



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

RWQC Resolution

Proposed No. RWQC2025-02.1

Sponsors

1 A RESOLUTION declaring the regional water quality
2 committee's support of the Regional Wastewater Services
3 Plan Update Charter.

4 WHEREAS, the regional water quality committee recognizes the critical
5 importance of maintaining and enhancing its wastewater utility services to ensure public
6 health, environmental protection, and operational efficiency, and

7 WHEREAS, a comprehensive long-range plan for wastewater services is essential
8 to effectively address current and future needs, including infrastructure improvements,
9 regulatory compliance, affordability of long-term rates and sustainable practices, and

10 WHEREAS, the council adopted the Regional Wastewater Services Plan ("the
11 RWSP") in November 1999 through Ordinance 13680, subsequently codified as part of
12 K.C.C. chapter 28.86, and

13 WHEREAS, the RWSP identifies projects and programs needed to provide
14 wastewater treatment capacity for homes and businesses in the wastewater treatment
15 division service area through 2030, and

16 WHEREAS, the RWSP provides policy direction for the operation and continued
17 development of the wastewater system, the wastewater treatment division capital
18 improvement program, financial policies to guide forecasting, budgeting, and debt
19 financing, and revenue to support the implementation of the RWSP, and

20 WHEREAS, the RWSP, a supplement to the King County Comprehensive Water
21 Pollution Abatement Plan originally adopted by the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle,
22 serves as the primary framework for guiding the future of the county's wastewater utility
23 and regional infrastructure, and

24 WHEREAS, the RWSP should be updated and the associated policies in K.C.C.
25 chapter 28.84, Water Pollution Abatement, and K.C.C. chapter 28.86, Wastewater
26 Treatment, should be examined to ensure investments in the wastewater system continue
27 to improve water quality, ensure system performance, and to mitigate the impact of
28 increasing sewer rates over the long term, and

29 WHEREAS, the wastewater treatment division has initiated the process to update
30 the RWSP and review associated policies, and

31 WHEREAS, the regional water quality committee has a strong interest in ensuring
32 the steps taken to update the RWSP are well coordinated and effective, and

33 WHEREAS, the wastewater treatment division developed a scoping document for
34 updating the RWSP informed by comments and input received from the metropolitan
35 water pollution abatement advisory committee, members of the regional water quality
36 committee, and interested parties, and

37 WHEREAS, the scoping document describes the overall approach that will be
38 used in the RWSP update, a timeline of major deliverables, and the major policy issues
39 that will be analyzed, and

40 WHEREAS, on January 5, 2025 the regional water quality committee approved
41 resolution RWQC2025-01 in support of the wastewater treatment division's Scoping
42 Document for Updating the Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update and

43 WHEREAS, the plan update will benefit from a charter to describe the shared
44 goals, roles and responsibilities, and agreed-upon process for the RWSP update, and

45 WHEREAS, a charter, the RWSP Update Charter, has been prepared by the
46 wastewater treatment division and members of a working group comprised of staff
47 representing members of the metropolitan water pollution abatement advisory committee,
48 staff representing regional water quality members, and staff from the Sound Cities
49 Association, and

50 WHEREAS, the RWSP Update Charter describes a framework for collaboration
51 and process between the wastewater treatment division and the metropolitan water
52 pollution abatement advisory committee to develop the Regional Wastewater Services
53 Plan Update, and

54 WHEREAS, the RWSP Update Charter establishes shared goals and principles,
55 establishes roles and responsibilities, outlines a process for the metropolitan water
56 pollution abatement advisory committee and the regional water quality to provide input in
57 the development of the RWSP update, and sets out schedules and milestones for the
58 RWSP update, and

59 WHEREAS, the charter sets a tone of collaboration and partnership that is
60 important for the multi-year process to develop the RWSP update and ensure broad
61 support, and

62 WHEREAS, on January 22, 2025, the metropolitan water pollution abatement advisory
63 committee voted to authorize the chair of the metropolitan water pollution abatement
64 advisory committee to sign the RWSP Update Charter, and

65 WHEREAS, the regional water quality committee has reviewed and concurs with
66 the approach proposed in the RWSP Update Charter, Attachment A to this resolution,
67 that will be used by the division and the metropolitan water pollution abatement advisory
68 committee to guide the collaborative development of the long-range Regional
69 Wastewater Services Plan Update;

70 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the King County Regional Water
71 Quality Committee:

72 A. The regional water quality committee declares its support of the Regional
73 Wastewater Services Plan Update Charter, attached as Attachment A to this resolution,
74 which the division shall use to guide the process to update the Regional Wastewater
75 Services Plan.

76 B. The regional water quality committee requests the wastewater treatment
77 division brief the regional water quality committee on any proposed substantive changes
78 to the Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update Charter.

RWQC Resolution 2025-02 was introduced and passed by the Regional Water Quality Committee on February 5, 2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 10 Balducci, Clarke, Dunn, Kettle, Lee, Mork, Moore, Rossman, Saka voting as alternate for Hooshangi, and Warren

No: 0

Excused: Hollingsworth

Attachments: A. Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update Charter

RWSP Update Charter

This Charter is similar to a Memorandum of Understanding, and is an agreement representing the shared goals, roles and responsibilities, and agreed-upon process for the Regional Wastewater Services Plan update. It describes the intent of the parties, but does not create any legally binding obligations.

1. Background

The Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP) is King County's comprehensive plan for wastewater. RWSP policies provide direction for the operation and further development of the wastewater system, its capital improvement program and, as necessary, the development of subsequent policies. RWSP policies are set forth in King County Code Chapters 28.84 and 28.86.

