



REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Developing a More Efficient Water Sector ~ Key Issues and Challenges

WASA RATE REVIEW

Introduction

In fulfilling its mandate to consult with stakeholders, the RIC hosted a Stakeholder Information Day and eight public consultations to encourage more focused debate, as well as to provide more direct opportunities to explain and hear the views of various interest groups. These public consultations were aimed at establishing and building consensus on a policy framework and approach for the review of the Water and Wastewater Sector. The end result of the process is to facilitate the acceptance of a draft document that serves the interests of all major stakeholders.

In preparation for the consultations, participants were sent key questions as well as a summary of the working document prior to the workshop to facilitate discussion. These key questions revolve around the key issues under consideration by the RIC for the rate review process, namely:

- How can consumers receive an improved supply of water within the shortest possible time?
- How can an improved water supply be achieved at the least possible cost?
- How can the RIC ensure that the poor and vulnerable groups in the society are not disadvantaged?

The RIC regards hosting public consultations as an important aspect of its mandate to regulate the water and wastewater sector. Public participation enhances the RIC's ability to carry out its work in an efficient, transparent and fair manner. The format at the consultations was consistent with the proceedings being formally opened, followed by a presentation by Chairman of the RIC, Professor Dennis Pantin. General questions and comments were then taken from the audience present. The RIC's focus was clear, that of acknowledging and sympathizing with the obvious frustrations of the people in the area with regards to the quality and regularity of the water supply, even empathising with the pessimism and scepticism displayed. However, the primary objective was to arrive at solution-driven options and to afford persons in the worst-served areas the opportunity to put forward their proposals for improvement of the sector.

The main comments/issues identified by this process and raised at different consultation venues are highlighted below.

Table 1: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at Penal Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
	Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/002 – 6 th May 2008 – Penal / Siparia Siparia Civic Centre
<p>RIC Personnel</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Dennis Pantin</p> <p>Harjinder Atwal</p> <p>Glenn Khan</p> <p>Garvin Alexander</p> <p>Mohan Chadee</p> <p>Martin Haynes</p> <p>Nadia John</p> <p>Shameel Khan</p> <p>Denise Caesar</p> <p>Carol Balkaran</p> <p>Claire Moolchan</p> <p>Roszan Maharaj</p> <p>Rickey Bovell</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Name: S. Naimath - Resident</p> <p>a. Commented on WASA’s horrible track record, sees WASA as a national disaster and expressed that he had difficulty comprehending how the RIC was going to ensure that its proposals were going to come to pass. He also raised questions of the legal status and the legal framework in which the RIC is operating.</p> <p>b. He felt that the RIC’s proposals are nothing short of fantastic and dreamlike which brought him back to the question of the legal framework of the RIC.</p> <p>Name: Mr. Wayne Bhagwandeem - Resident</p> <p>c. He spoke of inequity in the system in terms of how people have been asked to pay in areas where they have not received water and yet there are people in areas who receive a 24/7 supply. He strongly suggested that there should be no price increase prior to improved service.</p> <p>d. He spoke of his concerns with the automatic rebate and hoped that worst-served communities we not going to be subject to the same rate increase as other communities who receive 24/7 supply.</p> <p>Name: Mr. Sookoo - Penal/Debe Regional Corporation</p> <p>e. He rehashed a proposal he had made to the Ministry/Minister (Pamela Nicholson) which he offered as a solution. At present they are using water from the Caroni Treatment Plant. The water from the river is treated and then distributed to the consumers in areas as far as Point Fortin.</p> <p>f. He suggested that WASA trap the water in the areas of Barrackpore/Papourie River where several hundred (300) acres of state land is available and establish a new treatment plant in Barrackpore. This will serve a dual purpose: that of solving the flooding problem in the Barrackpore, Penal and Debe areas and addressed the acute water shortage.</p> <p>g. He discussed the matter of feasibility studies not being conducted by WASA before elections however a main was installed with no connections to that main to date. He related that in 2005 WASA ran a main in Saddoo Village, although residents paid \$200.00 for connections today they have no connections. He questioned whether it was because of Political expediency.</p> <p>h. He discouraged the installation of Community Tanks - he likened them to ‘black</p>

elephants' because WASA did not have the resources to fill those tanks – not even once a week. For the most part these tanks are filled once a fortnight.

- i. He disclosed that 44 areas in Penal/Debe receive a truck borne supply of water I.e. two trips of water every other day.

