Meeting Minutes



South Hillsborough Wellfield - Community Meeting

Aug. 24, 2021 6:30 p.m. Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees:	Chuck Carden, Tampa Bay Water
	Maribel Medina, Tampa Bay Water
	Warren Hogg, Tampa Bay Water
	Jon Kennedy, Tampa Bay Water
	Danielle Keirsey, Tampa Bay Water
	Jeffrey Trommer, WSP
	Drew Coleman, Hazen & Sawyer
	John McCary, Hillsborough County
	Jeff Greenwell, Hillsborough County
	Brandon Moore, Tampa Bay Water
	Michelle Stom, Tampa Bay Water
	Joey Schultz, Tampa Bay Water
	Michelle Robinson, Dialogue Public Relations
	Robin Bizjack, Dialogue Public Relations
	101 residents/citizens registered; 31 attended (31 percent)
Notification:	Direct mail letter to 4,055 homeowners/residents in a 3-mile radius of Balm/Balm Riverview roads on Aug. 3, 2021; 3,864 verified delivered.
	Emails to Florida Strawberry Growers Association and UF IAFS July 22, 2021
	Emails to 27 area neighborhood HOAs July 22, 2021
	Informational signs posted at Balm and Balm Riverview roads on Aug. 11, 2021
	News release posted to Tampa Bay Water website July 15, 2021
	Home page and specific web page notifications posted June 24 – July 28, 2021
	Facebook posts on July 12, 14, 20, 28; Aug. 10, 16, 2021
	Twitter posts on July 12, 14, 20; Aug 10, 2021

1. Purpose of the Meeting

The virtual public meeting provided residents with an overview of Tampa Bay Water and the projects under consideration to meet the region's long-term drinking water supply needs. This meeting focused on the proposed South Hillsborough Wellfield.

2. Meeting Summary

Interim General Manager Chuck Carden opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. He introduced panelists also on the call and then handed the meeting over to Danielle Keirsey, Tampa Bay Water project manager, who gave a brief background on Tampa Bay Water and its member governments.

Ms. Keirsey summarized the region's long-term need for more drinking water. She explained that the utility has enough water supply and treatment capacity to meet the region's needs for the next 7 years; however, with population growth, Tampa Bay Water will need to develop an additional 10-20 million gallons of water per day (mgd) in new supply to meet the needs in 2028-2038. She explained that Tampa Bay Water is mandated to provide high-quality drinking water to its member governments. Tampa Bay Water has no authority to control growth in the region. She highlighted the utility's diverse water supply system and shared the three projects Tampa Bay Water is currently investigating to provide more water: (1) a new South Hillsborough Wellfield via aquifer recharge credits; (2) expanding the seawater desalination facility and (3) expanding the surface water treatment capacity. She then handed the meeting over to Warren Hogg, professional geologist with Tampa Bay Water.

Mr. Hogg shared that groundwater is the region's most reliable and economical source of drinking water and presented background on the growth in the region, especially in southern Hillsborough. He discussed how southern Hillsborough is designated a Water Use Caution Area by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) and that no new withdrawals can be made from the aquifer in this area without an additional, positive effect, or net benefit, within the same aquifer.

He explained that groundwater withdrawals from the proposed new wellfield would be offset by Hillsborough County's South Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Project, or SHARP. Reclaimed water injected into the aquifer near the western coast of Hillsborough County would increase the pressure in the aquifer, slow the movement of saltwater into the freshwater portion of the aquifer, and increase aquifer levels several miles inland. Because groundwater naturally flows westward, no injected water would make its way upstream to the withdrawal wells 5 miles inland.

The proposed South Hillsborough Wellfield involves both Tampa Bay Water and Hillsborough County facilities. If this project is selected, Tampa Bay Water would design, permit and build a groundwater wellfield with up to eight production wells and a conveyance piping system. The wellfield is estimated to produce up to 7.5 million gallons of water per day. Tampa Bay Water would also design and build a new groundwater treatment facility and a pipeline to deliver water to Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County would continue to own and operate its reclaimed water treatment facilities, pipelines and recharge wells.

Mr. Hogg then presented a map displaying how the projects would be configured and zoomed in on the ELAPP and Water Resources Parcels, which are being purchased by the County, to show where the proposed wells would be generally located.

