Water Conservation Master Plan Update

- Timeline
- Look at Existing Programs
- Early Survey Results
- Thoughts

Development Process Timeline

Technical Committee

Cross-departmental data evaluation

- Integrated Capital Management
- Public Works
- Wastewater
- Water

Advisory Committee

Cross-departmental strategic oversight

- Public Works Leadership
- Parks and Rec Leadership
- Planning Staff
- Environmental Analytics

External Review

- Climate Resilience and Sustainability Board
- *Key Stakeholder Engagement*
- *Community Engagement*

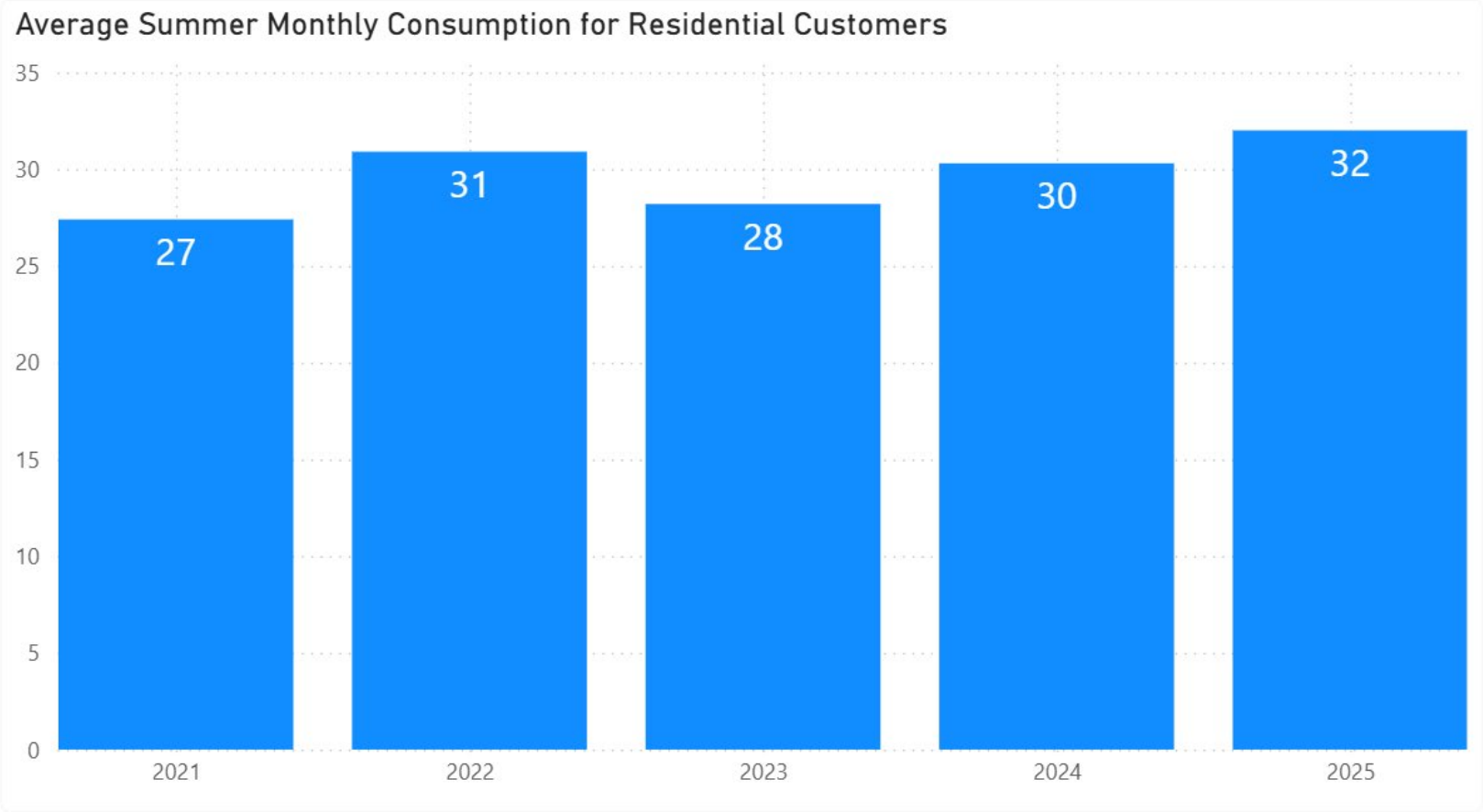
Water Conservation Rebate Evaluation

Stats