Name: Mr. Sookdeo Rampersad - Resident

- j. On the issue of metering, until such time as we have meters, he suggested that people who receive water once or twice per week not be charged the same rate as those who receive water everyday.
- k. He enquired whether the RIC had considered that people from these (worst-served) areas had the additional financial burden of having to buy tanks, run lines, buy pumps and maintain pumps while those in the urban areas received water in their lines effortlessly.

Name: Mr. Thomas - WASA Employee

- l. He suggested that WASA address the leaks in the area and indicated that no one could determine the leaks unless they inspected at about 4:00 - 5:00 in the morning because that is the time the water is connected and the taps overflow and the lines leak. Ironically, this is also the time that no WASA employee is around to identify the source of the leak or to suggest anything.
- m. He suggested implementing a system whereby WASA employees are assigned to walk/drive through the areas on the scheduled time so as to pick up on these leaks and ensure that WASA does something to address them. A little goes a long way.

Name: Premchand Sookoo - Village Council

- n. He enquired whether there was a law that prohibited persons in low-lying areas from accessing water directly from the water table by running their own lines and using pumps to retrieve water.
- o. His stance was that since WASA could not supply the water, therefore it should not be an offense to access this water yourself by either installing PVC pipes or creating a well. He lamented that many times persons are forced to do things that are illegal in light of their disadvantaged situations. He suggested that WASA consider making special allowances for this, particularly for agricultural purposes.

Name: Sahadeo Ramlal - PRO Village Council

- p. Shared his experience that involved protest action and direct liaising with Allan Poon King of WASA resulting in the residents receiving a 3-day a week supply which he would like to maintain as is.

	<p>Name: Mr. Bernard Charles – Resident</p> <p>q. Commented on the poor quality of the water coming through the taps – spoke of mud and silt discoloring the water and of the need for WASA to improve the quality.</p>
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Table 2: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at OWTU Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/003 – 14 th May 2008 – OWTU 99A Circular Road, San Fernando	
RIC Personnel Present: Dennis Pantin Harjinder Atwal Glenn Khan Garvin Alexander Martin Haynes Nadia John Janelle Crosby Shameel Khan Denise Caesar Carol Balkaran Claire Moolchan Michelle Smith Wendy Jack	<p>Proposals: Presentation by Mr. David Abdullah – President FITUN</p> <p>Several problems were discussed along with a few possible solutions.</p> <p>A. Water is a basic human right :</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. As humans, we are able to do without other effects. However, water is something we cannot do without</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">ii. Therefore, it should be embedded in the constitution of the respected country that water is a basic human right.</p> <p>B. Water is not a commodity:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. For example, people treat water as a commodity and this is seen by the increased use of bottled water, instead of using tap water which is a lot cheaper.</p> <p>C. There is a rising demand for water, not only nationally, but globally as well:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Therefore, conservation is necessary.</p> <p>D. Quarries damage waterways, therefore damaging the water supply via pollution:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i. Furthermore, instead of forestry divisions trying to expand the forest cover, they lessen it by felling, for the accommodation of Quarries.</p> <p>E. Retired persons’ income has severely eroded, how would the RIC address these persons?</p> <p>F. How industrial users are addressed and how are economic penalties for wastage</p>

