Meeting Summary

Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study

December 4, 2024
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
St. Leo University, Student Community Center Boardroom

Attendees: 58 Pasco County residents (by headcount)

Two Pasco County Representatives

- David Allen, Director, Pasco County Utilities
- Francisco Pavez, Senior Program Manager, Pasco County Utilities

Eight members of the Project Team

- Warren Hogg, P.G. Chief Science Officer, Tampa Bay Water
- Danielle Keirsey, PMP, Senior Project Manager, Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study, Tampa Bay Water
- Deanna Hamilton, P.E., Project Manager, Black & Veach
- Jeff Trommer, P.G., Hydrogeologist, WSP
- Stephanie Paredes, Water/Wastewater Engineer, AECOM
- Brandon Moore, APR, Public Communications Manager, Tampa Bay Water
- Nicole Miller, Public Engagement Consultant, Versant Strategies
- Michelle Robinson, APR, Public Engagement Consultant, Dialogue Public Relations

1. Welcome/Introductions

The meeting began with an open house, where participants viewed display boards with information about Tampa Bay Water, the Long-Term Master Water Plan, the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study and siting criteria, potential sites, schedule and next steps. Tampa Bay Water staff answered residents' questions one-on-one.

Following the open house, the presentation and question and answer portion of the meeting began at 6:33 p.m. with a welcome/introduction by Nicole Miller, public engagement consultant for the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study. Nicole shared agenda for the evening and then introduced Danielle Keirsey, Tampa Bay Water's senior project manager for the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study.

2. Presentation: Tampa Bay Water

Danielle shared the purpose of the public meeting was to explain the process Tampa Bay Water uses to investigate and select new water supply sources and to provide information on the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study, one of seven potential projects being considered as part of the Long-Term Master Water Plan to meet the region's water needs in 2033 and beyond.

Below are highlights from Tampa Bay Water's presentation. To review the presentation slides, visit https://www.tampabaywater.org/wp-content/uploads/EPW-Public-Meeting-01042024.pdf

Tampa Bay Water Background

- Tampa Bay Water is the region's drinking water utility, a not-for-profit government agency, created by state legislation and by contract with the member governments.
- Tampa Bay Water supplies wholesale water to member governments in the Tampa Bay region; does not supply water directly to residents.
- Six member governments: Pasco, Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, and the cities of New Port Richey, St. Petersburg and Tampa.
- Supplies 200 million gallons per day (mgd) of drinking water to its member governments who serve 2.6 million people and businesses in Tampa Bay region.

Long-Term Master Water Plan

- Tampa Bay Water has enough water to meet the region's demand for the next seven years but planning needs to happen now to meet future water demand.
- Since 1998, Tampa Bay Water has invested more than $2 billion to build more diverse water supply projects through an interconnected system that withdraws, treats, and delivers water from three different sources – river water, groundwater from the aquifer and seawater from Tampa Bay.
- Diversifying production reduced reliance on groundwater allowing the environment to recover over the past 25 years.
- Tampa Bay Water is investigating how to meet growing demand for drinking water supply in the 2033 timeframe.
- Tampa Bay Water does not have any authority to control growth. Tampa Bay Water is required by governing contracts and state law to supply water to member governments.
- Pasco and Hillsborough counties are the fastest growing in the region.
- Tampa Bay Water's Master Water Plan is updated every five years which produces a list of potential projects for further study. Feasibility studies determine if a project is technically, environmentally and economically sustainable by providing more information on permittability, yields, water quality and costs. Projects that are deemed infeasible may remove the potential project from consideration.

- Tampa Bay Water's Board approved seven potential projects for further study in November 2023. The Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study was one of the seven potential projects approved for further study and consideration.

Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study

- This study explores the development of a fresh groundwater wellfield and/or a brackish water wellfield.
- The approximate water yield is 9 mgd.
- Study includes construction of test and monitor wells and conducting aquifer performance tests producing data on water quality and quantity and modeling data to determine the aquifer's response to pumping.
- Step 1 – Acquire property for the test wells.