He explained the aquifer performance test that occurred in the first half of August. Completed Aug. 14, 2021, preliminary findings indicate the aquifer is very productive in this area and drawdown is localized because of the significant confining layer in this area. Because the drawdown is so localized and based on decades of monitoring data in the area, the proposed wellfield is not anticipated to affect nearby domestic or agricultural wells. If this project is selected, the District will determine its withdrawal quantity after reviewing the technical data and modeling Tampa Bay Water provides.

Mr. Hogg reiterated that this project is one of three the utility is considering and gave an overview of the selection criteria. He presented a photo of a wellhouse, and shared that if this project were selected, Tampa Bay Water will work closely with the County and site the wells in a manner that blends with the surrounding environment.

He briefly discussed other capital improvement projects currently in construction or design to address the growing needs of southern Hillsborough County. The Brandon Booster Station will provide an additional 5-7 million gallons per day of additional water to the County's Lithia Water Treatment Plant and is scheduled to be online by the end of 2024. Additionally, a South Hillsborough County Pipeline is currently in design to carry up to 60 million gallons of water per day to south Hillsborough County and provide a redundant delivery system in the event of emergencies.

Mr. Hogg outlined the next steps of the three Master Water Plan supply projects, which are to finish the feasibility studies in spring 2022, present findings to the Tampa Bay Water Board of Directors in the summer through fall of 2022, with the board selecting one or more new projects for construction by the end of 2022. He explained the evaluation criteria the board uses in making these decisions: balancing cost, environmental stewardship, and reliability. Community feedback is an integral part of the Master Water Plan evaluation. He then turned the meeting over to Ms. Robinson, who introduced the panelists before beginning the question-and-answer portion of the meeting.

3. Input Received

Thomas White, a resident of Valencia Lakes in Wimauma, asked why was there a need for an additional 7.5 mgd if the Brandon Booster Station and the new pipeline mentioned in the previous Tampa Bay Water Board meeting would supply additional water?

Mr. Hogg responded that Tampa Bay Water is planning for all six of its member governments, so it develops long-range planning for the forecasted needs of the entire tri-county region. The new pipeline in Hillsborough is for redundancy, and although both pipes will be used, they will not be used at capacity.

Patrick O'Boyle, president of Amber Sweet Farms HOA, a community that is less than a mile from the proposed wellfield said all homes in this community are on private wells. He asked what would be the water quality impacts to domestic wells from the recharge wells? Will it affect the filtering quality of the aquifer?

Mr. Hogg responded that the injection wells along the coast will not affect water quality for the residents' wells. The recharge wells won't "back up" water in the aquifer; water will continue flowing from east to west. Mr. Greenwell added that the County has not seen any water quality impacts associated with the recharge wells.

Matthew Gunter asked what other projects are under consideration to bring more capacity to the area and what lake levels are monitored in the region?

Mr. Hogg addressed the second half of the question relating to water level monitoring. He said that Tampa Bay Water had recently finished a study of the environment focused on northern Hillsborough, Pasco and east Pinellas counties and the Cosme Odessa wellfields. Over-reliance on groundwater and dry conditions led to low lake levels. Tampa Bay Water cut back pumping to 90 mgd at these 11 wellfields and has reached a sustainable point. The study included 515 individual lakes and wetlands and many wells in the shallow and deep aquifer. The study's report can be found on the Tampa Bay

Water website and includes maps that show the locations of all the monitored lakes and wetlands. The southern wellfields have a monitoring system too. Pumping from the deep aquifer has no impact on lakes, rivers and streams.

Ms. Medina addressed Mr. Gunter's question pertaining to other supply projects. She said Tampa Bay Water is looking at multiple options to expand its system. In addition to the South Hillsborough Wellfield, the Surface Water Treatment Expansion project would add 10-20 mgd to the current facility; this project is also exploring building a new surface water treatment plant near the C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir. A second option is expanding the desalination plant, allowing it to also add 10-20 mgd. Tampa Bay Water will consider all three, and its board will decide on one or more of them in December 2022.

Ms. Robinson read an online question: Who is served by the proposed wellfield?

Mr. Kennedy responded that water from this proposed wellfield would stay locally because the demands in this area are increasing and will be supplemented by other water in the regional system.

Daniel Dixon, a Balm resident, referenced the development of the South-Central Hillsborough Regional Wellfield, which caused issues with private wells. He asked if the utility would consider drawing water from the Alafia River rather than another wellfield. He also questioned the safety of the injection wells.

