



**Southbury Strategic Planning
Water Resources Considerations
Submitted by
Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition**

Introduction

The Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition (“PRWC”) greatly appreciates this opportunity to outline below what it proposes to be important strategic planning considerations relevant to the Town of Southbury’s water resources. Those resources include the streams and rivers within the community as well as the groundwater that serves its residents and businesses with drinking water supply.

The format below briefly identifies water resource-related strategic planning considerations and suggests an example question that may be helpful in thinking through broader questions for inclusion within a Town-wide survey.

PRWC applauds Strategic Planning Task Force members for their work and wishes them great success.

Water Resources Strategic Planning Considerations

1. Rivers and Streams as a Community Asset – Rivers and streams, including but not limited to the Pomperaug River, offer aesthetic, recreational and economic value to the community and serve as important aquatic and wildlife habitats. It is thought that continuing and enhancing the protection of these resources will remain of high interest to Southbury residents.

Example Question - What recreational uses of rivers and streams are important to you?

2. Groundwater Protection – Rivers and streams are linked to the groundwater we drink. Reduction in river flow impacts groundwater availability; use of groundwater impacts river flow. Safe and adequate drinking water supply and sufficient river flows to protect aquatic health can be competing needs for water resources. A balanced use of water resources must be understood and maintained and is an important component of long term strategic planning. The proposed State Water Plan, currently under review by our legislators, begins to address many of these water resource balance issues.

Example Question - How important would it be to you that competing uses of our water resources, such as those for drinking water and the aquatic health of our rivers and streams be properly balanced?

3. Water Conservation – Wise use of water should be understood and always practiced. Even with the rise in availability of low flow water use devices, public water conservation outreach remains important to informing the public on best practices. During periods of drought (which will be more common due to the impacts from climate change) water conservation for both public water supply and private well users is critical to maintain an adequate water supply and for the protection of our rivers and streams. Public water suppliers have conservation and drought emergency plans but lack enforcement rights.

Example Question - Would you benefit from and would you utilize education material that further informs you on best water conservation practices?

4. Drinking Water and Private Wells - There is a public health risk associated with drinking water from private wells that are not regularly maintained and tested for water quality safety. Private well users often do not understand potential risks of private well water supply or are not willing to take investigative action. Strategically the Town may want take a proactive look at private wells and programmatically plan first for community educational outreach and then a user-friendly approach to well sampling, analysis and treatment. This would involve engaging agencies such as state and local health departments, contracted water quality laboratories, well contractors and others.

Example Question - Do you feel that you adequately know of potential risks with your private well?

5. Point and Non-Point Source Pollution – Surface water (rivers, streams and wetlands) and groundwater may be impacted by both “point” (i.e. stormwater discharge) and “non-point” (i.e. land use) pollution. The Town has a robust pollution protection program that includes Town land use and wastewater commissions, state and local health department oversight with assistance from several local environmental organizations. While many of the programs are managed by the Town, there are opportunities for Town residents and businesses to provide meaningful help in protecting water quality.

Example Question - Would you like to learn more about the opportunities available to Town residents and businesses to improve water quality by participating in programs such as low impact development (LID) and best management practices (BMP)?

Submitted By: Len DeJong
PRWC Executive Director
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