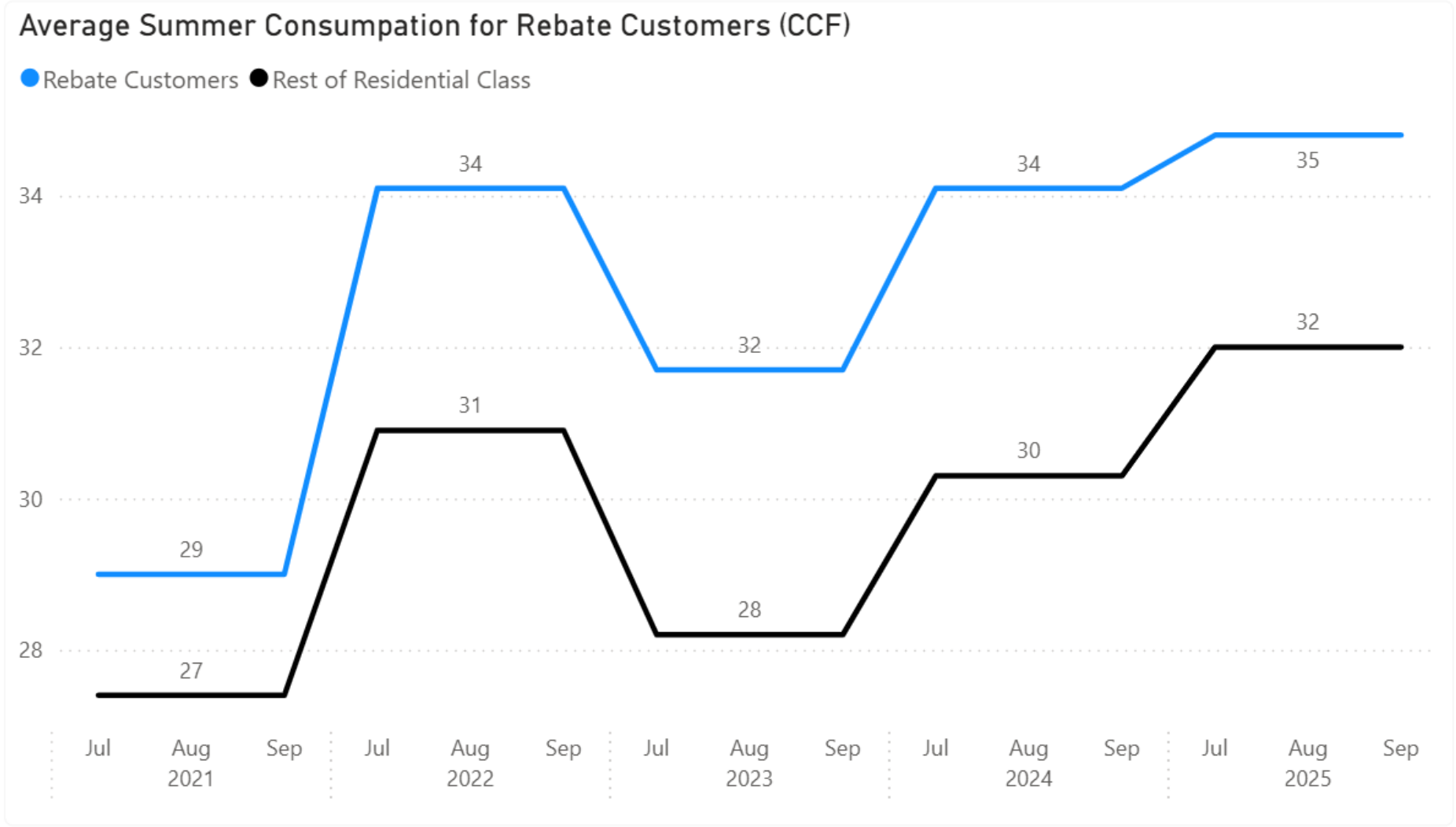
Rebates Issued Since 1/1/2020

Rebate Group	Rebate Count	Unique Customers	Total Amount	Median Amount
Commercial	**7**	**4**	**$3,455**	**$695**
Cooling Tower Controller Rebate	7	4	$3,455	$695
Indoor Fixtures	**559**	**451**	**$69,886**	**$100**
Toilet Rebate	559	451	$69,886	$100
Irrigation	**1,361**	**898**	**$205,479**	**$100**
Efficient Nozzle Rebate	94	82	$38,856	$40
IRR Controller Rebate	1,193	821	$153,758	$100
Spray to Drip Rebate	74	70	$12,865	$200
Other	**640**	**544**	**$214,987**	**$400**
Spokanescape	458	404	$190,237	$500
Water Wise Challenge	182	156	$24,750	$100
Total	**2,567**	**1706**	**$493,807**	**$100**