Property Acquisition

- The property search area was selected where potential new brackish water and/or fresh groundwater withdrawals may be available.
- An area where downdraw will not impact the Hillsborough River Groundwater Basin.

Site Selection Process

- Site selection criteria included protecting the environment, protecting public drinking water, protecting natural and cultural resources, constructability, and cost.
- Public input was considered in the site selection criteria; 158 residents ranked well site selection criteria in July 2024.
- Both public and private parcels were considered.
- Pasco County property became top ranked option for test/monitor well site location
- Pasco County Commission will vote on easement for the study well site in January 2025.

Test/Monitor Well Property

- Location – Trina Rd., east of Powerline Rd.
- Construction of 14-foot-wide driveway from Powerline Rd.
- Core hole drilled on north side.
- Test & monitor wells.
- 200-foot buffer west/north side from property line; southern 130-foot buffer.
- Working with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) on plan for discharge water.

Schedule

January 2025 – Pasco Co. Commission votes on easement for study test and monitor wells.

Q1 2025 – Clear site for test/monitor wells.

Q4 2025 – Aquifer performance tests for fresh water.

Q3 2026 – Aquifer performance tests for brackish groundwater.

Q2 2027 – Final report on the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study.

Q4 2027 – Water supply configuration recommendations to the Tampa Bay Water Board.

3. Audience Question-and-Answer Session

Following the Tampa Bay Water presentation, Nicole facilitated the audience question-and-answer session. Nicole introduced members of the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study team who answered the audience's questions. Below are the questions and comments received during this portion of the meeting along with the team's response.

Q: Are we the least populated area where a project is being considered? Are we the number one target?

A: Tampa Bay Water selected projects for study that are diverse by location, spread among the three counties, and diverse by source– river water, groundwater, brackish water and seawater.

Q: How long have Pasco County Commissioners known about the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study?

A. Tampa Bay Water completed the Master Water Plan update in 2023 and discussed with the Pasco Commission. All members have known about the feasibility studies for one and a half years.

Q: What is the concentrate from the brackish water groundwater that will be injected deep into the Aquifer?

A: If the brackish water portion of the project is feasible, the project proposes to inject the concentrated brackish water, which will have higher chlorides (salt), into the deep aquifer, where the water is saltier and of worse quality than the concentrate. (***Post-meeting clarification:*** This is only a consideration if the project concept is selected for implementation by Tampa Bay Water's board in late 2028. It is not part of the currently Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study.)

Q: If you choose to put wells in Pasco County, what will the size of the drop pipe be? I know it won't be 1.25 inches.

A: In the Upper Floridan Aquifer (fresh water), the well diameter will be a minimum of 16- 20 inches, with a 16-inch casing to 200 feet and open bore hole to 500 feet. The Lower Floridan Aquifer well (brackish water) will have a similar pipe diameter and casing to 1,700 feet. with an open bore hole down to 2,200 feet. Brackish water has higher chlorides and sulfates, which are separated out when the water goes through reverse osmosis. That concentrated brackish water would go down an injection well to 4000-5000 feet into a different zone of the aquifer. The deep injection well would only happen if the project were selected and only if part of the wellfield includes brackish water.

Q: Do you pull water out of the Tampa Bypass Canal? When the Tampa Bypass Canal was constructed, it was a 6-mile creek that could barely keep water in it. Since then, it has water from the underground aquifer flowing into it, which was once good water before going out into the Bay. Now, it has to go through the Desal plant which doesn't make any sense to me. In digging out the Bypass Canal, three springs opened up.

A: The Tampa Bypass Canal is one of Tampa Bay Water's regional water supply sources. When conditions are right and water is there, Tampa Bay Water is permitted to take up to 258 mgd, pulling from surface water and any groundwater in the canal from where the aquifer was breached when the Canal was constructed. Water from the Tampa Bypass Canal is treated at our Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant, not the Tampa Bay Desalination Plant.

Q: Have you done any studies with the volume of water that you will pull out of the wellfield? Concerned about sinkholes.

A: The Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study is being done to evaluate potential impacts, like sinkholes.

