

January 16, 2025

[J.Giambattista]

Sponsor: Commissioner Warren

Proposed No.: Resolution 2025-01

1 **AMENDMENT TO PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2025-01, VERSION 1**

2 Strike Attachment A and insert Attachment A, Revised January 16, 2025.

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5 **EFFECT prepared by *J.Giambattista: The Revised Attachment A inserts "customer"***
6 ***before all instances of "affordability, " except in sections citing quoted materials.***

7 ***Additionally, on page 11, the following question was added to the list of questions to be***
8 ***analyzed as part of the RWSP Update. "How will policies embedded in the current***

9 ***component agency contracts and WTD Functional Plans be evaluated for***

10 ***consideration of a) inclusion in the RWSP as currently implemented, b) inclusion in***

11 ***the RWSP but modified from current implementation, or c) not included in the RWSP***

12 ***at this time but recommended for further study and analysis?"***

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Scoping Document for Updating the Regional Wastewater Services Plan

Prepared by the Wastewater Treatment Division – January 2025

Introduction

This scoping document describes the overall approach that will be used, and some of the major policy issues that will be analyzed, to update King County’s Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP). The document was produced to solicit input and feedback on the scope of the RWSP Update from members of the Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC) and the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC).

The King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) drafted this scoping document based on initial verbal and written input from RWQC and MWPAAC members and staff as well as feedback obtained during and after the Clean Water Plan process. The scoping document was discussed at the August 28 MWPAAC general meeting, the September 4 RWQC workshop, the September 5 MWPAAC Engineering and Planning (E&P) subcommittee meeting, the October 2 RWQC meeting, and the November 7 joint meeting of the MWPAAC E&P and Rates and Finance subcommittees. WTD revised the document based on feedback from MWPAAC and RWQC and an updated version was then discussed at the December 4 RWQC meeting. Additional edits were received and incorporated into this final version. More detailed scopes of work for specific tasks under the RWSP Update will be developed as needed.

Key Terms

The following key terms are used throughout the scoping document. Because these terms can have different meanings depending on the context, the following definitions apply for purposes of the RWSP and associated materials unless otherwise noted.

Term	Definition
Equity and Social Justice	<i>Equity</i> is defined as full and equal access to opportunities, power, and resources so that all people achieve their full potential and thrive. <i>Social justice</i> refers to all aspects of justice – including legal, political, economic, and environmental – and requires the fair distribution of and access to public goods, institutional resources, and life opportunities for all people (source: King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022).
Rate Equity and Fairness	“Rates should be designed to distribute the cost of service equitably among each type and class of service. Non-cost of service rates that achieve certain other objectives such as affordability and water conservation may be considered in some situations.” (source: Revised:

	<p>AWWA Policy Statement: Financing, Accounting, and Rates – American Water Works Association, November 5, 2024). The AWWA Principles of Water Rates, Fees, and Charges Manual states “Rate-making endeavors to assign costs to classes of customers in a nondiscriminatory, cost-responsive manner so that rates can be designed to closely meet the cost of providing service to such customer classes.”</p>
<p>Customer Affordability</p>	<p>“The National Coalition for Legislation on Water Affordability defined water affordability as the cost of provision that does not impede people from meeting other basic needs or human rights. There is, however, currently no one generally accepted definition of water affordability. It varies depending on the purpose of the water affordability assessment... Affordability researchers generally agree that no one single metric can or should be used in measuring water affordability, rather, a variety of quantitative and qualitative data should be considered.” (source: Schneemann, M., 2019, Defining & Measuring Water Affordability: A Literature Review; Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant). The measure of customer affordability will need to be further quantified and defined during the RSWP update process.</p>

Background

The RWSP, a supplement to the King County Comprehensive Water Pollution Abatement Plan, was adopted by the King County Council in November 1999 by Ordinance 13680, and the RWSP policies were subsequently codified in King County Code (KCC), Chapter 28.86. The RWSP identifies projects and programs needed to provide wastewater capacity for homes and businesses in King County’s wastewater service area through 2030 and provides policy direction for the operation and continued development of the wastewater system. The RWSP has largely been implemented, and it is now time to update the plan to guide future investments and actions. Changed conditions, including population growth, climate change, aging assets, regulatory requirements, and customer affordability, also justify another major update to the RWSP.

The updated plan, along with the analytical work (e.g., review of the capacity charge) performed as part of the RWSP Update planning process, will support the extension of local agency sewage disposal contracts, many of which expire in 2036, and continue to strengthen WTD’s relationship with local agencies. An update to the RWSP will also help make the case for additional state and federal funding and meet the requirements for a General Sewer Plan update for approval by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).

The planning process to update the RWSP started in 2019 as the Clean Water Plan; it was paused at the end of 2021 to fully consider and address feedback received during the planning process. The pause in the Clean Water Plan process also provided an opportunity for more regulatory certainty regarding combined sewer overflow (CSO) obligations and nutrient reduction obligations. The planning process restarted in 2024 as the RWSP Update planning effort. The renewed process includes important adjustments intended to address feedback received during the Clean Water Plan process. The current RWSP Update planning process is generally similar to the process used to develop the 1999 RWSP.

Project Objectives

The overall project objectives are to develop an update to the RWSP, and to update the policies in King County Code 28.86. The project will also define a future 75-year vision (“Vision for Clean Water”), beyond the scope of the RWSP, for the utility that is consistent with WTD’s mission – “We protect public health and the environment by collecting and cleaning wastewater while recovering valuable resources for a healthy and resilient Puget Sound.”

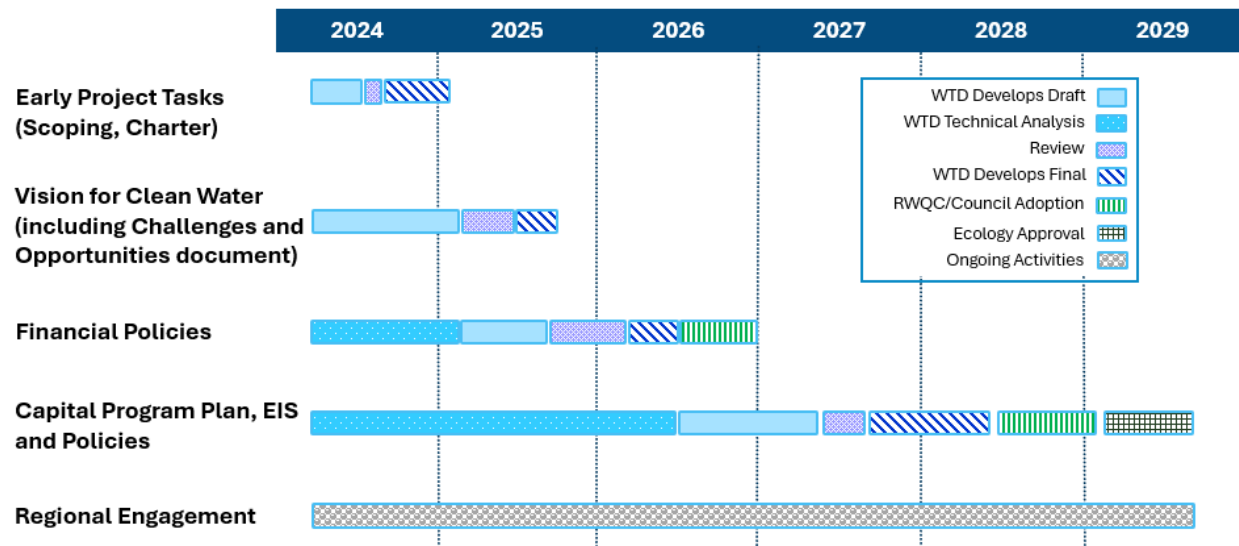
The Vision for Clean Water will inform but not constrain policies and investments that are included in the final RWSP Update. The planning process will produce an RWSP Update that will guide future investments; support the core mission to protect water quality; seek to achieve affordable wastewater utility rates into the future; meet regulatory and legal obligations; and reflect County initiatives including equity and social justice, strategic climate action planning, and Clean Water Healthy Habitat.

The resulting RWSP Update document will include the 75-year Vision for Clean Water, a capital investment plan, and policy updates to King County Code for King County Council review and approval. The RWSP Update will reflect the County’s and WTD’s commitment to transparency and accountability in implementing the RWSP. Once adopted by the Council, the document will be transmitted to Ecology for review and approval.

Scope for the Effort

Figure 1 shows the planning process for the RWSP Update. The tasks are also described below with the associated deliverables.

Figure 1. Overall Draft Schedule for Completing the Update to King County’s Wastewater Plan



Tasks/Deliverables

Early Project Tasks – The early project tasks are designed to inform the RWQC and MWPAAC of the scope and objectives of the project and the major policy issues to be addressed as part of the update to the RWSP.

Scoping – Scoping will identify the major issues that will be addressed and the process to address those issues. The work will include the following:

- Developing a draft scoping document.
- Soliciting feedback on the draft scoping document.
- Finalizing the scoping document.

Timeline: Final completed in 1st quarter 2025.

RWSP Working Group – The Working Group will serve as a forum for MWPAAC and RWQC member staff to collaborate with WTD’s RWSP project team through development and successful adoption of the RWSP update. The Working Group will help guide, shape and influence RWSP work products; it will serve as one channel for clear communication across key groups and will report out and receive feedback from MWPAAC and RWQC. The work will include the following:

- Convening a RWSP Working group with members from MWPAAC, RWQC staff, and Sound Cities Association (SCA) and WTD’s RWSP planning staff

Timeline: Formation of Working Group in 4th quarter 2024.

Charter – The charter will serve as a framework for collaboration, partnership, and process between WTD, MWPAAC, and RWQC to update the RWSP. The process will include identifying how WTD will ensure transparency and accountability during the RWSP update to the partners. The work will include the following:

- Developing the draft sections of the charter in partnership with the RWSP Working Group
- MWPAAC and RWQC review and input to the charter language
- Finalizing the charter
- Chairs of RWQC and MWPAAC, and WTD Director approve the charter as a commitment to collaboration and process to guide the RWSP update effort.

Timeline: Final completed in 1st quarter 2025.

Vision for Clean Water for Wastewater Services – The Vision for Clean Water for Wastewater Services will articulate the 75-year future of WTD and will inform but not constrain policies and investments that are included in the final RWSP Update. A document describing the challenges and opportunities facing the wastewater industry will be used to shape the vision. RWQC and MWPAAC members will have multiple opportunities to comment on challenges, opportunities, and provide feedback on the proposed final Vision components.

Challenges and Opportunities – This document will summarize the status of major challenges affecting the future of WTD’s wastewater system, projected trends for those challenges in the coming decades, emerging trends and potential opportunities for the future of water-sector utilities, and key questions to be explored in future regional discussions. Challenges and opportunities will inform but not constrain the

scope of work, policy analysis, investment plans, and financial strategies. The work will include the following:

- Reviewing relevant materials developed during the previous Clean Water Plan process.
- Reviewing industry research on drivers and trends.
- Updating information on the regional wastewater system.
- Interviewing national water utility experts and thought leaders.
- Listening sessions with interested and potentially affected parties.
- Developing a draft challenges and opportunities document.
- Soliciting feedback on the draft challenges and opportunities document.
- Finalizing the challenges and opportunities document.

Timeline: Final completed in 1st quarter 2025.