<p>Roszan Maharaj</p> <p>Rickey Bovell</p>	<p>introduced?</p> <p>G. How are incentives for conservation introduced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Industrial users spend billions of dollars, do not pay enough taxes and use unnecessary amounts of water. <p>H. A general incentive to all consumers to conserve needs to be instilled.</p> <p>I. Policies may be introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. For example, building codes, facilities to catch rain water ii. This water can be used to flush toilets instead of the good drinking water currently used. iii. Solar panels may be introduced, which would conserve electricity and natural gas. iv. If conservation methods are not put in place, we will suffer the consequences as we are the 9th fastest consumers of natural gas. <p>J. Agricultural use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Farmers do not need to use good drinking water to irrigate crops. <p>K. Water efficiency and treatment needs to be upgraded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The new introduction of transmission pipelines can help this ii. The pipelines are easy to run from Beetham to Pt. Lisas and also produce a good quality of water. iii. This treated wastewater can then be further used for Agricultural and Industrial means. iv. As a result, two problems are solved at once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The supply of water and - The treatment of water.
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Table 3: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at Tobago Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/003 & 004- 20 th May 2008 - Tobago (2) Argyle Community Centre 10am - 12pm / THA Lecture Room - S'boro - 4pm - 6pm.	
<p>RIC Personnel</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Dennis Pantin</p> <p>Harjinder Atwal</p> <p>Glenn Khan</p> <p>Garvin Alexander</p> <p>Camille Rolingson</p> <p>Karlene Mangru</p> <p>Gerard Benjamin</p> <p>Shameel Khan</p> <p>Michelle Smith</p> <p>Denise Caesar</p> <p>Gerard Rodriguez</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Presenter: Eon Robley - Tobago East Association of Farmers</p> <p>The usage of water was always paramount in our communities, whether it was from the communal standpipes or the many rivers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A twenty-four hour supply was never a choice and when it rained this precious commodity became extinct. 2. Tobago East benefited from a full treatment station commissioned at Kingsbay and this plant only supplied a small section of the East. 3. Many were literally abandoned by WASA when it rained because all the other Treatment plants were dry season plants/stations and cannot treat high levels of turbidity or dirty water as the layman may phrase it. <p>To elaborate on the guiding questions adopted by the RIC for the purpose of this Consultation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can consumers receive an improved supply of Water within the shortest possible time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WASA should engage in a mass education drive, informing the populace, about the importance of this commodity and the need to treat it quite special. ▪ WASA's lines need to be changed as a matter of urgency to minimize or completely eradicate that great loss of Water due to leaks. ▪ Install Communal tanks, capacity four hundred thousand (400,000) gallons or even larger based on the size of the community and expected growth and development over a fifteen years period. All water produced can be transmitted directly to these tanks then redistributed to customers in the Communities. ▪ Since water is a natural resource and not a manufactured product and we are only blessed with six months of rainfall, WASA should have adequate storage to ensure a regular and continuous supply. ▪ In areas where the water supply is low or non-existent, use pumps to boost the supply areas where, due to our geographical natural design in

Tobago East, very high hills exist in most communities.

2. How can an improved water supply be achieved at the least possible costs?

- Based on a report from the World Health Organisation (WHO), WASA maintains a very high quality of Water and when the rates are measured against the U.S. dollar or cost of the product is the second lowest in the entire Caribbean after Santo Domingo.
- In these times of high process globally coupled with the equipment and chemicals used to produce water, a rate increase is justifiable. However, due to the petroleum boom, the government should continue to subsidise the cost.
- Despite the quarrels about WASA and water, once the populace is given the opportunity to enjoy a reliable and regular supply, the cost would be the least worry as with other utilities.

3. How can the RIC ensure that the poor and Vulnerable groups in the society are not disadvantaged?

- WASA should document a list of all the services they provide, the cost, improvement and upgrading of water, timelines and the RIC must ensure that it is maintained.
- Water quality, reliability and regularity is paramount to our survival, so the RIC must act as watch dog, where this is concern.
- The payment of rates should be done on a percentage basis or on regularity of receipt of this product.
- WASA should be made to furnish the RIC with three monthly reports concerning the status on demand and consumption levels, with different areas being targeted every three months so that the yearly report would give a true reflection on WASA's performance.

4. How should Universal Metering be implemented?

- We applaud the implementation of Universal Metering since people perform/operate better when under heavy security.
- Though WASA provides water that can supply a large community due to a high level of delinquency among the populace, much water is lost due to overflowing tanks, leaking taps in yard, bathroom, toilet, kitchen gardens etc.
- Although persons should be charged per gallon/cubic meter on a monthly basis, senior citizens/special cases should be exempted from paying full rates.

- Meters should be installed where they can be easily accessed by an officer from WASA every month for proper costing and not an estimated cost as is done with other public utilities.
- Defective meters should be reported and repaired within forty eight hours on receipt of complaint.
- Every customer must have a timely redress by the RIC, when things goes sour and WASA does not want to honour its obligations.
- No mention was made of Wastewater since Tobago East is not privileged as yet to have the use of proper controlled wastewater facility.

Presenter: Ms. Racine Miller - Roxborough Police Youth Club, Tobago

Water can be viewed as a microcosm towards human growth and development.

- Universal metering systems should be implemented since it is the best strategy to conserve the use of water by allowing all to pay for their usage.
- The provision for water to vulnerable groups should be done at the present rate since any attempt to provide free water services must be afforded to persons in destitute situations or organisations providing care to such persons.
- Companies can be afforded tax concessions in lieu of payments of such services to the destitute/organisation.

Proposals:

1. The installation of standby generators at all stations. The cost of WASA advertising via radio/television can pay the cost for a generator at Richmond & King's Bay water treatment plants. While T&TEC is fixing their problem our schools, offices and homes must not be shut down.
2. Respond to leaks promptly. One member experienced a leaking main at Top Hill, Speyside for three days.
3. The Club recommends that WASA employees responsible for repairing leaks be trained. Even contracted firms seem to have not been exposed plumbing classes, since fixed mains need to be repaired within days. Let's stop this "Bad work contractor Cartel now"
4. Institute stiffer penalties for companies and persons who pollute our water ways with effluents, e.g. wayside garage owners.
5. Develop a dam at Louis D'or River - the land mass served by the Richmond dam poses serious challenges to several communities.
6. Consider desalination plant for Cove estate - "global climate changes" precipitates such intervention.

