

## **2014 Regional Water Quality Committee Work Plan**

**Background:** The Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC) is responsible for developing, reviewing and recommending countywide policies and plans related to the water pollution abatement and water quality improvement functions of King County as a metropolitan municipal corporation. It is the responsibility of the county (associated with its metropolitan powers) to prepare and implement a comprehensive water pollution abatement plan, including provisions for “waterborne pollutant removal, water quality improvement, sewage disposal, and storm water drainage for the metropolitan area” pursuant to policies and plans recommended by the RWQC and adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council.

In 1999, the Council, upon recommendation by the RWQC, adopted the Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP) as its comprehensive plan to provide wastewater treatment services to this region for the next 30 years. Much of the committee’s work in recent years has focused on the implementation of the RWSP by tracking progress made and adjusting and adding policies as needed; and reviewing and approving program updates for the implementation of capital projects.

In June 2014, the Executive will submit the third RWSP review and update to the RWQC and Council. It will: (1) evaluate the implementation of the plan and policies; and (2) update the planning assumptions of the locations and rates of residential and commercial growth, influent flow projections based on monitoring and modeling of the system, and other pertinent data, in order to plan for a regional system with adequate capacity to meet service needs of the component agencies served by King County’s wastewater treatment services.

At the same time, having completed the construction of two small treatment plants, one regional treatment plant (Brightwater) and significant conveyance system investments since 1999, Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff is evaluating long-term projections for operational costs, anticipated capital investments and WTD’s current debt structure and future strategies as they relate to future rates, the capacity charge, and overall debt capacity. The Wastewater Treatment Division has been engaging the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee in this effort. The first step in this evaluation is a third-party consultant review of wastewater treatment debt.

**2014 Work Plan:** In light of these efforts, the RWQC will embark on a work program in 2014 to review many components of the wastewater conveyance and treatment system operations and facilities, the related regulatory requirements (and potential future requirements), as well as the financial framework – so that committee members are prepared for the RWSP review and consideration of potential policy and plan refinements in the coming year.

Concurrently, the committee may consider and/or research related areas of water quality issues within the region that may have a bearing on future operations and capital investments where there are synergies and opportunities for coordination that may provide benefits to ratepayers and taxpayers across the region in an increasingly stringent regulatory environment.

## Anticipated 2014 – 2015 Legislative Actions

- **Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP):** Possible development, review and action to recommend RWSP policy amendments or additions.
  - Based upon review of the WTD's (1) evaluation of implementation of the Regional Wastewater Services Plan policies; and (2) updates to the planning assumptions for location and rate of residential and commercial growth, results of influent flow monitoring, projections of influent flow and treatment demands, etc.
- **Conveyance System Improvement (CSI) Program:** Review and approval of an update to the CSI Program (2015)
  - Based up review of the Regional Needs Assessment of conveyance capacity (2014).
- **Capital Debt:** Discussion of short and long-term rate and capacity charge objectives, and options/strategies regarding capital debt financing and management.
  - Based upon review of consultant's analysis of Wastewater Treatment Division capital debt profile, history, projections and comparisons.

## Informational and Background Briefings, Workshops and Possible Research Projects

- **WTD Capital Projects:** Continue regular review of a sampling of current capital projects in final design and construction phase (2014 emphasis on CSO projects in construction phase).
- **Inflow and Infiltration (I/I):** Learn about the wastewater conveyance system and the RWSP policies directing cost-effective investments to reduce existing and future levels of I/I in local collection systems because it consumes sewer system capacity and review the preliminary results of the first large-scale I/I project located in the Skyway Water and Sewer District.
- **Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-term Control Plan:** Update regarding implementation of the 2012 approved amendment to WTD's long-term CSO control plan to complete nine projects to control the remaining 14 uncontrolled CSOs pursuant to the 2013 consent decree (with EPA and Ecology) and the timeline/milestones for completion of the projects by the end of 2030. Learn about coordination efforts between Seattle and WTD (as required by their consent decrees).
- **CSO Water Quality Assessment and Monitoring Study:** Status report on implementation (including detail regarding costs expended and benefits received as a result of expenditure) of the water quality assessment pertaining to the receiving waters for CSO discharges.
- **Reclaimed/Recycled Water Projects and Policy Refinements:** Update on local, regional, and national recycled water projects and restart discussions of RWSP policy refinements.
- **2015 Sewer Rate and Capacity Charge** Review and potentially advise the Council on the Executive's proposed rate and capacity charge.
- **Lower Duwamish Waterway Cleanup:** Review of EPA Record of Decision on selected cleanup plan.
- **Climate Change:** Review incorporation of climate change projections into long-term wastewater facilities and operations planning to reduce the risks and mitigate future impacts of sea level rise and river flooding.
- **Ocean Acidification:** Update on current research and Washington State implementation of Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations to address acidification.
- **Public Education Efforts:** Learn about outreach and public education efforts related to WTD operations.