Adopted in 1999, the current RWSP is a supplement to the original Comprehensive Water Pollution Abatement Plan adopted in 1959, and includes additional components for Combined Sewer Overflows, Conveyance System Improvement, Infiltration/Inflow, and others. The RWSP and its related components form King County's General Sewer Plan, which was approved by the Department of Ecology in 1999.

It is time to update the RWSP to guide future investments and actions. The current RWSP was intended to guide the management of the system through 2030, and conditions have dramatically changed since its adoption. Some of the changing conditions that are driving the need to update the RWSP include:

- a. increasing capacity demands from a growing population,
- b. aging infrastructure requiring substantial amounts of maintenance, refurbishment, and replacement,
- c. recent and anticipated new regulations to protect water quality,
- d. customer affordability especially for lower-income households, and
- e. changing climate patterns which will stress our current system in multiple ways.

These challenges present opportunities for us to make our wastewater system better serve our region to ensure economic prosperity and sustain our environment through the end of the 21st century. Updating the RWSP will provide us these opportunities. Furthermore, an update to the RWSP will support the renegotiation and extension of local agency wastewater contracts, many of which expire in 2036, and it will help make the case for additional state and federal funding and meet the requirements for a General Sewer Plan update for approval by the Department of Ecology.

2. Charter Purpose

This Charter is intended to guide the multi-year process to update the RWSP. It establishes a framework for collaboration, partnership, and process between the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD, a division within the County Executive branch) and the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC) to develop work products for consideration by the Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC) and ultimately by the King County Council. It establishes shared goals, values, and principles; it sets clear and transparent roles and responsibilities, including decision-making

responsibilities. The Charter outlines a process with opportunities for MWPAAC and RWQC to shape and influence outcomes; and it provides a high-level road map with major work areas, schedule, and milestones for the RWSP update.

WTD and MWPAAC (hereafter referred to as “we”, “us”, or “Parties”) have distinct roles in the effort to update the RWSP. WTD’s and MWPAAC’s agreement to this Charter ensures we are partners in this effort and committed to work in good faith to effectively coordinate and carry out the steps in the planning process to deliver work products to the RWQC and achieve our shared goals.

3. Shared Goals

Our shared goals are:

- a. Develop a draft update to the RWSP by 2027, through thorough analysis, collaboration, and engagement across contract agencies, and
- b. Executive recommends to the King County Council a Final RWSP Update by mid 2029 (i.e. no later than end of 2nd Quarter) that reflects regional values and regional priorities, and
- c. Anticipated King County Council adoption of the Final RWSP Update by end of 2029, and that the updated RWSP will serve as a long-range plan to guide decision making through 2060.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to clearly define roles, responsibilities and expectations, including decision-making responsibilities and authority. Roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. The King County Executive will oversee the work of WTD and propose the update to the RWSP and its policies to the King County Council. In addition, the King County Executive will establish the Vision for Clean Water for 2100, to help guide, but not constrain, the 30-year implementation of the new RWSP.
- b. The King County Council may adopt the updated RWSP and its policies as proposed by the County Executive or with amendments.
- c. RWQC is a regional committee in the Legislative branch of County government with the role and responsibility to develop, propose, review, and recommend countywide policies and plans addressing water quality to the King County Council.¹ In this capacity, the RWQC may wish to influence the development phase of the RWSP update and its policies as described in paragraph I below. Following the King County Executive’s transmittal of a proposed ordinance to update the RWSP with new or amended policies, the RWQC may exercise its role and responsibility as described in paragraph II below.

¹ K.C.C. 1.24.065.K3

- I. During the development phase of the RWSP update, the RWQC may review and provide input and feedback on WTD work products, including the initial set of Vision for Clean Water options, and WTD's proposed new and amended policies. At the discretion of the RWQC Chair and its members, RWQC members may convey their input on issues or topics and whether they concur with WTD or have specific areas of concern on the direction or substance of WTD's work through Committee discussions, individual member comments, or through a Resolution. RWQC's input will be documented and reported as an addendum to the joint WTD/Working Group memo outlined in Step #5 in Section 8 on Information and Work Product Flow.
 - II. Following transmittal of the County Executive's proposed RWSP ordinance to County Council, King County Code requires the ordinance to be automatically referred to RWQC for its review and recommendations through the "mandatory referral" process as outlined in the King County Charter for all countywide water quality comprehensive and long-range capital improvement plans.² In accordance with the King County Charter, if the King County Council subsequently makes changes to the RWSP after RWQC has reviewed, the RWSP will be sent back to RWQC for additional consideration.
- d. MWPAAC is an advisory body to the County Council and Executive on matters related to the wastewater treatment system. MWPAAC and its associated Engineering and Planning (E&P) and Rates and Finance (R&F) Subcommittees roles and responsibilities in the RWSP update are to:
- I. Review technical analyses and provide feedback on WTD work products and proposals,
 - II. Contribute to discussions and help shape and influence WTD's work products,
 - III. Constructively influence new and revised policy language proposed by WTD,
 - IV. Report out their recommendations to RWQC and/or the King County Council and Executive.
- e. The RWSP Working Group is a newly created forum for MWPAAC, RWQC member staff, and Sound Cities Association staff to collaborate with WTD's RWSP project team through development and successful adoption of an updated RWSP. The Working Group's composition should not exceed a total of ten non-WTD members, with representation from MWPAAC and RWQC members' staff, and with representation from cities and sewer districts. Non-WTD members will be selected by the Chair of MWPAAC, in consultation with the WTD Director. Membership to the Working Group is not fixed for the duration of the RWSP update; members will rotate on/off based on expertise and interest in topic and their availability. To increase institutional memory and smooth the process of rotational membership, the Chair of MWPAAC, in consultation with the WTD Director, may invite past and future Working Group members to observe Working Group meetings.

