



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

December 12, 2017

Ordinance 18627

Proposed No. 2017-0428.2

Sponsors Kohl-Welles and Lambert

1 AN ORDINANCE related to at the West Point Treatment
2 Plant, requiring a report and plan from the executive
3 addressing issues related to staffing concerns, including
4 staff retention, and a mechanism to provide for anonymous
5 staff reporting of operational concerns at the West Point
6 Treatment Plant.

7 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

- 8 1. In response to the February 9, 2017, system failure event at the West
9 Point Treatment Plant, the council commissioned an independent
10 assessment of circumstances leading to the event, and identification of
11 appropriate responses.
- 12 2. As an element of the independent assessment, AECOM Technical
13 Services, which was selected to perform the assessment, conducted
14 extensive interviews with plant operations staff, and with plant and agency
15 management. AECOM also conducted a hazardous operations workshop
16 involving plant operations and management and agency management staff,
17 intended to surface operational conditions that may have contributed to the
18 February 9 event, and to conditions of concern at the plant generally.
19 Both the staff interviews and the hazardous operations workshop were

20 central to the identification of critical plant conditions and the
21 development of recommendations, which will guide the agency, the
22 council and the region in supporting the recovery from the February 9
23 event, and the avoidance of future such events. The council desires to
24 institutionalize a mechanism to heighten awareness by decisionmakers of
25 critical operational conditions that have the potential to result in system
26 failures similar to the February 9 event.

27 3. Additionally, the AECOM report described the issue of staff retention
28 at the West Point Treatment Plant. The report notes that "staff retention
29 has been an ongoing issue...the plant is not in an easy location for
30 commuting, and the cost of living in the surrounding area is high. WPTP
31 has had a significant number of new hires compared to the South Plant and
32 Brightwater Treatment Plant; ...there has been a large number of transfers
33 from WPTP to one of the County's other treatment plants." The report
34 notes that lack of corporate memory is a potential problem associated with
35 lack of staff retention.

36 4. The wastewater treatment division currently operates a safety hotline
37 monitored by the agency safety committee, which provides employees the
38 opportunity to communicate concerns that are specifically related to safety
39 but does not provide a process to identify larger operational issues.

40 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

41 SECTION 1. A. The executive shall prepare a report and recommendations
42 addressing issues related to staff concerns at the West Point Treatment Plant, including

43 1. How to provide an ongoing staff reporting tool by which plant operational
44 staff can anonymously communicate suggestions or concerns to agency management.
45 The reporting tool may be in the form of an electronic staff hotline or suggestions box, or
46 other means of allowing for candid and unreserved identification of conditions of
47 concern. The reporting tool may build on the existing safety hotline or Bright Ideas, but
48 shall also provide for reporting on broader plant operational issues; and

49 2. The identification of issues that result in problematic low levels of staff
50 retention at the West Point Treatment Plant.

51 B. The executive shall prepare a plan, based on the report, for the implementation
52 of the recommendations of the report, addressing both:

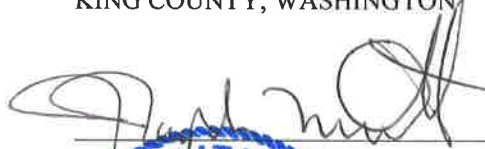
- 53 1. Instituting or augmenting an anonymous staff reporting tool; and
54 2. Means to improve staff satisfaction and retention, such as staff incentives or
55 other strategies intended to strengthen retention outcomes at the West Point Treatment
56 Plant.

57 C. The executive shall also prepare an annual summary of the suggestions and
58 concerns received through the plan's reporting tool, as well as responsive actions taken.

59 SECTION 2. The report and the plan shall be transmitted to the council by
60 February 15, 2018 and may be combined with the quarterly report required by Motion
61 14813. The annual summary shall be transmitted by February 15 of the year following
62 the year the suggestions and concerns are received through the plan's reporting tool. The
63 annual summary may be combined with the West Point Treatment Plant Independent
64 Assessment Final Report Implementation Plan quarterly report. The report, the plan and
65 each annual summary, shall be transmitted in the form of a paper original and an

66 electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an
67 electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the
68 transportation, economy and environment committee and regional water quality
69 committee, or their successors.
70

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



J. Joseph McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

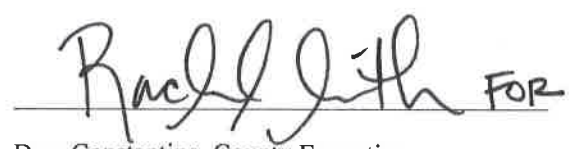


Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council



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APPROVED this 21st day of DECEMBER, 2017



Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None