



**INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT  
MEMORANDUM**

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**TO: INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

**FROM: D. MOREAU, MANAGER OF WATER OPERATIONS, EXT. 6158**

**WARD: ALL**

**NOTED: S. DIEMERT, P.ENG., DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.ENG., PMP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**  
**M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

**RE: WATER OPERATIONS BRANCH – DRINKING WATER SURVEY**

**DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2023**

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The purpose of this memorandum is to update members of the Committee on the results of the Drinking Water Survey conducted by the City of Barrie (City). This memo provides detailed information regarding the feedback received from our customers, actions taken to date and future considerations.

**Background**

In February of 2023, the Water Operations Branch (WOB) launched a City-wide survey asking our customers what they think about Barrie’s tap water. It included questions regarding water supply, and bottled water consumption and invited residents to share any additional comments.

The survey results would be used to assist WOB to determine the current state of customer satisfaction and confidence with the quality/quantity of drinking water delivered to their tap. Additionally, the results of the data would help to assess the customers’ overall experience when interacting with the Branch.

The survey would collect information about the customers’ likes, dislikes and potential opportunities for improvement, and the results would be used to support decisions for improvements. The data would also provide a baseline that would allow WOB to evaluate its performance on a more frequent basis by way of subsequent customer surveys.

The drinking water survey aligned with the following Council Strategic Priorities and divisional goals and objectives:

- Responsible Governance – support the services our community needs while keeping tax increase low, maintain focus on City core services, financial stewardship, which includes finding efficiencies and innovation
- Deliver high quality drinking water
- Reduce operating costs and strive for positive customer interactions

**Survey Results**

The City received over 1,200 responses – a record breaking level of engagement for any City survey.



WOB learned that more than a third of the respondents drank tap water, while more than half favoured filtered water (i.e., activated carbon filtered pitcher, tap mounted filter or fridge dispenser). Only a quarter of the respondents opted for bottled water.

More than half of the participants believed their water was safe to drink. However, others either disagreed or remained undecided. WOB also discovered a lack of awareness regarding water testing frequency and availability of results.

Out of the 1,200 respondents, over 80% expressed satisfaction with the tap water pressure. However, 60% of participants were dissatisfied with the taste of their tap water and approximately 50% of respondents reported that their tap water had an odour.

Results of the survey are summarized in Appendix "A".

Other common feedback received from the survey were as follows:

- Strong chlorine taste
- Water hardness issues
- Sediment present
- Request for increased notification of maintenance works

These insights provided valuable information to the team.