² K.C.C. 1.24.065.K3

The Working Group's roles and responsibilities are to:

- I. Influence and help shape WTD work products and RWSP outcomes.³
 - II. Play a regular role in the feedback loops built into the information and work product flow; this will involve providing inputs to help WTD refine and revise work products based on comments heard in the planning process.
 - III. Ensure elected members on RWQC and MWPAAC colleagues are kept apprised of the status of on-going work.
 - IV. Establish a clear channel of communication between WTD, MWPAAC and RWQC member staff that is dedicated to the RWSP update.
 - Alongside WTD, Working Group members have the option to report out at MWPAAC and RWQC meetings to update on progress and highlight areas of concurrence and any concerns.
 - Alongside WTD, Working Group members have the option to co-author a short-form memo that reports to RWQC an update on progress made by the Working Group, and areas of concurrence and any concerns conveyed by the Working Group or MWPAAC, as described in Step #5 of the information and work product flow in Section 8.
- f. The King County WTD is an Executive branch agency with the role and responsibility to develop and deliver an updated RWSP through the Department of Natural Resources and Parks to the County Executive. WTD's roles and responsibilities in the RWSP update are:
- I. Develop and recommend options for a Vision for Clean Water to the King County Executive. The process for the development of the Vision for Clean Water is described further in Appendix C since it is on a separate path than the process for future RWSP update work products.
 - II. Lead the RWSP update planning effort and develop an updated RWSP in alignment with the vision and high-level goals for decision and adoption by the King County Executive and Council,
 - III. Produce all work products associated with the planning process, including the development, evaluation and selection of new and revised RWSP policies, and provide briefings to RWQC and MWPAAC.
 - IV. Collaborate with MWPAAC and its subcommittees, RWQC and the RWSP Working Group to produce and refine work products and develop new and revised policies that have been reviewed and influenced by input from MWPAAC and RWQC in a manner consistent with goals, values, and principles in this charter.

³ The term "influence", as used in this Charter, refers to the Working Group and MWPAAC members influencing WTD's work products; it does not include influencing elected decision makers.

- V. Objectively convey MWPAAC feedback when presenting to RWQC. WTD will author a short-form memo that reports to RWQC to update the Committee on progress made by the Working Group, and areas of concurrence or any concerns conveyed by the Working Group or MWPAAC, as described in Step #5 of the information and work product flow in Section 8. A Working Group member may choose to co-author this memo alongside WTD. WTD will provide an addendum to this memo following RWQC meetings that reflect RWQC's input on issues or topic areas.
- VI. Protect and promote equity and social justice in the RWSP update. In 2010, King County Council adopted Ordinance 16948, requiring the principles of equity and social justice to be included in all strategic planning, comprehensive planning, and policy decisions at King County. These principles are outlined in the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and will be reflected in the updated plan.
- VII. Engage diverse voices and foster inclusive participation to ensure community members have equitable opportunities to contribute to and inform the RWSP planning process. WTD will actively reach out to underrepresented groups and historically underserved communities and consider their needs and perspectives when creating the plan. Engagement will be guided by King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.⁴
- VIII. Develop and share information and analyses to promote shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the regional wastewater system in the coming decades by providing historical context and data about volumes and rates and the rationale behind the current system. WTD will develop a range of possible future directions to address these challenges and opportunities and will create projections of capital costs and rates to inform cost/benefit analyses and decision making associated with these range of options.
- IX. Affirm that King County will commit to meet all current and anticipated future legal and regulatory obligations associated with the RWSP update. WTD will focus on wastewater system services, issues and policies and coordinate with, but not assume responsibility for, other water quality-related planning efforts (e.g., stormwater, water supply).

⁴ King County's Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan was unanimously adopted by the King County Council. It can be found at the following URL: <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-ACK-EX-SUM.pdf>

5. Shared Values and Guiding Principles

To succeed, we agree on the following shared values and associated action-oriented guiding principles. Together they will guide our work to update the RWSP.

Shared Values

The following are the four shared values for our collective work on the RWSP update; they will guide how we engage one another, how we share information, how we resolve conflict, and they will help us build a foundation of trust and mutual understanding.

- a. Collaboration
- b. Partnership
- c. Regionalism
- d. Innovative Thinking

Guiding Principles

The following principles are action-oriented expressions and mutual commitments of our shared values; they are our norms, our code of conduct and the guideposts for our process of working together to update the RWSP.

Collaboration:

- I. WTD will provide transparency and specific timelines in the planning process, including in all assumptions, in work product creation, information flow, and decision-making. WTD will share knowledge and information with sufficient time for meaningful review and avoid opaque processes where internal functions are unknown or not shared.
- II. WTD will build-in appropriate time for review, discussion, input, revisions, and engagement with the Working Group, MWPAAC and RWQC.
- III. WTD will build-in clear feedback loops to the information and work product flow prior to decision making.
- IV. MWPAAC and WTD will offer constructive feedback and will work together in good faith. WTD will strive to integrate feedback from MWPAAC and RWQC into its work products and communicate clearly if it does not, and the reasons why.

