

City of Bellingham Department of Public Works  
Homeowner Incentive Program  
Evaluation Plan

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## Program Background

Phosphorus loading in Lower Lake Whatcom is decreasing water quality and increasing water treatment costs. Because the cost of municipal interventions (augmented water treatment capability) is substantially greater than private homeowner interventions (infiltration structures, lawn removal, native plantings etc.) the City of Bellingham, through its Homeowner Incentive Program, henceforth HIP, offers homeowners reimbursement up to \$6000 and technical assistance for the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reduce phosphorous loading and run off. The program is funded by a Department of Ecology Water Quality Financial Assistance grant and only homeowners within the Bellingham City limits of the Silver Beach Creek sub-basin of the Lower Lake Whatcom watershed are eligible for participation. The 5-year grant term ends in 2014.

Eligible homeowners interested in participation may request a site visit from City of Bellingham Public Works. During a site visit homeowner's landscaping goals are discussed with City staff to determine what, if any, Best Management Practices could be implemented and eligible for reimbursement. Should a homeowner decide to pursue implementation, City staff will complete both the design and permitting process as needed and provide participants and/or contractors with blueprints and approved materials lists. After completing construction, Public Works staff returns to the site and conduct an inspection to confirm the design was followed and is eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement forms are then filed and, pending approval, the homeowner receives a check within 2-3 weeks.

During the first years of the grant period, HIP successfully recruited a progressive sub-set of the eligible population that would ultimately become the program's 'early adopters'. Since completing these projects, successful recruitment of new participants has slowed. Key internal stakeholders differ somewhat in their goals for an evaluation of HIP. Program staff would like to move forward during the final year of funding by developing a more nuanced understanding of how program strategies can be more effective. This question is seen from both an outreach/recruitment perspective as well as a process/implementation perspective. Additionally, Public Works leadership is concerned with the question of how to effectively address the phosphorus issue once grant funds are no longer available.

### Key Stakeholders:

- Clare Fogelsong, Natural Resources Policy Manager, Bellingham Public Works  
Clare supervises Eli and Emily, and the implementation of HIP.
- Eli Mackiewicz, Engineering Technician, Bellingham Public Works  
Conducts site visits, creates project plans, acquires the necessary permits, monitors project implementation, arranges for reimbursements, executes outreach and develops relationships with homeowners. Eli dedicates approximately 45% of his time to HIP.
- Emily Johnson, Environmental Educator, Bellingham Public Works  
Creates brochures, mailings, and other outreach materials. Emily dedicates approximately 10% of her time to HIP.

Previous evaluations relevant to HIP are limited to a focus group conducted in 2008 by the Department of Public Works to better understand homeowner participation in a rain barrel program. The results of this focus group were reported to the City of Bellingham and also used to

adjust outreach tactics to better address perceptual barriers to rain barrel use among homeowners. While reflecting on this program and focus group, one Public Works employee was struck by how much more advanced programming strategies have become.

The program context is highly complex, with social and psychological dimensions making the most effective next steps unclear. As a means of developing a more in depth understanding of these factors and addressing program staff needs for the immediate term, we have proposed and developed support for a focus group structured as a formative assessment of the program and also a form of market research seeking to understand the population which is most likely to be recruited.

<b>Evaluation Type</b>
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After a preliminary assessment meeting with the HIP team on January 17<sup>th</sup>, a number of aspirations for the evaluation project became clear. Some of these ideas were:

- Prioritize/rank homeowners (i.e. retrofitting older neighborhoods and lakefront properties might be higher priorities than others)
- Determine why people are discontinuing their involvement with HIP
- Determine which forms of contact are most time effective/preferred
- Determine which messenger(s) (City employees, WWU students, private entities, etc.) are best received when communicating about HIP
- Rank outreach tactics in terms of successes with various groups of HIP adopters (i.e. what encouraged the ‘early adopters’ to act so quickly, what discouraged others from acting at all?)

As such, Emily, Eli, Mollie, Colby and Katie decided that the most appropriate project would be to do the groundwork for focus groups to be implemented at later dates. More specifically, we developed the procedures for focus groups in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach techniques. The development of focus groups is critical to understanding why some individuals participate in the program and others do not, and to determine the most effective outreach techniques for fostering participation. Our tasks included: 1) creating a logic model 2) assessing stakeholder needs and priorities 3) determine focus group audience/participant groups 4) developing focus group questions and 5) developing the procedures for the focus groups.

