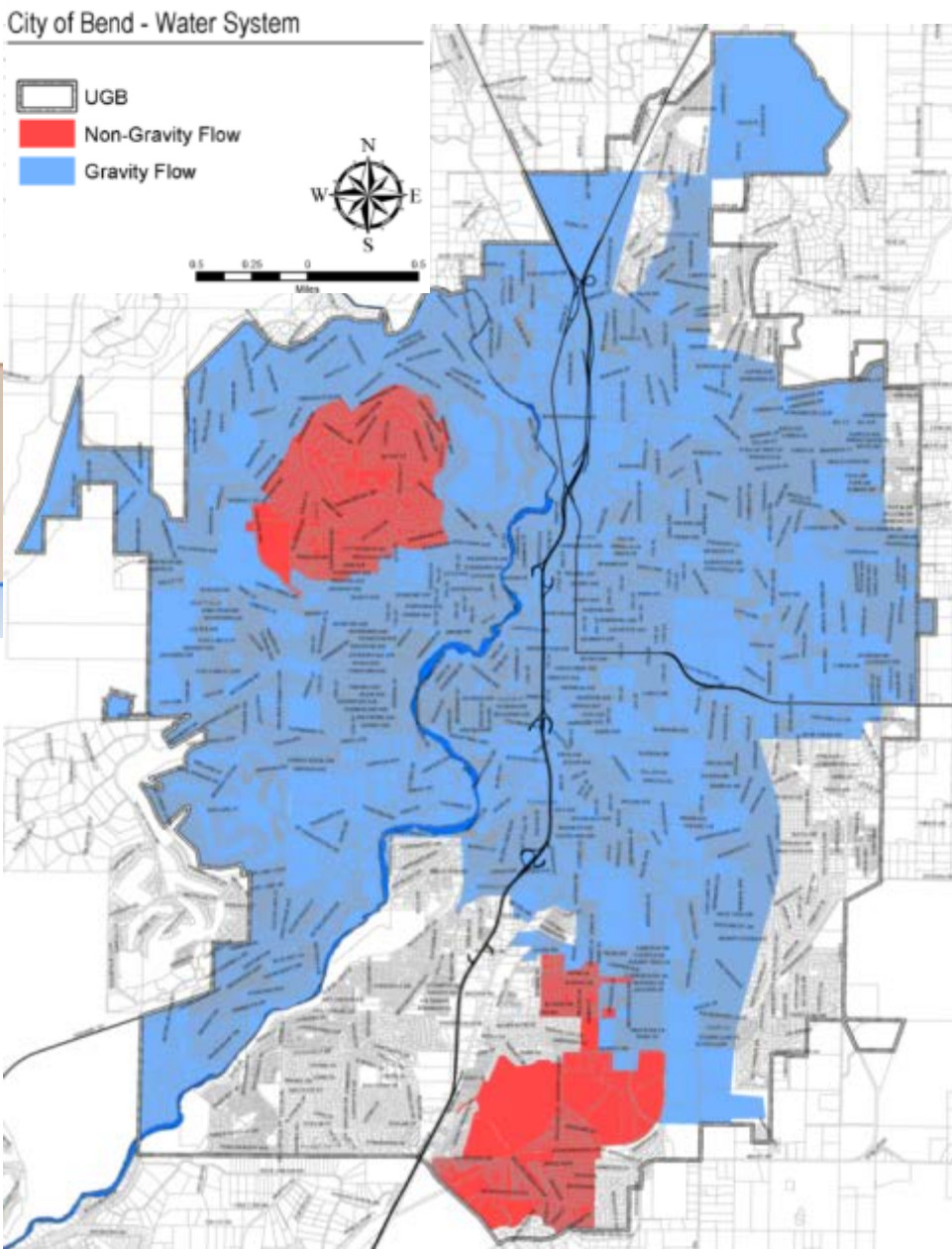
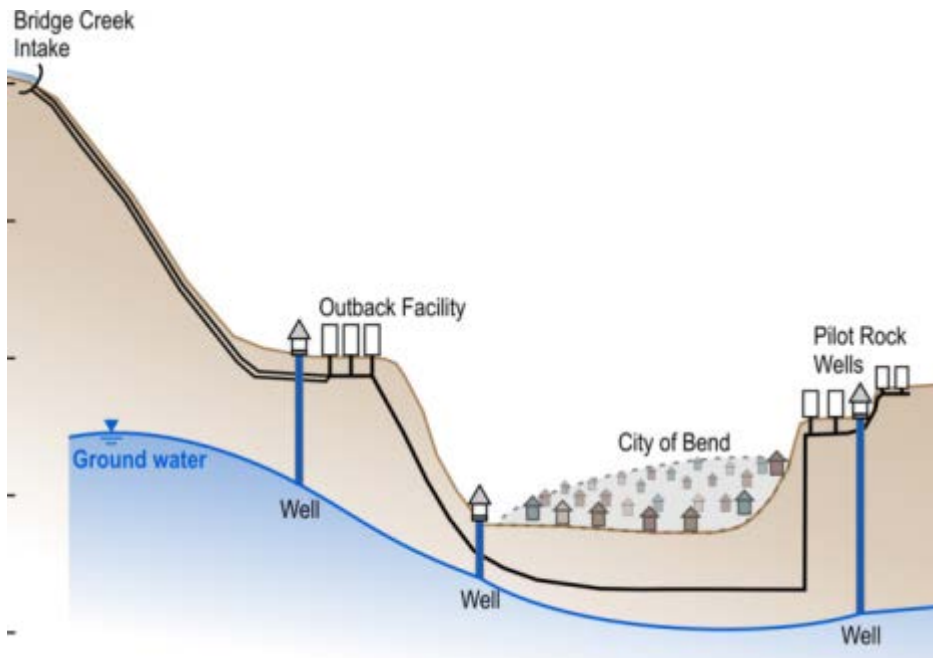
Significant infrastructure needs!