Partnership:

- I. WTD will respect all input from component agencies and will seek to understand the meaning and intent behind MWPAAC and RWQC's opinions and perspectives. WTD will establish a planning process that meaningfully considers the input, ideas and feedback heard from MPWAAC and RWQC. MWPAAC has value to add in policy discussions in addition to its role as technical advisor. As such, WTD's planning process will give MWPAAC opportunities to

constructively influence policy discussions. WTD will honor the process and schedule outlined in this Charter.

- II. WTD will respect all input from planning stakeholders outside of MWPAAC and RWQC and will meaningfully consider input, ideas, and feedback heard from them.
- III. MWPAAC will seek to understand the meaning and intent behind WTD's opinions and perspectives. MWPAAC will recognize the process and schedule outlined in this Charter and will help to prioritize discussions to convey their input on issues or topics.
- IV. WTD is intentionally creating a collaborative planning process that shifts MWPAAC's role from advisor and commentor of WTD's work products to a partner and participant to influence and shape WTD's work products and RWSP outcomes. In the spirit of partnership MWPAAC will strive to support WTD's efforts and the planning process outcomes when possible; and when support is not possible, MWPAAC will constructively frame feedback to WTD and RWQC.

Regionalism:

- I. WTD acknowledges its responsibility to convene conversations and facilitate regional solutions.
- II. The Parties commit to understand the challenges and opportunities facing the regional wastewater system in the coming decades and the planning process will result in a plan that is responsive and adaptive to them.
- III. The Parties will apply the lens of "Regionalism" to our discussions and deliberations. This means applying a 'systems thinking' approach wherein we all understand each component agency is a part of a 'whole', and each will bring local perspectives and needs to the table, while recognizing the interrelationship and interdependencies of their local system to the whole regional system.
- IV. The Parties will objectively evaluate tradeoffs and investment sequencing to ensure a resilient and sustainable wastewater system that protects our environment while balancing near-term and long-term impact to rate payers.

Innovative Thinking:

The Parties will employ innovative thinking to generate new ideas and cost-effective solutions to the 21st century challenges facing our wastewater system. This means we will approach problems and ideas with an open mind; we will be open to generate ideas that may diverge from the status quo; we will be flexible and adapt to change to find new ways to approach problems; and we will identify and question assumptions that may limit creative possibilities.

6. RWSP Policy Areas

The update to the RWSP is intended to span a 30-year time horizon (2030 – 2060), with planned future incremental smaller-in-scope updates every 10 years to adjust and adapt to changing conditions as needed in between major 30-year updates to the Plan.

WTD has or is developing eleven topic-specific Functional Plans listed below. These Plans will be reviewed and, if necessary, modified based on direction coming out of the RWSP planning process in order to align with and integrate into the broader and comprehensive updated RWSP.

WTD's Functional Plans:

1. Biosolids Strategic Plan
2. Climate Adaptation Plan
3. Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan
4. Conveyance System Improvement Plan
5. Energy Plan
6. Infiltration and Inflow Plan
7. Recycled Water Strategic Plan
8. Sediment Management Plan
9. Strategic Asset Management Plan
10. Treatment Plan
11. Seismic Resiliency Plan

The major policy areas that will be included in this 30-year update to the RWSP are described in the RWSP Scoping Document supported by RWQC via Resolution RWQC2025-01. This Charter organizes these same major policy areas into two general topic areas for planning purposes – Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment, and Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related topics.

A high-level overview of these two policy areas is described below; more information about the planning level framework and details about these two policy areas can be found in Appendix A.

Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment

The RWSP planning process will involve thorough technical analyses and evaluation of eight categories of capital investment:

1. Treatment
2. Asset Management
3. Separated System Conveyance (including infiltration/inflow)
4. Combined System Management
5. Climate Impact Preparedness and Natural Disaster Resiliency
6. Pollution (Source Control and Legacy)
7. Resource Recovery (Biosolids, Energy, Recycled Water)
8. Odor Control

Each of these eight categories of capital investment will be analyzed and evaluated across a range of enhancement levels over a 30-year time horizon with respect to three distinct conceptual Approaches.

Three Conceptual Approaches:

1. Stay the Course Approach
2. Strategic Enhancements Approach
3. Transformative Approach

These three Approaches represent a spectrum of investment and outcome possibilities for the region to consider managing its wastewater; they can be thought of as different pathways to get to different desired outcomes by the year 2060. Analyses of capital investment levels for each of the three Approaches will provide the necessary information to effectively evaluate trade-offs to inform proposed policy changes.

Using outputs received from a SEPA process, and feedback received from RWQC and MWPAAC during the planning process, a final Proposal will be selected from the three Approaches. The final Proposal may be a hybrid of the three Approaches.

Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related Topics

Policy Area 2 includes topics in the RWSP Scoping document that are not direct capital investment areas. These topics include, but are not limited to, the list shown below. These policy topics will be integrated into the RWSP update and applied across each of the three Conceptual Approaches.

1. Financial Policies
2. Customer Affordability
3. Equity and Social Justice
4. Relation to Contracts
5. Regular Future Reporting

7. High-level Schedule and Major Milestones

Development and descriptions of the three conceptual approaches, with their associated levels of enhancement across the eight categories of capital investment, is planned to begin in Q2 2025 and carry through 2026. Financial policies analyses and engagement will begin in early 2026 and will be separated into two phases as described in Appendix A. An updated draft RWSP with the three Approaches is planned in 2027 accompanied by a SEPA analysis. Following completion of the SEPA process a final Proposal is planned to be selected in 2028, followed by development of proposed new RWSP policies. It is anticipated that the King County Executive will transmit a final RWSP Update to the King County Council no later than the second Quarter of 2029 for anticipated Council adoption in 2029. Following Council adoption, the final RWSP Update will be submitted to the WA Department of Ecology for approval.