Mr. Hogg responded to the well mitigation question. Mr. Hogg said he worked for the utility when the South-Central Hillsborough Regional Wellfield was brought online. He said that wellfield differs from the proposed wellfield in a number of ways. The Lithia wellfield was permitted at 24 mgd on average and the proposed wellfield, if selected, is potentially 7.5 mgd. When the South-Central Wellfield was created, there was not much aquifer data available, and more wells were impacted than expected. That's part of the reason Tampa Bay Water established a mitigation program to repair or replace wells that were impacted. One benefit of this project is that the County's injection system that is expected to increase water levels in the aquifer. Tampa Bay Water expects very little drawdown that would potentially affect domestic wells. As part of any permit issued from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Tampa Bay Water would be responsible for investigating and mitigating any wells that were affected.

Mr. Greenwell addressed the injection well portion of the question. He first clarified that the injected water is not "graywater." It is reclaimed water from an advanced wastewater treatment plant and receives advanced disinfection. It is analyzed for 300-plus constituents of concern and has never had an exceedance of primary constituent limits for total dissolved solids in drinking water for the last three years. The purpose of the injection wells is to improve total dissolved solids in groundwater.

Buddy Harwell, a resident of Balm and a member of the Balm Civic Association, asked what guarantees the utility could give that residents' wells won't run dry. He also asked how many gallons of reclaimed water need to be injected to be able to withdraw a gallon of drinking water.

Mr. Hogg shared that Tampa Bay Water has a formal well mitigation program which mandates that if the utility causes a water-level problem with a domestic well, it must mitigate the well. It is a state rule. As part of selecting the next project, Tampa Bay Water will take the site-specific data from the aquifer performance test to improve the model and its prediction of drawdown, and then compare that to the water level increase from the injection, and the District will only permit this project if it is shown there is no adverse impact and if the environment also receives a benefit. As Tampa Bay Water continues evaluating the project, we'll have those models and data, and are happy to share that information with the civic association. If the wellfield is built, we will be good neighbors and not leave an impact. Regarding the ratio of reclaimed water injected to the drinking water withdrawn, that will be answered in permitting. Mr. Hogg said he believes the anticipated ratio to be about 10 mgd reclaimed recharge to 7.5 mgd of fresh water withdrawn from the production wells. Mr. Greenwell concurred with the ratio Mr. Hogg gave.

Matthew Gozdor asked if there was a report or presentation on the groundwater modeling done thus far.

Mr. Trommer responded that a report is not prepared yet because they are still gathering data from the aquifer performance test; however, all results will be in the feasibility report at the end of the year.

Matthew Gunter thanked the panel for the opportunity to ask questions and asked if this project was considered an aquifer storage and recovery project to keep water from going into the bay. He also asked if Tampa Bay Water considered changes in rates to encourage conservation.

Mr. Hogg stated this project is not an aquifer storage and recovery project, which injects and withdraws water from the same location. This project is different because injection and withdrawal is in two different places. Tampa Bay Water works closely with local governments and the District and counties to encourage conservation, both indoor and outdoor. Tampa Bay Water offers incentives to save water through its Water Wise program rebates.

Mr. McCary added that Hillsborough County has ongoing conservation efforts. In the near term, the County has a demand management program and is working to improve conservation metrics. The County has a tiered rate structure where the more water you use, the higher the rate you pay for water.

Mr. Greenwell added that the County has a very robust conservation education program in addition to a rebate program that has now been rolled into the Water Wise program.

Ms. Robinson asked another question from online: Will residents be forced to connect to municipal supply because of this project?

Mr. McCary said the short answer is "no, certainly not specific to this project." New developments will be required to connect to Hillsborough County's municipal supply, but not existing residents with domestic wells. Ms. Robinson added that this is a wholesale, not retail, project. Mr. Greenwell added that by statute, no one can compel a private citizen to connect with municipal supply.

Ms. Robinson asked another online question: Will this project affect my well located near the reservoir?

Mr. Hogg said that because there is very little drawdown expected in the aquifer and the distance of the wellfield from the reservoir, there should be no impact.

Patrick O'Boyle asked for more details on the localized drawdown. What would be the impact to nearby homes at a higher capacity withdrawal?

Mr. Hogg said the test well was 950-975 feet deep. At 2 mgd withdrawal from that single well, there was only 2-2.5 feet drawdown in the test well itself. That is very little drawdown. At the very edge of the 4-acre property, drawdown was only 1.5 feet. Very preliminary modeling of 7.5 mgd of pumping showed only 2.5 feet of drawdown in the middle of the property. Near the reservoir, drawdown won't

be measurable in that drawdown wouldn't be discernable from regular fluctuations in the aquifer. Water levels in this area fluctuate 15-20 feet throughout the year.