	<p>7. Develop a Youth incubator micro-enterprise in Bottled water industry.</p> <p>8. Grant tax concessions to those owners who have to invest in water pumps and tanks.</p> <p>9. The present cost of water to consumers is not realistic since the demand for water cannot equate to the prices that it is presently being supplied. A rate increase is therefore inevitable. However, in order to increase the rate we must be guaranteed with an adequately supply.</p>
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Table 4: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at Chaguanas Consultation – Chamber/Business Community

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/005 – 27 th May 2008 – Chamber/Business Community Regional Sports Complex, Saith Park Chaguanas – 7:30am – 10:30am	
RIC Personnel Present: Dennis Pantin Harjinder Atwal Glenn Khan Garvin Alexander Connel Mottley Shelly Anne Soonachan Martin Haynes Shameel Khan Peter Mootoosingh Denise Caesar Carol Balkaran Gerard Rodriguez	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Joint Presentation: Chamber of Industry & Commerce /TTMA – Presented by Jwala Rambarran – See Appendix</p> <p>Name: Avinash Omadath – Technical Customer Service Rep - TCL- Chaguanas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trinidad currently has eight more years supply of natural gas. ▪ There is a lot of precipitation in the Northern Range and along the East-West corridor. ▪ Currently, there is water flowing via pipelines from the Mangrove into the Gulf: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This water can be trapped and sent to Pt. Lisas. - Therefore, the need for desalination plants is reduced. ▪ The Tobago industry’s water demand will intensify due to the increasing number of electrical plants, light, chemical and photo chemical industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therefore amount of water pollution is increased. - The demand for water will also increase. - Desalination plants in Tobago will kill the Reef. ▪ When WASA does work on pipes underground roadways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They pave only where they have dug - The road is therefore left bumpy, wavy and unsafe for drivers. - Concrete fill will allow for safer roadways as well as better comfort for drivers.

<p>Claire Moolchan Maxine Ghent Rickey Bovell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A solution is an item called the “Trencher” which is four inches in width <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WASA can upgrade their technology to objects such as this. <p>Presenter: Wendy Lee Yuan - Agriculturalist - Chaguanas “Only rains saving T&T from water riots”</p> <p>Proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decentralize supplies and connect local sources to households instead of directing water to urban areas primarily. 2. Sink wells in communities not currently serviced. Keep spares for pumps, boosters ext. and repair promptly. 3. Meter all consumers and apply incremental charges for water used. This will dampen demand consumers who do not presently receive water are willing to pay for water once it is supplied. Advertise and stick to a schedule for supply. 4. Allocate a daily quota of free water per household and charge incremental rates. User pays principle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumers not supplied are currently charged water rates, but they have to purchase supplies privately. - The inequalities in water distribution are fuelling frustration and rage in this population. - Farmers are also included in the group of disadvantaged citizens. If farmers find their own untreated water for food production, it should be free. If WASA supplies untreated water the price should be nominal. - WASA needs to look at treated waste water not only for industry but also for agriculture. We cannot produce food without water- it would be strategic to subsidize water for agriculture to keep food more affordable. - Instructions to supply water to mega farms without similar facilities for small farms are an insult to our traditional food producers. - Consumers should not be penalised for WASA’s inefficiencies. They must adapt best practices in their operations – fix leaks more efficiently – have crews of 2 workmen. It is time to stop the political patronage and get on with the job of water for all. <p>Presenter: Councilor Manohar Gosyne – Couva, Tabaquite, Talparo Regional Corporation</p> <p>A. In the region of Couva / Tabaquite / Talparo, 5 years ago there were 44 areas that did not have a supply to date. This figure now stands at 34 – a mere 10 areas were given a supply at an exorbitant cost, no doubt.</p>
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- B. Over 2500 households are without water in our region. How long is it going to take WASA to provide the entire region with a portable supply of water?
- C. Area on a schedule e.g. Mundo Nuevo, have been without a supply for the last 7 weeks and many other areas suffer the same faith.
- D. In a time of plenty, people still draw water from polluted wells, ponds and rivers to do basic chores in communities like Miani and El Quemado and many entrepreneurs who venture into agro processing and livestock find themselves unable to establish their businesses due to a lack of water.
- E. With Central Government thrust on Local Government reform and empowering the Local Government Bodies, the Couva / Tabaquite / Talparo views that bi partisan approach be adopted between WASA and the 14 Local Government bodies.
- F. The approach will see that local authorities repairing leaks and expanding the network of lines to areas that don't have a supply, and WASA will provide all technical support to facilitate this venture.
- G. In isolated communities such as Brasso Venadous and El Quemado, ground water can be utilized, and portable treatment plants can be used to meet the demands of these areas thus eliminating the need to lay miles and miles of water mains to reach these remote communities as an immediate measure.
- H. The Communities without a supply of pipe borne water and who rely on the Local Government to provide a supply creates a bureaucratic nightmare. Proposed a system of registering all households without a supply at a nominal cost, and that a pool of registered contractors be utilized for the purpose of supplying these residents.
- I. A minimum supply should be provided to each household at a fixed cost using a rebate system.
- J. To correct the inefficiencies and improve the effectiveness of WASA, management must look at the performance appraisals of its employees with incentives for high achievers with regards to collection.
- K. Universal Metering is a must, but it should be at no cost to the customer. It will also get rid of the imbalance of the current rate system which is at a disadvantage. To a customer who is on a scheduled supply, it will also encourage consumers to conserve water.
- L. Industrial customers should be metered first, then domestic customers who are supplied 24/7 and then those with a scheduled supply. The poor or the less fortunate should be subsidized using a government subvention, but in doing so, we must set international standards to categorize poverty and work with Social Development Agency to identify the fortunate.