Vision – The Vision for Clean Water will articulate the future of WTD over the next 75 years. The work will occur in the first stages of the RWSP update process and will include the following:

- Reviewing existing documentation of regional priorities and feedback.
- Conducting interviews and listening sessions to confirm and refresh feedback as well as hear new ideas.
- Drafting several initial vision concepts.
- Conducting broad outreach and engagement to gather feedback on the initial vision concepts and the accompanying challenges and opportunities document.
- Finalizing the vision to be adopted with the RWSP Update.

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2025.

Financial Policies – Technical analysis will be performed to provide information to support proposed changes to the financial policies in King County Code 28.86.160. The analysis will consider cost structure and rate equity and fairness (including the capacity charge), capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency. The work will include the following:

- Studying peer utility agency financial policy structures and evaluating them within a WTD specific context.
- Developing draft policy revisions and seeking review from the RWSP Working Group with members from MWPAAC, RWQC staff, and SCA.
- Finalizing financial policy revisions and developing a proposed ordinance for Council review and approval.

Timeline: Final completed in 4th quarter 2026.

Capital Program Plan, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Policies – Technical analysis will provide the information to support proposed policy changes and WTD’s future capital program. The information will be used to develop a draft and final RWSP Update, draft and final EIS, and draft and final policy revisions. The work will include the following:

Technical analysis

- Identifying current/existing conditions in our service area in terms of demographics, the economy, water quality, and wastewater infrastructure.
- Gathering background information on current policies.
- Developing a range of options/strategies for policy questions. All options/strategies will meet legal obligations. Note that the approaches below should not be construed to mean least costly, more costly, and most costly, and that the recommended option may be a combination of the 3 below.
 - **Stay the Course:** Under this strategy, 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:** Under this strategy, 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:** Under this strategy, 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, eliminating Puget Sound discharges, maximizing resource recovery, proactively managing assets, and actively managing infiltration/inflow (I/I) to the system.
- Evaluating possible policy revisions.
- Identifying the capital projects, including timelines, costs, and rate impacts, associated with the options/strategies.

Draft Plan and EIS

- Conducting State Environmental Policy Act scoping.
- Writing a draft RWSP Update that includes draft projects and policies, along with a draft EIS that describes the environmental impacts associated with the draft RWSP Update.
- Conducting broad outreach and engagement to gather feedback on the draft RWSP Update and draft EIS.

Final Plan and EIS

- Responding to comments and feedback on the draft RWSP Update and draft EIS.
- Selecting among the options/strategies to create a proposed strategy that includes a list of capital projects, timelines, and policy revisions.
- Identifying outcome measures to evaluate progress and measure success.
- Identifying future update schedules and/or triggers.
- Preparing a proposed RWSP Update and final EIS.
- Developing and transmitting to Council an ordinance to adopt the proposed RWSP Update.
- Developing and submitting to Ecology the adopted RWSP Update as a proposed amendment to King County's General Sewer Plan.

Approvals

- Council adopting the RWSP Update.

- Ecology approving the RWSP Update, satisfying WTD’s regulatory obligation for an amended general sewer plan.

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2029.

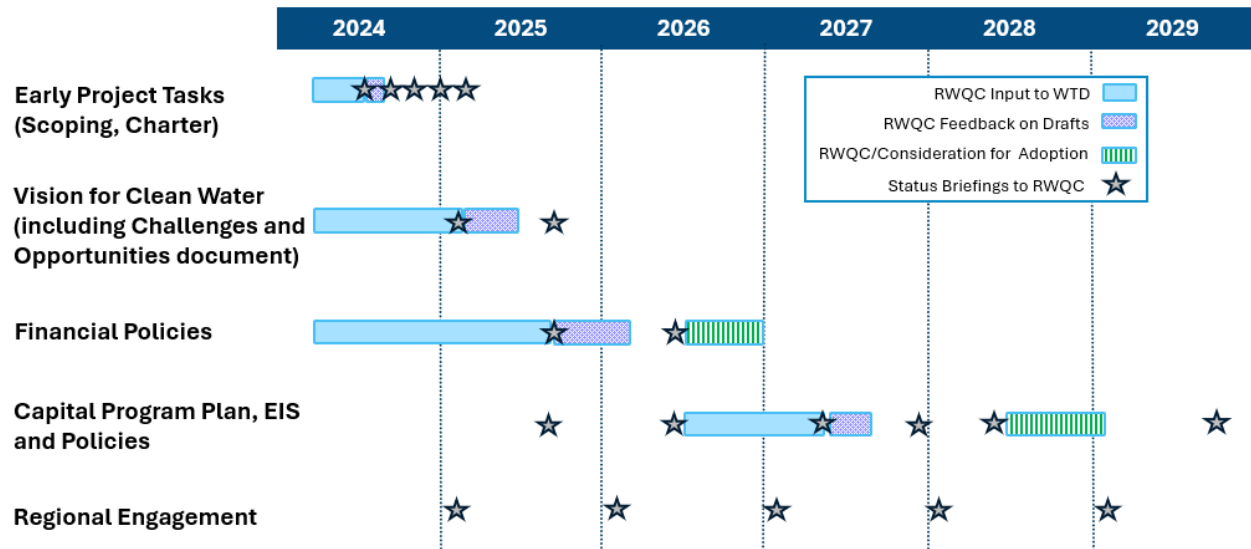
Regional Engagement – Regional engagement throughout the planning process ensures that interested and affected parties are informed and involved with the project. In addition to RWQC and MWPAAC, the following categories of interested and potentially affected parties may be engaged in the process (note: more detailed audience lists will be developed along with work plans and supporting outreach or event plans during each phase):

- Local Jurisdictions and Local Sewer Utilities
- Sound Cities Association
- Wastewater Professionals and industry peers
- Community-Based Organizations (Equity and Social Justice, Immigrant and Refugee, Environmental Justice)
- Communities that have/are experiencing the greatest environmental and health burdens
- Environmental Organizations /Nongovernmental Organizations
- Regulators and Resource Managers
- Neighborhood Groups
- Public Health Community-Based Organizations
- Water Resource Organizations
- Ratepayers
- Youth and Students
- Business community
- Agricultural community
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Homeowner Associations
- Labor Unions
- Thought leaders and experts from inside and outside the region

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2029.

A specific plan and approach will be developed to engage with Tribal Governments. Figure 2 shows RWQC engagement during the RWSP Update planning effort. RWQC will have an opportunity to provide input before drafts are produced and feedback once drafts are available; WTD will provide status briefings along the way before RWQC is asked to take action.

Figure 2. Draft Summary of RWQC Engagement During Effort to Update King County’s Wastewater Plan



Major Policy Issues and Questions

King County has identified several major decisions regarding the future of our regional wastewater system that will need to be made in this process. To build and operate the large regional system, WTD has a long and growing list of capital projects in the coming decades, with significant forecasted costs. In making these investments, King County needs to consider many issues like our aging wastewater system, capacity drivers like population growth and infiltration and inflow, future regulations, water quality goals, energy and resource conservation and recovery, customer affordability, and climate change.

The update to the RWSP will not include stormwater planning for the region but will instead include how to address stormwater entering the wastewater system. Similarly, the update to the RWSP will not include water supply planning, but will include water reuse, which has a nexus between wastewater and water.

The policy questions in the table below have been grouped into major topics/themes that WTD has identified as known challenges and opportunities for the wastewater sector. Though a question is identified under one topic, it may also intersect with other topics in the table.

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
<p>Regulatory Landscape</p> <p>CSO, nutrients, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), current and existing requirements, new and anticipated</p>	<p>Should the County evaluate costs and plan for levels of treatment beyond current legal requirements?</p> <p>How should the County anticipate, engage with, and plan for future nutrient permit requirements, regulations related to CECs such as PFAS, or other future regulatory changes?</p>

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
<p>requirements, opportunities for larger regional partnerships to address water concerns, requirement to comply with future total maximum daily loads</p>	<p>What upstream or source control actions should the region undertake to prevent contaminants and reduce costs?</p> <p>How should WTD efforts support the water quality of Puget Sound and applicable inland waterways?</p>
<p>Capacity Demands</p> <p>I/I, population growth, conveyance and treatment capacity demand, including on-site septic systems in urban areas</p>	<p>Given the uncertainties in future growth rates reported by Washington State and the Puget Sound Regional Council, how aggressively beyond legal requirements should WTD expand capacity to account for future population growth?</p> <p>To what extent should WTD prioritize use of existing facility sites vs. acquiring new property to accommodate future treatment needs (including capacity)?</p> <p>Should the region continue to provide a centralized approach for regional wastewater treatment, or should the region move towards a more decentralized approach?</p> <p>How should I/I be managed and how can costs be fairly apportioned? Should system capacity be expanded to account for increases in I/I? Should I/I policies change to support reducing the capacity needed for I/I?</p> <p>How should the conversion of on-site septic systems to sewers in the service area be managed and should WTD implement programs to encourage conversion within the service area?</p>
<p>Infrastructure Resiliency</p> <p>Asset management, maintenance, improvements, renewal, replacement, labor and supply chain disruptions, natural hazard resiliency</p>	<p>How proactive vs. reactive should WTD be when deciding to refurbish or replace aging infrastructure?</p> <p>What level of resiliency should WTD plan for regarding seismic and other natural hazards to avoid or minimize risks? What level of risk tolerance should WTD accept? How can these considerations be best informed by the long-term capital motion work in progress?</p> <p>What level of redundancy of critical systems should WTD have?</p>
<p>Equity and Social Justice</p> <p>Distributional equity, WTD role in safeguarding public health</p>	<p>What actions should WTD take to increase equity and social justice for the regional wastewater system?</p> <p>How will equity and social justice be interwoven in the update: community engagement, rate structure analysis, etc.?</p>

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
	<p>How should the regional wastewater system address environmental justice concerns as described in the 2021 Healthy Environment for All Act¹, such as addressing the disproportionate environmental health impacts of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities?</p>
<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Mitigation – green building, eliminating/reducing fossil fuel use, energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, materials management, tree planting, etc. Adaptation – sea level rise, more extreme heat, increased storm intensities, wildfire smoke, increased river flooding, etc.</p>	<p>Should existing wastewater policy language (KCC 28.86) be revised to specifically call out planning for future climate conditions in addition to population growth and other environmental factors?</p> <p>How much should WTD reduce energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>How should WTD prepare and adapt to climate impacts (e.g., precipitation/storm intensities, sea level rise, river flooding, etc.) in line with the Strategic Climate Action Plan? What level of climate impact risk tolerance should WTD plan for to avoid or minimize risks to the system?</p>
<p>Resource Recovery</p> <p>Recycled water, biosolids, energy capture</p>	<p>Energy production and heat recovery – Should WTD be expanding its efforts to capture energy and heat? If so, at what level of effort?</p> <p>Biosolids – Should WTD further expand its efforts to develop Class A biosolids? What changes are needed to biosolid recovery policies to get to Class A?</p> <p>Recycled water – Under what circumstances should the region expand the use of reclaimed water? Which uses (e.g., environmental benefits, groundwater recharge, industrial uses, irrigation) are most appropriate?</p> <p>How can WTD best support environmental benefits while instituting safeguards to protect against environmental risks of contamination? How should cost considerations be weighed?</p>
<p>Finance / Customer Affordability</p> <p>Rate equity, fairness, and structure, capital financing and debt management, financial planning and revenue sufficiency</p>	<p>How will WTD measure customer affordability for contract agencies and ratepayers?</p> <p>Is there a better rate structure for the sewer rate? (Note: WTD has identified a work plan to further evaluate the residential customer equivalent conversion factor of 750 cubic feet per month.)</p>