Q: Site selection appears to target potential development in Northeast Pasco. Prior to today, this potential project was to address water demands in Dade City and Zephyrhills. Are you doing this in anticipation of some proposed developments that are not allowed to go forward without water resources?

A: Tampa Bay Water provides regional water sources for regional use. Projects are not selected for a specific development. Tampa Bay Water doesn't serve Dade City or Zephyrhills.

Q: Why have drawdowns in the Northwest Regional Hillsborough Wellfield gone down? Was it due to problems or have withdrawals been instructed to go down? Lakes in Hillsborough issued pumping permits have nearly dried up.

A: The Consolidated Water Use Permit required pumping cutbacks from 160 mgd to 90 mgd between 2002 and 2007. Tampa Bay Water spreads that 90 mgd annual average among wellfields in three counties to minimize concentrated withdrawals, and the environment has recovered. Lake levels were low due to drought conditions this past year, but during that timeframe, Tampa Bay Water wasn't pulling water from the nearby wellfields.

Q: How many potential projects that have gone through the Feasibility Study process have been rejected?

A: Not all projects that go through the Feasibility Study process move forward. Some are not permittable, some have environmental impacts, some are too expensive.

The next Long-Term Master Water Plan for 2033 is studying seven projects; between one to three of them will meet the water supply need for the future.

Q. My question is about drilling a well in this area. When our Commissioner who represents this area sits on your Board. That is highly suspicious to us as to why this site was selected. And because we know the Evans Company has that piece of property in the upper corner where they are projecting to build 4500 suburban transition homes in the northeast rural area. We are highly suspicious of why this potential project was selected. Those houses cannot be on wells. Your project is the first domino in the gutting of the Northeast rural area and our County Commission is giving you the red carpet to go forward with that. How did you select this location? Nine million gallons per day is not a lot of water for what you are projecting to fulfill. Our County Commission approved a surf park, with more lagoon projects in the metro area. This is a poor use of water and now with this proposed project it could decimate the Northeastern protected area and potentially impact our private wells.

A: Tampa Bay Water is a wholesale water supplier created to meet the water needs of our members. Each year, they give us their future water demands that we must meet. All growth is handled by the member government; our obligation is to meet their drinking water needs. We do that by finding new sources in places where there will be no impact. It is likely we will move forward with more than one smaller project as multiple small projects across a wide area reduce environmental impacts. (***Post-meeting clarification:*** Tampa Bay Water staff and consultants developed the screening criteria used in the 2023 Long-term Master Water Plan process which yielded the short-list of projects that were recommenced to Tampa Bay Water's board of directors. Individual projects go through a thorough evaluation process; board members play no role that process.)

Q. I'm concerned about injection wells and what happened with injection wells in Texas. Now they have earthquakes every hour. I don't want to see this happen here.

A. Injection wells in Texas are high pressure wells and totally different than the injection wells we are proposing, if the brackish portion of the project is feasible. If we do an injection well, it would be gravity or perhaps low pressure, like 50 pounds per square inch (psi).

Comment: Stop the rubber stamping of development.

A: Tampa Bay Water is a wholesale water supply authority that must meet water demands of its six member governments. All growth is up to member governments.

Q. There is a lot of land in that area that used to be agricultural and used lots of chemicals. Polk County found chemicals at 10 miles deep. All those places had orange groves that the 1989 freeze wiped out. North of the site sits an 80-acre orange grove. You need to study the water quality before you go further.

A. The Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study includes the full suite of water quality parameters including PFAS and is evaluating historical aerials for all three counties.

Comment: We don't have excess water here. Desal may be a better way to go to keep East Pasco from looking like West Pasco.

A: Tampa Bay Water considers a mix of water supply options spread across the three counties. An expansion of the Tampa Bay Desalination plant is one of the feasibility studies.

Q. Will there be a wastewater treatment plant?

A. Tampa Bay Water will not be building a wastewater treatment plant. (*Post-meeting clarification:* Tampa Bay Water is responsible for providing potable drinking water only and does not have wastewater operations. Wastewater is handled by our member governments.*)*

Q. What will be done with the brackish water collected during the aquifer performance tests?

A: The freshwater Upper Floridan aquifer test production well will be pumped during the brackish Lower Floridan Aquifer test production well APT to provide dilution of the brackish water to a salinity required for discharge to the ground.