Bend is growing rapidly

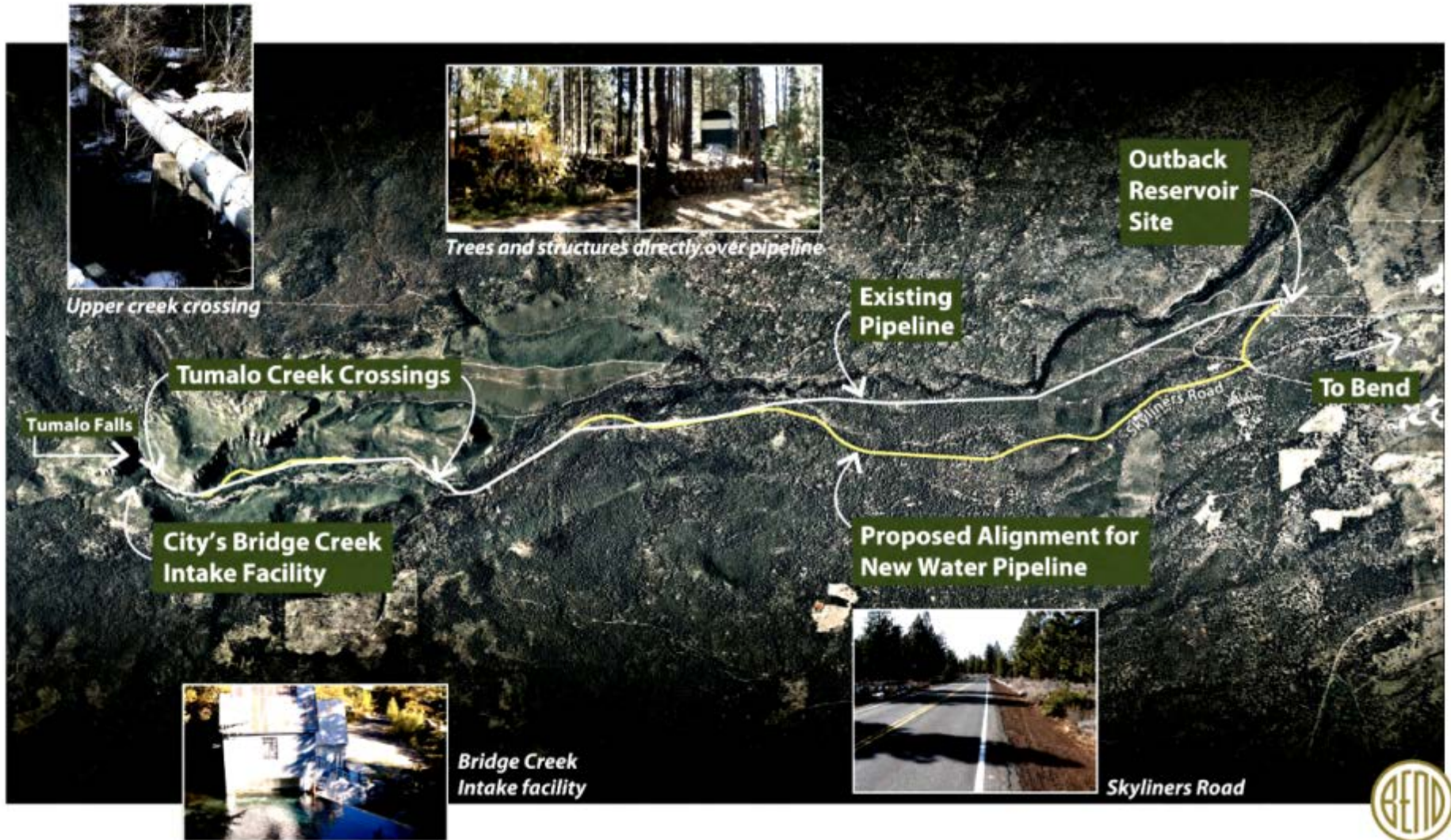
Population





Bend's two sources of water: Bridge Creek and Deschutes Aquifer

Replacing aging pipelines



The Bridge Creek pipelines—built in the 1920s & 1950s—are at risk of failure.