¹ RCW 70.A.02

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
	<p>Will WTD maintain a single uniform sewer rate per residential customer equivalent (Robinswood “one for all, all for one”), or consider alternative cost recovery rate structures to reflect other system impacts?</p> <p>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.)</p> <p>What other rate relief approaches should WTD implement to improve customer affordability for those who may struggle to pay their sewer bill?</p>
Relationship to Contracts and Functional Plans	<p>How will policies embedded in the current component agency contracts and WTD Functional Plans be evaluated for consideration of a) inclusion in the RWSP as currently implemented, b) inclusion in the RWSP but modified from current implementation, or c) not included in the RWSP at this time but recommended for further study and analysis?</p> <p>How will WTD implement the RWSP Update consistent with direction and requirements expected of contract agencies?</p>

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Prepared by the Wastewater Treatment Division – January 2025

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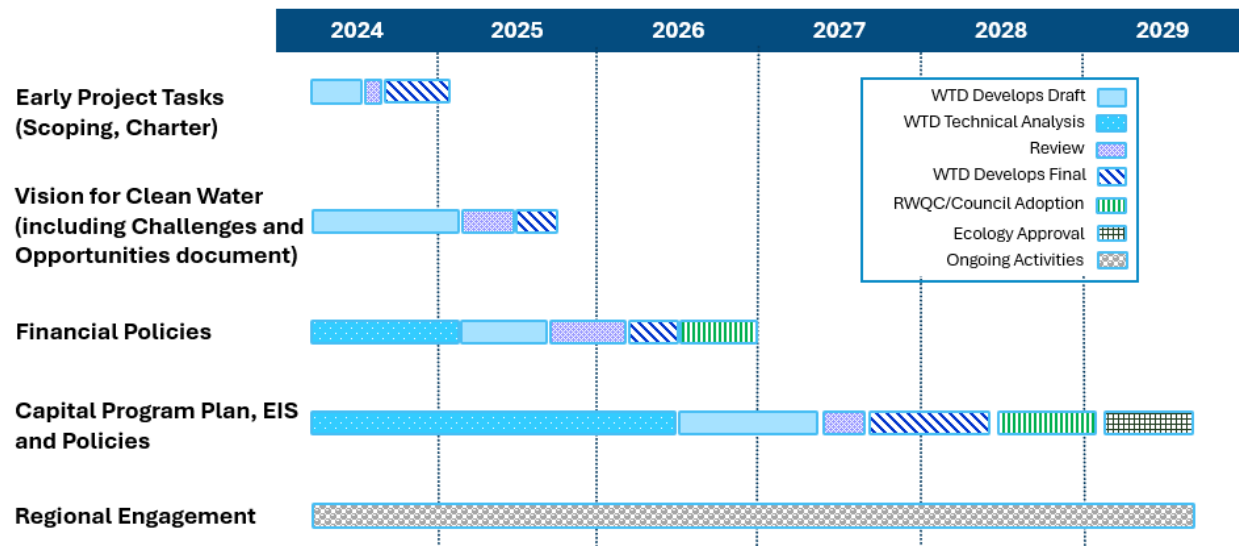
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- Reviewing relevant materials developed during the previous Clean Water Plan process.
- Reviewing industry research on drivers and trends.
- Updating information on the regional wastewater system.
- Interviewing national water utility experts and thought leaders.
- Listening sessions with interested and potentially affected parties.
- Developing a draft challenges and opportunities document.
- Soliciting feedback on the draft challenges and opportunities document.
- Finalizing the challenges and opportunities document.

Timeline: Final completed in 1st quarter 2025.

Vision – The Vision for Clean Water will articulate the future of WTD over the next 75 years. The work will occur in the first stages of the RWSP update process and will include the following:

- Reviewing existing documentation of regional priorities and feedback.
- Conducting interviews and listening sessions to confirm and refresh feedback as well as hear new ideas.
- Drafting several initial vision concepts.
- Conducting broad outreach and engagement to gather feedback on the initial vision concepts and the accompanying challenges and opportunities document.
- Finalizing the vision to be adopted with the RWSP Update.

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2025.

Financial Policies – Technical analysis will be performed to provide information to support proposed changes to the financial policies in King County Code 28.86.160. The analysis will consider cost structure and rate equity and fairness (including the capacity charge), capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency. The work will include the following:

- Studying peer utility agency financial policy structures and evaluating them within a WTD specific context.
- Developing draft policy revisions and seeking review from the RWSP Working Group with members from MWPAAC, RWQC staff, and SCA.
- Finalizing financial policy revisions and developing a proposed ordinance for Council review and approval.

Timeline: Final completed in 4th quarter 2026.

Capital Program Plan, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Policies – Technical analysis will provide the information to support proposed policy changes and WTD’s future capital program. The information will be used to develop a draft and final RWSP Update, draft and final EIS, and draft and final policy revisions. The work will include the following:

Technical analysis

- Identifying current/existing conditions in our service area in terms of demographics, the economy, water quality, and wastewater infrastructure.
- Gathering background information on current policies.
- Developing a range of options/strategies for policy questions. All options/strategies will meet legal obligations. Note that the approaches below should not be construed to mean least costly, more costly, and most costly, and that the recommended option may be a combination of the 3 below.
 - **Stay the Course:** Under this strategy, 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:** Under this strategy, 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:** Under this strategy, 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, eliminating Puget Sound discharges, maximizing resource recovery, proactively managing assets, and actively managing infiltration/inflow (I/I) to the system.
- Evaluating possible policy revisions.
- Identifying the capital projects, including timelines, costs, and rate impacts, associated with the options/strategies.

Draft Plan and EIS

- Conducting State Environmental Policy Act scoping.
- Writing a draft RWSP Update that includes draft projects and policies, along with a draft EIS that describes the environmental impacts associated with the draft RWSP Update.
- Conducting broad outreach and engagement to gather feedback on the draft RWSP Update and draft EIS.

Final Plan and EIS

- Responding to comments and feedback on the draft RWSP Update and draft EIS.
- Selecting among the options/strategies to create a proposed strategy that includes a list of capital projects, timelines, and policy revisions.
- Identifying outcome measures to evaluate progress and measure success.
- Identifying future update schedules and/or triggers.
- Preparing a proposed RWSP Update and final EIS.
- Developing and transmitting to Council an ordinance to adopt the proposed RWSP Update.
- Developing and submitting to Ecology the adopted RWSP Update as a proposed amendment to King County's General Sewer Plan.

Approvals

- Council adopting the RWSP Update.

- Ecology approving the RWSP Update, satisfying WTD’s regulatory obligation for an amended general sewer plan.

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2029.

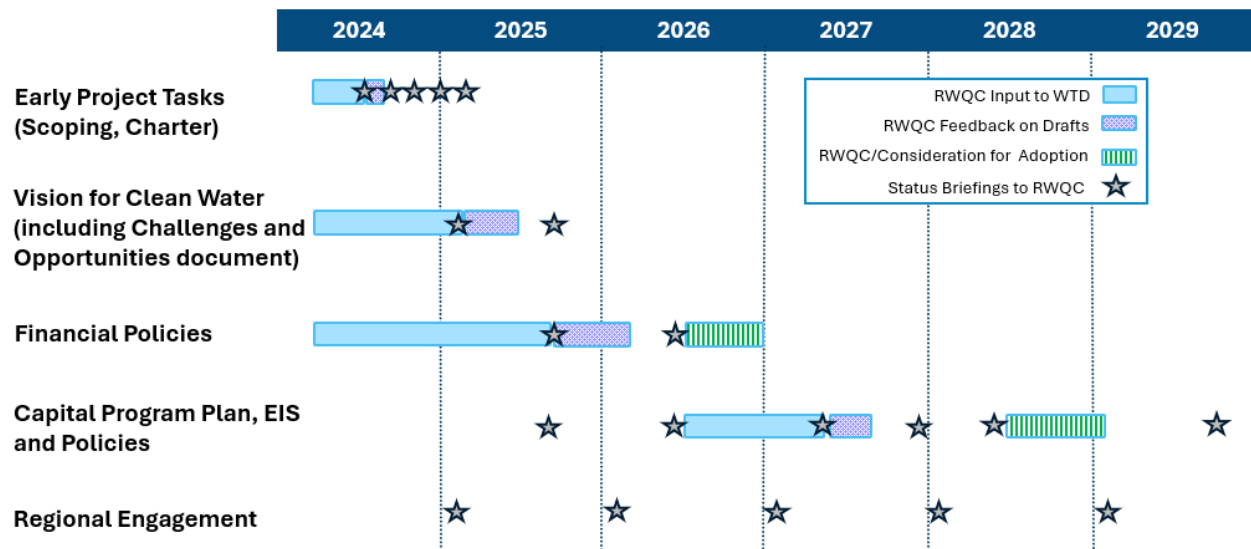
Regional Engagement – Regional engagement throughout the planning process ensures that interested and affected parties are informed and involved with the project. In addition to RWQC and MWPAAC, the following categories of interested and potentially affected parties may be engaged in the process (note: more detailed audience lists will be developed along with work plans and supporting outreach or event plans during each phase):

- Local Jurisdictions and Local Sewer Utilities
- Sound Cities Association
- Wastewater Professionals and industry peers
- Community-Based Organizations (Equity and Social Justice, Immigrant and Refugee, Environmental Justice)
- Communities that have/are experiencing the greatest environmental and health burdens
- Environmental Organizations /Nongovernmental Organizations
- Regulators and Resource Managers
- Neighborhood Groups
- Public Health Community-Based Organizations
- Water Resource Organizations
- Ratepayers
- Youth and Students
- Business community
- Agricultural community
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Homeowner Associations
- Labor Unions
- Thought leaders and experts from inside and outside the region

Timeline: Final completed in 3rd quarter 2029.

A specific plan and approach will be developed to engage with Tribal Governments. Figure 2 shows RWQC engagement during the RWSP Update planning effort. RWQC will have an opportunity to provide input before drafts are produced and feedback once drafts are available; WTD will provide status briefings along the way before RWQC is asked to take action.

Figure 2. Draft Summary of RWQC Engagement During Effort to Update King County’s Wastewater Plan



Major Policy Issues and Questions

King County has identified several major decisions regarding the future of our regional wastewater system that will need to be made in this process. To build and operate the large regional system, WTD has a long and growing list of capital projects in the coming decades, with significant forecasted costs. In making these investments, King County needs to consider many issues like our aging wastewater system, capacity drivers like population growth and infiltration and inflow, future regulations, water quality goals, energy and resource conservation and recovery, customer affordability, and climate change.

The update to the RWSP will not include stormwater planning for the region but will instead include how to address stormwater entering the wastewater system. Similarly, the update to the RWSP will not include water supply planning, but will include water reuse, which has a nexus between wastewater and water.

The policy questions in the table below have been grouped into major topics/themes that WTD has identified as known challenges and opportunities for the wastewater sector. Though a question is identified under one topic, it may also intersect with other topics in the table.