Ms. Robinson asked another online question: Will this project provide a disproportionate benefit to any class or race over another?

Mr. Hogg replied that the water will go to Hillsborough County and the County will distribute to whomever needs water. It goes into the system for equal use by everyone.

Ms. Robinson asked another online question: How will the project be affected by natural disaster and an extended power outage?

Mr. Kennedy responded that Tampa Bay Water is required by law to have a generator for the wellfield, and it will eventually be connected to the regional system that also has a backup power supply.

Ms. Robinson asked another online question: What will this project cost residents? Will rates go up?

Ms. Medina said that Tampa Bay Water charges its member governments a uniform rate. Wholesale pricing is \$2.56 per 1,000 gallons. If this project is chosen, the utility will conduct an analysis after total costs for this project are estimated. In 2022, Tampa Bay Water will be able to determine the impact on the rate structure from any of its studied projects.

Daniel Dixon asked if any studies had been done on wellfield output during a major freeze, noting that strawberry farmers several years back ran water constantly to save crops, which led to sinkholes in the area.

Mr. Hogg responded that the District conducted an intensive study of that freeze event, during which farmers pumped close to 1 billion gallons a day. Tampa Bay Water was not pumping much from the area at that time as the District requests Tampa Bay Water to lessen its pumping in freeze events. The utility's flexible system will help avoid that by sending water from other sources. During a District meeting earlier today, they presented a study to that board about that freeze event. Since 2010, they've seen far fewer cold events, and the number of freeze events are lessening.

Nicole Licor asked a question in the chat: "I understand that the water flows from east to west, but we have saltwater intrusion all the way through Wimauma. How can Tampa Bay Water assure us that the reclaimed water won't make its way to the wellfield?

Mr. Hogg responded that the site-specific data from the test well site will be important to refine the models. That's key information the utility will update in its feasibility studies to make sure that the pumping won't cause any changes and that the reclaimed water being injected cannot make its way upstream to the wellfields against the gradient of flow. All the studies show the flow is persistent and strong east to west. The District would review this in the permitting process. They would double-check work before issuing any permits. We would also put monitoring wells to monitor the water quality and the aquifer levels to ensure we are not damaging the environment.

Ms. Robinson asked another online question: Will the proposed water treatment plant cause foul odors in the area?

Mr. Coleman said the processes for the water treatment plant would be enclosed, so they wouldn't be releasing any gasses to cause an odor.

Buddy Harwell asked whether the new 42-inch pipe running through the rural area would make it easier for developers to connect to it?

Ms. Robinson clarified that the 42-inch pipeline is a Hillsborough County pipeline. Mr. McCary said the 42-inch pipeline will carry water from the County's new water treatment plant to the Wimauma area. Although the final route is not yet determined, the pipeline will generally go from Big Bend Road in Balm Riverview south to State Road 674 and U.S. Highway 301. Regarding developers connecting to it, the short answer is that it will depend on the development. The County does not usually allow connections to its transmission mains, and there are other pipes in the area this main will serve.

Ms. Robinson asked Mr. McCary to discuss the urban service boundary. Mr. McCary said the new transmission main does not allow connections that wouldn't otherwise be allowed through current growth and land use policies.

Daniel Dixon asked if there was any scientific data that shows that the injected water won't interfere with the bay, stating concerns for red tide.

Mr. Greenwell said the County has ongoing monitoring for both recharge and the drinking water zones of the aquifer. He said the County's sampling shows no impact to the drinking water zone of the aquifer. The recharge wells are simply a freshening of the recharge zone. The County's drinking water has met all primary drinking water standards. If this water were not being injected in the recharge zone, it would be discharged directly into Tampa Bay, but instead it is injected to depths of 800-1,000 feet with 300 feet of confinement above it, which impedes any migration above it.

With no more questions, Ms. Robinson thanked participants for attending and shared that this meeting was the beginning of the public outreach process. Next year an integrated system manager will be looking at all the projects under consideration and putting together proposed configurations to bring before the board. Tampa Bay Water will share more information as it becomes available and looks forward to getting your input. She shared the Tampa Bay Water website (www.tampabaywater.org) and the specific URL for this project (www.tampabaywater.org/shw). She also shared Hillsborough County's website address (www.hcflgov.net) and said for planning questions to visit the Hillsborough Planning Commission (www.planhillsborough.org).