Presenter:

**Ann McCarthy - Welfare Officer Cumana Village Council & Assistant Secretary
Electrical Association for Women Cumana/Toco Branch - CUMANA - TOCO**

The solutions to improving some of WASA problems are simple.

- A. First of all start thinking about pleasing the customers....better customer service, better customer satisfaction which would therefore result in customers "happy" to pay their bills and most importantly more revenue for WASA.
- B. Customer complaints and concerns seem to fall on deaf ears with the general feeling being "they do not care about we" - Areas serviced by WASA Tompire Water Treatment Plant and from which complaints emanate include: the southern part of Cumana are Cumana Village, Rampanalgas, Balandra and Toco.
- C. This area is a rural coastal community with several beach houses which are usually booked out during public and school holidays. Some property owners have installed water tanks to make sure they have an adequate supply of water for their clients since several residents make a living by being caretakers of these beach houses.
- D. A service centre is needed in Sangre Grande (St. Andrew and St. David). For instance, if a resident of Matelot needs to do business with WASA the nearest service centre is in Arima at a cost of \$50-00TTreturn, from Cumana the return cost is \$30-00TT.
- E. There has been an improvement in one area of customer service and that is payment centres available at different outlets in Sangre Grande

While there has been some improvement in the number of people receiving a more regular supply of water but there has been no improvement in WASA services in this community in the following areas:

- (1) During power outages at WASA Tompire Compound there is no water pumped because there is no standby generator and this means three communities can be without a water supply until TTEC rectifies the situation.
- (2) During the wet season or after heavy rainfall the taps are dry for sometimes up to 24 hours. When the water supply returns the water is usually brown in colour with cloudy sediments
- (3) Also when repairs are being done on the water lines sometimes these lines are not flushed properly. Unofficially, WASA Tompire needs complete overall and/or new equipment.
- (4) Regular patrols of streets to check for leaks would save water, decrease soil erosion and save money on repairs because the longer it takes to repair a leak the more damage is done to the road. Residents of Cumana usually rely on personal contact with WASA employees to get repairs done but there seems to be some problem with instructions that need to be received by Head Office to get the work done.
- (5) Universal Metering: WASA should consider a discount for clients who volunteer