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
<p>Regulatory Landscape</p> <p>CSO, nutrients, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), current and existing requirements, new and anticipated</p>	<p>Should the County evaluate costs and plan for levels of treatment beyond current legal requirements?</p> <p>How should the County anticipate, engage with, and plan for future nutrient permit requirements, regulations related to CECs such as PFAS, or other future regulatory changes?</p>

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
<p>requirements, opportunities for larger regional partnerships to address water concerns, requirement to comply with future total maximum daily loads</p>	<p>What upstream or source control actions should the region undertake to prevent contaminants and reduce costs?</p> <p>How should WTD efforts support the water quality of Puget Sound and applicable inland waterways?</p>
<p>Capacity Demands</p> <p>I/I, population growth, conveyance and treatment capacity demand, including on-site septic systems in urban areas</p>	<p>Given the uncertainties in future growth rates reported by Washington State and the Puget Sound Regional Council, how aggressively beyond legal requirements should WTD expand capacity to account for future population growth?</p> <p>To what extent should WTD prioritize use of existing facility sites vs. acquiring new property to accommodate future treatment needs (including capacity)?</p> <p>Should the region continue to provide a centralized approach for regional wastewater treatment, or should the region move towards a more decentralized approach?</p> <p>How should I/I be managed and how can costs be fairly apportioned? Should system capacity be expanded to account for increases in I/I? Should I/I policies change to support reducing the capacity needed for I/I?</p> <p>How should the conversion of on-site septic systems to sewers in the service area be managed and should WTD implement programs to encourage conversion within the service area?</p>
<p>Infrastructure Resiliency</p> <p>Asset management, maintenance, improvements, renewal, replacement, labor and supply chain disruptions, natural hazard resiliency</p>	<p>How proactive vs. reactive should WTD be when deciding to refurbish or replace aging infrastructure?</p> <p>What level of resiliency should WTD plan for regarding seismic and other natural hazards to avoid or minimize risks? What level of risk tolerance should WTD accept? How can these considerations be best informed by the long-term capital motion work in progress?</p> <p>What level of redundancy of critical systems should WTD have?</p>
<p>Equity and Social Justice</p> <p>Distributional equity, WTD role in safeguarding public health</p>	<p>What actions should WTD take to increase equity and social justice for the regional wastewater system?</p> <p>How will equity and social justice be interwoven in the update: community engagement, rate structure analysis, etc.?</p>

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
	<p>How should the regional wastewater system address environmental justice concerns as described in the 2021 Healthy Environment for All Act¹, such as addressing the disproportionate environmental health impacts of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities?</p>
<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Mitigation – green building, eliminating/reducing fossil fuel use, energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, materials management, tree planting, etc. Adaptation – sea level rise, more extreme heat, increased storm intensities, wildfire smoke, increased river flooding, etc.</p>	<p>Should existing wastewater policy language (KCC 28.86) be revised to specifically call out planning for future climate conditions in addition to population growth and other environmental factors?</p> <p>How much should WTD reduce energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?</p> <p>How should WTD prepare and adapt to climate impacts (e.g., precipitation/storm intensities, sea level rise, river flooding, etc.) in line with the Strategic Climate Action Plan? What level of climate impact risk tolerance should WTD plan for to avoid or minimize risks to the system?</p>
<p>Resource Recovery</p> <p>Recycled water, biosolids, energy capture</p>	<p>Energy production and heat recovery – Should WTD be expanding its efforts to capture energy and heat? If so, at what level of effort?</p> <p>Biosolids – Should WTD further expand its efforts to develop Class A biosolids? What changes are needed to biosolid recovery policies to get to Class A?</p> <p>Recycled water – Under what circumstances should the region expand the use of reclaimed water? Which uses (e.g., environmental benefits, groundwater recharge, industrial uses, irrigation) are most appropriate?</p> <p>How can WTD best support environmental benefits while instituting safeguards to protect against environmental risks of contamination? How should cost considerations be weighed?</p>
<p>Finance / <u>Customer</u> Affordability</p> <p>Rate equity, fairness, and structure, capital financing and debt management, financial planning and revenue sufficiency</p>	<p>How will WTD measure <u>customer</u> affordability for contract agencies and ratepayers?</p> <p>Is there a better rate structure for the sewer rate? (Note: WTD has identified a work plan to further evaluate the residential customer equivalent conversion factor of 750 cubic feet per month.)</p>

¹ RCW 70.A.02

Challenges and Opportunities – Topics/Themes	Major Policy Questions to be Analyzed in RWSP Update
	<p>Will WTD maintain a single uniform sewer rate per residential customer equivalent (Robinswood “one for all, all for one”), or consider alternative cost recovery rate structures to reflect other system impacts?</p> <p>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.)</p> <p>What other rate relief approaches should WTD implement to improve <u>customer</u> affordability for those who may struggle to pay their sewer bill?</p>
<p>Relationship to Contracts <u>and</u> <u>Functional Plans</u></p>	<p><u>How will policies embedded in the current component agency contracts and WTD Functional Plans be evaluated for consideration of a) inclusion in the RWSP as currently implemented, b) inclusion in the RWSP but modified from current implementation, or c) not included in the RWSP at this time but recommended for further study and analysis? Are major policy updates aligned with component agency contracts?</u></p> <p>How will WTD implement the RWSP Update consistent with direction and requirements expected of contract agencies?</p>

RWSP Update Charter

This Charter is similar to a Memorandum of Understanding, representing the shared goals, roles and responsibilities, and agreed-upon process for the Regional Wastewater Services Plan update but does not create any legally binding obligations.

1. Background

The Regional Wastewater Services Plan (RWSP) is King County's comprehensive plan for wastewater. RWSP policies provide direction for the operation and further development of the wastewater system, its capital improvement program and, as necessary, the development of subsequent policies. RWSP policies are set forth in King County Code Chapters 28.84 and 28.86.

Adopted in 1999, the current RWSP is a supplement to the original Comprehensive Water Pollution Abatement Plan adopted in 1959, and includes additional components for Combined Sewer Overflows, Conveyance System Improvement, Infiltration/Inflow, and others. The RWSP and its related components form King County's General Sewer Plan, which was approved by the Department of Ecology in 1999.

It is time to update the RWSP to guide future investments and actions. The current RWSP was intended to guide the management of the system through 2030, and conditions have dramatically changed since its adoption. Some of the changing conditions that are driving the need to update the RWSP include:

- a. increasing capacity demands from a growing population,
- b. aging infrastructure requiring substantial amounts of maintenance, refurbishment, and replacement,
- c. recent and anticipated new regulations to protect water quality,
- d. rate affordability especially for lower-income households, and
- e. changing climate patterns which will stress our current system in multiple ways.

These challenges present opportunities for us to make our wastewater system better serve our region to ensure economic prosperity and sustain our environment through the end of the 21st century. Updating the RWSP will provide us these opportunities. Furthermore, an update to the RWSP will support the renegotiation and extension of local agency wastewater contracts, many of which expire in 2036, and it will help make the case for additional state and federal funding and meet the requirements for a General Sewer Plan update for approval by the Department of Ecology.

2. Charter Purpose

This Charter is intended to guide the multi-year process to update the RWSP. It establishes a framework for collaboration, partnership, and process between the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD), and the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC) to develop work products for consideration by the Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC). It establishes shared goals, values and principles; it sets clear and transparent roles and responsibilities, including decision-making responsibilities; it outlines a process with opportunities for MWPAAC and RWQC to

shape and influence outcomes; and it provides a high-level road map with major work areas, schedule and milestones for the RWSP update.

WTD and MWPAAC (hereafter referred to as “we”, “us”, or “Parties”) have distinct roles in the effort to update the RWSP. WTD’s and MWPAAC’s agreement to this Charter ensures we are partners in this effort and committed to work in good faith to effectively coordinate and carry out the steps in the planning process to deliver work products to the RWQC and achieve our shared goals.

3. Shared Goals

Our shared goals are:

- a. Develop a draft update to the RWSP by 2027, through thorough analysis, collaboration, and engagement across contract agencies, and
- b. Executive recommends to the King County Council a Final RWSP Update in 2029 that reflects regional values and regional priorities, and
- c. King County Council adopts the Final RWSP Update in 2029 that will guide decision making through 2060.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to clearly define roles, responsibilities and expectations, including decision-making responsibilities and authority. Roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. The King County Executive will oversee the work of WTD and propose the update to the RWSP and its policies to the King County Council. In addition, the King County Executive will establish the Vision for Clean Water for 2100, to help guide the 30-year implementation of the new RWSP.
- b. The King County Council may adopt the updated RWSP and its policies as proposed by the County Executive or with amendments.
- c. RWQC is a regional committee in the Legislative branch of County government with the role and responsibility to develop, propose, review, and recommend countywide policies and plans addressing water quality to the King County Council.¹ In this capacity, the RWQC may wish to influence the development phase of the RWSP update and its policies as described in paragraph I below. Following the King County Executive’s transmittal of a proposed ordinance to update the RWSP with new or amended policies, the RWQC may exercise its role and responsibility as described in paragraph II below.

¹ K.C.C. 1.24.065.K3

- I. During the development phase of the RWSP update, the RWQC may review and provide input and feedback on WTD work products, including the initial set of Vision for Clean Water options, and WTD’s proposed new and amended policies. At the discretion of the RWQC Chair and its members, RWQC members may convey their input on issues or topics and whether they concur with WTD or have specific areas of concern on the direction or substance of WTD’s work through Committee discussions, individual member comments, or through a Resolution. RWQC’s input will be documented and reported as an addendum to the joint WTD/Working Group memo outlined in Step #5 in Section 8 on Information and Work Product Flow.
 - II. Following transmittal of the County Executive’s proposed RWSP ordinance to County Council, King County Code requires the ordinance to be automatically referred to RWQC for its review and recommendations through the “mandatory referral” process as outlined in the King County Charter for all countywide water quality comprehensive and long-range capital improvement plans.² In accordance with the King County Charter, if the King County Council subsequently makes changes to the RWSP after RWQC has reviewed, the RWSP will be sent back to RWQC for additional consideration.
- d. MWPAAC is an advisory body to the County Council and Executive on matters related to the wastewater treatment system. MWPAAC and its associated Engineering and Planning (E&P) and Rates and Finance (R&F) Subcommittees roles and responsibilities in the RWSP update are to:
- I. Review technical analyses and provide feedback on WTD work products, proposals, and initial set of Vision for Clean Water options,
 - II. Contribute to discussions and help shape and influence WTD’s work products,
 - III. Constructively influence new and revised policy language proposed by WTD,
 - IV. Report out their recommendations to RWQC and/or the King County Council and Executive.
- e. The RWSP Working Group is a newly created forum for MWPAAC, RWQC member staff, and Sound Cities Association staff to collaborate with WTD’s RWSP project team through development and successful adoption of an updated RWSP. The Working Group’s composition will not exceed a total of ten non-WTD members, with representation from MWPAAC and RWQC members’ staff, and with representation from cities and water districts. Non-WTD members will be agreed upon by the Chair of MWPAAC and the WTD Director. Membership to the Working Group is not fixed for the duration of the RWSP update; members will rotate on/off based on expertise and interest in topic and their availability.

The Working Group’s roles and responsibilities are to:

- I. Influence and help shape WTD work products and RWSP outcomes.