Difficult to Compare Before/After Rebate for Individual Customers



Removing Annual Variability

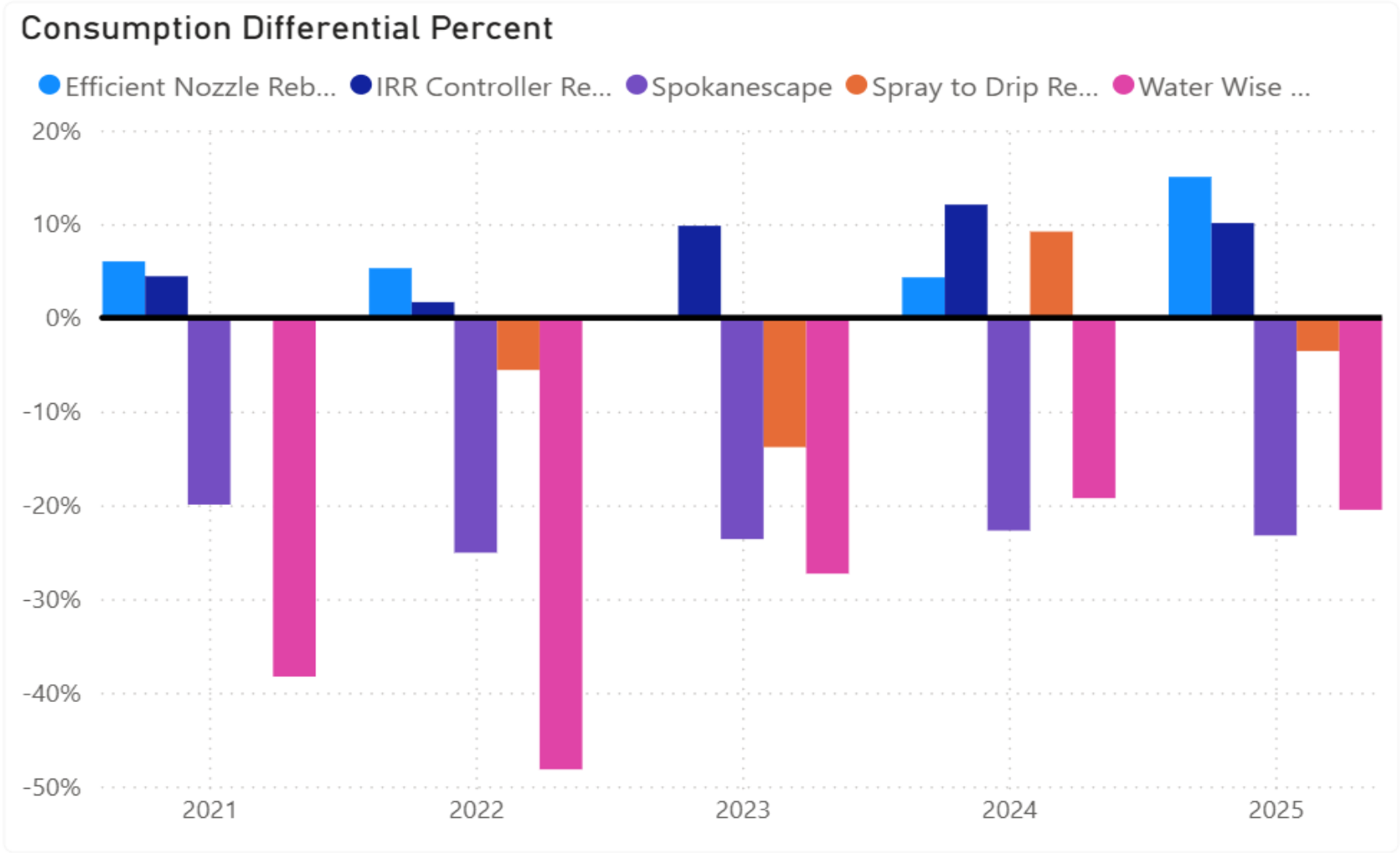


Consumption Differential

Rebate Details (Summer, 2025 Cons)

Unit of Measure	CCF		Gal / Sq Ft	
Rebate Group	Cons Differential	Cons Differential Pct	Cons Differential	Cons Differential Pct
Indoor Fixtures	**3**	**8%**	**-0.04**	**-1%**
Toilet Rebate	3	8%	-0.04	-1%
Irrigation	**8**	**26%**	**0.33**	**9%**
Efficient Nozzle Rebate	13	40%	0.55	15%
IRR Controller Rebate	9	28%	0.37	10%
Spray to Drip Rebate	-2	-7%	-0.13	-4%
Other	**-7**	**-21%**	**-0.81**	**-22%**
Spokanescape	-7	-21%	-0.85	-23%
Water Wise Challenge	-7	-23%	-0.75	-20%
Total	**3**	**8%**	**-0.05**	**-1%**

Gal./Sq. Ft. Differential Over Time by Program



Conservation Effect on Bills

Takeaways

- Indoor fixture programs likely have negligible effect on water use, but are inexpensive and popular, thus give education opportunity.
- Irrigation programs are difficult to quantify. Large opportunity for conservation due to popularity and potential impact.
- Spokanescape is effective but expensive.
- Water Wise Challenge is most direct – rebate directly tied to demonstrable conservation.
- Changes to tier structure over the years have amplified the cost savings for customers.

What We're Hearing

Comprehensive Plan Process gives us an initial look

Water is the highest topic of interest and concern

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Topics of Importance

Survey respondents were asked to identify topics related to climate and resiliency that are important to them. This information will help inform the focus and distribution of future policy recommendations to ensure community priorities are addressed.

What climate and resiliency topics are important to you?

Community members were asked to rank key climate and resiliency topics in order of importance. While many if not most topics are interrelated, this question forced ranking to identify the aspects of local resiliency that are most significant. Survey respondents were asked to rank topics from 1 to 11 in importance. Those topics were: water; energy; food systems; transportation; human health; natural resources; ecological health; cultural resources; waste management; greenhouse gas emissions; and none (in case none of the topics were important to the respondent). **Water** was collectively ranked the highest, followed by **human health** and **food systems**. When it comes to the topics ranked first in importance, **water** once again the top choice, followed by **human health** and **greenhouse gas reduction**. Of note, Greenhouse Gas Reduction had the third most rankings of 1 while also having the second most 11 rankings. 8.53% of survey respondents ranked "none" of the topics as being of significant importance, while 71.91% ranked the **none** option last; these numbers were left off the below table for graph readability.