Updating intake facility

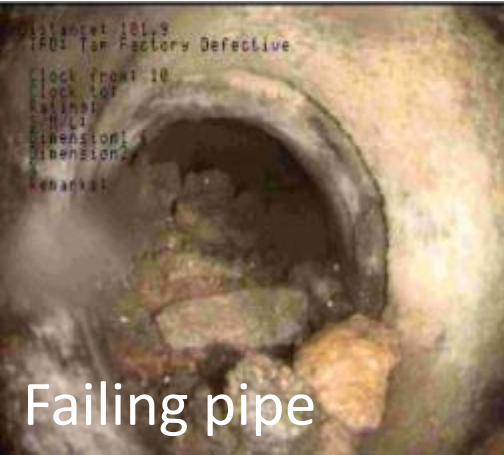


The water intake facility lacks screens to protect fish and doesn't meet current standards.

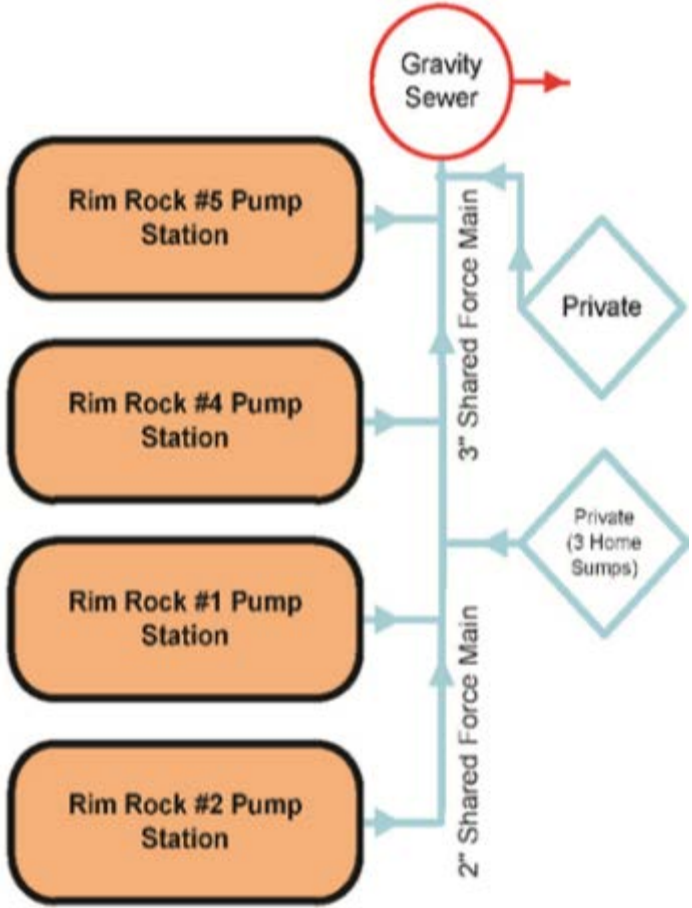
EPA requires treatment of unfiltered surface water sources



Sewer collection system cobbled together and near capacity.



336 pump stations!




Water Reclamation Facility is at capacity.



Organized opposition

about the campaign




What is the SWIP

What are the OPTIONS

What you can DO

[news](#) • [blog](#) • [faq](#) • [reference materials](#) • [contact us](#)


BEND'S SURFACE WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SWIP) IS A \$68 MILLION DOLLAR DRAIN ON...



Rate Payer's Pockets

The SWIP will cause City of Bend water users to see their rates rise by 40% in the next five years....


[Read More »](#)



Tumalo Creek

Bend already takes too much water out of Tumalo Creek. This project will reduce the creek's flows even further....

[Read More »](#)



Bend's Future




The SWIP is Bend's biggest public works project ever. But it is not necessary, it relies on incomplete studies with misleading information, and....

[Read More »](#)

Petition to Stop the Drain

I wish to state my opposition to the proposed City of Bend's Surface Water Improvement Project (SWIP), which would cost Bend nearly \$70 million, reduce flows in Tumalo Creek, and raise rate-payers' bills more than 40% in the near future. I believe this project is misdirected and the process should be reopened for public participation and reassessment of alternatives.

[sign here](#)



Current situation

Water	Sewer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Federal court (but recent success on pipeline!)<li>■ Land use appeal likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Treatment plant under construction<li>■ Collection system master plan underway—with community and Council support