	<p>to have a water meter. There needs to be an educational programme for all sectors of society before the implementation of water meters since customers need to know exactly how much the average household will have to pay once there is a water meter installed on their premises.</p> <p>(6) Research should be conducted to determine the correct taps and washers that should be used given the combination of chemicals used by WASA and the mineral content of water and if there is a synergistic effect which may lead to faster deterioration of these washers and some other working mechanisms in fixtures.</p> <p>(7) Poor and vulnerable: a realistic increase in the HARD SHIP RELIEF ALLOWANCE should be considered. For example if WASA rates go up by 10% therefore HARD SHIP RELIEF ALLOWANCE should raise by 10%.</p>
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Table 5: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at SWWTU Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
	Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/006- 28 th May 2008 - SWWTU, POS Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain - 2pm - 4pm
RIC Personnel Present: Dennis Pantin Harjinder Atwal Glenn Khan Garvin Alexander Daramdeo Maharaj Martin Haynes Connel Mottley Denise Caesar Claire Moolchan Maxine Ghent	<p>Proposals: Presenter: Ricardo Revanales, Asst City Engineer - Port-of-Spain Corporate</p> <p>PERSPECTIVE: The city of Port of Spain is undergoing major developmental change with various consultants, agencies and property developers engaged in a number of projects and studies that would have tremendous impacts on the ageing infrastructure of the city.</p> <p>Key developments presently taking place in the built environment are: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Government Campus ii. The Waterfront Development iii. The Performing Arts Academy iv. The Social Development Tower v. One Woodbrook Place vi. HDC Terre Brulee housing development vii. Public Services Association (PSA) Housing development <p>Proposed projects outlined for the future are -:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carnival Center - Queen’s Park savannah • The Transcorp building - Broadway • Salvatori building - Independence Square • HDC Headquarters - South Quay • Ministry of Health building - Keate Street • Two Hotels - Borde Street (Choice) & Ariapita Ave

Rickey Bovell

Studies that are in progress are -:

- a) The East Port of Spain Development Plan
- b) The Port of Spain Central Business District Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project
- c) The Greater Port of Spain Drainage Master Plan
- d) The Extension and Rehabilitation of Sewers & Water lines in Downtown Port of Spain (WASA)

1. These developments would challenge the City Corporation's capability to maintain the physical infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner.
2. Also a much greater demand/burden would be placed on water supply, sewerage services, electricity supply and telephone services. The consideration of a rate review would obviously have to coincide with the redevelopment and re-engineering of the water sector with phased tangible benefits redounding to the citizenry.

CONCERNS:

- a) It is well documented that Trinidad and Tobago has adequate water resources to meet the needs of the entire population. However, distribution of this essential commodity is failing, especially in the hilly terrains of Port of Spain. The distribution is also affected by leaks and the untimely response to have them repaired.
- b) Reports in the East Port of Spain area are that the water supply is very irregular and in some cases non-existent for long periods of time. Where a regular service exists, the water pressure is extremely low.
- c) With increase demand for water in the Central business district of the city and development also taking place in uptown Port of Spain, supply of potable water would be stretched. This could lead to further hardships in outlying residential areas.
- d) If an accelerated, concentrated network upgrade and replacement is not undertaken to run parallel with present development, the risk of communities becoming agitated for this lifeline commodity would exist, resulting in demonstrations and protest action.
- e) To accomplish pipe replacement and upgrade, proper coordination between all stakeholders should be mandatory so that minimum inconvenience and disruptions are experienced. This does not always happen.
- f) The salt-water piping network used as a key component in collaboration with the fresh water mains, to supply fire-fighting operations in the city of Port of Spain still needs upgrading.
- g) Presently sewer lines replacement is being undertaken in the city. The concern is that line capacity and alignment do not contradict the outcome of the study that is taking place.

- h) After mains are replaced and upgraded, maintenance and repairs must continue over its life span - access to these lines is essential.
- i) The non-existence of defined utility corridors or main duct tracts is of concern, as it may mean excavation of roadways to repair problems.

Presenter: Ms Hazel Browne - Network of NGO's for the Advancement of Women

- a. Ms. Browne suggested that policies be developed on:
 - i. Water for Agriculture and for Industry - to determine how proposed to be supplied and charged.
 - ii. Full list of qualifications for subsidies and a review of the existing subsidies for Public Assistance.
 - iii. Information on Subsidiaries for Recipients of Public Assistance (Names and Amount). She explained that a large number of women who are on the Ministry of Social Development's public assistance list do not benefit because their names are not on the bill as the account holders.
 - iv. Gender Issues of Water and Sanitation.
- b. She sought clarification on the 3% of Family Income principle. It is of her view that the family principle will be very difficult to verify in terms of the exact family income whether its cash or other kinds.
- c. Suggested that the RIC considers delivering a minimum quantity of water (free) to low income families, rather than try to manipulate the bill in relation to the family's income.

2. Donald Berment - Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW)

- a. Voiced two concerns regarding WASA's Application for a Rate Review.
 - i. Waste Management - for example numerous burst mains, illegal connections and faulty water tank connections. He stated that too much waste occurs under WASA distribution system; therefore a continuous monitoring system must be put in place.
 - ii. Suggested that the RIC develop a department to visit areas on a monthly basis ensuring there are no road restoration problems, leaks, etc.
 - iii. He also expressed concern with Affordability for no-income and low-income persons.