² K.C.C. 1.24.065.K3

- II. Play a regular role in the feedback loops built into the information and work product flow; this will involve providing inputs to help WTD refine and revise work products based on comments heard in the planning process.
 - III. Ensure elected members on RWQC and MWPAAC colleagues are kept apprised of the status of on-going work by co-presenting and co-authoring memos with WTD as needed.
 - IV. Establish a clear channel of communication between WTD, MWPAAC and RWQC member staff that is dedicated to the RWSP update.
 - Alongside WTD, report out at MWPAAC and RWQC meetings to update on progress and highlight areas of concurrence and any concerns.
 - Alongside WTD, co-author a short-form memo that reports to RWQC an update on progress made by the Working Group, and areas of concurrence and any concerns conveyed by the Working Group or MWPAAC, as described in Step #5 of the information and work product flow in Section 8.
- f. The King County WTD is an Executive branch agency with the role and responsibility to develop and deliver an updated RWSP through the Department of Natural Resources and Parks to the County Executive. WTD's roles and responsibilities in the RWSP update are:
- I. Develop and recommend options for a Vision for Clean Water to the King County Executive. The process will engage MWPAAC, RWQC, component agencies, community groups, and other regional audiences to develop a long-term vision for future wastewater services, as well as identify high-level goals to achieve that vision, both of which will be included in the final RWSP update. The vision will be consistent with WTD's mission to protect public health and the environment by collecting and cleaning wastewater while recovering valuable resources for a healthy and resilient Puget Sound,
 - II. Lead the RWSP update planning effort and develop an updated RWSP in alignment with the vision and high-level goals for decision and adoption by the King County Executive and Council,
 - III. Produce all work products associated with the planning process, including the development, evaluation and selection of new and revised RWSP policies, and provide briefings to RWQC and MWPAAC.
 - IV. Collaborate with MWPAAC and its subcommittees, RWQC and the RWSP Working Group to produce and refine work products and develop new and revised policies that have been reviewed and influenced by input from MWPAAC and RWQC in a manner consistent with goals, values, and principles in this charter.
 - V. Objectively convey MWPAAC feedback when presenting to RWQC. WTD will co-author, alongside a Working Group member, a short-form memo that reports to RWQC to update the Committee on progress made by the Working Group, and areas of concurrence or any concerns conveyed by the Working Group or MWPAAC, as described in Step #5 of the information and work product flow in Section 8. WTD will provide an

addendum to this memo following RWQC meetings that reflect RWQC’s input on issues or topic areas.

- VI. Solicit input and feedback from other interested and affected parties to develop the Vision for Clean Water options for the Executive, an updated plan and policies; this includes revisiting and re-engaging with individuals and groups who previously contributed to the Clean Water Plan, as well as reaching new interested parties. WTD will regularly solicit community feedback and integrate it into work products and decision-making. Community feedback will be shared with MWPAAC and RWQC. The process will work to ensure that voices are heard and report back how input is considered and used.
- VII. Protect and promote equity and social justice in the RWSP update. In 2010, King County Council adopted Ordinance 16948, requiring the principles of equity and social justice to be included in all strategic planning, comprehensive planning, and policy decisions at King County. These principles are outlined in the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and will be reflected in the updated plan.
- VIII. Engage diverse voices and foster inclusive participation to ensure community members have equitable opportunities to contribute to and inform the RWSP planning process. WTD will actively reach out to underrepresented groups and historically underserved communities and consider their needs and perspectives when creating the plan. Engagement will be guided by King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.³
- IX. Develop and share information and analyses to promote shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the regional wastewater system in the coming decades by providing historical context and data about volumes and rates and the rationale behind the current system. WTD will develop a range of possible future directions to address these challenges and opportunities and will create projections of capital costs and rates to inform cost/benefit analyses and decision making associated with these range of options.
- X. Affirm that King County will commit to meet all current and anticipated future legal and regulatory obligations associated with the RWSP update. WTD will focus on wastewater system services, issues and policies and coordinate with, but not assume responsibility for, other water quality-related planning efforts (e.g., stormwater, water supply).

³ King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan was unanimously adopted by the King County Council. It can be found at the following URL: <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-ACK-EX-SUM.pdf>

5. Shared Values and Guiding Principles

To succeed, we agree on the following shared values and associated action-oriented guiding principles. Together they will guide our work to update the RWSP.

Shared Values

The following are the four shared values for our collective work on the RWSP update; they will guide how we engage one another, how we share information, how we resolve conflict, and they will help us build a foundation of trust and mutual understanding.

- a. Collaboration
- b. Partnership
- c. Regionalism
- d. Innovative Thinking

Guiding Principles

The following principles are action-oriented expressions and mutual commitments of our shared values; they are our norms, our code of conduct and the guideposts for our process of working together to update the RWSP.

Collaboration:

- I. WTD will provide transparency in the planning process, including in all assumptions, in work product creation, information flow, and decision-making. WTD will share knowledge and information and avoid opaque processes where internal functions are unknown or not shared.
- II. WTD will build-in appropriate time for review, discussion, input, revisions, and engagement with the Working Group, MWPAAC and RWQC.
- III. WTD will build-in clear feedback loops to the information and work product flow prior to decision making.
- IV. MWPAAC and WTD will offer constructive feedback and will work together in good faith.

WTD will strive to integrate feedback from MWPAAC and RWQC into its work products and communicate clearly if it does not, and the reasons why.

Partnership:

- I. WTD will respect all input from component agencies and will seek to understand the meaning and intent behind MWPAAC and RWQC's opinions and perspectives. WTD will establish a planning process that meaningfully considers the input, ideas and feedback heard from MWPAAC and RWQC. MWPAAC has value to add in policy discussions in addition to its role as technical advisor. As such, WTD's planning process will give MWPAAC opportunities to

constructively influence policy discussions. WTD will honor the process and schedule outlined in this Charter.

- II. WTD will respect all input from planning stakeholders outside of MWPAAC and RWQC and will meaningfully consider input, ideas, and feedback heard from them.
- III. MWPAAC will seek to understand the meaning and intent behind WTD's opinions and perspectives. MWPAAC will recognize the process and schedule outlined in this Charter and will help to prioritize discussions to convey their input on issues or topics.
- IV. WTD is intentionally creating a collaborative planning process that shifts MWPAAC's role from advisor and commentor of WTD's work products to a partner and participant to influence and shape WTD's work products and RWSP outcomes. In the spirit of partnership MWPAAC will strive to support WTD's efforts and the planning process outcomes when possible; and when support is not possible, MWPAAC will constructively frame feedback to WTD and RWQC.

Regionalism:

- I. WTD acknowledges its responsibility to convene conversations and facilitate regional solutions.
- II. The Parties commit to understand the challenges and opportunities facing the regional wastewater system in the coming decades and the planning process will result in a plan that is responsive and adaptive to them.
- III. The Parties will apply the lens of "Regionalism" to our discussions and deliberations. This means applying a 'systems thinking' approach wherein we all understand each component agency is a part of a 'whole', and each will bring local perspectives and needs to the table, while recognizing the interrelationship and interdependencies of their local system to the whole regional system.
- IV. The Parties will objectively evaluate tradeoffs and investment sequencing to ensure a resilient wastewater system that protects our environment while balancing near-term and long-term impact to rate payers.

Innovative Thinking:

The Parties will employ innovative thinking to generate new ideas and cost-effective solutions to the 21st century challenges facing our wastewater system. This means we will approach problems and ideas with an open mind; we will be open to generate ideas that may diverge from the status quo; we will be flexible and adapt to change to find new ways to approach problems; and we will identify and question assumptions that may limit creative possibilities.

6. RWSP Policy Areas

The update to the RWSP is intended to span a 30-year time horizon (2030 – 2060), with planned future incremental smaller-in-scope updates every 10 years to adjust and adapt to changing conditions as needed in between major 30-year updates to the Plan.

WTD has ten topic-specific Functional Plans that will align with and integrate into the broader and comprehensive RWSP. These ten Functional Plans are listed below:

WTD's Functional Plans:

1. Biosolids Strategic Plan
2. Climate Adaptation Plan
3. Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan
4. Conveyance System Improvement Plan
5. Energy Plan
6. Infiltration and Inflow Plan
7. Recycled Water Strategic Plan
8. Sediment Management Plan
9. Strategic Asset Management Plan
10. Treatment Plan

The major policy areas that will be included in this 30-year update to the RWSP are described in the RWSP Scoping Document supported by RWQC via Resolution XX. This Charter organizes these same major policy areas into two general topic areas for planning purposes – Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment, and Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related topics.

A high-level overview of these two policy areas is described below; more information about the planning level framework and details about these two policy areas can be found in Appendix A.

Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment

The RWSP planning process will involve thorough technical analyses and evaluation of eight categories of capital investment:

1. Treatment
2. Asset Management
3. Separated System Conveyance (including infiltration/inflow)
4. Combined System Management
5. Climate Impact Preparedness and Natural Disaster Resiliency
6. Pollution (Source Control and Legacy)
7. Resource Recovery (Biosolids, Energy, Recycled Water)
8. Odor Control

Each of these eight categories of capital investment will be analyzed and evaluated across a range of enhancement levels over a 30-year time horizon with respect to three distinct conceptual Approaches.

Three Conceptual Approaches:

1. Stay the Course Approach
2. Strategic Enhancements Approach
3. Transformative Approach

These three Approaches represent a spectrum of investment and outcome possibilities for the region to consider managing its wastewater; they can be thought of as different pathways to get to different desired outcomes by the year 2060. Analyses of capital investment levels for each of the three Approaches will provide the necessary information to effectively evaluate trade-offs to inform proposed policy changes.

Using outputs received from a SEPA process, and feedback received from RWQC and MWPAAC during the planning process, a final Proposal will be selected from the three Approaches. The final Proposal may be a hybrid of the three Approaches.

Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related Topics

Policy Area 2 includes topics in the RWSP Scoping document that are not direct capital investment areas. These topics include, but are not limited to, the list shown below. These policy topics will be integrated into the RWSP update and applied across each of the three Conceptual Approaches.

1. Financial Policies
2. Affordability
3. Equity and Social Justice
4. Relation to Contracts
5. Regular Future Reporting

7. High-level Schedule and Major Milestones

Development and descriptions of the three conceptual approaches, with their associated levels of enhancement across the eight categories of capital investment, is planned to begin in Q2 2025 and carry through 2026. Financial policies analyses and engagement will occur in 2026 and will be separated into two phases as described in Appendix A. An updated draft RWSP with the three Approaches is planned in 2027 accompanied by a SEPA analysis. Following completion of the SEPA process a final Proposal is planned to be selected in 2028, followed by development of proposed new RWSP policies. It is anticipated that the King County Executive will transmit a final RWSP Update to the King County Council for subsequent adoption in 2029. Following Council adoption, the final RWSP Update will be submitted to the WA Department of Ecology for approval in 2029.

A high-level schedule to update the RWSP with the major milestones is shown in Table 1 in Appendix B. Further detail about topic specific deliverables and dates is forthcoming as WTD moves further into the RWSP Update planning process.

8. Information and Work Product Flow

This Charter establishes a process to allow space where we can find synergies and co-benefits by working together to plan for our future wastewater investments. The steps below outline a process for the flow of information and work products between WTD, the Working Group, MWPAAC, and RWQC to ensure productive, constructive, and efficient collaboration.

Sequencing Steps & Feedback Loops

WTD will bundle work products by topic into modules to facilitate the workflow process. Given monthly meeting schedules, it will take 3-5 months to move a module of work products through the sequence steps and feedback loops outlined below. These steps will be repeated for each topic-specific module needed to develop the RWSP Update.

WTD has the responsibility to bring its work products to the RWSP Working Group and MWPAAC. Upon receiving an initial briefing about the content of a work module from WTD, the RWQC will determine its preferred level and timing of engagement on a given module's work products.

Step #1: WTD coordinates with the Chairs of RWQC and MWPAAC prior to the beginning of work for each work module to determine the appropriate level of detail that WTD will bring to RWQC and MWPAAC, and to establish a schedule for completion of the work module.

Step #2: WTD shares initial drafts of its work products with Working Group.

Step #3: Working Group meets regularly to collaborate with WTD to help shape and influence WTD's work products. Working Group members ensure elected members on RWQC and MWPAAC colleagues are kept apprised of the status of on-going work by co-presenting and co-authoring memos with WTD as needed.

Step #4: MWPAAC reviews WTD's work products and provides input and feedback to WTD.

Step #5: WTD and the Working Group report to RWQC on results of steps 2-4 for purposes of keeping RWQC members up to date on status of work product development and areas of concurrence or any concerns (report is a co-authored short-form memo).