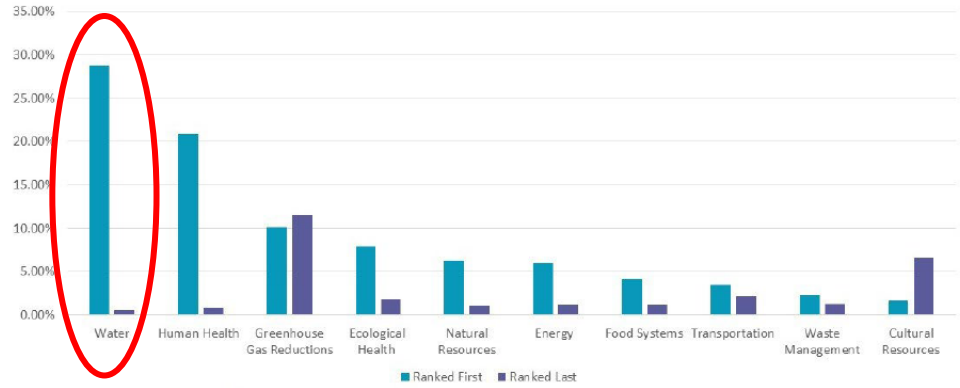
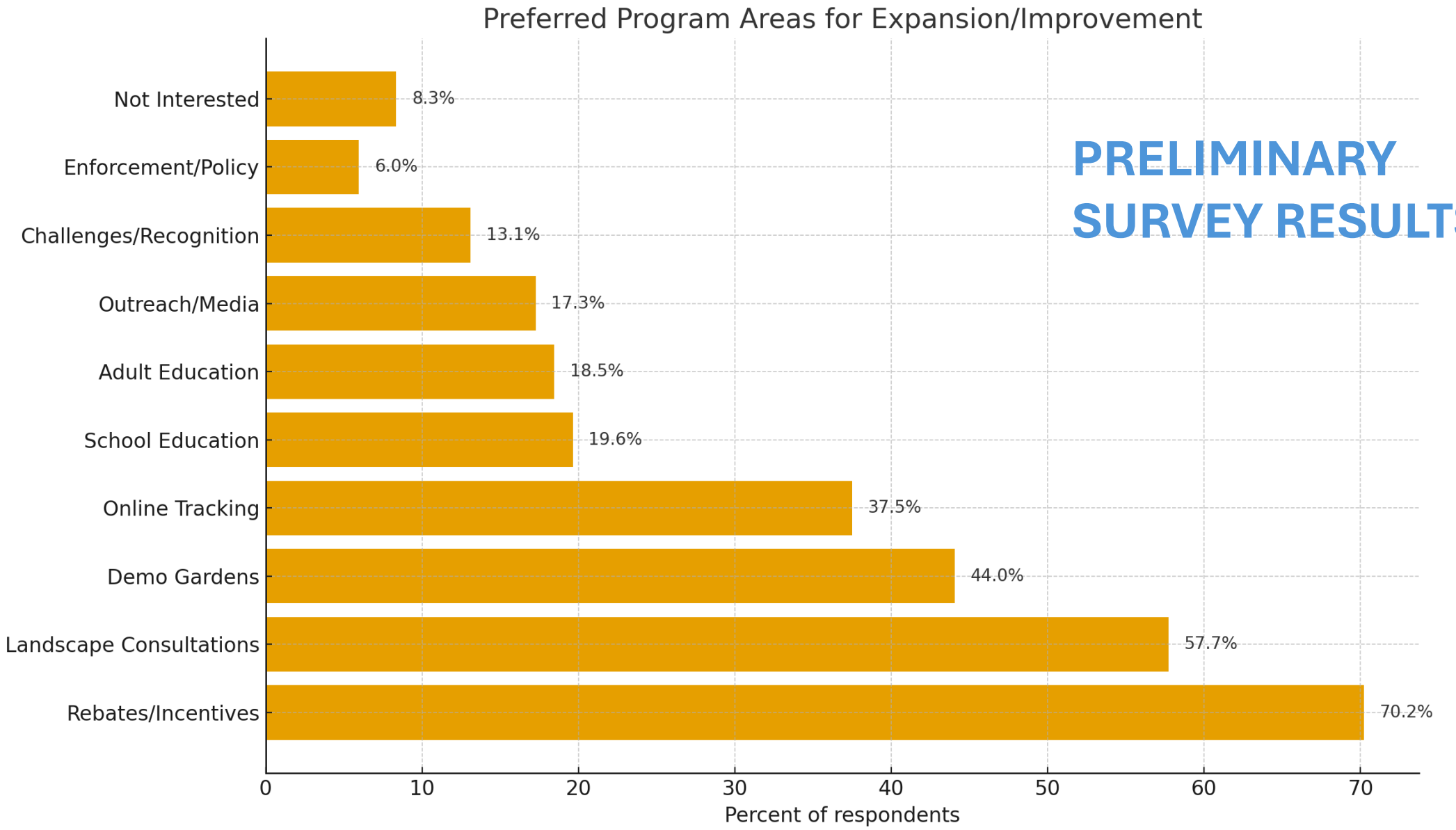
