

Maximizing Outreach Success through **WAVE**: Willingness-Accountability-Visibility-Empathy

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Introductions

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Our Reliable Water Future



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The Project That Allowed Me to Build This Values
Based Approach:

Willamette Water Supply Program



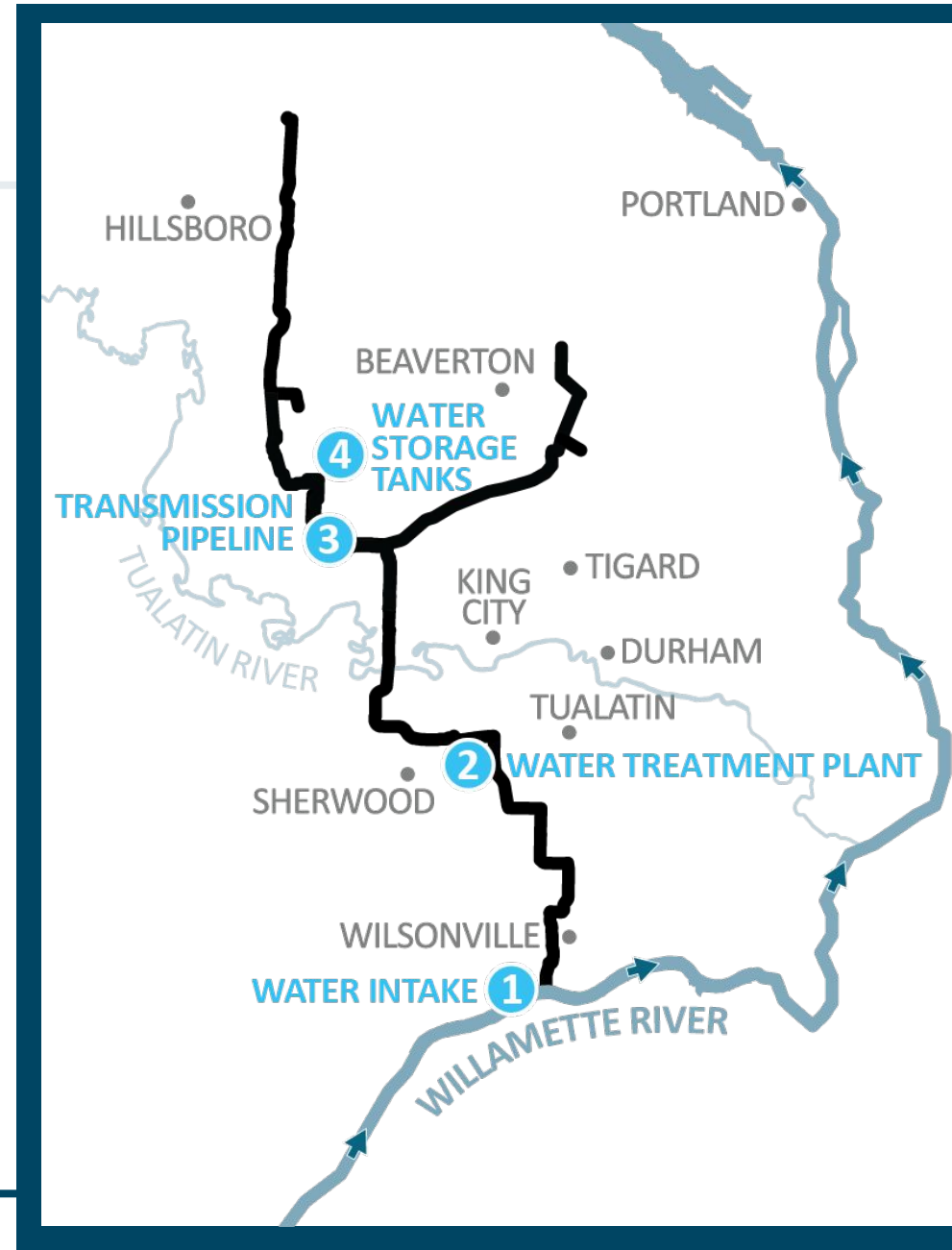
Willamette Water Supply Program Mission

Provide a cost-effective, reliable, and resilient water supply system by 2026, that benefits current and future generations of the communities we serve and supports a vibrant local economy.