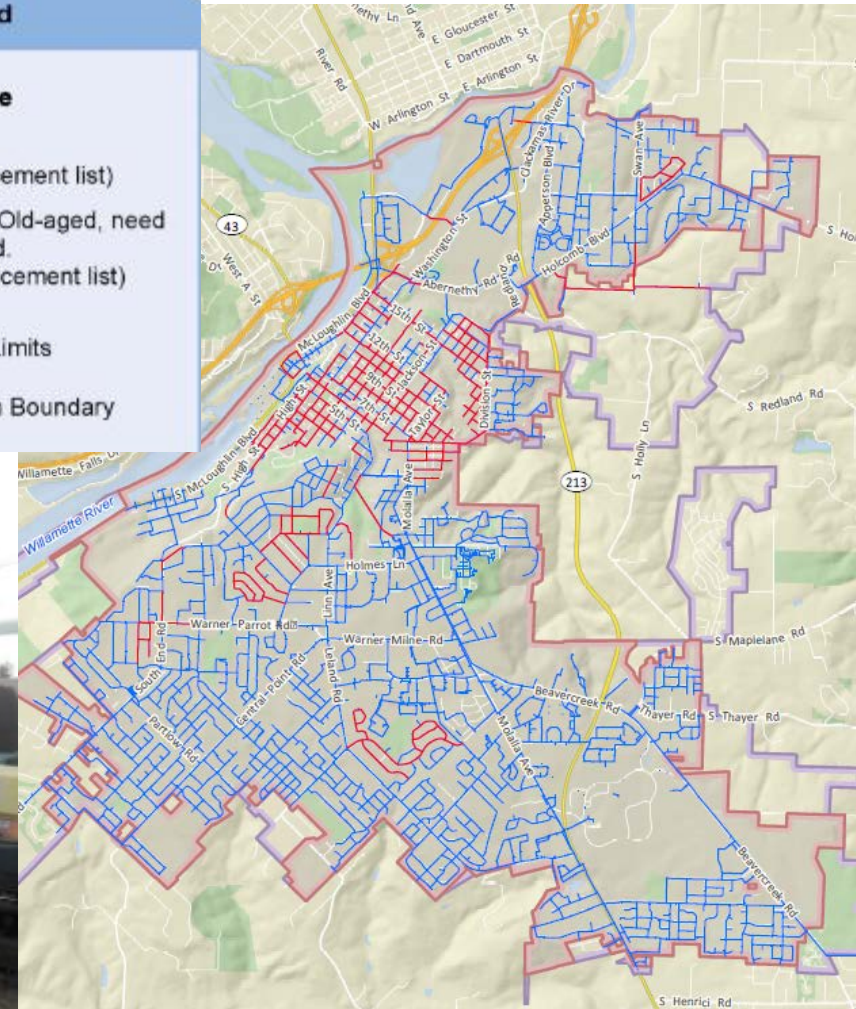
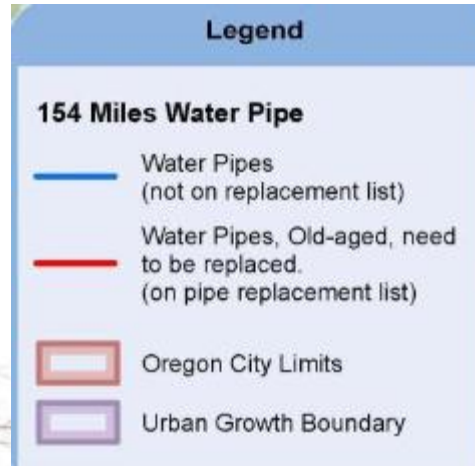
The Situation—Oregon City

1. Failing Old-Aged Water Pipes



Needed System Improvements

Oregon City needs to replace two miles of existing old-aged water pipe each year



2. Loss of Revenue to Fix the Problem

A 1996 City Charter amendment enacted by Oregon City voters required the City (in 2014) to **rollback water rates to near-1994 levels.**

The Charter also **restricts water rate increases to no more than 3% per year**—even if there is a water emergency.



1996 City Charter amendment was a reaction to steep rate increases for new intake on the Clackamas River



The Solution?

New City Charter amendment

- **Eliminate the water rates rollback**
- **Retain 3% limit**

Required a vote of the people



Official Election Results

May 21, 2013
Oregon City Ballot

Measure 3-423

PASSED

YES: 2,369 51.8%

NO: 2,205 48.2%



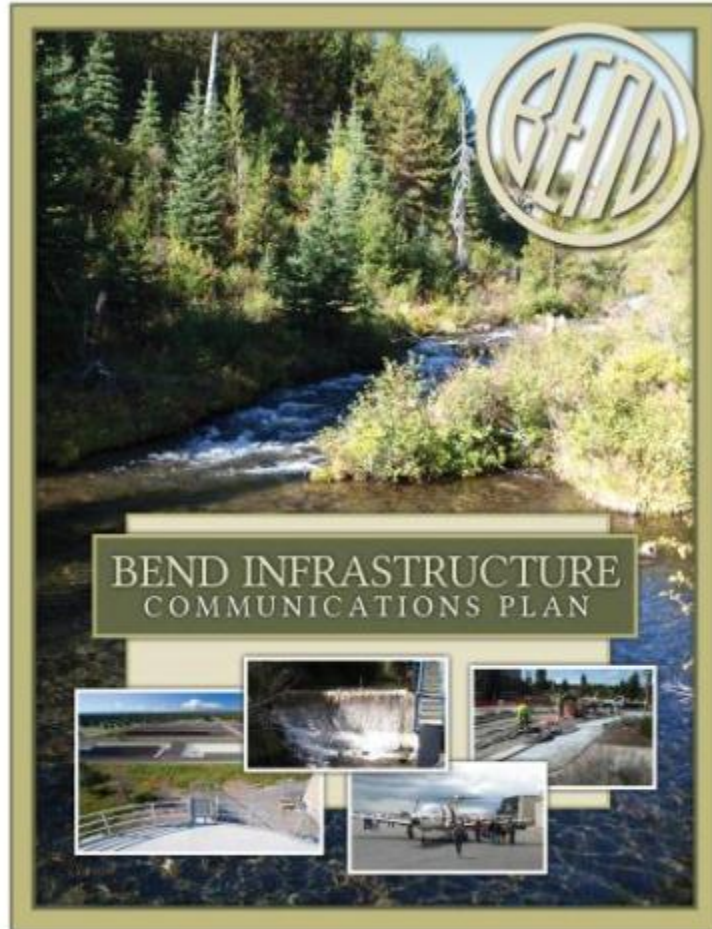
What research did you use to help craft your campaigns?