### **Action**

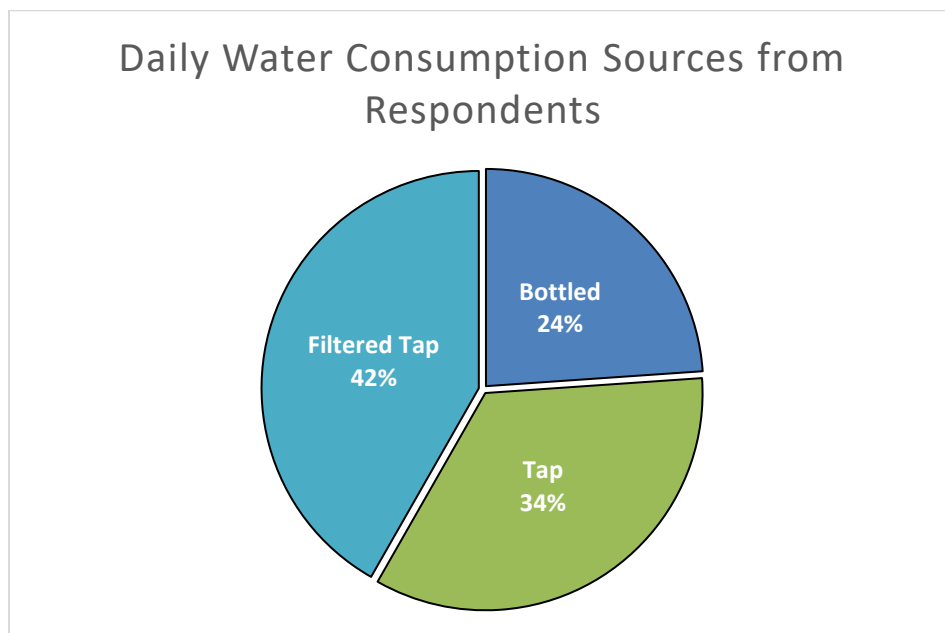
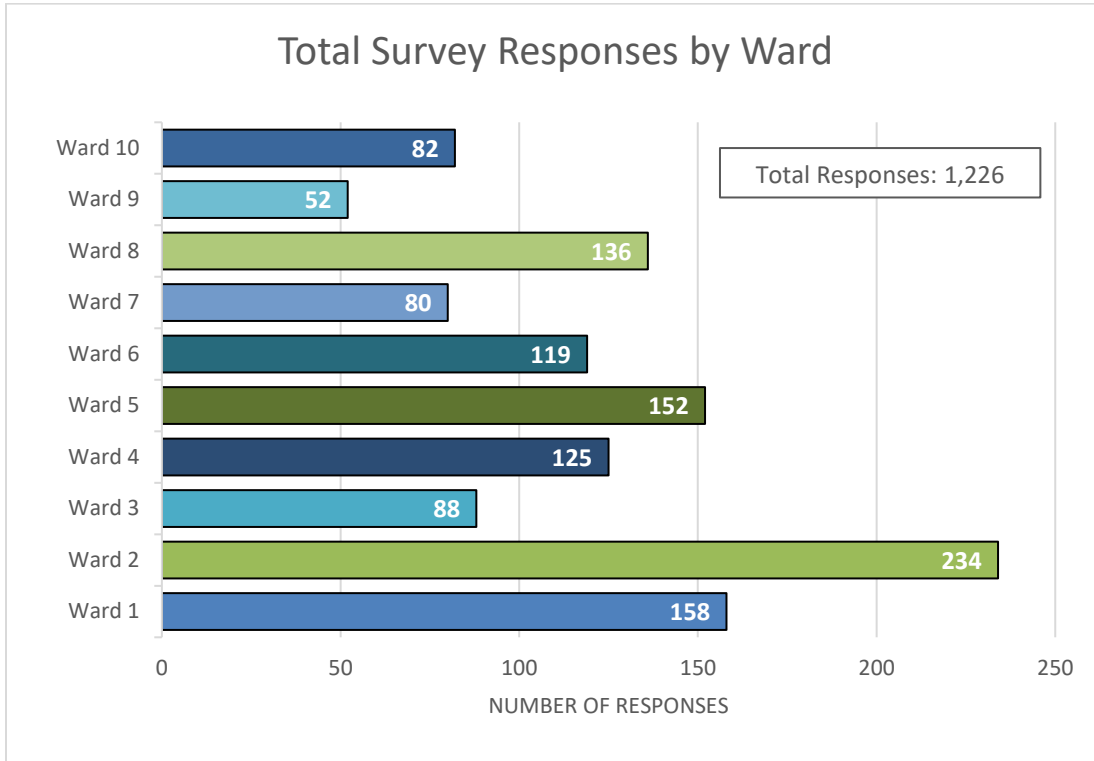
One of the most significant findings was that a considerable number of responses in Ward 5 had concerns about their water quality. It became evident that the current system design and elevated mineral content were contributing factors to this viewpoint. Consequently, a series of measures were undertaken and included maintenance activities in the system and preparations for the installation of several autoflushers to assist with water quality concerns.

Additionally, WOB has expanded public education and outreach initiatives. Efforts now include participating in various events and beach days, where the water trailer is deployed to engage and inform the community about water related matters promoting Tap into Barrie water.