With specific reference to which *type of evaluation or approach to evaluating* was most appropriate, there were a few. First, the footwork necessary for the eventual evaluation aligns most closely with the description of ‘**evaluability assessment.**’ In order to better understand HIP, we ‘refined program logic, articulated the underlying cause-effect relations, assessed resources and activities, etc.’

Using the logic model, we moved to a more directed type of evaluation using a combination of ‘**formative evaluation**’ and ‘**implementation monitoring**’ tactics. More specifically, formative evaluation is described as: ‘guiding program improvement, determining how well the program model works, determining the barriers to adoption, etc.’ Furthermore, the role/style of a formative evaluator is that of a ‘consultant: interactive, perceptive, and insightful.’ Likewise, implementation monitoring is defined as asking the following questions: ‘How well is the program delivered? What are the patterns of use and delivery? What are the biases in coverage or failures in implementation? Is the target audience accessible? Are participants/stakeholders satisfied?’

Considering the AEA (Utility) Standards for Evaluators, and given the needs of the internal stakeholders (Public Works), formative evaluation and implementation monitoring tactics made the most sense. The Utility Standards ask evaluators to consider:

***U1 Evaluator Credibility*** *Evaluations should be conducted by qualified people who establish and maintain credibility in the evaluation context.*

***U2 Attention to Stakeholders*** *Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program and affected by its evaluation.*

***U3 Negotiated Purposes*** *Evaluation purposes should be identified and continually negotiated based on the needs of stakeholders.*

***U4 Explicit Values*** *Evaluations should clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning purposes, processes, and judgments.*

***U5 Relevant Information*** *Evaluation information should serve the identified and emergent needs of stakeholders.*

***U6 Meaningful Processes and Products*** *Evaluations should construct activities, descriptions, and judgments in ways that encourage participants to rediscover, reinterpret, or revise their understandings and behaviors.*

***U7 Timely and Appropriate Communicating and Reporting*** *Evaluations should attend to the continuing information needs of their multiple audiences.*

***U8 Concern for Consequences and Influence*** *Evaluations should promote responsible and adaptive use while guarding against unintended negative consequences and misuse*

Bearing in mind the scope of this HIP evaluation project, the aforementioned utility standards have been actively considered and worked towards. Particular attention has been paid to our stakeholders, their explicit values, meaningful processes and products, and timely/appropriate communicating and reporting.

And, given the current stage of the HIP, formative evaluation and implementation monitoring tactics made more sense than say ‘goals clarification’ or ‘summative evaluation.’ The project is far enough along that the goals are already well articulated. Similarly, the project is simply a work in progress, so a summative evaluation would not yet make sense. When the grant expires (in 2014) however, and the project *is* complete, a summative evaluation will make much more sense.

In sum, our work with City of Bellingham Department of Public Works, as third party evaluators, led us to design an evaluation with elements of an evaluability assessment, formative evaluation, and implementation monitoring.

#### *Similar Projects*

Focus group procedures provided below were adapted from the University of Idaho’s “Methods for Conducting Educational Needs Assessment.” Considerations were made to program and situational context as well as assessment and stakeholder needs.

### Evaluation Question

Evaluation questions were formed to gain a better understanding of general homeowner characteristics, site visit experiences, perceived or actual barriers to participation, and insight into improving HIP messaging and consequently, homeowner participation. In the context of HIP, barriers are considered anything homeowners believe they will have to give up in order to accomplish the Best Management Practices, concerns they have about participation, misconceptions or beliefs about the value of Best Management Practices, phosphorus reduction, and HIP in general. Information gained from evaluation questions serve to inform messaging, communication techniques, incentives, and implementation procedures and aid HIP stakeholders in revamping or improving the program to meet the needs of the homeowners and assist them in overcoming barriers to participation.

Silver Beach Neighborhood residents have been categorized into four groups based on their participation level in HIP:

- 1) Homeowners who successfully implemented and completed Best Management Practices,
- 2) Homeowners who had a site visit but did not further pursue implementation,
- 3) Homeowners who said they were willing to participate in HIP but did not continue contact, and
- 4) Homeowners who made no contact.

Through an initial divergent phase of question development, we devised questions for each homeowner group and obtained feedback from stakeholders on questions and their preferred homeowner group for the purposes of an initial focus group. For the purpose of obtaining the most valuable and cost-effective information from a focus group, we collectively chose Group 2: homeowners who had a site visit but did not pursue further implementation. Individuals from this group would likely provide valuable and timely insight into how to increase their participation and would be the most likely group to participate in a focus group. Group 1 would not provide the additional needed information on how to alter messaging, and Groups 3 and 4 would likely not be willing to participate in a focus group.

