



King County

Shannon Braddock

King County Executive

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June 30, 2025

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay
Chair, King County Council

The Honorable Claudia Balducci
Chair, Regional Water Quality Committee

Mayor Bruce Harrell, City of Seattle
Mayor Lynne Robinson, City of Bellevue
Mayor Kelli Curtis, City of Kirkland
Seattle Public Utilities' Customer Review Panel
John McClellan, Chair, MWPAAC

Dear Councilmembers and Regional Partners:

Thank you for the letters regarding the 2026 sewer rate, rate forecast, and capacity charge. I share your concerns about ratepayer affordability and the long-term environmental and financial sustainability of the regional system. I concur with many of the shared major recommendations expressed in your letters. I'm committed to working with you to develop and implement those recommendations.

The key drivers for the Wastewater Treatment Division's capital improvement program (CIP) include meeting regulatory requirements, addressing aging facilities and equipment needing repair or replacement, and providing sufficient wastewater treatment and conveyance capacity to serve our growing region. These drivers are reflected in numerous WTD capital projects shared with the Regional Water Quality Committee and in other forums. Many of these projects will need to be completed in the same timeframe, resulting in a "stacking" problem of multiple, concurrent costs and a tripling of the WTD capital program in just a few years. This means significantly higher wholesale sewer rate forecast starting in 2027.

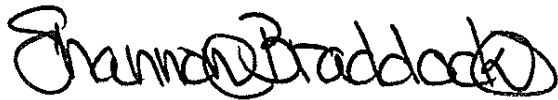
King County remains committed to providing reliable wastewater services to protect public health and the environment. At the same time, our ability to deliver the required capital programs and operations in a financially sustainable manner is deeply challenged because our regional wastewater system is funded almost entirely by local ratepayers. And our low-income ratepayers are the most vulnerable to rate increases. In my [200-Day Plan](#), I said I would work with partners to host a regional utility affordability summit. By working together, I believe we can develop

responses to the financial challenges facing our regional wastewater system while also protecting water quality in Puget Sound and public health in the communities we serve.

At my direction, the County's Wastewater Treatment Division has developed the attached draft work plan (Attachment A) to address the major common recommendations in your rate letters. I will be receiving regular progress updates from the Division on the implementation of the work plan.

Thank you again for your thoughtful feedback and recommendations. If your staff have questions or need more information, please contact Kamuron Gurol, Director of the Wastewater Treatment Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at kgurol@kingcounty.gov or 206-549-1190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Braddock". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "S" and a circular flourish at the end.

Shannon Braddock
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: Regional Water Quality Committee Members
Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Stephanie Pure, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Kamuron Gurol, Division Director, Wastewater Treatment Division, DNRP

Attachment A – Draft King County Wastewater Treatment Division work plan to implement major recommendations in 2026 sewer rate letters

Major Recommendation	Wastewater Treatment Division Tasks	Working Timeline ¹
<p>1. Continue to improve approach for Sewer Rate Development. For the 2027 rate process and on-going, the Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) approach should include or enhance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. An earlier ‘look ahead’ with MWPAAC, RWQC, and County Council on key factors affecting the rate and forecastb. Continued transparency on capital improvement program assumptions and factors needed to deliver a substantially increasing programc. Prioritization approaches for projects needed for asset management, regulatory compliance, capacity commitments, and other needsd. Time for more in-depth review and understanding of costs, discussion of options and effects, and prioritization of investments²e. Ensure that the long-term rate forecast methodology requested by Motion 16449 can be used to develop scenarios to evaluate options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft report on long-term forecasting required by Motion 16449 will be available in late July 2025 for MWPAAC review, and the final report will be available to RWQC in September 2025• WTD to work with MWPAAC Executive Board member(s) to develop process for members to observe WTD capital Portfolio management staff meetings• WTD to work with King Co Exec Office to schedule an early ‘look ahead’ presentation on known and potential factors affecting the 2027 rate proposal and forecast	<p>Q3 2025</p> <p>Q3/Q4 2025</p> <p>Q4 2025</p>
<p>2. Process for large project alternatives evaluation. Develop mechanisms for MWPAAC and RWQC in the planning and development process for large capital projects including alternatives analysis to improve knowledge and confidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide briefings on large capital projects earlier in the rate development process, including alternatives analyses	<p>TBD for individual project timelines</p>

¹ Final timelines will need to be determined based on more detailed planning.

² Note this may involve extended or additional MWPAAC or subcommittee meetings.