Water Supply System Overview

- ➊ Modified water intake
 - ➋ New water treatment plant
 - ➌ 30+ miles of large diameter pipeline
 - ➍ Water storage tanks
- ✓ Earthquake resilient
 - ✓ Alternative source during a drought
 - ✓ Back-up if one source has water quality issues



Special considerations

Geography:

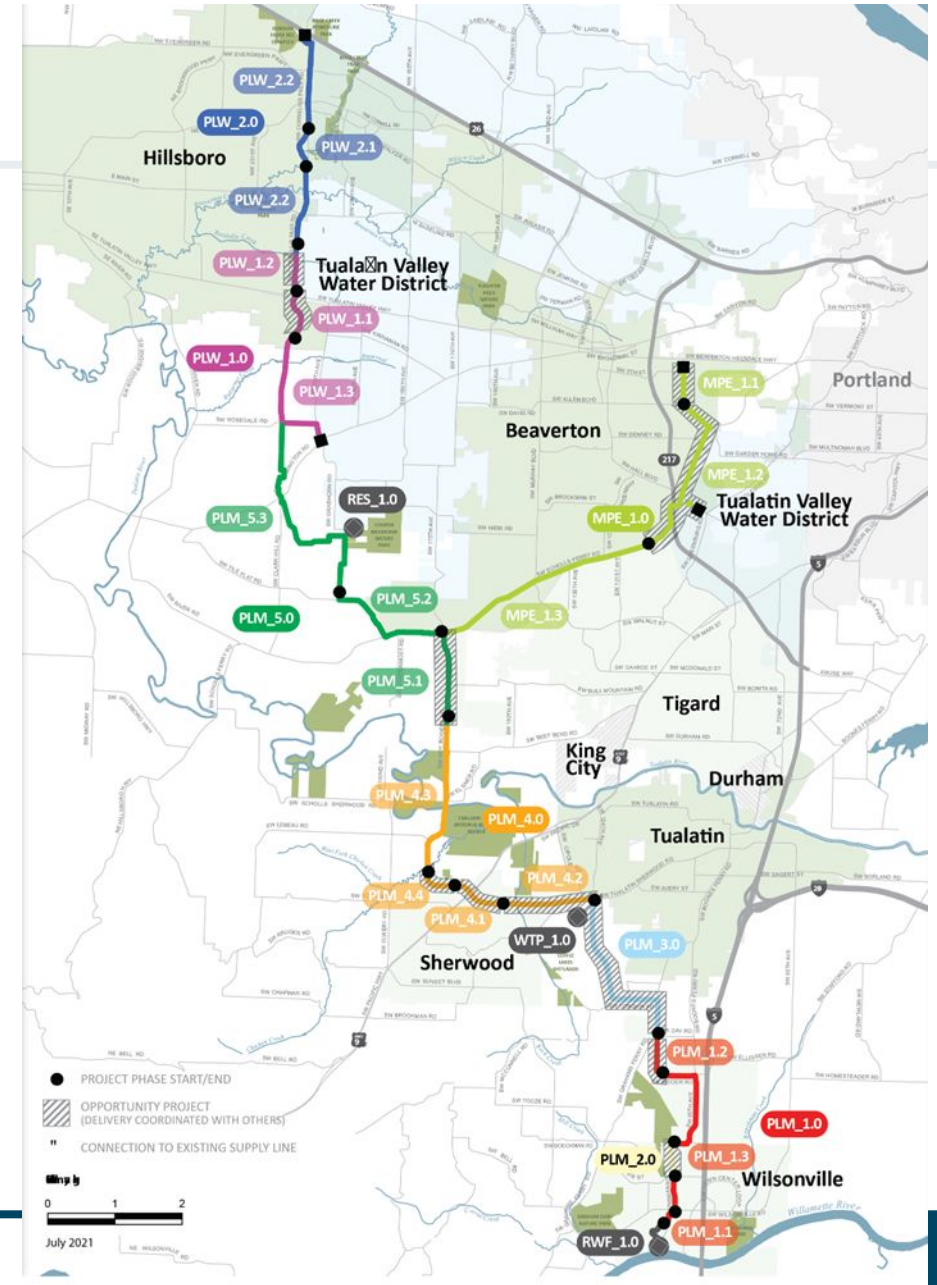
- 7 jurisdictions including cities, counties and special districts
- Urban, suburban and rural communities