How were the results used?

“Public opinion presents a source of **great uncertainty** in infrastructure development projects.”

—2012 American Society of Civil Engineers

Developed Infrastructure Communications Plan

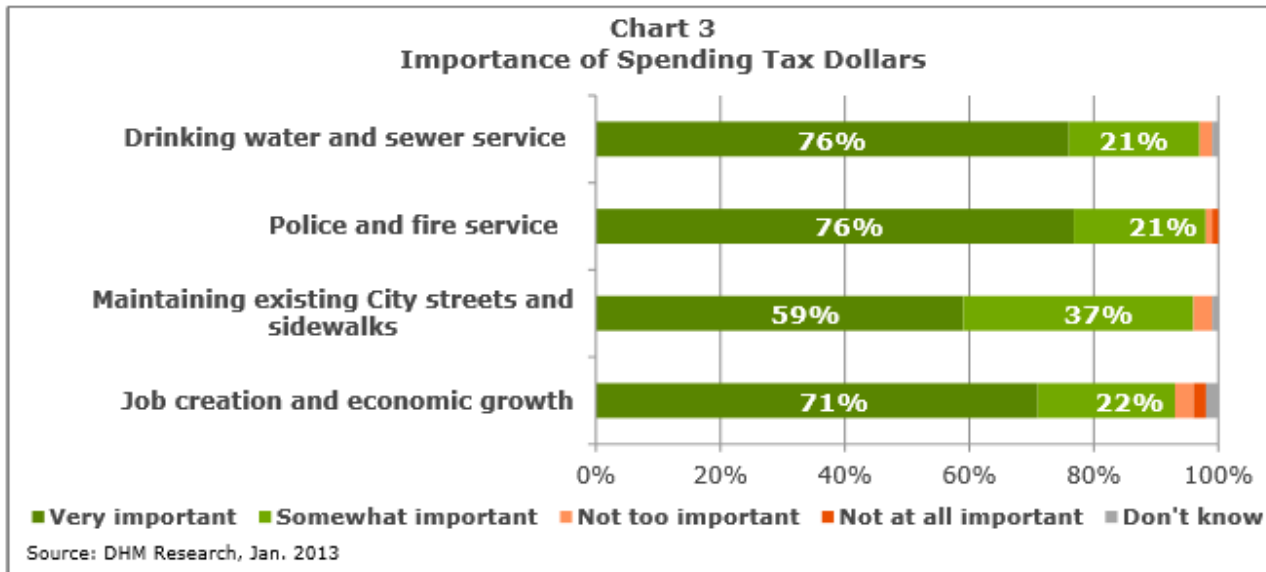


Before Plan	Now
Reactive	Proactive
Ad hoc	Advance preparation
One-time	Multiple use
Episodic	Ongoing

Bend—Opinion Research

Telephone poll completed in 2013

- Valuable information for policymakers: **the public does value infrastructure investment!**



2013 Telephone Poll Results (DHM)

- Services least likely to be cut by residents: water, sewer, public safety
- Six in ten residents would consider paying more on their water or sewer bill

Oregon City—Opinion Research

- Public opinion research conducted early:
October 2012
- Telephone survey of Oregon City registered voters