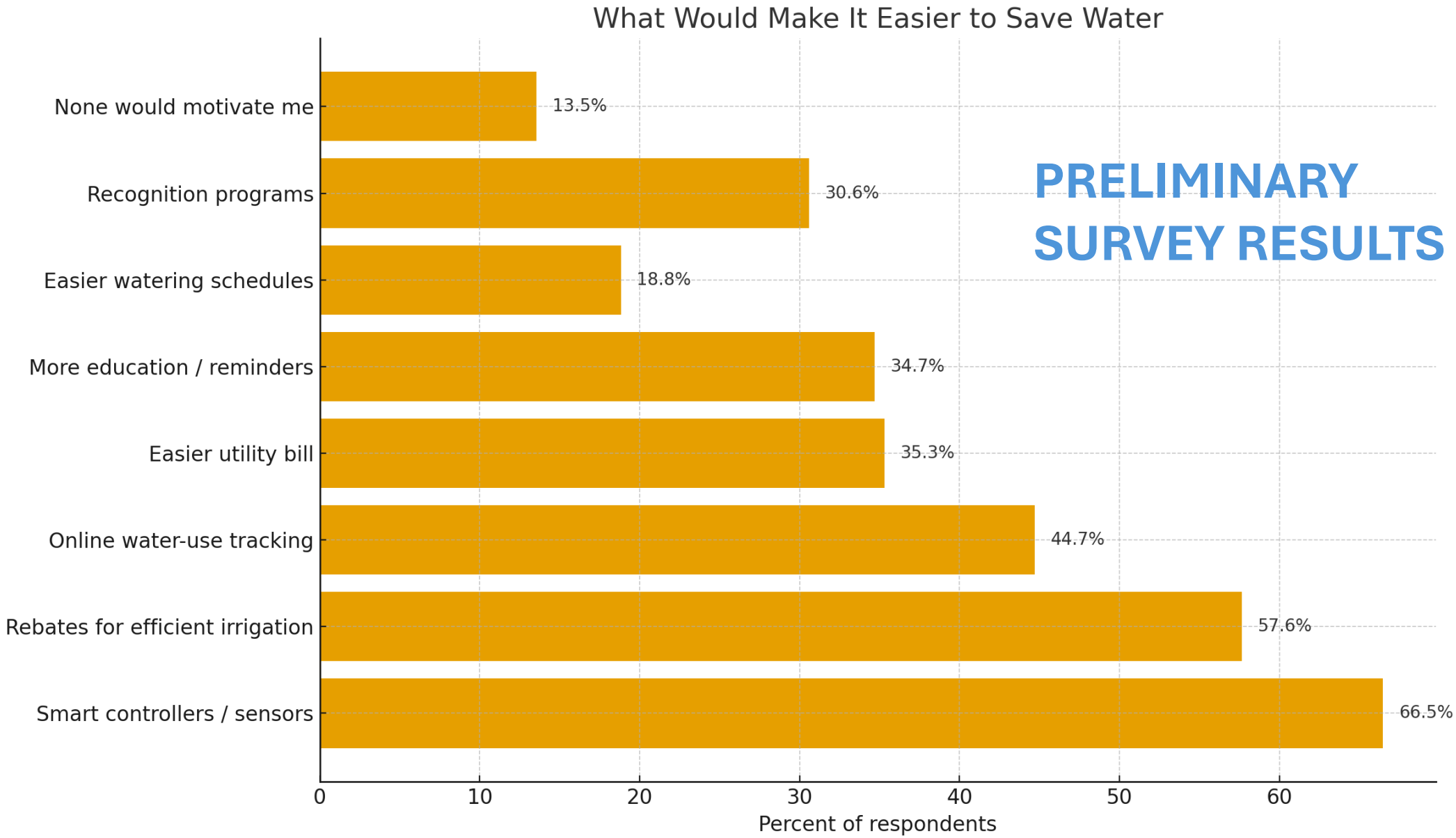
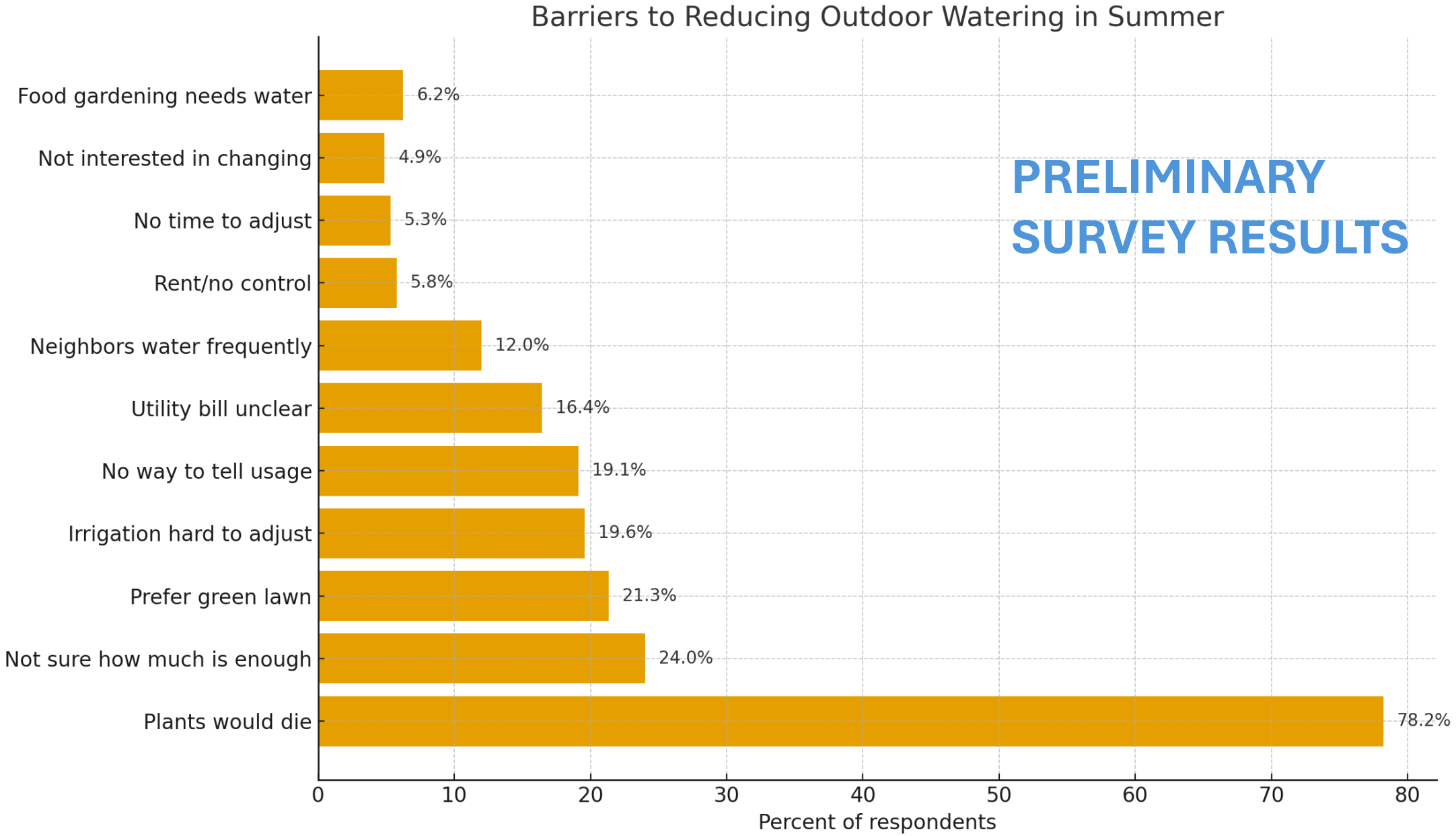