Q. The Eastern Pasco Feasibility Study is investigating two pump wells and five data points. Will this provide enough data to determine if this project is feasible?

A. The number and position of monitor wells is sufficient to derive the aquifer parameters needed to update the groundwater models that will be used to evaluate the feasible groundwater withdrawal quantities from the wellfield.

Q: Where will blended water go?

A: The blended water will be discharged on the test site.

Q. What are the criteria for determining potential impacts on the Hillsborough River Groundwater Basin?

A. The Hillsborough River is not meeting minimum flow. Projects must have zero impact and demonstrate 0.0 drawdown in order for SWFWMD to grant the water use permit.

Q. The problem lies in development. The County Commission approves development, and you have to fulfill the need. I've seen failed projects in Central Florida where Gov. Bush commissioned a studied on deep well injection of effluent in contaminated waters. Are you aware of this study?

A. We are not aware of the study, but deep well injection is used throughout Florida for reverse osmosis concentrate and municipal reclaimed water.

Q. What are the potential detrimental effects of this project based on previous case histories? Publish previous studies.

A. When wellfields were over permitted and over pumped, negative impacts happened to lakes and wetlands. Where that happened in our system, the withdrawal rate was cut and the environment recovered over time. The aquifer performance test for this project will look at potential impacts to residential and agricultural lands and water quality. For a project to be permitted, it can't have these negative effects. If a project is selected for development, Tampa Bay Water continues to monitor the environment and water quality after the project comes online.

Q: Could the project be shut down if negative effects are found after it begins operation?

A: Yes, Tampa Bay Water cut wellfield permits in half, when over pumping occurred and the environment needed to recover. The Water Management District has the authority to reduce any permitted use of water if adverse impacts occur.

Q. Your agency is an entity for six local governments. Is the reason you are studying this potential project because of overdevelopment by these particular governments? Go back to governments and tell them to stop developing.

A. Tampa Bay Water must meet the need of member governments. We are obligated by state law and member government contracts to meet their water needs today and in the future.

Q: Why aren't you looking at doing more desal plants instead of drawing water from the ground? We don't have excess water here. Look at what happened in Spring Hill. Concern about overdrawing and causing sinkholes.

A: Tampa Bay Water looks at projected member governments' demands and starts planning years in advance. It takes up to 10 years to study, permit and build projects. Tampa Bay Water responds to the demands of member governments. Tampa Bay Water is looking at expanding the existing desalination plant and will look at additional desal plants to meet future demand.

Q: The study will look at the Hillsborough River Basin. Are any studies being done on impacts to the Withlacoochee River and Silver Lake? The Withlacoochee is flowing now, but there have been years you could walk through the thing.

A: The project's analysis will investigate that there is no drawdown on the Hillsborough River Basin. SWFWMD is currently doing a minimum flow study on the Withlacoochee River. When the minimum flow is established, withdrawals can't have a negative impact on any body of water - the Hillsborough River Basin or the Withlacoochee River. Our project cannot go forward if it would harm either river.

Q: If your project is granted, and the long-term effects are unknown, how will the Good Neighbor Policy apply?

A: Tampa Bay Water must obtain a water use permit from SWFWMD. The same permitting process applies through a feasibility study to make sure that there won't be impacts on local wells. Tampa Bay

Water created the Domestic Well Mitigation program, a mitigation program that repairs or replaces domestic well in specified radius, if a water level-related problem occurs. If the Eastern Pasco Wellfield project proved feasible and moved forward, the Domestic Well Mitigation program would apply.

Q: How many wells do you plan to install, if the project is granted?

A: The feasibility study will determine how many well sites will be needed.

Q: Will the Tampa Bay Water board meeting be moved to accommodate people in the area?