Following the divergent phase, the group focused on selecting and prioritizing questions based on utility and feasibility. Following NAAEE Evaluation Standard guidelines, considerations were given to ensure that the questions will be useful for the stakeholders, provide novel contributions towards improving HIP, illicit results that provide actionable suggestions, adhere to appropriate needs of the stakeholders, and can be answered within the given time, money and availability of staff and focus group participants.

As a result, six questions, below, serve as the framing for developing focus group specific questions.

- 1) Describe your awareness of Lake Whatcom water quality issues, specifically phosphorus levels. How would you rate your interest in improving water quality on Lake Whatcom?
- 2) What motivated you to request a site visit?
- 3) Describe your site visit experience.
- 4) After the visit, were you interested in any of the potential HIP-eligible projects suggested? Which ones? What about these projects interested you?
- 5) If not, are there any specific reasons why you chose not to continue participation.

- 6) What would motivate you to reengage in HIP and once reengaged, complete a project?

These questions focus on the critical needs of HIP stakeholders, and while they do not address all the needs, were selected for their immediate utility and feasibility to inform a broader understanding of necessary actions. Additional focus groups may pose questions that provide insight into the specific operations of technical advice, social marketing procedures to increase social norms of HIP, additional exploration of alternative incentives to participation, and an evaluation of the logistical components of HIP. These additional questions, if presented in the first focus group, would not add immediate value in terms of encouraging additional involvement, but would serve to improve operations.

### Focus Group Procedures

A focus group was chosen as the means of evaluation to gain an understanding of a variety of perspectives and experiences related to homeowner participation in HIP. The interaction between participants will enable the facilitator and the evaluation team to explore topics at depth through group discussion, reactions to experiences, and collect common or unique perspectives on HIP. Furthermore, through the facilitator, the evaluation team can pose a sequence of questions that build upon each other and are reactive to participant responses. The focus group will serve to answer the questions expressed in the previous section. The questions will be divided into audience characteristics and audience experiences through two sets of scaffolded questions.

#### **Participant Selection**

##### *Target Population*

The target population of the focus group is Silver Beach Neighborhood residents who participated in a HIP site visit on their property but did not maintain further contact with the City or pursue further implementation of HIP Best Management Practices.

##### *General Guidelines on Selection*

All efforts should be made to create a supportive, open environment where participants are comfortable talking in front of each other and engaging in conversation. Individuals should be selected with the goal of assembling a group of strangers with common characteristics. This will aid in creating a comfortable atmosphere that promotes open conversations. Although it is important to have diversity among participants, too much diversity in political views, interests, age and profession will not promote this open environment and may compromise the integrity, utility, feasibility and impact of the focus group. Diversity can be accomplished with multiple focus group sessions of like-minded individuals.

##### *Number of Participants*

The number of participants should range from 7 to 10 individuals, which is small enough for conversation and large enough to provide a diversity of perceptions and attitudes. As this group has a history of expressing interest without following through, at least 12 participants should be recruited with the understanding that some participants may not be able to attend.

##### *Recruitment*

- Participants should be recruited 10-14 days before the session.

- Personalized invitations should be sent out a week prior to the session with details on date, time, location, overview of purpose and information on participation incentives.
- Participants should be phoned the day before the session to remind of and confirm participation.

#### *Participant Incentives*

- Mileage reimbursement
- \$15-50 for participation depending on how challenging it is secure their participation
- Coupons for landscaping purchases (free plants, etc.).
- Refreshments (as appropriate)

#### **Facilitator Selection and Responsibility**

The facilitator will manage the delivery of questions, draw out information and opinions, and facilitate general operations of a focus group. Selecting the facilitator is as important as selecting participants. The following criteria should be used in selecting a facilitator. The facilitator should be:

- A neutral party in the focus group where personal or professional involvement in HIP would not influence the facilitator to challenge, probe or explore issues further than expressed in the questions.
- Possess sufficient background knowledge in Lake Whatcom, Silver Beach Neighborhood and watershed, phosphorus impact and reduction needs, and HIP purpose and processes.
- Trained in presenting questions and general communication with group in a sympathetic, understanding and professional manner.
- Trained in obtaining clarifications and additional details in response to participant answers that aid in increased understanding and utility.
- Able to maintain a focused and courteous conversation while aiding the flow of conversation.