Figure 1 Graph illustrating the number of respondents who ranked topics first and last. Source: 2025 City of Spokane Community Climate Policy Survey.



PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS


What Would Make It Easier to Save Water
None would motivate me
13.5%
Recognition programs
30.6%
Easier watering schedules
18.8%
More education / reminders
34.7%
Easier utility bill
35.3%
Online water-use tracking
44.7%
Rebates for efficient irrigation
57.6%
Smart controllers / sensors
66.5%
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
Percent of respondents
PRELIMINARY
SURVEY RESULTS


Barriers to Reducing Outdoor Watering in Summer
Food gardening needs water
6.2%
Not interested in changing
4.9%
No time to adjust
5.3%
Rent/no control
5.8%
Neighbors water frequently
12.0%
Utility bill unclear
16.4%
No way to tell usage
19.1%
Irrigation hard to adjust
19.6%
Prefer green lawn
21.3%
Not sure how much is enough
24.0%
Plants would die
78.2%
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
Percent of respondents
PRELIMINARY
SURVEY RESULTS

What would make water conservation programs more beneficial or impactful for your household or neighborhood?

What Residents Need Most

- More support to transform yards
- Simple, affordable ways to remove lawn
- Design help, consultations, and plant guidance
- Better access to drought tolerant and native plants

- **Core idea:** People want help making real landscape changes without high cost or complexity.

What would make water conservation programs more beneficial or impactful for your household or neighborhood?

Better Tools and Information

- Real time water use data
- Easier to read utility bills
- Accurate irrigation tracking or separate irrigation meters
- Clear guidance on how much water is enough

- **Core idea:** Residents cannot manage water use without clear information.

What would make water conservation programs more beneficial or impactful for your household or neighborhood?

Education and Communication

- Workshops, school programs, and neighborhood presentations
- Simple tips for watering schedules and plant care
- Clear messaging about aquifer health and climate impacts
- More outreach at events and through mailers

- **Core idea:** Education drives behavior change when it is practical and local.

What would make water conservation programs more beneficial or impactful for your household or neighborhood?