A: The Tampa Bay Water board meetings take place on the third Monday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in Clearwater (unless there is a holiday). All meetings are live streamed and recorded for those unable to attend in person. Public comment may be provided in person, via teleconference during the public comment portion of the meeting, or by submitting written comments for the record and distributed to the Board. Anyone wishing to speak in person must submit a completed speaker card to a board clerk prior to the beginning of the meeting. To submit written comment or to participate via teleconference, please contact Krista Simon at 727-791-2347 by 4:00 p.m. the Friday before each meeting. Each speaker shall have a maximum of three (3) minutes to address the Board on any matter on the agenda. For more information and a schedule of Tampa Bay Water' board meetings, please visit www.tampabaywater.org/board-meetings.

Q. If a well produces poorly, will Tampa Bay Water drill a new well because a water use permit has been granted? Will wells be replaced with another well if there is poor water quality, like with one of the Brandon Wells?

A: If Tampa Bay Water were to build a wellfield, and a well produces poorly, there are many options. Tampa Bay Water could replace the well with a new well at another site or another operating well at another site could already meet the demand and no replacement would be necessary. Tampa Bay Water looks at this on a case-by-case basis. If a replacement well were to be built, the same siting criteria and permitting would apply.

Q: Are all sites A-G occurring at the same time, or if not, what is the sequence?

A: Yes, all seven potential projects are being studied at the same time. The South Hillsborough Wellfield Recharge Feasibility Study (G) is complete, and back on the table for consideration.

Q: All or some of these projects are going to happen. Who gets the final say? Who can stop it?

A: Not all projects being studied will be recommended. Public input is taken into consideration on all potential projects. The data findings from the feasibility studies could stop a potential project. We must develop projects to meet the demand of the member governments. (***Post-meeting clarification***: Only feasible projects are put forward for consideration. Once feasibility studies are complete, Tampa Bay Water will analyze how a potential project or group of projects might fit into its regional system from a hydraulic and water quality perspective, among other factors. Tampa Bay

Water expects to review potential project groupings with its board of directors in mid- to late 2027 with a recommendation grouping going before the board for approval in late 2027.)

Q: Is Tampa Bay Water private?

A: Tampa Bay Water is a public state agency that serves six customers – Pasco County, Hillsborough County, Pinellas County, City of New Port Richey, City of St. Petersburg and City of Tampa. Tampa Bay Water is a non-for-profit government agency.

Q: Does Tampa Bay Water work with the SWFWMD? Does SWFWMD have a say in the feasibility study?

A: Any time water is withdrawn from the environment - a lake, river, aquifer, etc., Tampa Bay Water must obtain a water use permit from SWFWMD. Their rules can stop a project from moving forward. If a withdrawal doesn't meet their strict criteria, they will not issue a water use permit, and the study/project will not move forward. SWFWMD is the regulator who oversees, reviews and evaluates data to determine if a permit should be granted.

Q: You mentioned drilling 20-inch wells. SWFWMD requires meters on any well over four inches Is SWFWMD going to meter your wells?

A: All Tampa Bay Water wells have a flow meter. Tampa Bay Water records the number of gallons that comes out of each well each day. Tampa Bay Water submits monthly and annual reports to SWFWMD detailing the quantity pumped and water quality for each well. The data are evaluated annually.

Q: Does SWFWMD charge you for the metered water?

A: No, water is a resource of the state. The water use permit grants permission to use the water for a set period of time, usually a minimum of 10 years. Typical water use permits are for 10 to 20 years.

Q: Why are you not considering another desal plant instead of a project in the conservation area? Why not another desal plant in Pinellas?

A: Tampa Bay Water studied the desal plant at Anclote at same time as the Tampa Bay Desal Plant. Additional desal plants will be considered in the future. One feasibility study is looking at if it's possible to make the Tampa Bay Desal Plant a larger water supply source without having any environmental impacts.

Tampa Bay Water balances the source type groundwater, surface water and desalinated seawater– look across all geographic areas. It's important to determine what water is available, safe and permittable. Tampa Bay Water updates its Long-term Master Water Plan every five years, and if additional water is needed, the board considers feasibility studies for new projects every five years.