Step #6: WTD refines its work products based on feedback from steps 4 and 5 in consultation with the Working Group.

WTD's work products at this step are still dynamic and adjustable going into Step #7.

Step #7: Based on RWQC's preferred level of engagement from step #1, RWQC may review and provide input and feedback on WTD's work products. At the discretion of the RWQC Chair and its members, RWQC members convey their input through Committee discussions and individual member comments or through a Resolution. WTD/Working Group draft an addendum to the memo from step #5 capturing RWQC member comments and/or the Committee's concurrence or areas of concern on issues or topic areas.

Step #8: WTD makes final refinements to its work products.

Step #9: WTD shares its final work products with RWQC and MWPAAC. For each work module WTD will provide a record if substantive MWPAAC and RWQC feedback was or was not included, and why.

Steps 4 and 7 in this process may require more than one MWPAAC or RWQC meeting. This process is cyclical and will begin anew for each new topic-specific work module.

Built-in feedback loops are also important in the process for productive collaboration, and to ensure constructive input can be incorporated into work products. Following Steps 5 or 7, if WTD determines that additional partner feedback is warranted, then draft work will loop back to process step 3.

Sequencing the steps with appropriate time for MWPAAC and RWQC to review and discuss work products is important. WTD commits to provide all work products and meeting materials to the Working Group, MWPAAC, and RWQC no later than 1 week in advance of meetings. Given the frequency of the monthly meetings of these groups, it is difficult for WTD to provide meeting materials any sooner than 1 week in advance.

Equally important to sequencing and feedback loops is the need to have the process function to maintain the schedule so we can achieve our shared goals by the deadlines indicated in Section 4. It will facilitate the process and schedule when MWPAAC provides feedback to WTD no later than 5 business days following a meeting to enable smooth and timely flow of work product delivery to RWQC.

For this process to be successful, all parties need to work together in good faith.

9. Commitments from MWPAAC Chair and WTD Director

The MWPAAC Chair and WTD Director support this Charter for the update to King County’s RWSP, and request our colleagues and staff abide by it as we work collectively through the multi-year process to update the RWSP. Furthermore, we request that all staff from WTD, MWPAAC members, and those who serve on the RWSP Working Group read and formally acknowledge this Charter and the responsibilities it requires so this document can serve as an on-going reminder about the expectations around collaboration, partnership, and process for those who participate on the RWSP Working Group.

MWPAAC Chair: John McClellan

King County WTD Director: Kamuron Gurol

Appendix A: Policy Areas & Planning Level Specifics

Information in this Appendix provides more detail about the planning framework and process associated with the major policy areas outlined in Section 6 of this Charter.

Policy Area 1: Categories of Capital Investment

The planning process will involve thorough technical analyses and evaluation of eight categories of capital investment. The analyses will provide the necessary information to effectively evaluate trade-offs to inform proposed policy changes. The following categories reflect the same general policy topics described in the RWSP Scoping document (supported by RWQC via Resolution XX) that are directly related to levels of capital investment. Policy Area 2 describes the work planned for policy topics addressed in the Scoping document that are not direct capital investment areas.

1. **Treatment:** Policies will consider level of treatment (i.e. removal of pollutants such as nutrients) and capacity demands (due to population growth). A range of options will be considered from regional plants to decentralized concepts.
2. **Asset Management:** Policies will consider level of risk for wastewater infrastructure failure in aging systems and approach for repair/replacement/refurbishment.
3. **Separated System Conveyance (including infiltration/inflow):** Policies will consider level of service for capacity within the separated wastewater conveyance system and concepts to manage capacity including reduction of I/I and use of automation.
4. **Combined System Management:** Policies will consider controlling CSO discharges and managing/reducing flow in the combined conveyance system (separation, green stormwater infrastructure).
5. **Climate Impact Preparedness and Natural Disaster Resiliency:** Policies will consider climate adaptation (precipitation/storm intensities, sea level rise, etc.); level of resiliency/redundancy to natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes).
6. **Pollution (Source Control and Legacy):** Policies will consider potential to limit harmful chemicals in consumer products and manufacturing before they enter wastewater. Policies will also consider legacy pollution/sediment management.
7. **Resource Recovery (Biosolids, Energy, Recycled Water):** Policies will consider recovery of resources from wastewater treatment process – biosolids, energy (including sewer heat recovery), recycled water.
8. **Odor Control:** Policies will consider prevention and control of nuisance odor occurrences at all treatment plants and associated conveyance facilities.

Each of these eight categories of capital investment will be analyzed and evaluated across a range of enhancement levels over a 30-year time horizon with respect to the three distinct conceptual approaches mentioned below. These three approaches represent a spectrum of investment and outcome possibilities for the region to consider managing its wastewater; they can be thought of as different pathways to get to different desired outcomes by the year 2060.

Three Conceptual Approaches:

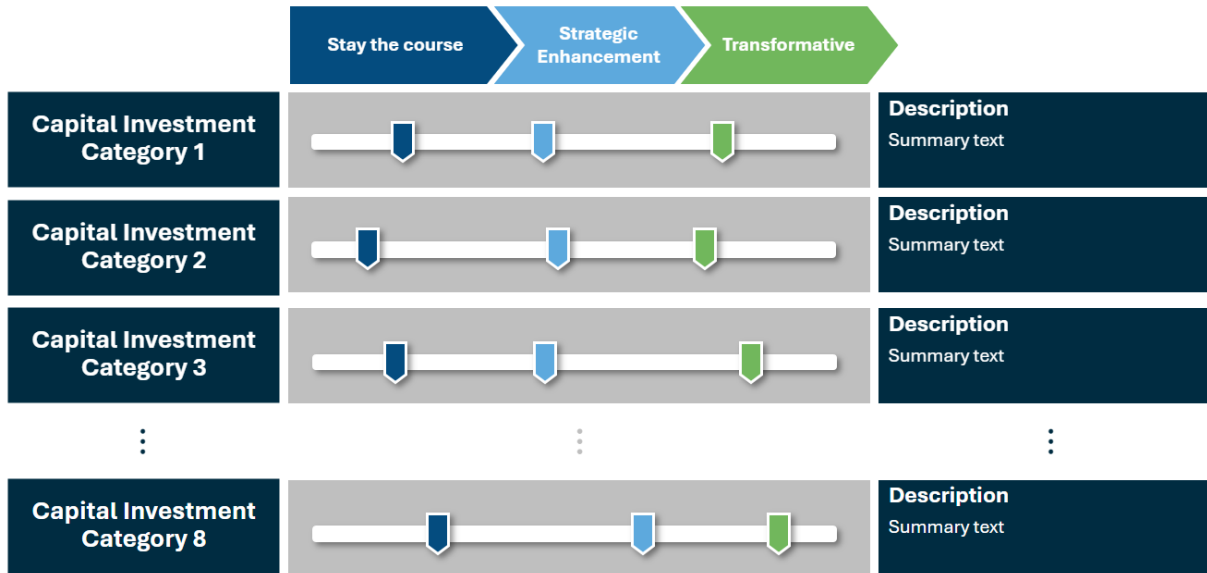
1. **Stay the Course:** Under this approach, WTD would provide fundamental services. WTD would implement operations and a capital program that focus on compliance for all applicable current and future regulations. WTD would use industry-accepted standard operating procedures and proven and reliable technologies. WTD would work to maintain a positive public image, cultivate an understanding of its operations and the value of its services with the community.
2. **Strategic Enhancements:** Under this approach, WTD would provide strategic enhancements to the operations and capital program beyond those provided in the Stay the Course approach. The strategic enhancements will focus on continual improvement and optimizing its services as central to mission success. WTD would actively engage with its community to ensure responsiveness to community needs and interests. WTD would have explicit performance improvement objectives and service levels and would actively seek to ensure its operations support the community's economic and social well-being. WTD would seek to create co benefits with partners when it is cost effective and feasible. WTD would adopt sustainability as a core business principle and appropriately utilize natural systems, like green infrastructure, in addition to other nonconventional technologies (e.g. decentralized approaches) and practices. WTD would enhance use of processes for recovery of energy, solids, and materials.
3. **Transformative:** Under this approach, WTD would transform from where it is today to a more innovative, future-focused utility. As a leader in the industry, WTD would employ practices that focus on managing wastewater as a valuable commodity. This approach would incorporate an efficient reclamation mindset and focus on producing usable products instead of treatment and discharge. WTD would focus on enhanced resiliency and act as a leader in treatment technology, pollution prevention, energy production and recycling by working with other utility and industry partners to promote beneficial resources from wastewater to benefit agriculture, industry and ecosystems. WTD would foster and invest in a culture of innovation, collaborative development, and active engagement with its employees.

Within each approach, varying levels of enhancements across each of the eight categories of capital investment will be described, identified, and then evaluated with planning level cost estimations. When choosing levels of capital enhancement for evaluation we will use the process outlined in Section 8. The level of enhancement for each category can be thought of as a dial that can be increased or decreased across a range based on the desired outcome for a particular approach. The low level of enhancement across the range is associated with the "Stay the Course" Approach, while the high level of enhancement across the range is associated with the "Transformative" Approach. This range of capital enhancements across the approaches is illustrated in Diagram 1 below. For the "Strategic Enhancement" Approach there will likely be a range of options within each category of capital investment which may require additional evaluation.

These plan approaches are not ordered according to increasing costs. Cost estimation of each approach's varying levels of investment will consider life cycle costs, the effect of delayed investment on future costs due to inflation, as well as potential financial benefits that may accrue from proactive

investment. As such, it is difficult to predict cost levels of one approach relative to another at this point in the planning process.

Diagram 1. Example Three Conceptual Approaches with Categories of Capital Investment

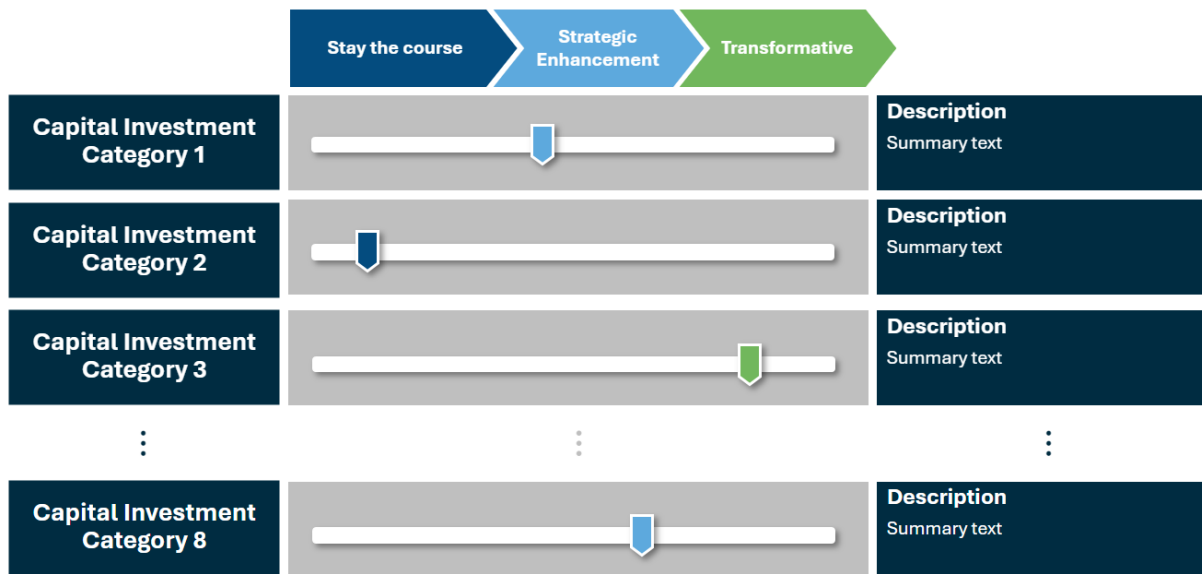


The planning process will include the development and application of criteria to compare the approaches and discuss tradeoffs to ultimately recommend a final proposal. Criteria may include, but not limited to, environmental sustainability, reliability, Equity and Social Justice, impacts to rate payers, and risk of compliance. The RWSP Working Group will weigh in on the development of the criteria.