A high-level schedule to update the RWSP with the major milestones is shown in Table 1 in Appendix B. Further detail about topic specific deliverables and dates is forthcoming as WTD moves further into the RWSP Update planning process.

8. Information and Work Product Flow

This Charter establishes a process to allow space where we can find synergies and co-benefits by working together to plan for our future wastewater investments. The steps below outline a process for the flow of information and work products between WTD, the Working Group, MWPAAC, and RWQC to ensure productive, constructive, and efficient collaboration.

Sequencing Steps & Feedback Loops

WTD will bundle work products by topic into modules to facilitate the workflow process. Given monthly meeting schedules, it will take 3-5 months to move a module of work products through the sequence steps and feedback loops outlined below. These steps will be repeated for each topic-specific module needed to develop the RWSP Update.

WTD has the responsibility to bring its work products to the RWSP Working Group and MWPAAC. Upon receiving an initial briefing about the content of a work module from WTD, the RWQC will determine its preferred level and timing of engagement on a given module's work products.

Step #1: WTD coordinates with the Chairs of RWQC and MWPAAC prior to the beginning of work for each work module to determine the appropriate level of detail that WTD will bring to RWQC and MWPAAC, and to establish a schedule for completion of the work module.

Step #2: WTD shares initial drafts of its work products with Working Group.

Step #3: Working Group meets regularly to collaborate with WTD to help shape and influence WTD's work products. Working Group members ensure elected members on RWQC and MWPAAC colleagues are kept apprised of the status of on-going work.

Step #4: MWPAAC reviews WTD's work products and provides input and feedback to WTD.

Step #5: WTD reports to RWQC on results of steps 2-4 for purposes of keeping RWQC members up to date on status of work product development and areas of concurrence or any concerns (report is a short-form memo authored by WTD. A Working Group member may choose to partner with WTD in drafting the memo).

Step #6: WTD refines its work products based on feedback from steps 4 and 5 in consultation with the Working Group.

WTD's work products at this step are still dynamic and adjustable going into Step #7.

Step #7: Based on RWQC's preferred level of engagement from step #1, RWQC may review and provide input and feedback on WTD's work products. At the discretion of the RWQC Chair and its members, RWQC members convey their input through Committee discussions and individual member comments or through a Resolution. WTD drafts an addendum to the memo from step

#5 capturing RWQC member comments and/or the Committee's concurrence or areas of concern on issues or topic areas.

Step #8: WTD makes final refinements to its work products.

Step #9: WTD shares its final work products with RWQC and MWPAAC. For each work module WTD will provide a record if substantive MWPAAC and RWQC feedback was or was not included and why.

Steps 4 and 7 in this process may require more than one MWPAAC or RWQC meeting. This process is cyclical and will begin anew for each new topic-specific work module.

Built-in feedback loops are also important in the process for productive collaboration, and to ensure constructive input can be incorporated into work products. Following Steps 5 or 7, if WTD determines that additional partner feedback is warranted, then draft work will loop back to process step 3.

Sequencing the steps with appropriate time for MWPAAC and RWQC to review and discuss work products is important. WTD commits to provide all work products and meeting materials to the Working Group, MWPAAC, and RWQC no later than 1 week in advance of meetings. Given the frequency of the monthly meetings of these groups, it is difficult for WTD to provide meeting materials any sooner than 1 week in advance.

Equally important to sequencing and feedback loops is the need to have the process function to maintain the schedule so we can achieve our shared goals by the deadlines indicated in Section 4. It will facilitate the process and schedule when MWPAAC provides feedback to WTD no later than 5 business days following a meeting to enable smooth and timely flow of work product delivery to RWQC. For this process to be successful, all parties need to work together in good faith.

9. Commitments from MWPAAC Chair and WTD Director

The MWPAAC Chair and WTD Director support this Charter for the update to King County's RWSP, and request our colleagues and staff abide by it as we work collectively through the multi-year process to update the RWSP. Furthermore, we request that all staff from WTD, MWPAAC members, and those who serve on the RWSP Working Group read and formally acknowledge this Charter and the responsibilities it requires so this document can serve as an on-going reminder about the expectations around collaboration, partnership, and process for those who participate on the RWSP Working Group.

MWPAAC Chair: John McClellan

King County WTD Director: Kamuron Gurol

Appendix A: Policy Areas & Planning Level Specifics

Information in this Appendix provides more detail about the planning framework and process associated with the major policy areas outlined in Section 6 of this Charter.

Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment

The planning process will involve thorough technical analyses and evaluation of eight categories of capital investment. The analyses will provide the necessary information to effectively evaluate trade-offs to inform proposed policy changes. The following categories reflect the same general policy topics described in the RWSP Scoping document (supported by RWQC via Resolution RWQC2025-01) that are directly related to levels of capital investment. Policy Area 2 describes the work planned for policy topics addressed in the Scoping document that are not direct capital investment areas.