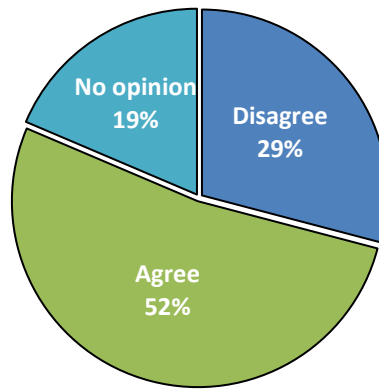
WOB continues to promote scheduled water treatment plant tours that provide residents with an on-site learning experience. WOB has also increased the frequency of Experience Water Days, a dedicated program for Grade 7 and 8 students where they gain valuable insights into the intricacies of the drinking water system. These efforts collectively aim to build a more informed and engaged community.

Lastly, WOB is currently working with the City's Communications Team to develop a Communications Plan focused on public education. Some of the items that the campaign will focus on include potable water treatment, quality, and safety of our tap water, how residents can learn more, and how residents can report issues to WOB. The Communications Plan will be supplemented with various water education events, initiatives, and outreach activities.

APPENDIX "A"

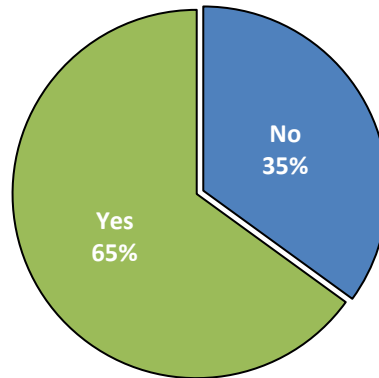


Respondents' Answer to "My Tap Water is Safe to Drink?"

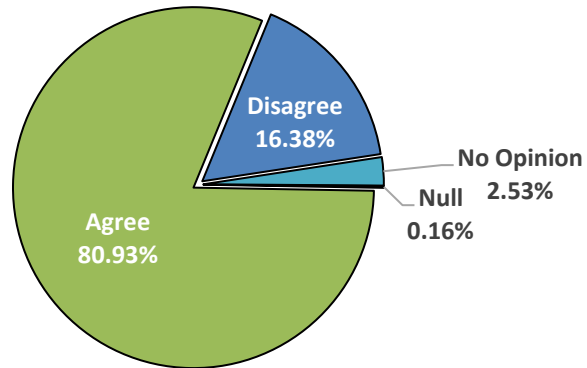


Awareness of the City Water Testing

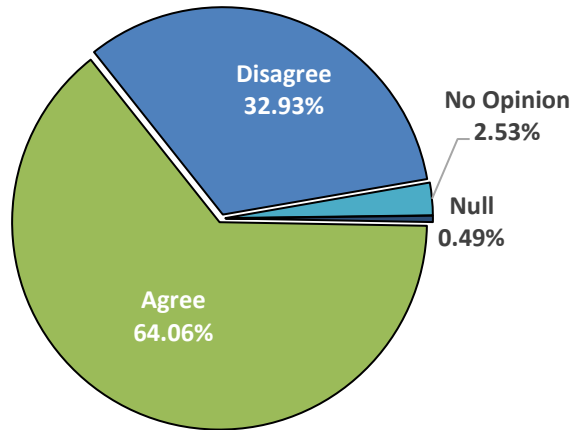
Q: Are you aware that the City of Barrie frequently tests your water?



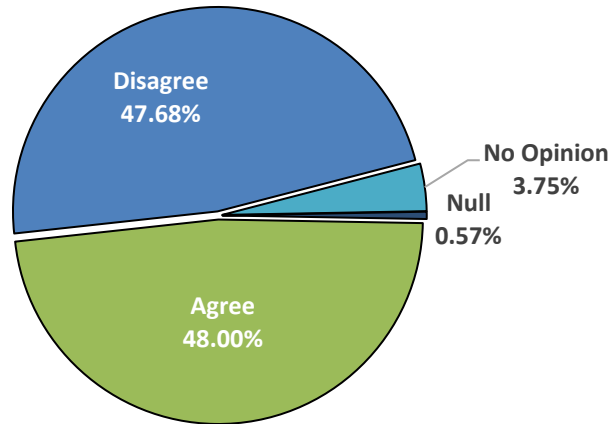
### Is The Tap Water Pressure Good?



### Is The Tap Water Clear?



Does The Tap Water Have No Odour?



Does The Tap Water Taste Good?