#### **Managing Focus Group Sessions**

##### *Confidentiality*

Participants must have confidence and trust that the proceedings of the focus group will be treated confidentially and responses to questions, surveys, and conversations will be shared with deference for anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, participant names do not have to be shared, written comments will be shared only with the facilitator and evaluation team, spoken comments will be shared only within the focus group, the facilitator and evaluation team, and no observers will be allowed in the room. Only the evaluation team will see the video and audio recordings of the focus group. Participants will be notified prior to agreeing to participate in focus group of confidentiality agreements and the plan to record focus group proceedings.

##### *Ground Rules*

Ground rules should be established to ensure confidentiality, respect, and full participation.

##### *Room Set-Up*

Room should be set up with enough chairs for each participant formed into a circle (or the most appropriate form) with consideration for placement to white board, TV, etc. Room should be well lit and provide an open and energetic atmosphere. Registration forms, nametags, note pads,

educational materials and refreshments should be conveniently located near the entrance to the room.

*Prior to Session Beginning*

Facilitator should warmly greet participants; hand out demographic questionnaire, share pertinent pre-focus group procedures and respond to basic questions while avoiding discussing questions and key topics to be discussed during focus group.

**Logistics**

- Length: between 1.5 and 2 hours (depending on the number of questions, number of participants and length of participant responses).
- Time and Date: Before selecting a date and time for the focus group, check on community events, school schedules, holidays, key deadlines (ex. taxes).
- Location: Convenient to Silver Beach Neighborhood residents such as Bloedel Donovan Park community building (accessible, sufficient parking, great proximity to Lake Whatcom)
- Equipment and Materials:
  - Tape or Audio Recorder, microphone, tapes
  - Name tags
  - Notepad
  - Confidentiality forms
  - Educational materials on HIP
  - Refreshments (at least water and coffee)

**Focus Group Procedures**

<p><b>Introduction</b> 10-15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Facilitator Welcome</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Thank you and Welcome</li> <li>2) 1.5 to 2 hour focus group</li> <li>3) Remind participants that they are being recorded</li> <li>4) All information is confidential and will only be shared between facilitator and evaluation team</li> <li>5) Ground Rules                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Respect comments of all participants</li> <li>b. What is said here, stays here</li> <li>c. Participate fully and honestly</li> <li>d. Ask for clarification if needed</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
	<p><b>Focus Group Purpose</b></p> <p>You have all been selected because you have been identified as an individual who initially participated in a Homeowner Incentive Program site visit. We value your input on how to better improve messaging and City communication to increase participation in the program.</p>
	<p><b>Participant Introduction</b></p> <p>Invite participants to share:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) First name</li> <li>2) How long they have lived in the Silver Beach Neighborhood.</li> <li>3) When did they have their site visit</li> </ol>
<p><b>Positioning</b></p>	<p>The City of Bellingham would like Silver Beach Neighborhood residents</p>



<p><b>Statement</b></p>	<p>to see value in modifying or maintaining their property in ways, which reduce phosphorus runoff into Lake Whatcom. The City would like residents to complete phosphorus reduction practices through participation in the Lake Whatcom Homeowner Incentive Program.</p>
<p><b>Audience Characteristics Questions</b> 45 minutes</p>	<p><b>Homeowner Questionnaire:</b> Give participants the opportunity to respond to the following questions in a written questionnaire:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Describe where you live in the Silver Beach Neighborhood?</li> <li>2) How long have you lived in the Silver Beach Neighborhood?</li> <li>3) What do you like most about living the Silver Beach Neighborhood?</li> <li>4) When did your site visit occur?</li> <li>5) What Best Management Practices were discussed during your site visit (rainwater harvest, use of rainwater for flushing toilets, permeable pavement, pavement strips and pads, impervious surface removal, infiltration trenches, lawn replacement, landscape densification, rain gardens, storm water planter, don't remember, other.)</li> <li>6) Describe how much you have thought about your site visit and HIP practices following your site visit?</li> </ol> <p><b>Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>What motivated you to request a site visit?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do you recall if some of your neighbors participated in HIP? If so, did this influence your decision to participate?</li> <li>b. Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your concern for the health of Lake Whatcom watershed, in comparison to your neighbor? (See rating procedure below)</li> <li>c. Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of the impact phosphorus has on the lake? (See rating procedure below)</li> <li>d. Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of phosphorus reduction strategies/practices? (See rating procedure below)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) <i>After you had your site visit, were you interested in implementing any of the potential HIP practices?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of the best practices recommended by the program staff? (See rating procedure below)</li> <li>b. What additional information would have been beneficial to encourage you to implement a HIP practice?</li> <li>c. What advantages did you see to implementing HIP practices?</li> <li>d. What disadvantages did you see to implementing HIP practices?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Audience Experience Questions</b> 45 minutes</p>	<p><b>Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>When you reflect on your involvement in HIP, what do you think were the specific reasons you decided to not to implement HIP practices?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do you propose these challenges be overcome?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Were the reimbursement funds going to be sufficient to compensate for the work you desired? If no, why?</li> <li>c. Were the changes you were interested in making to your property part of the HIP practices? If yes, what caused you to reconsider your involvement in HIP?</li> <li>d. Did HIP practices interfere with any other plans you had for your property? If yes, how?</li> </ul> <p>2) <i>Given your experience with HIP, what would motivate you to pursue implementing HIP practices?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What would increase your interest in HIP?</li> <li>b. X% of homeowners have completed projects in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. How, if at all, does this influence your decision to participate in HIP?</li> <li>c. If you knew your neighbors participated in HIP, how, if at all, does this influence your decision to participate in HIP?</li> <li>d. If you knew improving water quality of Lake Whatcom is tied to the neighborhood-wide adoption of HIP best practices, how would this information affect your participation?</li> <li>e. What suggestions would you have for City of Bellingham Public Works Department on how to encourage individuals to be involved in HIP?</li> </ul>
Conclusion	<p><b>Final Question</b> Is there anything else you would to share about your experience?</p>