Oregon City Charter Survey

Perceptions of Water
Service and Support
for Charter
Amendment Options

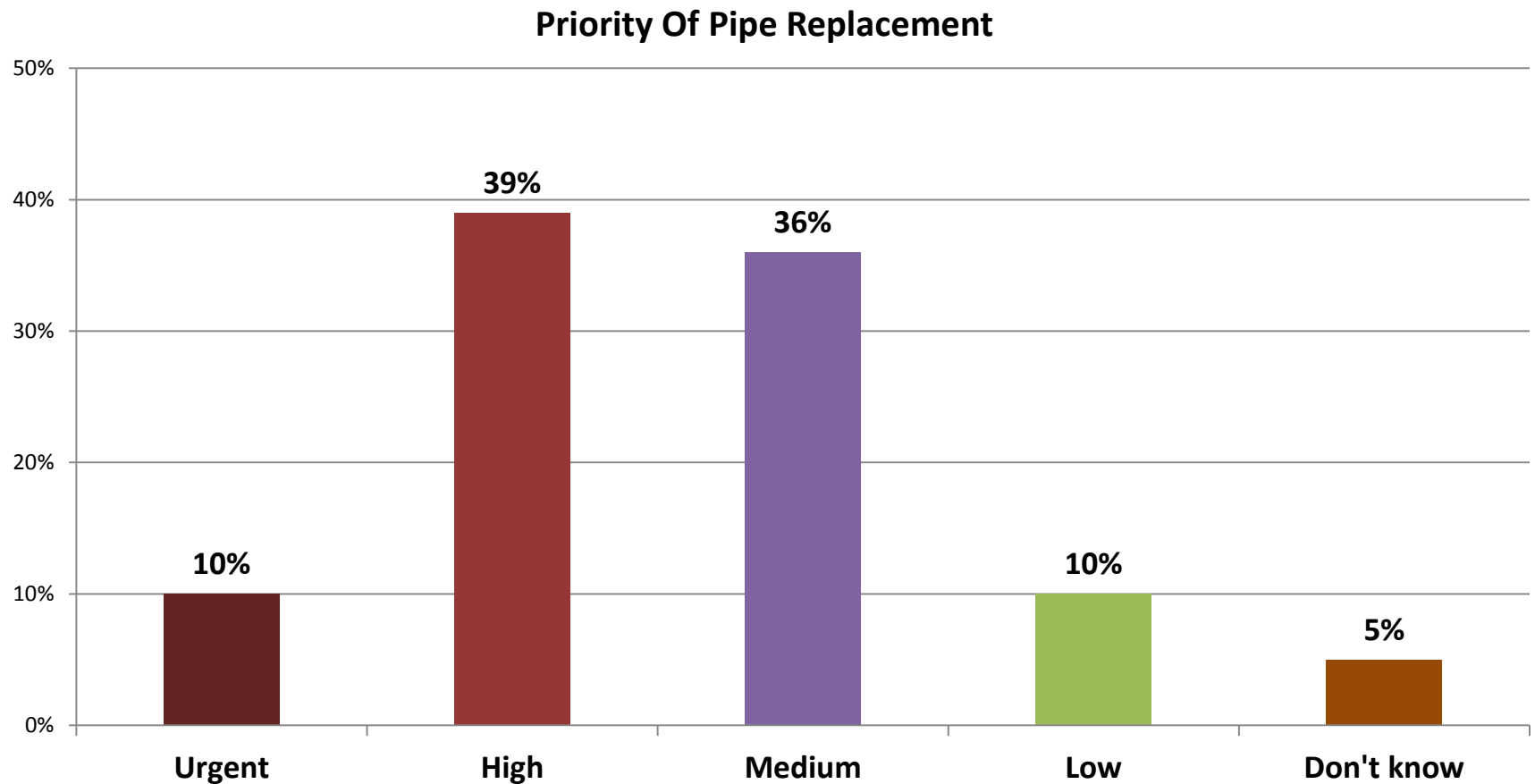
PREPARED FOR
Oregon City
October 2012

www.dhmresearch.com

There is very low awareness of water issues in Oregon City

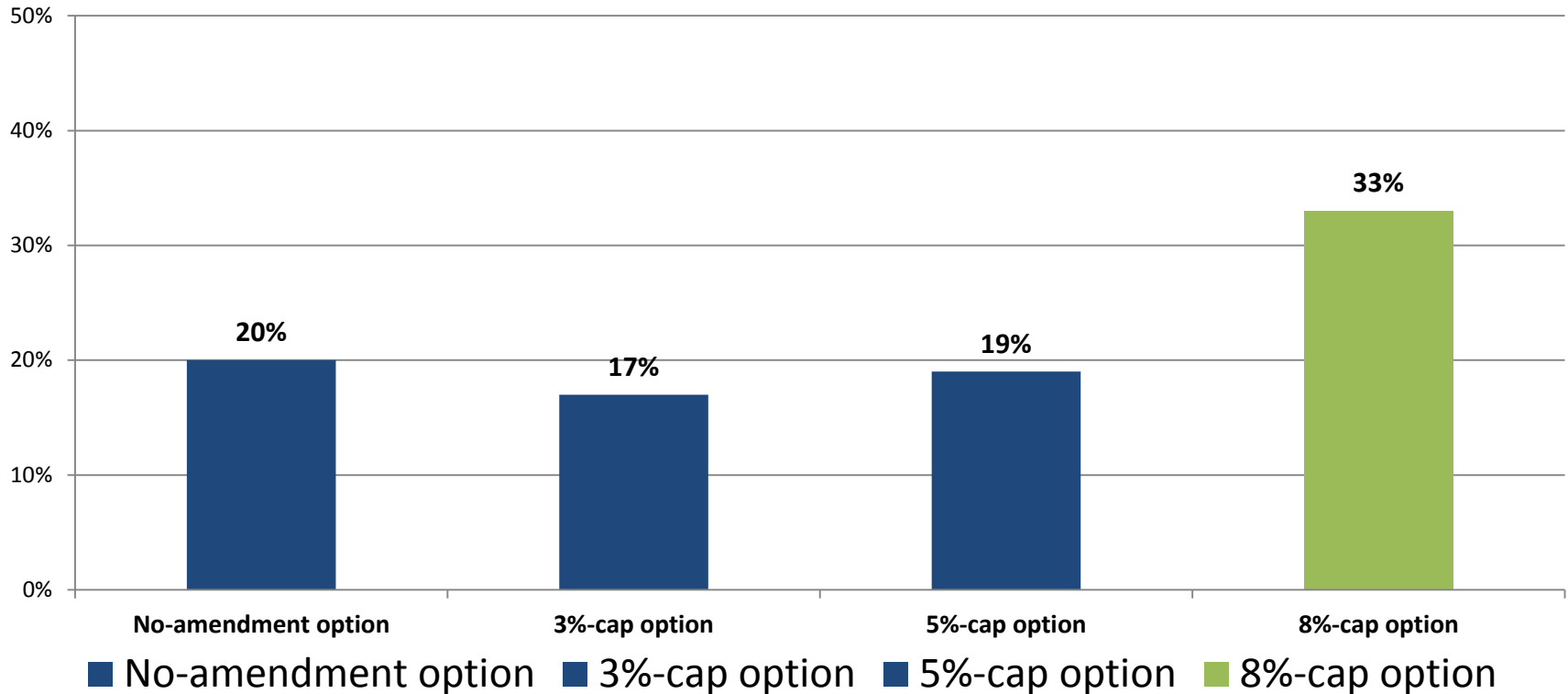
- ✓ **63%** could not name the Clackamas River as the source of Oregon City's water
- ✓ **71%** were not aware of any services provided by the South Fork Water Board
- ✓ **85%** were not at all aware of the city's current charter amendment related to water rates