Q: Is the Northeast Pasco area being studied because of potential growth in this area?

A: Tampa Bay Water conducted a thorough site selection process, considering various criteria – protecting environment, water supply, natural resources, constructability, access to the site, availability of water underground. The study area shifted based on these criteria.

The Environmental Lands Acquisition and Management Program property is not this study area. Tampa Bay Water partnered with member governments to protect wildlife, their habitats and conservation lands.

Q: Pasco County Utilities owns this land which makes this land easier and cheaper for Tampa Bay Water, correct?

A: Partnering with Pasco County has advantages from a schedule perspective. This is one of the longest projects due to the number of studies needing to be done. The partnership makes the process easier, however there are other private lands Tampa Bay Water considered as viable options.

Q: What class well is this?

A: This is a class one well. (*Post-meeting clarification:* If the project is approved, the potential injection will be a class one well.)

Q: Where does the data come from for your projected growth?

A: Demand projections are updated each year. Raw data comes from many sources – University of Florida BEBR, U.S. Census and Moody's Analytics. These sources show projections on anticipated population growth. Tampa Bay Water models these projections and then meets with member governments to discuss.

Q: Do member governments share the growth projection data?

A: Yes. Member governments share the future land use planning maps. We do regional planning for regional water at 20 existing points of connection where Tampa Bay Water's system connects to the local member government's system. Member governments distribute water to where it's needed. Tampa Bay Water doesn't control where growth happens.

Q: Is the data available to the public?

A: All data is accessible to the public. Tampa Bay Water will provide an update on demand projections at the January board meeting. The agenda is posted online at www.tampabaywater.org about 10 days prior to the meeting, and the community can make a request for any additional data.

Q: How big is the test site?

A: The test site is 20 acres.

Q: Are there plans for a wastewater treatment plant on the site?

David Allen, Pasco County Utilities answered this question.

A: David said that Pasco County doesn't have any plans for a wastewater treatment plant on this site. Pasco County originally purchased the land for building a wastewater treatment plant, and the option is still on the table. Pasco County needs to prepare for projected growth based on studies, which is why the space is being reserved as an option for a wastewater treatment plant, if the Eastern Pasco Wellfield project moves forward. (***Post-meeting clarification:*** Tampa Bay Water is a regional wholesaler of drinking water and provides drinking water to Pasco County through several pipelines. Tampa Bay Water does not own, build, operate or have any input or control over where its members, including Pasco County, plan to locate future infrastructure, including wastewater treatment facilities. Tampa Bay Water's feasibility study is simply an exploration of the potential availability of groundwater as a future drinking water supply.)

Should the project prove feasible, Tampa Bay Water must coordinate the possible location of any groundwater wells with Pasco County Utilities. The locations of possible production wells is not yet known.

Tampa Bay Water and Pasco County prioritize the protection of public water supply and public health. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has established minimum setback requirements (the minimum distance from a wastewater treatment plant to a public supply well) of 500 feet for Upper Floridan wells and 1,000 feet for Lower Floridan wells. Tampa Bay Water has a minimum setback requirement of 1,000 feet for all water supply wells. As a result, preliminary well test and monitor well locations are at least 1,000 feet from the site of any potential future wastewater treatment plant. Should the project prove feasible and be approved for development, Tampa Bay Water would work to site future wells in locations that would protect the public's drinking water supplies.

Q: How quickly is a well replaced under the Good Neighbor Policy?

A: The water use permit dictates that Tampa Bay Water must respond within 24 hours of receiving the call about a domestic well mitigation issue. Within 48 hours, Tampa Bay Water must perform an investigation of the well. Tampa Bay Water understands water is a necessity and, in the past, has reimbursed residents for water needed in the interim or delivered bottle water.

Q: Are you going to replace water, if wells run dry?

If a domestic use well runs dry, Tampa Bay Water ensures water is received quickly, whether by delivering bottled water or reimbursing for water until the water supply is restored.

Q: We have cattle that require a minimum of eight gallons of water per day. If our well goes dry, will you only supply for humans? Our cows can't produce milk without water.