1. **Treatment:** Policies will consider level of treatment (i.e. removal of pollutants such as nutrients) and capacity demands (due to population growth). A range of options will be considered from regional plants to decentralized concepts.
2. **Asset Management:** Policies will consider level of risk for wastewater infrastructure failure in aging systems and approach for repair/replacement/refurbishment.
3. **Separated System Conveyance (including infiltration/inflow):** Policies will consider level of service for capacity within the separated wastewater conveyance system and concepts to manage capacity including reduction of I/I and use of automation.
4. **Combined System Management:** Policies will consider controlling CSO discharges and managing/reducing flow in the combined conveyance system (separation, green stormwater infrastructure).
5. **Climate Impact Preparedness and Natural Disaster Resiliency:** Policies will consider climate adaptation (precipitation/storm intensities, sea level rise, etc.); level of resiliency/redundancy to natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes).
6. **Pollution (Source Control and Legacy):** Policies will consider potential to limit harmful chemicals in consumer products and manufacturing before they enter wastewater. Policies will also consider legacy pollution/sediment management.
7. **Resource Recovery (Biosolids, Energy, Recycled Water):** Policies will consider recovery of resources from wastewater treatment process – biosolids, energy (including sewer heat recovery), recycled water.
8. **Odor Control:** Policies will consider prevention and control of nuisance odor occurrences at all treatment plants and associated conveyance facilities.

Each of these eight categories of capital investment will be analyzed and evaluated across a range of enhancement levels over a 30-year time horizon with respect to the three distinct conceptual approaches mentioned below. These three approaches represent a spectrum of investment and outcome possibilities for the region to consider managing its wastewater; they can be thought of as different pathways to get to different desired outcomes by the year 2060.

Three Conceptual Approaches:

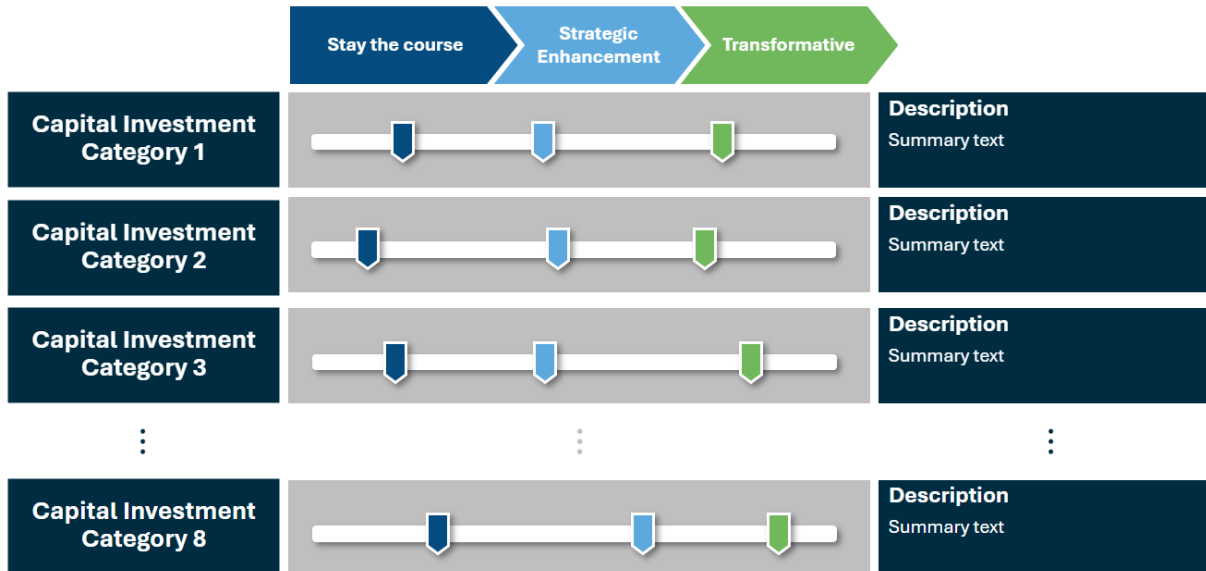
1. **Stay the Course:** Under this approach, WTD would provide fundamental services. WTD would implement operations and a capital program that focus on compliance for all applicable current and future regulations. WTD would use industry-accepted standard operating procedures and proven and reliable technologies. WTD would work to maintain a positive public image, cultivate an understanding of its operations and the value of its services with the community.
2. **Strategic Enhancements:** Under this approach, WTD would provide strategic enhancements to the operations and capital program beyond those provided in the Stay the Course approach. The strategic enhancements will focus on continual improvement and optimizing its services as central to mission success. WTD would actively engage with its community to ensure responsiveness to community needs and interests. WTD would have explicit performance improvement objectives and service levels and would actively seek to ensure its operations support the community's economic and social well-being. WTD would seek to create co benefits with partners when it is cost effective and feasible. WTD would adopt sustainability as a core business principle and appropriately utilize natural systems, like green infrastructure, in addition to other nonconventional technologies (e.g. decentralized approaches) and practices. WTD would enhance use of processes for recovery of energy, solids, and materials.
3. **Transformative:** Under this approach, WTD would transform from where it is today to a more innovative, future-focused utility. As a leader in the industry, WTD would employ practices that focus on managing wastewater as a valuable commodity. This approach would incorporate an efficient reclamation mindset and focus on producing usable products instead of treatment and discharge. WTD would focus on enhanced resiliency and act as a leader in treatment technology, pollution prevention, energy production and recycling by working with other utility and industry partners to promote beneficial resources from wastewater to benefit agriculture, industry and ecosystems. WTD would foster and invest in a culture of innovation, collaborative development, and active engagement with its employees.