The meeting concluded at 7:55 p.m.

4. Survey Results

One hundred sixty-nine (169) people participated in the online survey. Results are presented in a separate report.

5. Signage, Social Media and Ads

Tampa Bay Water focused its efforts to reach residents in proximity of the proposed wellfield and to the general public.

On Aug. 3, 2021, Tampa Bay Water directly mailed a postcard to 4,055 homeowners/residents in a three-mile radius of the Balm/Balm Riverview intersection alerting them of the public meeting; 3,864 were verified delivered. On Aug. 11, 2021, staff



strategically placed signs near the intersection to be seen by residents traveling these roads.

Tampa Bay Water notified the general public by sending a news release to local media and posting the release to the utility's website on July 15, 2021. Additionally, information on the meeting and how to attend was listed in the utility's "Public Notices" section of the home page and in newsletter/blog articles, both of which linked to the South Hillsborough Wellfield Via Aquifer Recharge Credits page with an explanation of the meeting and a registration link.

Tampa Bay Water also used social media to reach the general public. The utility posted organically to Facebook (3,611 followers) and Twitter (1,888 followers). These posts directed readers to the utility's South Hillsborough Wellfield Via Aquifer Recharge Credits webpage for more information and a link to register for the meeting.

For people who could not attend the meeting, the meeting recording and slide deck were posted to the South Hillsborough Wellfield Via Aquifer Recharge Credits webpage after the meeting.



News release posted July 15, 2021:

Website notifications posted June 24 – July 28, 2021:



Signs placed on Aug. 11, 2021:

Two signs were placed at the intersection of Balm Road and Balm Riverview Road.



Twitter organic posts on July 12, 14, 20; Aug 10, 2021:



Facebook posts on July 12, 14, 20 and 28; and Aug. 10, and 16, 2021, and engagement results:





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Tampa Bay Water July 28 at 4:20 PM · 🔇

The Tampa Bay region is growing fast and will need an additional 10-20 million gallons of drinking water per day by 2028. A new wellfield in southern Hillsborough County, Florida Government is an option we're considering to meet this need. Join us at a virtual community meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 24, and let us know what you think. Learn about the project and register. http://ow.ly/dPWq50FFLfe







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Comment

Tampa Bay Water

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Tampa Bay Water Wants Public Input For New Project



By Brad Stage

Each day, Tampa Bay Water provides drinking water to more than 2.5 million customers in the Tampa Bay area. The region's growing population is creating a need for the utility to plan for a changing (butere, in which it said at least an additional 10 million gallons of water a day will be needed by 2028 to support anticipated growth.

In order to ensure water needs can be met, Tampa Bay Water is requesting public input on a proposed project that is intended to help maintain a reliable water supply, especially in Southern Hillsborough County, where a large amount of development is occurring.

According to Brandom Moore, public communications manager of Tampa Bay Water, involving the public is an essential part of the work the stilly performs. Reaidents can learn details about the project by visiting Tampa Bay Water's website and reviewing the information presended there, including a video. Feedback about the project can be provided via an online survey.

"Your voice counts," said Moore. "The 15 minutes you spend watching the video and answering the survey provides us valuable feedback we can share with the project team and will inform our board as they make their decisions on the next water projects."

The project's goal is to increase capacity of the region's aquifer to support demand by reducing saltwater intrusion into it.

This increase of capacity in distributable water would be achieved by constructing a series of recharge wells that inject reclaimed water underground that can serve as a barrier between the encreaching saltwater from the west and the aquifer's fresh water supply inland.

The injection sites would be along Southern Hillsborough County's coastline, in brackish areas of the aquifer.

Water treatment facilities will be built on Hillsborough County-owned land near the intersection of Balm and Balm Riverview Rds.

The volume of freshwater available for distribution to customers will increase and no reclaimed water will intrude into the welffield according to Tampa Bay Water, which said the project will increase water distribution capacity by 7.5 million gallons per day, and possibly even more.

There will also be a virtual public meeting on the project hosted by Tampa Bay Water on Tuesday, August 24 beginning at 6:30 p.m. The meeting requires preregistration at tampabaywater.org, where you can also review the video and other project materials as well as provide readback.



Post-meeting website offering recording posted Aug. 25, 2021:



6. Presentation