After being informed about the age of water pipes, 49% of voters said it is an urgent or high priority to replace the pipes



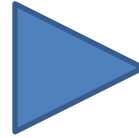
Most preferred charter amendment option: the one that fixed the problem!

Most Preferred Charter Amendment Option (Phone/Online)



What did we learn?

Community education was needed for an informed decision.



There was a clear mandate to **fix the problem.**

The no-amendment option was **unacceptable** to two-thirds of respondents.



Oregon City Water

A Reliable Water Future

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH OREGON CITY'S WATER SYSTEM?

1. Failing Old-Aged Water Pipes

Many of Oregon City's aging pipes are at the end of their useful life and need replacement. There are 154 miles of water pipes; some pipes are over 100 years old.

OLD-AGED PIPES break and cause water service outages and ongoing water loss.

OLD-AGED PIPES restrict the flow of water needed to fight fires.



OLD-AGED PIPES are encrusted with rust, causing discolored water at homes and businesses.

2. Loss of Revenue to Fix the Problem

A 1996 City Charter amendment enacted by Oregon City voters requires the City (in 2014) to rollback water rates to near-1994 levels. The Charter also restricts water rate increases to no more than 3% per year—even if there is a water emergency.

The 20-year old water rates will not support the needed operations and maintenance of Oregon City's water system nor will it support replacement of old-aged water pipes.

Clean and reliable water is essential to public health, safety, and a strong economy.



WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

The Commission is considering a **new** City Charter Amendment to support replacement of old-aged water pipes and support responsible funding of Oregon City's water system.

New City Charter Amendment

The City Charter amendment would remove the water rate rollback provision, retain a cap on annual water rate increases, and provide for small, steady water rate increases of \$2 to \$3 for the average household monthly water bill. The amendment would allow Oregon City to:

- ✓ Adequately fund water system needs;
- ✓ Retain accountability to ratepayers;
- ✓ Provide for predictable rate increases; and
- ✓ Yield enough money to pay for water projects and routine system operations and maintenance.

Water Pipeline Replacement Benefits

NEW WATER PIPES don't leak or break.



NEW WATER PIPES provide adequate firefighting flows and high quality drinking water.

What communication strategies are most effective in your community?

- 1) Involve community leaders in the decision-making process
- 2) Talk past the few loud / vocal opponents to the public
- 3) Get out to the public—don't expect them to come to a meeting



1) Involve community leaders in the decision-making process

Sewer Infrastructure Advisory Group:

- 17-member citizen committee
- Appointed by Bend City Council in 2012
- Advises master planning

Bend wants public input for sewer system plan update

By Eric King

Published: May 24, 2012 4:00AM PST

As Bend's city manager, I agree with The Bulletin's May 5 editorial, "Get Bend out of the spin zone."



The Assignment: Develop *affordable* collection system capital improvements for Bend —within the current Urban Growth Boundary.

2) Talk past the few loud / vocal opponents to the public



Bridge Creek Pipeline Project *FACT CHECK*

The Bridge Creek Pipeline Replacement Project replaces two existing parallel pipelines that carry water 10 miles from the Bridge Creek source to Bend's water chlorination facility. The pipelines were built in the 1920s and 1950s. The project also includes adding screening at the water intake facility to protect fish and new features to control how much water is diverted. The intake facility hasn't been updated since it was originally built in 1925.

Misinformation has circulated in the community about this project. Take a moment now to check the facts.