Table 6: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at Arima Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/007- 5 th June 2008 - Arima Arima Town Hall - 5pm - 7pm	
<p>RIC Personnel</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Dennis Pantin</p> <p>Harjinder Atwal</p> <p>Glenn Khan</p> <p>Garvin Alexander</p> <p>Daramdeo Maharaj</p> <p>Martin Haynes</p> <p>Janelle Crosby</p> <p>Shameel Khan</p> <p>Denise Caesar</p> <p>Gerard Rodriguez</p> <p>Claire Moolchan</p> <p>Maxine Ghent</p> <p>Michelle Smith</p> <p>Rickey Bovell</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Presenter: Stephen Barrow - Town Assessor II</p> <p>Reliability of Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our country is blessed with good rainfall though seasonal. • Construction of a network of reservoirs and auxiliary tanks to improve storage and hence supply • The question of the construction of desalination plants arises but how do these compare with other plants in terms of efficiency. • Maintenance of lines • Hotline and response time • Partnership with the private sector (contracts) • Performance bond • Review the process of awarding contracts • Procurement processes <p>How can the efficiency and performance of WASA be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource upgrade – specifically human resource. The level of technical skills required to complete the job successfully • Review the skills set needed for the efficient execution of projects – are the right people in the jobs or given contracts; what is the skill level of operators. • Are they sufficiently motivated to perform at their best • Enforcement of standards <p>How can collections be improved and receivables be reduced?</p> <p>Two ways by which revenue is assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metering. • Applied mostly to properties of a commercial nature. • Attached to property tax system. • Applied mostly to residential properties <p>Collections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of properly trained personnel • Underperformance of property tax regime • System of property taxation leaves room for subjectivity and hence diminished values • Tamperproof metering will have no such problems because it is tied purely to consumption. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LUPAP STUDY AND ITS CONCLUSIONS • Universal Metering isn't therefore the way to go. <p>How should universal metering be implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Expensive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be done incrementally over a suitable time period • T&TEC Example.
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Table 7: Summary of Stakeholder Comments at Rio Claro Consultation

CONSULTATION	COMMENTS
Ref: WASA Rate Review RIC/006- 9 th June 2008 - Rio Claro Rio Claro High School, Clear Water Village, Rio Claro	
RIC Personnel Present: Dennis Pantin Harjinder Atwal Glenn Khan Garvin Alexander Mohan Chadee Gerard Benjamin Shameel Khan Camille Rolingson Claire Moolchan Gerard Rodriguez Maxine Ghent Michelle Smith Rickey Bovell	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Presenter: Mr. Ramnarine Panchoo- Chairman - Rio Claro / Mayaro</p> <p>Problems in this area were discussed along with possible solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mayaro is 853 square kilometers, which is larger than Barbados. ○ Within this region, 60% is without pipe-born water. ○ In addition to this, the remaining 40% of the region does not get a regular drinking supply. ○ For the repairs that have taken place, soon after they have been completed, various problems may occur such as a truck passing will create a new and larger trench. ○ For the existing areas with pipes, no water is available and WASA is responsible for this. ○ The government has too much wealth to deny a basic necessity such as water. ○ Major Problems that exist in this region include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delay in repairs - Type of road repairs - Paving of mud - Incomplete projects - Lack of electricity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are lights which need changing. • Some street lights are not effective. • This results in several secondary students having to use a flambeau as a light source.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several places lack water on specific days: ● Some people with water problems may have to wait between five to six days for water. ● A number of people have to cast water in buckets to fill their tanks. ○ A few possible, temporary solutions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing trucks to areas such as Mayaro. ▪ A consumer not having to pay for water since it is a WASA contracted job. ▪ Having someone, particularly an ombudsman in that region, therefore people will be able to report their problems. ▪ Leaks should be repaired within 48 hours. ▪ A repair system should be created for the disabled, retired and senior citizens in our community. ▪ A system should be set up for customers with excessive bills to be able to negotiate. ▪ Wastewater plants should be created at strategic points in Trinidad and Tobago. ▪ Proper paving methods should be instilled. (No rushed paving jobs.) ▪ Building codes ought to be made. For example, government buildings can catch and use rain water for things such as flushing of toilets. ○ There are residents who have not received water for 20 years, yet they receive water bills. ○ Water is not a commodity in Mayaro, it is a scarcity.
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Table 8: Summary of Stakeholder Comments – Online at RIC website Discussion Forum