Within each approach, varying levels of enhancements across each of the eight categories of capital investment will be described, identified, and then evaluated with planning level cost estimations. When choosing levels of capital enhancement for evaluation we will use the process outlined in Section 8. The level of enhancement for each category can be thought of as a dial that can be increased or decreased across a range based on the desired outcome for a particular approach. The low level of enhancement across the range is associated with the “Stay the Course” Approach, while the high level of enhancement across the range is associated with the “Transformative” Approach. This range of capital enhancements across the approaches is illustrated in Diagram 1 below. For the “Strategic Enhancement” Approach there will likely be a range of options within each category of capital investment which may require additional evaluation.

These plan approaches are not ordered according to increasing costs. Cost estimation of each approach's varying levels of investment will consider life cycle costs, the effect of delayed investment on future costs due to inflation, as well as potential financial benefits that may accrue from proactive

investment. As such, it is difficult to predict cost levels of one approach relative to another at this point in the planning process.

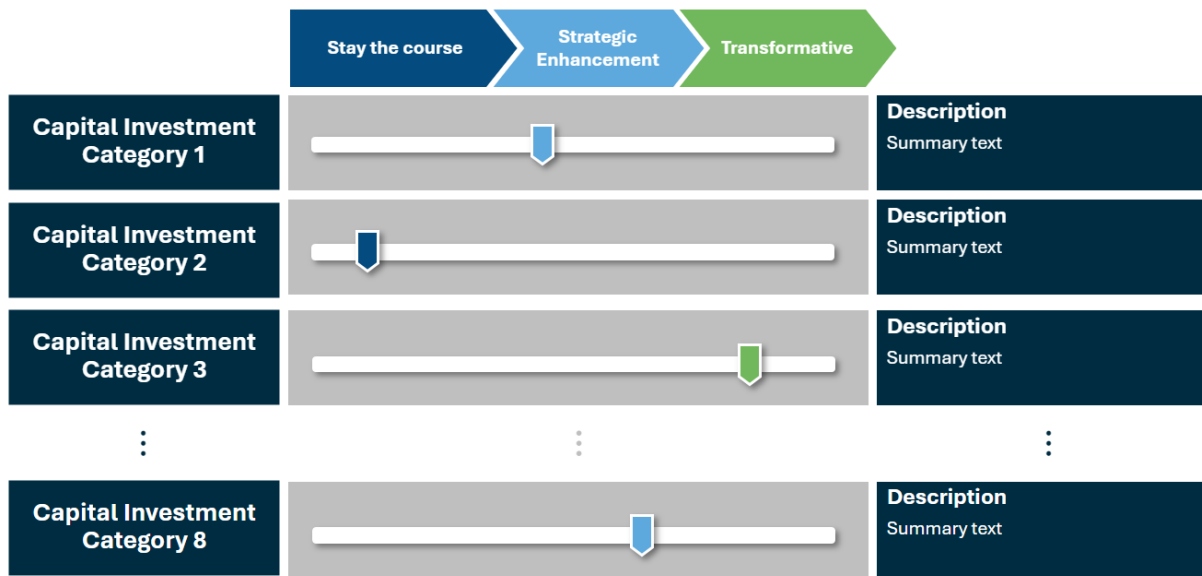
Diagram 1. Example Three Conceptual Approaches with Categories of Capital Investment



The planning process will include the development and application of criteria to compare the approaches and discuss tradeoffs to ultimately recommend a final proposal. Criteria may include, but not limited to, environmental sustainability, reliability, Equity and Social Justice, impacts to rate payers, and risk of compliance. The RWSP Working Group will provide guidance to MWPAAC, who will weigh in on the development of the criteria.

The Washington State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) requires the County to complete a checklist and either an environmental impact statement (EIS), a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) or a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS) for the updated RWSP. The process will require the issuance of a draft EIS or a draft DNS or MDNS to precede the issuance of a final EIS, DNS or MDNS.

Using outputs received from the SEPA process, and feedback received from RWQC and MWPAAC during the planning process, a final Proposal will be selected. The final Proposal may be a hybrid of the three approaches as illustrated in Diagram 2 below.

Diagram 2. Example of Final Proposal

Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related Topics

Policy Area 2 includes the topics in the Scoping document supported by RWQC via Resolution RWQC2025-01 that are not direct capital investment areas. Planned work for each of these topic areas, and how each will support the RWSP update, is described.

Financial Policies

Technical analyses will be performed to provide information to support proposed changes to the financial policies in King County Code 28.86.160. The analysis will consider rate structure and rate equity (including the capacity charge), capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency.⁵ The analysis will also study peer utility agency financial policy structures and evaluating them within a WTD specific context.

Financial policies analyses and engagement will be separated into two phases, with phase 1 occurring earlier in the planning process because they provide the framework for future revenue requirements under each RWSP conceptual approach. These financial policies include capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency. Phase 2 will include the financial policies that fall in the category of rate structure and rate equity. These financial policies are revenue neutral for

⁵ Rates should be designed to distribute the cost of service equitably among each type and class of service. Non-cost of service rates that achieve certain other objectives such as affordability and water conservation may be considered in some situations.” (source: Revised: AWWA Policy Statement: Financing, Accounting, and Rates – American Water Works Association, November 5, 2024). The AWWA Principles of Water Rates, Fees, and Charges Manual states “Rate-making endeavors to assign costs to classes of customers in a nondiscriminatory, cost-responsive manner so that rates can be designed to closely meet the cost of providing service to such customer classes.”