**Procedures for Rating Questions**

To evaluate Audience Characteristic questions 1b, 1c, 1d, da, follow the below procedures:

1. Give each participant a group of note cards with the numbers 1-5 in large writing. A “1” represents no understanding, “3” is neutral and “5” is significant understanding. For question 1b, “1” would be much less than my neighbor, “3” same as my neighbor, and “5” much more than my neighbor.
2. Ask participants to hold up the number that expresses their rating on each question. For example, “Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of the impact phosphorus has on the lake? “5” being “I have a strong understanding” and “1” being “I have no understanding.”
3. At this point you should see numbers raised in the air. Record numbers as appropriate.
4. Ask one from each grouping to share a bit more about why they said “1” and this will draw out additional information from others.

**Data Collection**

Data collection will occur throughout the focus group process through a systematic approach of recording data from the 1) Homeowner Questionnaire, 2) responses to questions 3) rating responses. To ensure that evaluation potential is maximized consider the following:

*Facilitator Probing and Checking for Understanding*

1. Probe for understanding for inconsistent, vague or cryptic comments.

2. At the end of the focus group, provide a summary of key questions and responses and seek confirmation of general understanding.

*Analysis Following Focus Group (done immediately after focus group to increase retention of information)*

1. Facilitator shares notes with evaluation team.
2. Evaluation team reviews facilitator notes, listens to tapes.
3. Seek clarification from facilitator where necessary.
4. Review question by question and organize participant questions with quotes that exemplify points. Group like responses according to any emergent and useful themes.
5. Compare and contrast results by categories and evaluate for emerging themes by question and then overall.
6. Determine if questions and responses secured the intended results and evaluate whether follow-up or additional focus groups are required to obtain necessary information.

*Prepare Draft and Final Report*

1. Describe findings in narrative form.
2. Report should clarify any misconceptions, biases, distortions or errors that impact findings.
3. Provide diagrams of analysis where useful.
4. Organize information by theme or by question.
5. Conclusions are justified in the culture and appropriate context.

*Adapted from "Methods for Conducting Educational Needs Assessment" September, 2008. University of Idaho Extension.*

<b>Anticipated or Hypothetical Results</b>
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Data will be collected with respect to the six core evaluation questions. What follows is a hypothetical representation of that data, how it can be organized, presented and interpreted.

**Homeowner Questionnaire** – most of the responses to the survey questions can be expressed as follows:

Response type (number of respondents)

The ‘response types’ that follow are hypothetical and should not be considered comprehensive or representative of the actual data. Once the surveys are collected, ‘response types’ can be generated that reflect the full range of responses given.

- 1) Describe where you live in the Silver Beach Neighborhood?

Responses can be listed and possibly plotted on map. From this information it may be possible to draw conclusions about how representative this sample is of the entire region.

- 2) How long have you lived in the Silver Beach Neighborhood?

