



August 28, 2024

Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update

MWPAAC General Meeting



King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks

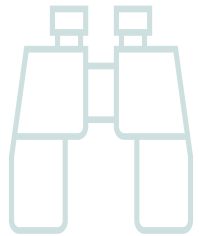
Wastewater Treatment Division

Agenda

- Draft scope and schedule overview
- Draft major policy issues/questions
- Next steps



RWSP Update Objectives



A vision for clean water for the regional wastewater system



Updated programs and projects to provide wastewater services



Updated RWSP policies in King County Code

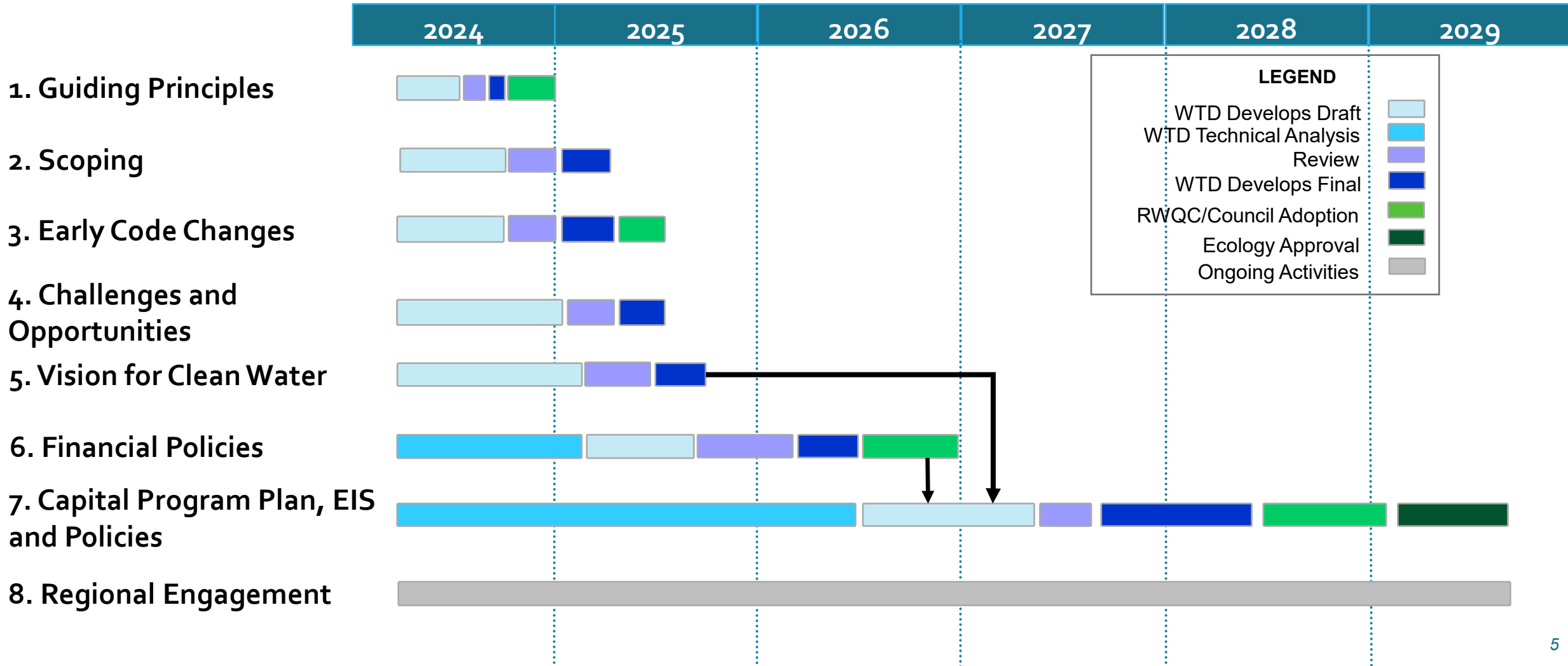


General sewer plan amendment approved by Ecology

Scoping Document and Schedule Overview

- In draft form and looking for feedback
- Currently envision seven main tasks
- Start in 2024 and finish in 2029
- Work closely with RWQC and MWPAAC
- Robust public engagement
- Series of deliverables and progress throughout
- Coordination methods with MWPAAC being developed

Draft Schedule for RWSP Update



Three Alternatives will be Developed and Compared as Part of Task 7: Capital Program Plan, EIS, and Policies

Stay the Course: WTD would largely maintain current policies while investing as needed to meet current and future regulatory obligations with as little disruption as possible.

Strategic Enhancement: WTD would largely maintain current policies but look to enhance or proactively invest in key areas that may include asset management, resource recovery (biosolids, recycled water), and additional treatment capacity.