The Washington State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) requires the County to complete a checklist and either an environmental impact statement (EIS), a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) or a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS) for the updated RWSP. The process will require the issuance of a draft EIS or a draft DNS or MDNS to precede the issuance of a final EIS, DNS or MDNS.

Using outputs received from the SEPA process, and feedback received from RWQC and MWPAAC during the planning process, a final Proposal will be selected. The final Proposal may be a hybrid of the three approaches as illustrated in Diagram 2 below.

Diagram 2. Example of Final Proposal



Policy Area 2: Non-Capital Related Topics

Policy Area 2 includes the topics in the Scoping document supported by RWQC via Resolution XX that are not direct capital investment areas. Planned work for each of these topic areas, and how each will support the RWSP update, is described.

Financial Policies

Technical analyses will be performed to provide information to support proposed changes to the financial policies in King County Code 28.86.160. The analysis will consider rate structure and rate equity (including the capacity charge), capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency.⁴The analysis will also study peer utility agency financial policy structures and evaluating them within a WTD specific context.

Financial policies analyses and engagement will be separated into two phases, with phase 1 occurring earlier in the planning process because they provide the framework for future revenue requirements under each RWSP conceptual approach. These financial policies include capital financing and debt management, and financial planning and revenue sufficiency. Phase 2 will include the financial policies that fall in the category of rate structure and rate equity. These financial policies are revenue neutral for

⁴ Rates should be designed to distribute the cost of service equitably among each type and class of service. Non-cost of service rates that achieve certain other objectives such as affordability and water conservation may be considered in some situations.” (source: Revised: AWWA Policy Statement: Financing, Accounting, and Rates – American Water Works Association, November 5, 2024). The AWWA Principles of Water Rates, Fees, and Charges Manual states “Rate-making endeavors to assign costs to classes of customers in a nondiscriminatory, cost-responsive manner so that rates can be designed to closely meet the cost of providing service to such customer classes.”

WTD and determine the allocation of costs to different classes of customers, so they are not constrained by timing of the revenue requirements and can be evaluated later in the process along with other RWSP policies. Rate structure and rate equity policies include things like sizing the Residential Customer Equivalent (RCE at 750 cubic feet per month) and whether to maintain a single uniform sewer rate per RCE or consider alternative cost recovery rate structures (Robinswood “all for one and one for all”).

The affordability analysis will be conducted primarily through two lenses: ⁵

1. As a tool to compare the rate impacts of the different RWSP conceptual approaches and assess relative impact to any household.
2. Relief strategies for low-income households who are most likely to struggle to pay essential living expenses.

WTD will apply an approach that is consistent with industry recommendations and the acknowledgement that affordability must be evaluated in a local context. This will center on a suite of WTD service area-tailored metrics that:

- Gauge the household burden of the different RWSP approaches’ financial outcomes.
- Can be calculated at the census tract/local agency level, e.g. bill as % of median income, bill as % of poverty income – locally adjusted, hours worked at local minimum wage bill equivalent.

Equity and Social Justice: The work to update the RWSP will integrate and address issues around equity and social justice as described in the Scoping document; these issues include, but are not limited to, WTD’s role in safeguarding public health, especially for underserved communities; distributional equity; and other specific actions WTD can take to increase equity and social justice for the regional wastewater system.

Relation to contracts: The work to update the RWSP will address and ensure agency contracts are aligned with major RWSP policy updates.

Regular Future Reporting: The work to update the RWSP will evaluate the most effective ways for WTD to provide routine future reporting to MWPAAC and RWQC under the updated RWSP.

⁵ “The National Coalition for Legislation on Water Affordability defined water affordability as the cost of provision that does not impede people from meeting other basic needs or human rights. There is, however, currently no one generally accepted definition of water affordability. It varies depending on the purpose of the water affordability assessment. Affordability researchers generally agree that no one single metric can or should be used in measuring water affordability, rather, a variety of quantitative and qualitative data should be considered (source: Schneemann, M., 2019, Defining & Measuring Water Affordability: A Literature Review; Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant).

Appendix B: Schedule and Milestones

A high-level schedule to update the RWSP with the major milestones is shown in Table 1. The Deliverables are in reverse chronological order to emphasize the importance of maintaining schedule in 2025 and 2026. This schedule is approximate and subject to revision without amending this Charter.

Table 1. Schedule and Major Milestones ⁶ (dates are estimates and subject to change)

	Deliverable / Milestone	Target Year	Responsible Party / Involved Party
20	King County transmits Final Plan to WA Dept. Ecology for approval	2029	ECY
19	Anticipated King County Council adoption of Final RWSP & new policies	2029	KC Council
18	Anticipated King County Council referral of RWSP & new policies to RWQC	2029	RWQC
17	King County Executive transmits RWSP & new policies to the King County Council	2029	KC Executive
16	WTD finalizes new RWSP policy proposals	2029	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
15	Final Proposed Plan developed with draft new RWSP Policies and Phase 2 Financial Policies	2028	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
14	Final Proposal Selected	2028	KC Executive / WTD
13	If needed, produce EIS Analysis of 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD
12	Draft RWSP with 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
11	Final planning level cost analyses for each of the 3 Conceptual Approaches	2027	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
10	Anticipated King County Council adoption of Phase 1 Financial Policies	2026/27	KC Council
9	Anticipated referral of Phase 1 Financial Policies to RWQC	2026	RWQC
8	Financial Policies finalized and transmitted to King County Council	2026	WTD
7	SEPA Threshold Determination of Significance or Non-Significance	Q3-Q4 2026	WTD
6	Planning level project cost analyses of enhancement levels across the 8 categories of capital investment for the 3 approaches	Q1-Q4 2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
5	Draft Phase 1 Financial Policies	2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
4	Analysis of enhancement levels across each of the 8 categories of capital investment for each of the 3 approaches; agreement on enhancement levels for step 6	Q4 2025/ Q1 2026	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC
3	Feedback and refinement of the 8 categories of capital investment evaluated for the 3 Conceptual Approaches	Q3-Q4 2025	WTD/MWPAAC/RWQC

⁶ Engagement with the Sound Cities Association for briefings and discussions on substantive topics can occur through coordination with WTD and RWQC member staff.

2	Develop descriptions for 3 Conceptual Approaches and their associated categories of capital investment	Q1-Q2 2025	WTD
1	RWSP Vision engagement and Vision announcement	Q4 2024-Q4 2025	WTD / KC Executive

Regional Wastewater Services Plan Charter

RWQC Meeting

Presentation by WTD & the RWSP Working Group

January 16, 2025



RWSP Working Group

Membership for Charter work:

- John McClellan – MWPAAC Chair / Alderwood
- Ben Marre – MWPAAC E&P Chair / Seattle
- Carly Joerger – Kirkland (MWPAAC & RWQC)
- Ella Williams – Bellevue (RWQC)
- Andie Parnell – SCA (RWQC)
- Crystil Woolridge – MWPAAC / Woodinville Water District

Working Group Meetings to develop Charter

1. October 9
2. November 13
3. December 2
4. January 7



Scoping Document



RWSP Charter



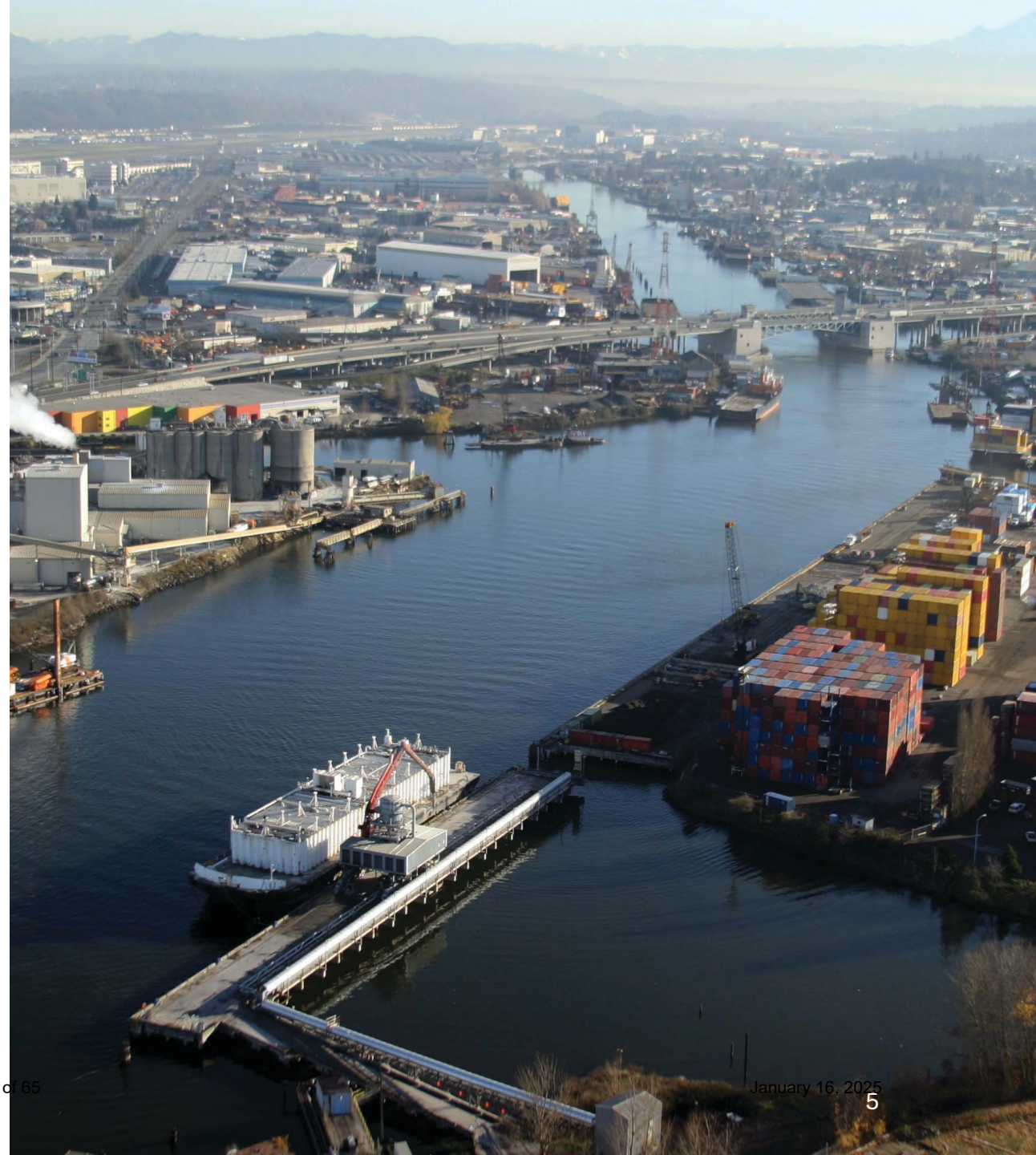
Charter Purpose

- Guide the multi-year process to update the RWSP
- Establish a framework for collaboration, partnership, and process between WTD and MWPAAC to deliver RWSP work products to RWQC
- Ensure WTD and MWPAAC are partners committed to work together in good faith to coordinate the steps in the RWSP planning process



Charter Purpose

- Establish shared goals, values, and principles
- Set clear and transparent roles & responsibilities
- Define information and work product flow process with opportunities for MWPAAC and RWQC to shape & influence WTD work products and outcomes
- High level road map with schedule & milestones





Charter Outline

1. Background
2. Purpose
3. Shared Goals
4. Roles & Responsibilities
5. Shared Values and Guiding Principles
6. RWSP Policy Areas
7. High Level Schedule and Major Milestones
8. Information and Work Product Flow
9. Commitments: WTD and MWPAAC
10. Appendix A: Policy Areas & Planning Level Specifics
11. Appendix B: Schedule & Milestones

Shared Goals

1. Develop a draft RWSP by 2027, through thorough analysis, collaboration, and engagement across contract agencies
2. Executive recommends to the King County Council a final RWSP in 2029 that reflects regional values and regional priorities
3. Anticipated King County Council adoption of final RWSP in 2029 to guide decision making through 2060

Goals are Specific and Time-Bound



Collaboration is transparency in the planning process


Collaboration means built-in feedback loops

Collaboration is cooperating with one another.