Neighbor Impacts:

- Major transportation routes for commuters, residents and businesses
- Construction occurs within and outside partner service areas
- In public right of way and on private property
- Road and park closures
- Rock blasting, vibration and noise, dust, lights
- Night work

Other challenges:

- Construction in communities that wouldn't directly benefit from the project
- Inside and outside the UGB
- High growth area – lots of private development
- Many other public infrastructure projects
- Construction contractors with varying “people skills”



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The Set Up



TUALATIN VALLEY
WATER DISTRICT



Hillsboro
OREGON



Beaverton
OREGON

Context

- The billion-dollar Willamette Water Supply Program was being stood up and preliminary design was about to kick off.
- Leadership had already cemented the importance of communications on the team.
- I was in the “right place at the right time”.



An Innovative Approach Was Needed

WWSP presented a unique set of challenges, including:

- Multiple owners
- Long-term timeframe
- Large geographic area
- Impactful construction

A traditional, outcomes focused, reactive approach was not going to work.



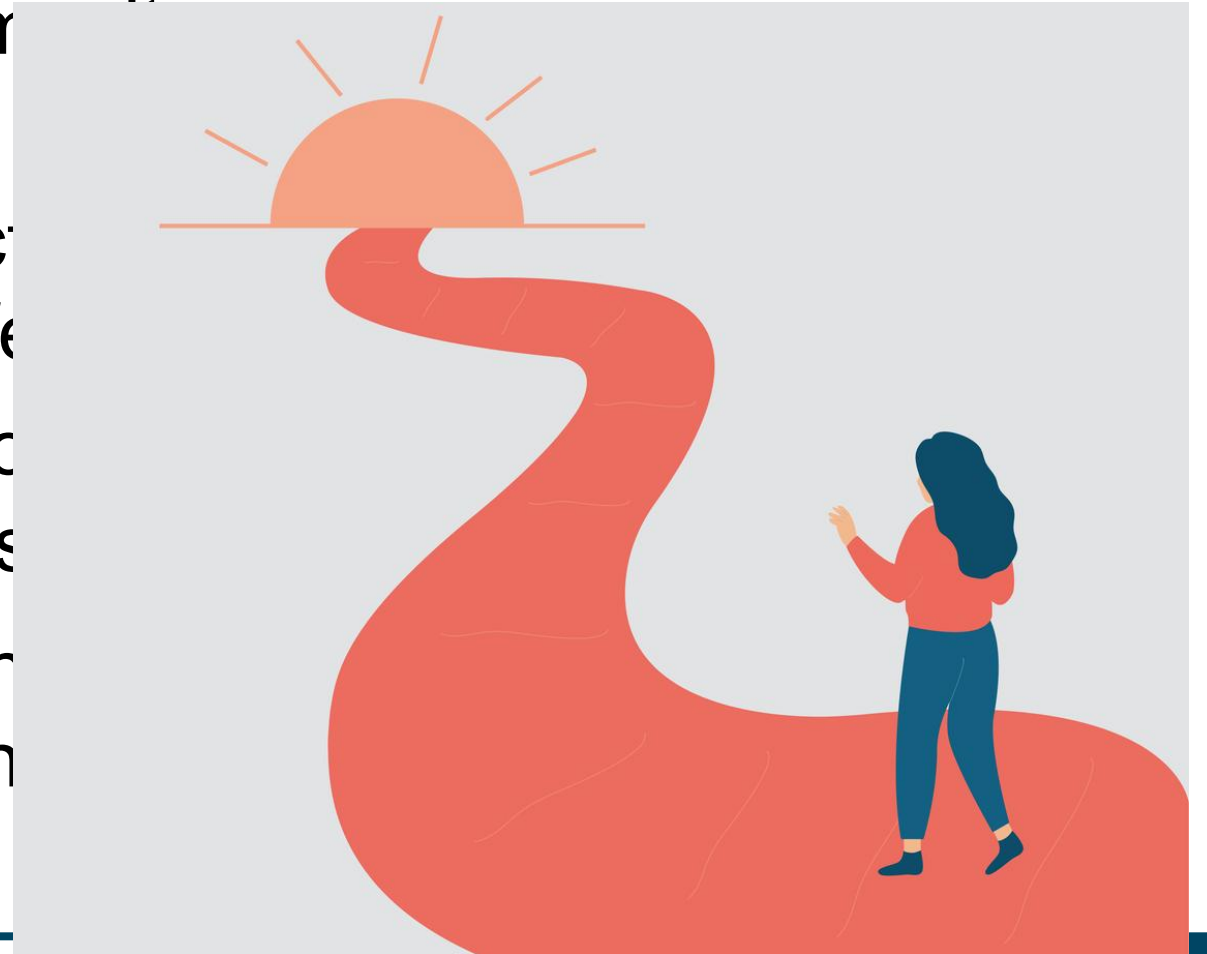
What was I thinking?

