

**Metropolitan King County Council**

**Regional Water Quality Committee**

## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 9 | **Name:** | Mike Reed |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2021-B0032 | **Date:** | March 3, 2021 |

**SUBJECT**

Committee Review of the Wastewater Treatment Division Clean Water 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. The Regional Water Quality Committee has been invited to participate in the planning effort, and has taken part in several planning workshops and briefings on the Clean Water Plan over the last year and a half. Today’s briefing will be conducted as a “workshop”, and will feature a closer look at sample Clean Water Plan “action”.

**BACKGROUND**

The business of the Wastewater Treatment Division is focused on the identification, development, construction and operation of physical facilities intended to collect and process the region’s wastewater. The agency has been heavily involved with the Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Plan—which defines how it will develop and construct 14 CSO controls through nine control projects, before 2030. The agency additionally has been working to complete its Conveyance System Improvement project, by which regional needs for capacity expansion and upgrade of its pipeline network—over 390 miles of interceptor pipeline—will be addressed to respond to anticipated capacity demand and system upgrade needs.

These ongoing capital projects are complicated by a number of current and potential developments, including the following:

* Substantial increase in regional population increasing solids loading to the system;
* Aging infrastructure, and the need for ongoing asset management;
* Current and potential future regulatory requirements, notably including possible nutrients management requirements
* Complications associated with management of stormwater and wastewater in a single system;
* Need for system resiliency and redundancy, highlighted by the recent West Point system failure.

Most recently, the development and adoption of sewer rates for 2021 highlighted coming cost challenges in asset management and increasing rate projections, and underlined the need for consideration of priorities.

The Clean Water Plan has been undertaken in an attempt to manage these various system demands, in a way that helps to mitigate potential rate impacts. The planning effort began with a major regional outreach effort, as a means of receiving input on regional interests and values regarding protection of regional waters.

Following the outreach, planners developed a series of Decision Areas, addressing:

* 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

At the December RWQC meeting, planning managers described efforts to identify project actions for evaluation for each of the decision areas; they noted that next steps include building strategies to support the actions—leading to the development of a preferred strategy.

At this stage, planners are seeking engagement with key regional actors, including RWQC, to help define direction among alternatives. They anticipate a series of workshops for elected officials, as well as technical workshops on actions.

At today’s meeting, WTD will engage with members in a “workshop” format, focusing on an action item that members are familiar with—Asset Management.

**INVITED**

* Tiffany Knapp, Clean Water Plan Project Manager, Wastewater Treatment Division
* Steve Tolzman, Clean Water Plan Project Manager, Wastewater Treatment Division
* Elizabeth Lowell, Business Systems Analyst and Project Manager, HDR