WTD and determine the allocation of costs to different classes of customers, so they are not constrained by timing of the revenue requirements and can be evaluated later in the process along with other RWSP policies. Rate structure and rate equity policies include things like sizing the Residential Customer Equivalent (RCE at 750 cubic feet per month) and whether to maintain a single uniform sewer rate per RCE or consider alternative cost recovery rate structures (Robinswood “all for one and one for all”).

The customer affordability analysis will be conducted primarily through two lenses: ⁶

1. As a tool to compare the rate impacts of the different RWSP conceptual approaches and assess relative impact to any household.
2. Relief strategies for low-income households who are most likely to struggle to pay essential living expenses.

WTD will apply an approach that is consistent with industry recommendations and the acknowledgement that customer affordability must be evaluated in a local context. This will center on a suite of WTD service area-tailored metrics that:

- Gauge the household burden of the different RWSP approaches’ financial outcomes.
- Can be calculated at the census tract/local agency level, e.g. bill as % of median income, bill as % of poverty income – locally adjusted, hours worked at local minimum wage bill equivalent.

Equity and Social Justice: The work to update the RWSP will integrate and address issues around equity and social justice as described in the Scoping document; these issues include, but are not limited to, WTD’s role in safeguarding public health, especially for underserved communities; distributional equity; and other specific actions WTD can take to increase equity and social justice for the regional wastewater system.

Relation to contracts: The work to update the RWSP will address and ensure agency contracts are aligned with major RWSP policy updates.

Regular Future Reporting: The work to update the RWSP will evaluate the most effective ways for WTD to provide routine future reporting to MWPAAC and RWQC under the updated RWSP.

⁶ “The National Coalition for Legislation on Water Affordability defined water affordability as the cost of provision that does not impede people from meeting other basic needs or human rights. There is, however, currently no one generally accepted definition of water affordability. It varies depending on the purpose of the water affordability assessment. Affordability researchers generally agree that no one single metric can or should be used in measuring water affordability, rather, a variety of quantitative and qualitative data should be considered (source: Schneemann, M., 2019, Defining & Measuring Water Affordability: A Literature Review; Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant).

Appendix B: Schedule and Milestones

A high-level schedule to update the RWSP with the major milestones is shown in Table 1. The Deliverables are in reverse chronological order to emphasize the importance of maintaining schedule in 2025 and 2026. This schedule is approximate and subject to revision without amending this Charter.

Table 1. Schedule and Major Milestones ⁷ (dates are estimates and subject to change)

	Deliverable / Milestone	Target Year	Responsible Party / Involved Party
20	King County transmits Final Plan to WA Dept. Ecology for approval	2029	ECY
19	Anticipated King County Council adoption of Final RWSP and new policies	2029	KC Council
18	Anticipated King County Council referral of RWSP and new policies to RWQC	2029	RWQC
17	Anticipated King County Executive transmittal of RWSP and new policies to the King County Council	Q2 2029	KC Executive
16	WTD finalizes new RWSP policy proposals	2029	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
15	Final Proposed Plan developed with draft new RWSP Policies and Phase 2 Financial Policies	2028	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
14	Final Proposal Selected	2028	KC Executive / WTD
13	If needed, produce EIS Analysis of 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD
12	Draft RWSP with 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
11	Final planning level cost analyses for each of the 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
10	Anticipated King County Council adoption of Phase 1 Financial Policies	2026/27	KC Council
9	Anticipated referral of Phase 1 Financial Policies to RWQC	2026	RWQC
8	Financial Policies finalized and transmitted to King County Council	2026	WTD
7	SEPA Threshold Determination of Significance or Non-Significance	Q3-Q4 2026	WTD
6	Planning level project cost analyses of enhancement levels across the 8 categories of capital investment for the 3 approaches	Q1-Q4 2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
5	Draft Phase 1 Financial Policies	2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
4	Analysis of enhancement levels across each of the 8 categories of capital investment for each of the 3 approaches; agreement on enhancement levels for step 6	Q4 2025/ Q1 2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
3	Feedback and refinement of the 8 categories of capital investment for the 3 Conceptual Approaches	Q3-Q4 2025	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC

⁷ Engagement with the Sound Cities Association for briefings and discussions on substantive topics can occur through coordination with WTD and RWQC member staff.

2	Develop descriptions for 3 Conceptual Approaches and their associated categories of capital investment	Q1-Q2 2025	WTD
1	Vision for Clean Water engagement and announcement	Q4 2024-Q4 2025	WTD / KC Executive

Appendix C: Vision for Clean Water

WTD is developing and recommending a set of Vision for Clean Water options to the King County Executive. The process will engage MWPAAC, RWQC, component agencies, community groups, and other regional audiences to develop a long-term vision for future wastewater services, as well as identify high-level goals to achieve that vision, both of which will be included in the final RWSP update. The vision will be consistent with WTD's mission to protect public health and the environment by collecting and cleaning wastewater while recovering valuable resources for a healthy and resilient Puget Sound,

WTD will solicit input and feedback from other interested and affected parties to develop the Vision for Clean Water options for the Executive, an updated plan and policies; this includes revisiting and re-engaging with individuals and groups who previously contributed to the Clean Water Plan, as well as reaching new interested parties. WTD will regularly solicit community feedback and integrate it into work products and decision-making. Community feedback will be shared with MWPAAC and RWQC. The process will work to ensure that voices are heard and report back how input is considered and used.