- How would I feel as a business or property owner near pipeline or facility construction
 - I would want to know early on
 - I would want to know who I could contact
 - I would want to express my concern and ask questions



It all boiled down to a few important elements; and WAVE was born

- **Willingness** to address community concerns proactively
- **Accountability** for the project impacts and mitigating their effects
- Ensuring updates about the project have **Visibility** and are accessible
- Bring **Empathy** by listening and addressing concerns and feelings



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WAVE Principles

Willingness-Accountability-Visibility-Empathy

Willingness to proactively address concerns

- Met with dozens of homeowners and businesses near our construction sites thru preliminary design.
- Shared the likely impacts of noise, dust, lights, vibration, and construction in roadways.
- Shared preliminary plans.
- Said “I don’t know” a lot.
- Continued communications through construction.



Accountability for the project's impacts

- I felt responsible to break the bad news and address concerns early.
- A LOT of people have my cell number.
- We tracked and returned calls/emails.
- We were available and people knew how to reach us.

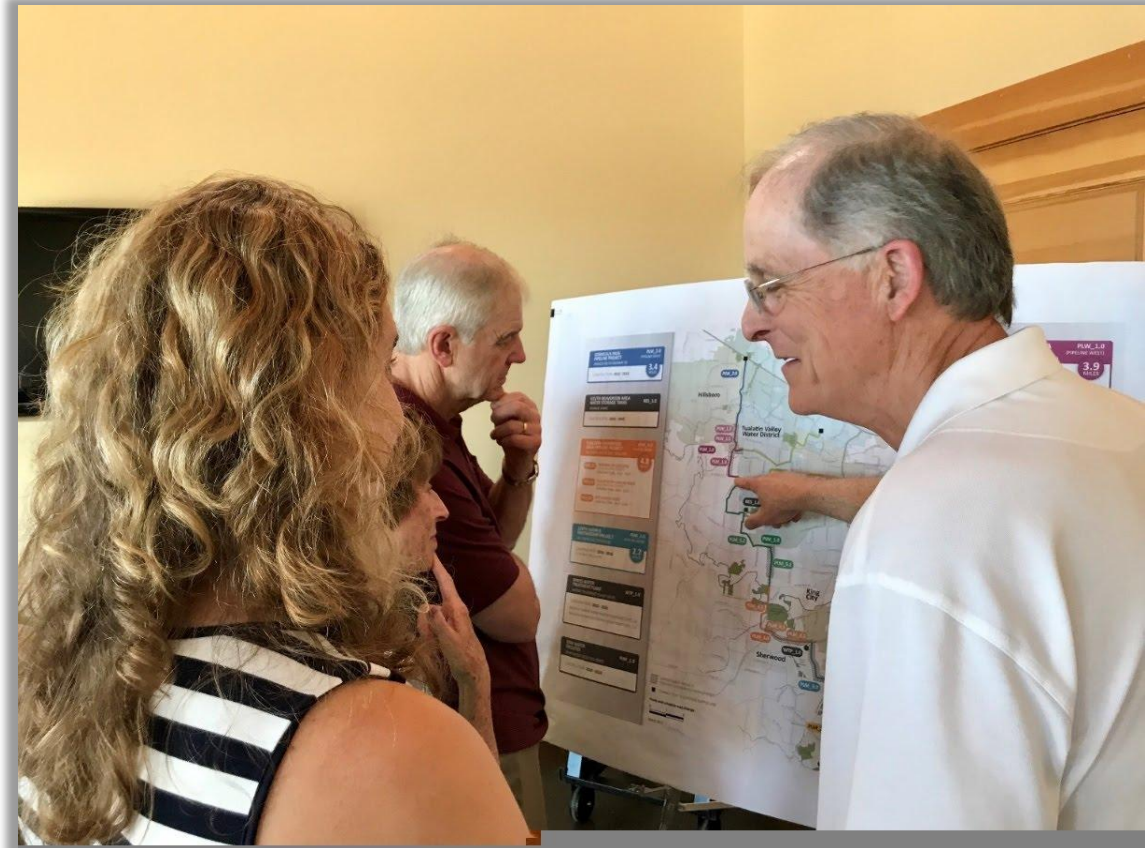


Visibility



Bring **empathy** by listening and addressing concerns and feelings