Pioneering Utility: WTD would shift to an even more innovative, future-focused utility, including but not limited to investing earlier in upgraded treatment levels to meet all future legal obligations, work toward eliminating Puget Sound discharges, maximizing resource recovery, proactively managing assets, and actively managing infiltration/inflow (I/I) into the system.

Draft Plan and Draft EIS will

- Describe and compare draft policies, program/project lists, cost estimates, and rate impacts for each of the three alternatives
- Describe how each of the three alternatives aligns with the vision for clean water for the regional wastewater system
- Compare environmental impacts of each of the three alternatives
- Solicit public comment on the three alternatives

Executive's Proposed Plan and Final EIS will

- Be developed using input received on the draft plan and draft EIS, evaluation of tradeoffs, and other considerations
 - It is possible the Executive's proposed plan may include components of each of the draft alternatives as opposed to matching one of the draft alternatives
- Include proposed updated policies, program/project list, cost estimates, and rate impacts
- Address comments on draft EIS and describe environmental impacts of the proposed plan

Categories of Major Policy Issues and Questions

- Regulatory landscape
- Capacity demands
- Infrastructure resiliency
- Equity and social justice
- Climate change
- Resource recovery
- Finance / affordability

Feedback on Draft Major Policy Issues and Questions

- Are there additional important questions you recommend be addressed?
- Are there important concepts/issues that would be better captured with edits to the questions?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Regulatory Landscape

- What types and levels of treatment should be planned for?
- What assumptions should be made about future nutrient permit requirements, regulations related to CECs such as PFAS, or other future regulatory changes?
- What upstream or source control actions should the region undertake to prevent contaminants and reduce cost?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Capacity Demand

- What is the future capacity needed for growth and when, where and how should we address that need?
- Beyond the required capacity needed to meet current regulatory and contractual obligations, what level of capacity should be planned for?
- When addressing capacity, should capacity increases within existing facilities be maximized over acquiring new sites, where possible? Should the region continue to provide a centralized approach or consider decentralized options?
- How should I/I be managed? How much of the additional projected flow is coming from I/I versus population growth? Should I/I policy change to reduce the capacity needed for I/I?
- How should the conversion of onsite septic systems to sewers in the service area be managed and what planning assumption should WTD use about the conversion rate?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Infrastructure Resiliency

- How and when should WTD decide to refurbish or replace aging infrastructure?
- What level of resiliency should WTD plan for regarding seismic and other natural hazards? What level of risk tolerance should WTD accept?
- What level of redundancy of critical systems should WTD have?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Equity and Social Justice

- What actions should WTD take to increase equity and social justice for the regional wastewater system?
(Should include definition of equity and social justice)
- Additional questions likely to be developed during scoping process

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Climate Change

- What climate experts and data should WTD use to inform planning?
- How should WTD reduce energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- How should WTD prepare and adapt to climate impacts in line with the Strategic Climate Action Plan? What level of climate impact risk tolerance should WTD plan for?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Resource Recovery

- Energy production and heat recovery – Should WTD be expanding its efforts to capture energy and heat? If so, at what level of effort?
- Biosolids – Should WTD further expand its efforts to develop Class A biosolids? What changes are needed to biosolid recovery policies and processes?
- Recycled water – Under what circumstances should the region expand the use of reclaimed water? Which uses (e.g., environmental benefit, groundwater recharge, industrial uses, irrigation) are most appropriate?

Major Policy Issues and Questions: Finance/Affordability

- Is there a better rate structure to address policy goals such as affordability? *(Note WTD has identified a work plan to further evaluate the residential customer equivalent (RCE) conversion factor of 750 cubic feet per month.)*
- Will WTD maintain a single uniform sewer rate per RCE (Robinswood “one for all, all for one”), or consider alternative cost recovery rate structures to reflect other system impacts?
- Should WTD update the rate structure for the capacity charge to align with current industry standards? *(Note the capacity charge rate structure was updated in 2021. A capacity charge methodology study is in progress)*
- What other rate relief approaches should WTD implement to improve affordability for those who may struggle to pay their sewer bills?

Next Steps

- RWQC provides input on Draft Scoping Document on September 4
- WTD delivers revised scoping document to RWQC for October RWQC meeting
- MWPAAC and WTD establish process for MWPAAC to provide ongoing input and feedback during RWSP update



For more information, contact
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Extra Slide: Guiding Principles

Draft Guiding Principles Resolution Sent to RWQC

- A set of principles to guide the process to update the RWSP and associated policies
- Developed based on feedback heard during Clean Water Plan process and on input from RWQC
- Anticipate RWQC will adopt via resolution at the October 2 meeting or later meeting