COMMENTS	
Online – RIC’s Discussion Forum	
Online Forum:	<p>Proposals:</p> <p>Graham Outridge: My concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we getting value for money and what are the measures used to determine efficiency at this utility? What international benchmarks are used to compare water production and water loss in system? This is very important since it affects operational costs. • A separation should be made between Capital Cost for distribution in new areas being supplied and recurring cost to produce water at an efficient rate. Government should fund Capital Cost and rates should be adjusted to cover recurring cost. <p>Karl Theodore: There is a real possibility that one of the reasons for the situations...is the fact that WASA is most probably under-resourced at present. To address the problems...will require, inter alia, more resources! The issue therefore may not be whether WASA should get a rate increase but how we could tie any proposed rate increase to better service to the population. A related issue is whether the required resources for WASA's upgrade could be "loaned" by the government to WASA with the increase coming in phases as the system is improved.</p> <p>Simon Fraser: I think that any proposal to vary rates should go hand in hand with a proposal to meter water usage. In principle I agree that WASA needs to increase rates but this increase should be based on usage NOT on the taxable value of a property. A combination of increased rates and metering will help develop an interest in conservation on the part of the consumer. Thus WASA should only be allowed to increase rates on metered customers and these rates should be introduced incrementally over a 5 to 10 year period. This will help cushion the impact of the increase. As the pricing system stands now, neither WASA nor the public have any incentive to conserve.</p> <p>Gerard Rogers: I totally agree with the implementation of the increase on a phased basis. The utility should have an increase in order to implement its strategic plans. However,</p>

a 100% increase is not reasonable based on the quality of service that has been meted out to customers. The point about a metered system is also quite valid in that not all consumers use water at the same levels, and the use of meters would provide a fair and accurate means of billing.

Paul Kyles:

Recently a new house supply was installed in my area. WASA sent a contractor, who used twelve men, three trucks, a backhoe, a pitch cutting machine, and a WASA inspector, to do this job. A totally inefficient system.

Damor:

It's amazing how we always seem to choose the hardest way out. Raising rates with the existing level of coverage would make the UNDP people cringe in horror. What we need first is proper water management. We use little ponds in a country that is drowning in water for half of the year. And the biggest pond is in the driest area. If we dam one of those huge valleys in the Northern Range...as a spin-off you have positive pressure (no pumping to the treatment plant) and maybe even a hydro-electric plant. Also if we are bent on desalinating water, why don't we use solar distillation? ...once we have enough water we can charge a decent rate while ensuring that the 20% poor in our country also have access to enough safe water. ~ Damor

M. Sook:

In order for me to even consider an increase the following is compulsory:

1. I must pay for what I use only. This means that I must be metered. If this is done then, on the consumer's side there will be no wastage due to leakage at taps or by the washing of cars, yards etc. On WASA's side there will be a reason now to ensure that people get water. Leaks (50%?) will therefore be fixed in record time and metering should start where there is a 24 hour supply of water.

2. The method of formulating the charge per consumer must be changed. Presently this is based on the annual taxable value of your property so if you live in Goodwood Park you will pay a fortune for water although you might economize on it. All the more reason for metering.

3. People should be given jobs based on their ability not on their affiliation to a political party.

4. A thorough investigation in the operations of WASA should be done to investigate the misuse of funds since there seem to be corruption at the

management level. (See Trinidad Guardian Article 'Business Guardian' - Thursday 21st February, 2008 as my reference (see) for points 3 and 4 above.)

After reading this article I am of the firm view that a foreign company should be called in to clean up and run WASA for a few years and then hand it back to the government.

Myra Myco:

How can WASA even think of wanting to increase their rates? To me, this is insane due to:

1. A 24 hour water supply in many areas is not present.
2. Areas like Beech still do not have tap borne water.
3. Water supplied is very dirty containing high amounts of sediment which makes water tanks filthy, clogs water filters in a day and at times comes so white with chlorine it looks like milk!
4. Repairs are not effected in a timely manner - takes weeks!
5. Repairs that are made are not done well in many cases e.g. El Socorro Ext # 2 near the WASA water works. The line has ruptured in excess of 5 times in the last 5 years with repairs taking weeks.
6. When water is not supplied and individuals purchase water tanks, that is one cost they incur plus the installation of a pump and the electrical and plumbing to facilitate it. Not to mention there are running costs. Why pay more for water when now you got to pay T&TEC as well for your pump to run to supply your stored water!
7. Truck borne water. Need I say more? Takes long to come, lucky if you get depending on the demand and you are lucky if you get a full tank!

S. Rampersad:

On the issue of universal metering...people who receive water once or twice per week should not be charged the same rate as those who receive water everyday.