Barriers to Participation

- Cost and labor needed for yard changes
- Renters and HOA restrictions
- Confusion about rules or program requirements
- Difficulty adjusting irrigation systems

- **Core idea:** Many residents want to conserve but feel limited by cost, control, or system complexity.

What would make water conservation programs more beneficial or impactful for your household or neighborhood?

Trust and Leadership

- Residents want the City to model conservation at parks and facilities
- Desire for transparent aquifer data
- Some support more enforcement
- A small group strongly opposes restrictions

- **Core idea:** Credibility and trust shape willingness to participate.

Base Program

- Irrigation Efficiency Incentives
- Indoor Efficiency Incentives
- Landscape Transformation
- Commercial Audits
- Efficiency Check-Ups
- Education & Outreach
- Watering Rules

Base Program +

- AMI Enabled Education w/Customer Portal (leak alerts, high bill alerts, monitor irrigation cycles, informed monthly reports, education)
- City-Owned Property Program
- Increased Collaboration w/ Parks
- Irrigation and Landscaping Standards
- Efficient Irrigation & Landscaping for new development & City properties
- Custom Rebate Considerations
- City Water Management Training
- Water Wise Certified Business Recognition Program
- Water Consumption Rate Adjustments
- Landscape & Irrigation Plan Review

Utility / Region	Primary Goal(s)	Program Funding / Staffing	Program Focus Areas	Key Takeaways for Spokane
Spokane (2020 Plan)	Save 500 million gallons by 2030; 5% per-capita reduction; reduce summer peak demand by 15%.	~$500–600k/yr; 2 FTE (Coordinator + Specialist); some temp/seasonal and contractor/vendor help.	Incentives (SpokaneScape, controllers, toilets, nozzles), education/outreach, city facilities upgrades.	Strong outreach foundation, but no mandatory irrigation or landscape standards.
Salt Lake City (Draft 2025)	Reduce gpcd from 182 → 160 by 2040; up to 24% additional outdoor savings, 25% city facility reduction.	~$672k annual program budget, 3–4 FTE equivalent; AWWA G480 alignment.	Strong mix of incentives + ordinances (landscape, irrigation, rain sensors, waste runoff); CII audits, AMI analytics, GSL resilience framing.	Integrates ecosystem and resilience goals with enforcement.
Tacoma Water (2018–2027)	6.65% reduction in peak-season use (0.274 MGD over 10 yrs); maintain financial sustainability.	Embedded within TPU budget; staff shared across customer programs (2–3 FTE equivalent).	Peak-use reduction focus via rebates, irrigation controllers, CII audits, education (EnviroHouse), low-cost outreach.	Tacoma treats conservation as a “customer service and infrastructure offset”
Flagstaff, AZ (Ongoing)	Maintain ~84 gpcd (already < half Spokane’s); continue 1–2% annual outdoor savings; drought resiliency.	Estimated ~$400k/yr; 2–3 FTE + seasonal help.	Mandatory watering schedule, low-water landscape program, rebates, workshops, drought education.	Flagstaff’s enforcement-based model shows the value of clear watering rules + code alignment.
Saving Water Partnership (Seattle region)	Maintain regional avg ≤ 110 MGD through 2028 (regional goal for 1.6M population).	~$1.6M annual regional budget, ~8–10 FTE across utilities.	Regional rebates (irrigation timers, fixtures), codes, annual reporting, coordinated campaigns.	SWP shows the advantage of regional coordination + pooled funding.

What role do rates play in water conservation?