A: When a well fails in an area, we work with the homeowner to make sure immediate needs are addressed. (***Post-meeting clarification:*** Tampa Bay Water has a well mitigation policy that applies to domestic wells. When we receive a complaint about a domestic well, we respond within 24 hours. If the complaint is a water level-related issue within a defined mitigation area around a wellfield, the well will be mitigated at no expense to the homeowner. Mitigation could include repair of the well or full replacement of the well, depending on individual site conditions. If cattle are also watered by a domestic well, both uses would be mitigated under this policy.

Tampa Bay Water also has a separate policy that relates to ranch operations (the Ranch Operators Assistance Program). If wellfield pumping impacts agricultural well(s) so that livestock wells cannot supply the quantity of water needed (which had been able to be met), Tampa Bay Water will investigate and mitigate the impact by repair or replacement of the well(s) under an agreement between the landowner and our agency. Under this policy, the well will be mitigated if pumping from one or more Tampa Bay Water wellfields adversely impacted the well(s).

Q: What will you do about protected gopher tortoises at wellfields?

A: Gopher tortoises can't be impacted by test well or wellfield development. We have created habitats for gopher tortoises at other wellfields. Tampa Bay Water will work with Fish and Wildlife to ensure any gopher tortoises onsite are protect or relocated.

Comment: We are rural. We don't want this crap. We don't want another Villages.

The question-and-answer period extended an extra 30 minutes to ensure that all residents had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered by the Tampa Bay Water Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study team. The public meeting concluded at 8pm.

Following the Tampa Bay Water presentation, Nicole facilitated the audience question-and-answer session. Nicole introduced members of the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study team who answered the audience's questions. Below are the questions and comments received during this portion of the meeting along with the team's response.

5. Comments collected via comment form

Four comment cards received from public meeting attendees

Q1: Did the presentation and open house help you better understand the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study and other studies being considered as part of the Long-Term Master Water Plan?

Somewhat - 4
Yes - 0
No - 0
Comments to Q1:

- I don't understand how a short-term feasibility study using test wells can predict long-term negative effects. You did not address this issue.
- Thank you for the meeting. I understand why you must find water, but if sinkholes happen here because of this, how will you help the people dealing with sinkholes?

- Still aware no new residential usage required by major development.

Q2: After this meeting, I now understand the need to study potential new water supply projects to mee the growing demand for the Tampa Bay region.

Responses:

Yes - 0
Somewhat - 1
No – 2
*One person did not answer this question
Comments to Q2:

- I understand the need to put a halt to unrestricted growth.
- I understand why you do this, but not why you chose this area. You are protecting the Hillsborough River, but what about the Withlacoochee River?
- As stated, check the past chemical application to recharge areas such as at this site.

Additional Comments from the Comment Forms:

- Why is Ron Oakley on Tampa Bay Water's Board of Directors? This is a conflict of interest. How do you adequately determine the long-term effects on local wells, or potential sinkholes with just test wells?
- How do you connect into the government water lines? Do you connect or do they? Also, where will the water lines leaving this wellfield be run? Such as which roads? How deep are the test wells and how many are you drilling?

Per the completed comment forms, three attendees asked to be added to the Tampa Bay Water distribution list to receive updates on the Eastern Pasco Wellfield Feasibility Study.

6. Email comment received 12/5/2024

I object to the new site. Pasco find a backbone and stand up to Swiftmud's demands of using Pasco's water resources for every other county in Florida. Reclaim our water rights from Pinellas and so be it if they must go desalination that is their problem with over development not ours. Why create sink holes in East Pasco for Pinellas to water their beach front lawns? Why? Gone are the days of getting kickbacks for water rights the public sees it. Too many of our natural resources are being plundered. So just say no to draining every drop out of Pasco to slake the thirsty lawns of Pinellas beach communities. Pasco is tired of sink holes; we are built on water to take that water out from under us is to destroy our foundations. And for what ?, to also give it away ? Don't you do it. Stop stealing our foundations and our water rights. Build desal for Pinellas don't steal from Pasco County residents, landowners, and voters.