MISINFORMATION	FACT
The project is paid for by property tax.	The Bridge Creek Pipeline project is paid for by water ratepayers, the people who use the water.
A new pipe is no longer necessary.	The pipelines are old, built in the 1920s and 1950s. They are at the end of their useful life and need to be replaced.
The water withdrawals from the new pipeline will harm Tumalo Creek.	Withdrawals from Bridge Creek (which flows into Tumalo Creek below Tumalo Falls) will not change.
The pipes are vastly oversized for the amount of water the city can take.	The pipe for the proposed project is sized to provide long-term operating safety and flow control.
Bend's project will prevent restoration of Tumalo Creek.	Tumalo Irrigation District has plans to maintain instream flows AND allow Bend's use of this high-quality protected source.
The project is bad for business.	A reliable, diverse, high-quality water supply is vital to Bend's economic future.
The project will cost close to \$68 million.	The total cost is around \$24 million and Bend has already increased water rates to cover the cost of the pipeline project.
In the future, most of Bend's water will come from groundwater wells.	Bend will always benefit from two sources. Bridge Creek will continue to supply a substantial percentage of annual use – AND help reduce Bend's carbon footprint, as no pumping is required.
The revised Forest Service Environmental Assessment (EA) varies little from the first.	The revised EA limits the City's water withdrawals to match what is withdrawn today, and requires extensive additional monitoring of stream flows, temperature, and fisheries in Tumalo Creek.

For more facts, visit www.bendoregon.gov/bridgecreekpipe



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3) Get out to the public—don't expect them to come to a meeting





- 1) Craft solutions with key stakeholders
- 2) Tell the simple story
- 3) Use your communications tools to stay on message!

1) Craft solutions with key stakeholders

Water Rate Advisory Work Group

A sounding board for City staff and policymakers on water rate study, long-range financial plan, and City Charter.



Work Group Top Priorities

- Replace outdated provisions of the 1996 Charter amendment.
- Maintain uninterrupted service to Oregon City's customers.
- Retain a measure of City accountability to water customers over future water rate increases.

Clean and reliable water is essential to public health, safety, and a strong economy.



2) Tell the simple story

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3) Use your communications tools to stay on message!

Oregon City Water

A Reliable Water Future

January 2013 Community Presentation

City of Oregon City
621 Center St
P.O. Box 3045
Oregon City, OR 97145

Postal Customer
97045

Important Information About Oregon City's Drinking Water Inside
www.orcity.org/water-rates

Oregon City A Reliable Water Future

COMPARABLE MONTHLY WATER RATES*

Community	Average Residential Rate	Recently Approved or Proposed Rate Changes
West Linn	\$22.99	
Salem	\$24.55	18% proposed 2013
Hillsboro	\$29.38	6% Jan 2013
Oregon City	\$32.41	To be determined
Portland	\$36.61	9.5% Oct 2012
Lake Oswego	\$36.61	7.6% July 2012
Beaverton	\$36.61	25.5% Mar 2012
		9% Sept 2012
		4% July 2012

What You Should Know

About Oregon City's Drinking Water

JANUARY 2013

WE ALL COUNT ON DRINKING WATER

Every day Oregon City residents turn on their taps and get safe, clean water. Water is available 24 hours a day—year round—for drinking, fire protection, showers, cooking, and keeping gardens green. Water is also vital to business and industry and indispensable to the local economy and jobs.

Most of us take clean water for granted. We don't often think about what we can't see—the infrastructure that delivers water: water pipe lines, pumps, and storage reservoirs. For less than pennies a gallon, this system transports water directly to our homes and businesses.

Oregon City sources its high quality water supply in from the lower Clackamas River.

100 YEARS OF CLACKAMAS RIVER WATER

South Fork Water Board operates the water treatment plant and is jointly owned by Oregon City and West Linn. South Fork Water Board is governed by a nine-member Board of the Mayor, City Commission and City Council members from the two cities.

Oregon City needs to replace two miles of existing old aged water pipe each year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
To learn more about Oregon City's drinking water or to get involved, contact:

Alicia Franco-Goodrich, P.E.
Senior Project Engineer
Oregon City Public Works
afg@orcity.org
503.686.1572

LEARN MORE AT
www.orcity.org/water-rates

Bend is facing significant opposition to the Bridge Creek Water project—what lessons learned do you have to share?

Involve the public!



- ✓ Do the research
- ✓ Establish advisory committees
- ✓ Simplify communications
- ✓ Build communications partnerships
- ✓ Implement a media strategy
- ✓ Appoint spokespersons

Sewer system upgrade more important than parks

By Jared Black

Published: May 02, 2013 4:00AM PST

"Will the Boat Sink the Water?" is the title of a recent book describing Chinese peasants' struggles against their bloated, over-reaching government. This intriguing title might also refer to our politicians' cavalier attitude regarding revenue and spending issues. Over the past five years the federal spending has exceeded revenue, on average, by 125 percent. Much of the spending has gone to nonproductive rent seekers (for example Solyndra, Fisker, A123 Systems). This folly cannot and surely will not continue. The only question is which occurs first, the nation sinks in an ocean of debt or the irresponsible spending is stopped.

Don't forget to celebrate successes

Oregon City needed voter approval to ensure stable funding for the water system—any tips for others in similar situations?

Start early



- ✓ Do the research
- ✓ Spend time with policymakers—they need to understand and support your effort
- ✓ Gain grassroots support
- ✓ Education and outreach is key to success
- ✓ Tell the simple story-stay on message

**Don't forget: people
value clean water**

Your questions?

A Few Tips

- Understand customer perspectives
- Put policymakers first
- Tell your story—but keep it brief
- Include the media
- Say it again (and again)



Resources



WATER'S WORTH IT.®



American Water Works Association