**2020 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 intervening 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.

**2020 Work Plan:** Below are summarized the elements of the 2020 RWQC Work Plan. Noting that committee meeting restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic have limited time available for committee work, a number of items are identified with an asterisk (\*) for priority consideration.

* **Capital Projects:** Update on the status of major capital projects under construction by the Wastewater Treatment Division
* **Clean Water Plan\*:** Systemwide review of major projects and priorities, in the context of an increasingly complex and extensive matrix of service demands and related potential rate impacts.
* **Impacts of Regional Economic Conditions on Wastewater Revenues and Operations\*** The COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, and the related economic downturn, have affected the region’s business and commercial sector substantially, raising questions as to impacts on wastewater effluent volumes and related discharge revenues.
* **2021 Sewer Rate and Capacity Charge:** Review of Council action on the wastewater rate and capacity charge.
* **Asset Management and Projected Sewer Rates\*** The sewer rate development process for the 2021 sewer rate highlighted the coming pressure on rates in coming years, significantly impacted by costs associated with the repair, upgrade and replacement of the system’s physical plant, including both the conveyance system and treatment plants. The agency has committed to working with RWQC and MWPAAC in addressing this asset management concern.
* **Capacity Charge Rate Structure\*:** Capacity charge fee levels are defined according to the category of user and projected volume of wastewater generated—including single family households, large and small multifamily structures, business and industry. Legislation recommending a revision of that structure has been transmitted by the Executive, including a policy measure currently before the Committee.
* **Joint Ship Canal Project:** The Division is undertaking a joint project with Seattle Public Utilities to construct a wastewater capture/storage tunnel on the north side of the Lake Washington Ship Canal; this briefing would provide a status update on that project.
* **Biosolids:** Review of Biosolids program, including processing methods, quality of biosolids product, and application.
* **WaterWorks Grant Program:** Review of grant proposals of the WaterWorks Grant Program
* **Reclaimed Water:** Status review of the program to process certain volumes of wastewater to a level that supports the use of those waters for alternative purposes.
* **Infiltration/Inflow** Briefing regarding the review effort by MWPAAC of Infiltration/Inflow issues.
* **Nutrients in Puget Sound\*** The Washington Department of Ecology is indicating an intent to manage and control the discharge of nutrients into Puget Sound; wastewater plants are significant sources of such discharges.
* **Toxics:** The Division is undertaking a review of toxics in the effluent of wastewater plants, with specific attention to their impacts on marine life; this would provide a status briefing on that project.
* **Flows and Loads Study**: Review of the recently completed study to assess volumes of projected wastewater flows, and projected solids loading, as an information base for discussions about capacity of wastewater treatment facilities against the projected demand, in light of recent population growth.
* **New Sewage Disposal Agreement:** Report on current efforts towards development of a new interlocal agreement with partner jurisdictions; it is anticipated that one element of that agreement will be an “operating board” that will provide the opportunity for input by partners on operating activities of the system.
* **Industrial Waste:** In 2018, the Executive proposed, and the Council approved, revisions to Industrial Waste fee structure. This briefing will provide an opportunity to review the implementation of those fees, as well as to consider the broader Industrial Waste program.