> 1 Year (x)

1 to 3 Years (x)

- 4 to 7 Years (x)
- < 7 years (x)

From this data it may be possible to conclude how much awareness or exposure to HIP, the phosphorus issue or other relevant topics tied to the Silver Beach Creek neighborhood may be expected. Note, this is correlational in nature and should be considered as such.

3) What do you like most about living the Silver Beach Neighborhood?

- Quality Schools (x)
- Views of Lake (x)
- Proximity to Lake (x)
- Recreational Opportunities (x)
- Our house/property (x)
- Neighborhood/Community (x)

This information could reveal the primary value assigned to living in this area. Conclusions drawn from this data may shape messaging, images used for publications/outreach materials, issue framing etc.

4) When did your site visit occur?

- Within the last 3 months (x)
- 3 to 6 months ago (x)
- 6 to 12 months ago (x)
- 1 to 2 years ago (x)
- 2 to 3 years ago (x)
- > 3 years ago (x)

Responses to this question could reveal the stage of the program/sophistication of strategies and communications encountered by the homeowner. It is possible that individuals exposed to HIP during its infancy were exposed to different variables that may have influenced their decision to participate. This can help determine to what degree the sample is representative of different aspects of the HIP programs growth over time.

5) What Best Management Practices were discussed during your site visit (rainwater harvest, use of rainwater for flushing toilets, permeable pavement, pavement strips and pads, impervious surface removal, infiltration trenches, lawn replacement, landscape densification, rain gardens, storm water planter, don't remember, other.)

Practice(s) (number of responses)

Each proposed best management practice carries with it unique costs, barriers, and relative value in the eyes of homeowners. Again, this information adds to the picture of how representative the sample is of the wide range of participant experiences.

6) Describe how much you have thought about your site visit and HIP practices following your site visit?

- Not at all (x)
- Rarely following the site visit but less recently (x)
- Frequently following the site visit but less recently (x)
- Frequently in the time since (x)

From this information it may be possible to determine the stability and penetrance of HIP messaging and environmental concerns relevant to the project. Again, this is correlational and should be considered as such. Additional depth can be gained from discussion in focus group.

### Focus Group Reponses – Participant Characteristics

1) *What motivated you to request a site visit?*

- Concern for Lake Health (x)
- Concern for Water Treatment Costs (x)
- Possibly reimbursement for planned landscaping project (x)

- a) Do you recall if some of your neighbors participated in HIP? If so, did this influence your decision to participate?
- b) Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your concern for the health of Lake Whatcom watershed, in comparison to your neighbor? (See rating procedure below)
- c) Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of the impact phosphorus has on the lake? (See rating procedure below)
- d) Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of phosphorus reduction strategies/practices?

Additional perspectives gained from follow up questions can be expressed in narrative form emphasizing common themes or the range of differences between participants. Understanding of key motivating factors may lead to a better understanding of priorities and expectations leading into the program. The numbered response questions (b-d) can also be expressed more quantitatively to pull out trends, however, this technique should primarily be used as a means of generating meaningful discussion between participants.

2) *After you had your site visit, how did your attitudes toward implementing HIP practices change?*

- Less interested (x)
- More interested (x)
- No change (x)
- Had unanswered questions (x)

- a) Using your numbered cards, how would you rate your understanding of the best practices recommended by the program staff? (See rating procedure below)
- b) What additional information would have been beneficial to encourage you to implement a HIP practice?
- c) What advantages did you see to implementing HIP practices?
- d) What disadvantages did you see to implementing HIP practices?

Responses to these questions may inform new follow up procedures or communication techniques which may anticipate and address concerns/lack of understanding/disadvantages of implementation.

### **Focus Group Responses – Participant Experience w/ HIP**

1) *When you reflect on your involvement in HIP, what were the specific reasons you decided to not to implement HIP practices?*

Uncontrollable variables; changing financial situation, busy schedule etc. (x)

BMPs and landscaping goals not aligned (x)

Forgot (x)

Timing w/ construction season (x)

Didn't understand plans (x)

Unsure of next steps (x)

- a. How do you propose these challenges be overcome?
- b. Were the reimbursement funds going to be sufficient to compensate for the work you desired? If no, why?
- c. Were the changes you were interested in making to your property part of the HIP practices? If yes, what caused you to reconsider your involvement in HIP?
- d. Did HIP practices interfere with any other plans you had for your property? If yes, how?

These responses are likely to inform outreach and follow-up procedures both before and after a site visit. Managing expectations, developing relationships, providing adequate follow-up information are all likely strategies to mitigate attrition from the program.

## References

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