Water Consumption Rates

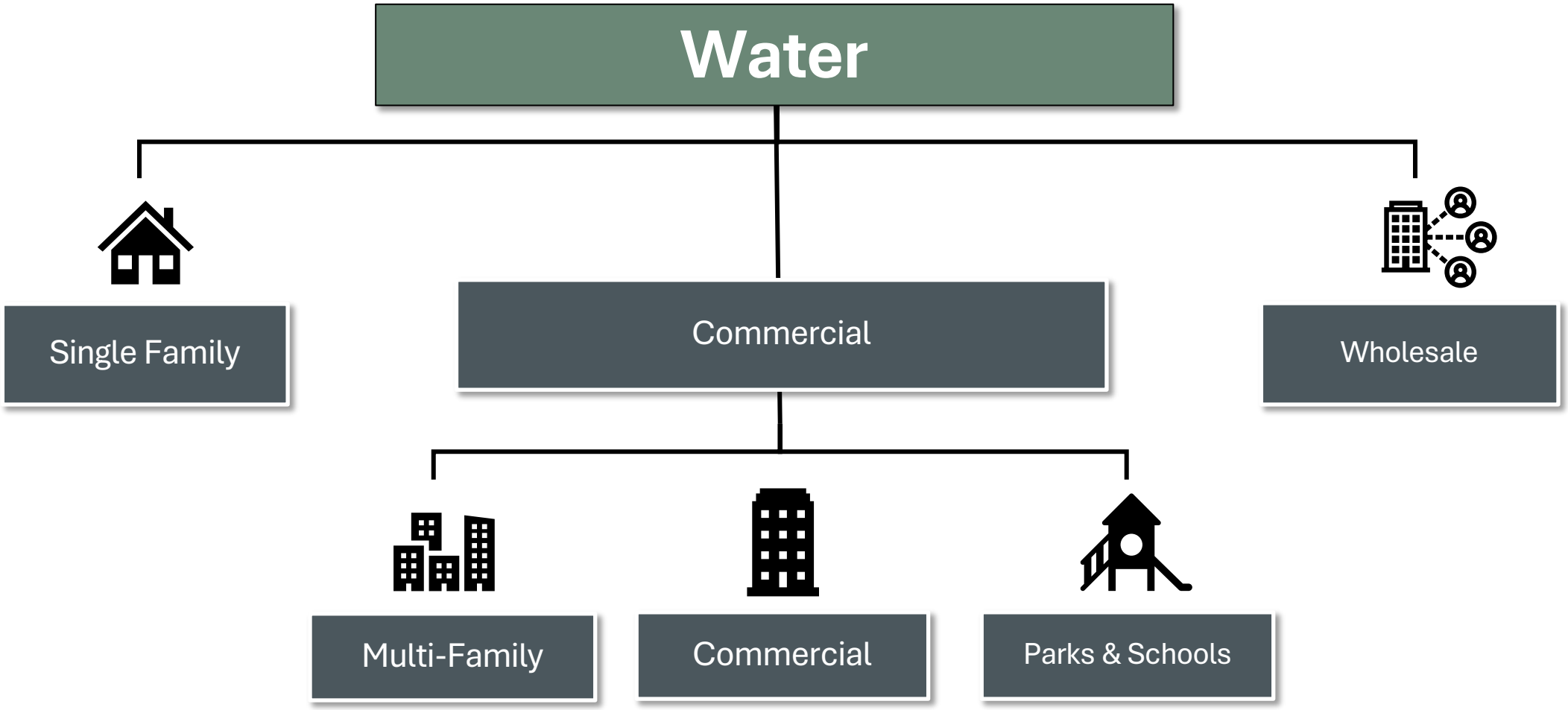
- **Policy to use rate structures** to encourage water conservation is well established by the City Council and state law

- Have had a **tier structure** for water use for many years

- In recent years, **two significant changes** to the **residential water consumption** structure have been **implemented**
  - In 2020 for rates approved for 2021, 2022, and 2023
  - In 2024 for rates approved for 2025 and 2026

- Have not made significant changes to the **Commercial Water Consumption rate structure**

Customer Classes



Residential Water Consumption Rates

Water Usage

Step	Usage	Cubic Feet	Inside City Rate*	Outside City Rate*
1	1-6 units	0-600 cfs	$ 0.3581/unit	$ 0.5371/unit
2	6-12 units	600-1,200 cfs	$ 0.7577/unit	$ 1.1366/unit
3	12-25 units	1,200-2,500 cfs	$ 1.0193/unit	$ 1.5291/unit
4	25-45 units	2,500-4,500 cfs	$ 1.6115/unit	$ 2.4173/unit
5	Over 45 units	4,500+ cfs	$ 2.3179/unit	$ 3.4769/unit

**Per water unit, rounded to the nearest cent.*

Commercial Water Consumption Rates

Water Consumption Charges

Water meters measure in cubic feet. The City of Spokane bills consumption based on units. A unit is equal to 100 cubic feet or approximately 748 gallons. This chart is based on per month usage.

Usage	Inside City Rate (Per hundred cubic feet)	Outside City Rate (Per hundred cubic feet)
Zero up to 600 cubic feet (Charge for all use: zero up to 600.)	$0.3975	$0.5962
Greater than 600 up to 1,000 cubic feet (Charge for all use: zero up to 1,000.)	$0.8249	$1.2377
Greater than 1,000 cubic feet (Charge for all use: zero to amount used.)	$1.1933	$1.7899

Considerations

- How can we send the **appropriate price signal**?

- **Existing tiered structure applies to all commercial** customers – both small and large
  - **Majority** of commercial customers **consistently use** more than the **highest existing tier** threshold
  - **Variability of usage** in class **makes** meaningful **tier thresholds difficult**

- Cost of service analysis has shown **cost allocation imbalances** between **commercial** and **multi-family** classes

- We want to continue to **target conservation** through **rate redesign and education**

- What about **community greenspace**? Parks & Schools

Rate Design Options

No Change – Stay with existing tiered system

Tiered structure remains as the general rate design

Commercial sub-classes are developed to allow for **future cost** of **service implementation**

Develop a uniform year-round usage rate

A **uniform rate** is developed that would be the same rate, **regardless of usage level**

Commercial sub-classes are developed to allow for **future cost** of **service implementation**

Develop a uniform seasonal rate

Develop **seasonal rate** that would be the same **regardless of usage** level, and **would increase in summer months**

Commercial sub-classes are developed to allow for **future cost** of **service implementation**

Rate Design Options

A **revised rate structure does not have to be the same for all** commercial sub-classes

- For example: Application of a seasonal rate for commercial and multi-family accounts but a uniform year-round rate for parks and schools is achievable

In **all rate structure scenarios**, commercial sub-classes are created to **allow for cost-of-service adjustments** during the next **rate approval cycle**

Questions