



King County

**Metropolitan King County Council
Regional Water Quality Committee**

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item:	8	Name:	Mike Reed
Proposed No.:	2021-B0114	Date:	September 1, 2021

SUBJECT

Committee Review of the Wastewater Treatment Division Clean Water Plan planning project.

SUMMARY

The Wastewater Treatment Division is continuing with a broad-scale planning effort of Division priorities and strategies across programs and agency services. This review, referred to as the Clean Water Plan, comes as the agency is faced with an increasingly challenging mix of mandates and program demands, together with potential rate impacts. Today's briefing is part of a series of briefings in preparation for development of a recommended strategy addressing the future direction of the wastewater system.

BACKGROUND

The regional wastewater system is at a critical juncture in its development as a system. It is facing increasing pressures across the range of service offerings. These include the aging of the system and accelerated maintenance needs (both West Point and South treatment plants celebrated their 50-year anniversaries recently); increasing concerns about water quality-related issues; increasing regulatory requirements; increasing growth-related capacity concerns; climate change-related storm patterns that challenge system operations; and increasing rate pressures resulting from these system developments. Concurrently, there are discussions about alternative approaches to managing wastewater, including distributed systems, stricter biosolids standards, and stormwater retention opportunities. In sum, major strategic directional questions are facing the system, and have led to the initiation of a process to inventory, evaluate, and address the policy options associated with these questions.

In response to these developments, the Wastewater Treatment Division has undertaken a planning process, referred to as the Clean Water Plan. Planners have progressed through a number of stages in the planning effort, including outreach to stakeholders, identification of key decision areas, development of potential action alternatives for these decision areas, and policy considerations associated with potential actions.

More specifically, the identified Decision Areas include:

- Treatment Plants
- Pollution Source Control/Product Stewardship
- Stormwater and Combined Sewer Overflows
- Wastewater Conveyance System
- Asset Management, Resiliency, and Redundancy
- Legacy Pollution
- Resource Recovery
- Finance

Planners have briefed the Committee and other interested audiences on a range of action alternatives, intended to help shape possible strategy options. Those options are expected to lead to a preferred strategy, which may have significant implications for the future shape of the system, and for revenue needs.

In acknowledgement of the strategic program implications of this planning project, the Regional Water Quality Committee has requested regular briefings on the planning effort, and has included a series of briefings from program staff on this topic at each of its scheduled 2020 committee meetings.

At the July 2021 meeting of the Regional Water Quality Committee, the Committee was introduced to alternative strategy packages, from which a recommended preferred strategy will be selected. Those strategies will be further developed and extended at the September 1, 2021 committee meeting.

INVITED

- Tiffany Knapp, Clean Water Plan Project Lead, Wastewater Treatment Division
- Steve Tolzman, Clean Water Plan Project Lead, Wastewater Treatment Division
- Sonia-Lynn Abenojar, Regional Engagement Project Manager, Wastewater Treatment Division

ATTACHMENTS

1. "Making the Right Investments at the Right Time" Clean Water Plan Presentation
2. WTD Supplemental Briefing Document