Collaboration is working together in good faith

Shared Values

- 1. Collaboration**
2. Regionalism
3. Partnership
4. Innovative Thinking



“Each component agency is a part of a ‘whole’, and each will bring local perspectives and needs to the table, while recognizing the interrelationship and interdependencies of their local system to the whole regional system.”

Shared Values

1. Collaboration
- 2. Regionalism**
3. Partnership
4. Innovative Thinking



Partnership means respecting input .

Partnership is seeking to understand meaning and intent behind opinions and perspectives.

Shared Values

1. Collaboration
2. Regionalism
- 3. Partnership**
4. Innovative Thinking



*“we will approach problems
and ideas with an open mind;*

*we will be open to generate
ideas that may diverge from the
status quo;*

*we will identify and question
assumptions that may limit
creative possibilities.”*

Shared Values

1. Collaboration
2. Regionalism
3. Partnership
- 4. Innovative Thinking**



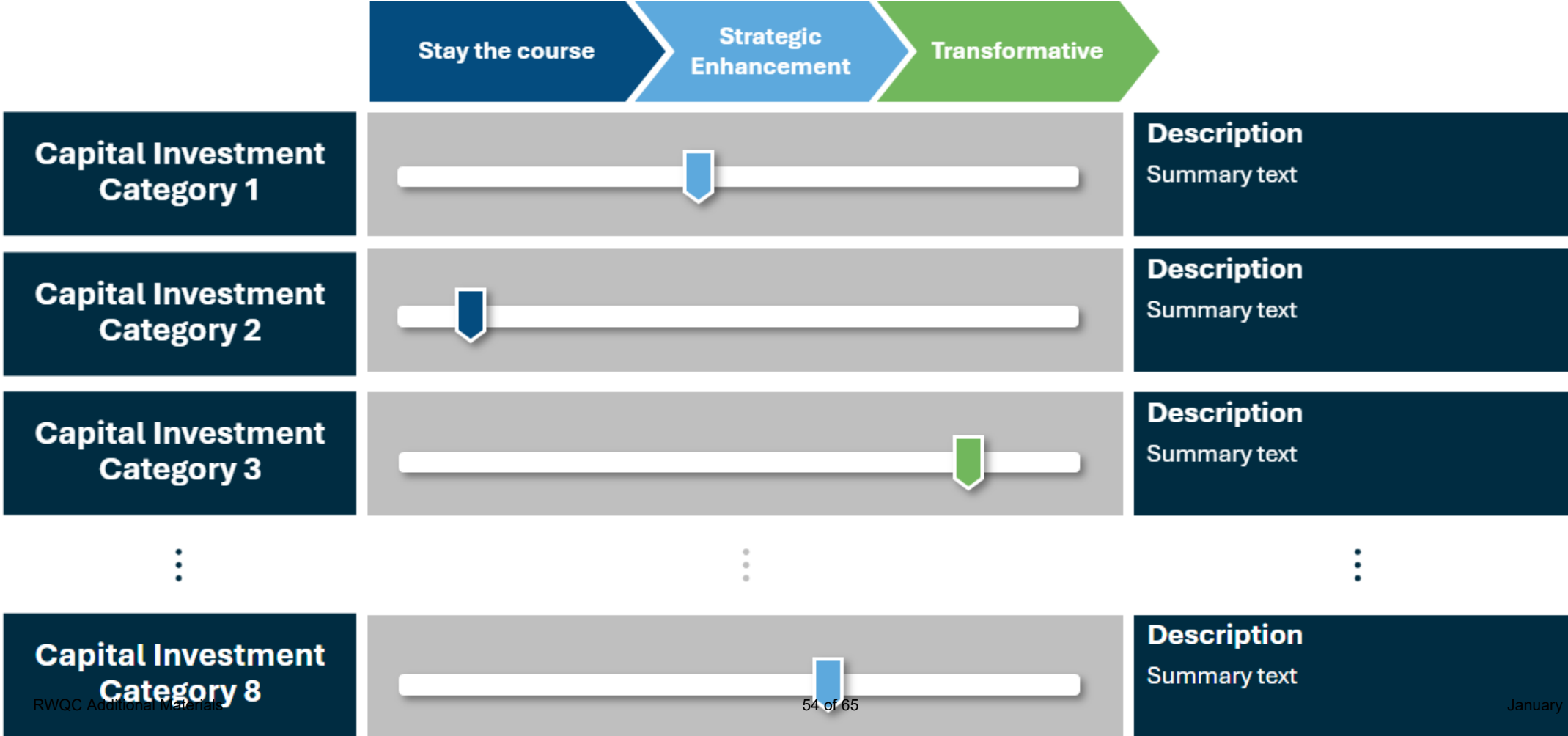
Policy Areas from Scope Doc

Policy Area #1 – Categories of Capital Investment

1. Treatment
2. Asset Management
3. Separated System Conveyance and I/I
4. Combined System Management
5. Climate Impact Preparedness and Natural Disaster Resiliency
6. Pollution (Source Control and Legacy)
7. Resource Recovery (Biosolids, Energy, Recycled Water)
8. Odor Control

Three Conceptual Approaches

1. Stay the Course 2. Strategic Enhancements Approach 3. Transformative Approach





Policy Areas from Scope Doc

Policy Area #2 – Non-Capital Related Topics

1. Financial Policies
2. Affordability
3. Equity and Social Justice
4. Relation to Contracts
5. Regular Future Reporting

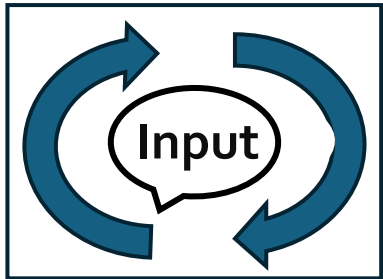
Information and Work Product Flow



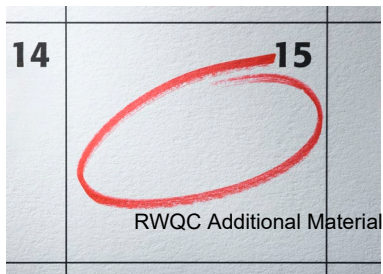
- **Sequencing Steps**



- **Appropriate time for Review and Input**



- **Built-in Feedback Loops**



- **Maintaining Schedule**

Timeline / Next Steps

1. RWQC Overview of Charter on January 16
2. MWPAAC discussion of Charter on Jan 22; authorization of Chair to sign
3. Anticipated RWQC discussion of Charter on Feb 5, and March 5 if needed



Questions ?

WTD and RWSP Working Group



King County | Wastewater Treatment

Work Flow Sequence Steps

1. WTD coordinates with Chairs of MWPAAC and RWQC to determine appropriate level of detail for work products and schedule for work module
2. WTD shares initial drafts of its work products with the Working Group
3. Working Group collaborates with WTD to help shape and influence WTD's work products
4. MWPAAC provides input and feedback on WTD's work products
5. WTD and Working Group report to RWQC results of steps 2-4 to keep RWQC members up to date on work product development and areas of concurrence or any concerns (report is short-form memo)
6. WTD refines its work products based on feedback from steps 4 & 5 in consultation with the Working Group
7. Based on RWQC's preferred level of engagement, RWQC may review and provide input and feedback on WTD work products; WTD/Working Group include addendum to the memo from step 5 to capture RWQC input/feedback
8. WTD makes final refinements to its work products
9. WTD shares final work products with RWQC and MWPAAC. For each work module WTD will provide a record if substantive MWPAAC and RWQC feedback was or was not included, and why.

Regional Vision for Clean Water

Status Briefing to RWQC
January 16, 2025



King County

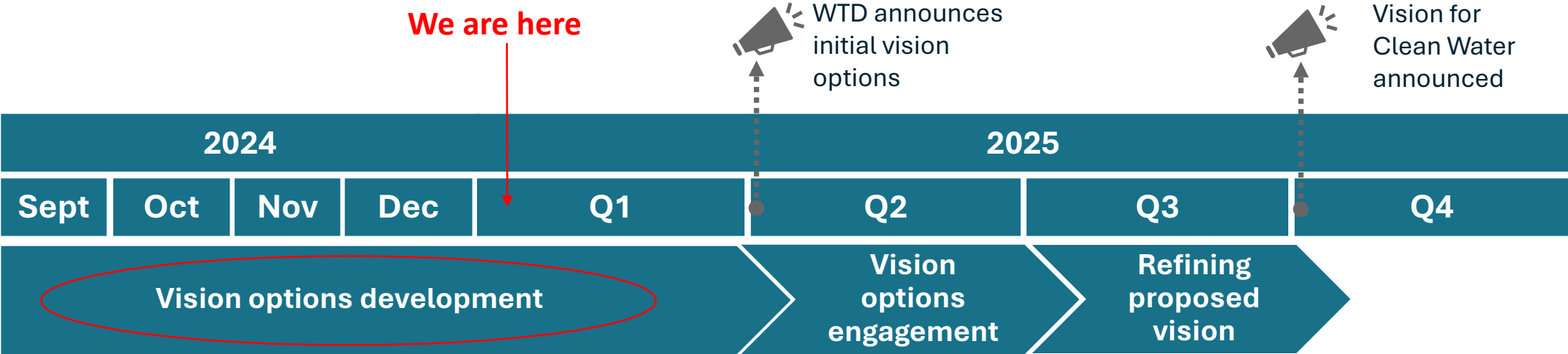
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division

RWQC Additional Materials

60 of 65

January 16, 2025

Process to develop the Regional Vision for Clean Water



Regional Vision Package

Regional Vision statement

- Brief and high-level

Goals

- Complement/support the vision
- High-level implementation

Challenges and opportunities

- Drivers (regulation, climate, affordability...)



Upcoming Vision Touchpoints

1. **RWQC Jan 16:** Vision Process Touchpoints
2. **RWQC March 5:** (1) Outreach/engagement update, (2) Challenges and Opportunities framing
3. **RWQC April 2:** Emerging Themes
4. **RWQC May 7:** Presentation on Vision Options and Input on Vision Options
5. **RWQC June 4:** Opportunity for additional input on Vision Options

Questions ?



King County | Wastewater Treatment

Vision for Clean Water

2100

King County

Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update

2024