- Focusing on the relationships helped to let go of outcomes.
- Listening gave people an outlet.
- Built trust and social capital with those most impacted.



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WAVE(S)
The “S” stands for Savvy

SAVVY

Savvy is an adjective that means having or showing practical intelligence, perception, or shrewdness.

When you utilize all of the WAVE elements, and it's not enough.



What does WAVE success look like?

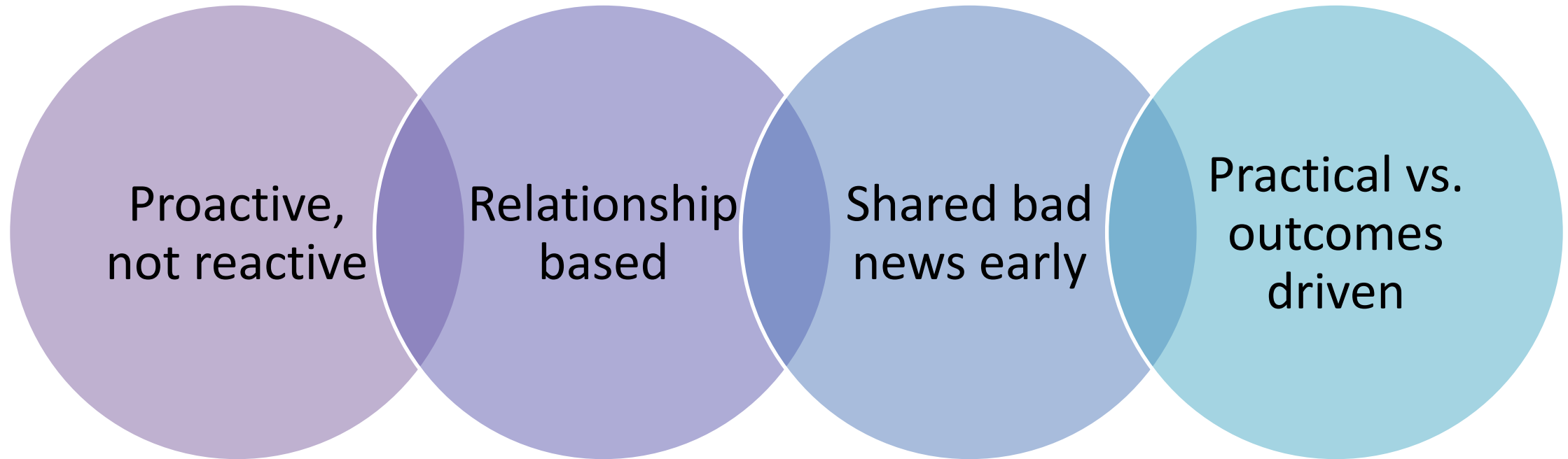
We experienced fewer community complaints because the public knew what to expect.

We avoided being a target for organized opposition.

We secured land use approval, avoided appeals, saving money and time.

Our leadership trusted us because we resolved issues with neighbors and communicated every step of the way.

Why is WAVE a unique approach?



Willingness-Accountability-Visibility-Empathy

Final thoughts

- There is value in building long-term social capital.
- Deliver bad news early.
- Set healthy boundaries and be careful of becoming avoidant and burned out.
- Be compassionate about how/what people are experiencing.
- Try to not take it personally.
- Get better at listening.
- Get support if possible.
- It's ok to say "I don't know"
- It's ok to say "I'm sorry"



Connect With Us!



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Questions?



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