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Attachment A – Draft King County Wastewater Treatment Division work plan to implement major recommendations in 2026 sewer rate letters

<p>3. Improve rate predictability. Develop options and implement a mechanism to improve rate predictability to help partner agencies better plan and lessen large changes in rate proposals especially for the first three years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with MWPAAC executive board and partner agencies on potential options around rate predictability • Coordination with Executive Office and county budget process 	<p>Q3 2025 – Q2 2026</p>
<p>4. Evaluate regulatory requirements and develop options to address financial sustainability. Evaluate consent decree and permit deadlines for major projects and investments to confirm ‘stacking challenge’ associated with multiple and concurrent requirements and identify options to address financial sustainability while optimizing water quality benefits and maintaining permit compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the costs/benefits of regulatory changes to improve the environmental and financial sustainability of the regional system • Coordinate on outreach plan with local agency partners to state and federal government • Review options and timing with legal counsel 	<p>Q3 2025 – 2026</p>
<p>5. Independent, third-party oversight. Provide for independent third-party review for WTD “mega” capital projects such as the Mouth of Duwamish Combined Sewer Overflow Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a proposal for review by King Co Executive Office to procure an independent consultant to review WTD’s megaproject(s) • Work with MWPAAC Executive Board to solicit input on need/composition of a ‘blue ribbon panel’ or other mechanism 	<p>Q4 2025 – Q2 2026</p>
<p>6. Regional Utility Affordability Summit. In partnership with local municipal leaders, prepare a multi-jurisdictional summit to address affordability and access to essential utilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with RWQC, SCA, Seattle and sewer districts to develop a proposed approach to a regional utility affordability summit 	<p>Q4 2025 – Q1 2026</p>

Principal Issues for Wastewater Oversight

SCA Caucus Leadership and Sewer Districts – June 2025

There have been many questions raised in committee actions, letters, and other conversations that have elevated the level of discussion on our regional wastewater system. Throughout, we appreciate the efforts of WTD to be responsive and engage thoughtfully.

As WTD works on responses, we have undertaken an exercise that is intended to help the regional conversation move forward by distilling and articulating key questions that SCA, the sewer districts, and others are seeing crop up on a regular basis. The purpose of this work is to improve collaboration and information sharing, in support of informed policymaking.

Key Interest Areas:

(1) Understanding and confidence in how the rate model is built

- When can we expect to see a **range of specific rate scenarios** and the positive and negative consequences of each? What assumptions and policy levers are built into the model, and when will we receive full access to the methodology?

(2) Understanding CIP needs and priorities

- What are the system's total needs, what is the body of work that can be achieved with the proposed rate path, and what is the rate path that would keep pace with system depreciation? Hypothetically, if rates were held to this year's rates for the foreseeable future, how do we see **what WTD would prioritize** and what WTD would cut?
- What is the supporting rationale for how CIP prioritization decisions are made (i.e., what factors are considered and why, and how are they weighted)? How can RWQC and MWPAAC be meaningfully engaged in this decision-making?

(3) Seeing an accounting of all large known costs

- What big additional costs, like regulatory drivers, are **known but not included** in rate forecasts, and where and when will we see those?

(4) Oversight and engagement

- What are WTD's general timelines for seeking a third-party consultant?
- What are WTD's timelines for engaging on next year's rates, including sharing information around capital investments and holding discussions ahead of rate adoption?

We look forward to continued productive conversation and partnership between RWQC, MWPAAC, and WTD.

Capital Spending Forecast_2026 Proposal**CIP**

Asset Management - Conveyance	\$ 810,617,800
Asset Management - Plants	2,426,439,445
Capacity Improvement	1,142,365,880
Operational Enhancements	211,332,094
Planning & Administration	167,483,324
Resource Recovery	259,882,047
Regulatory	5,931,262,266
Resiliency	402,506,586
Total - CIP	\$ 11,351,889,441

CIP - Capital Spending Forecast_2026 Proposal

2025-2035

Asset Management - Conveyance	\$ 810,617,800
Odor / Corrosion Control	\$ 52,212,149
Conveyance System H2S Corrosion Rehabilitation	1,841,708
Pipeline Replacement	26,321,097
Coordinate with WSDOT on I-405N	2,904,271
Lake Hills Interceptor Rehabilitation Phase II	41,958
Murray Forcemain Rehabilitation	6,349,525
South Interceptor Rehabilitation	49,414,231
SPC Yarrow Bay PS Overflow Pipe Rehabilitation	8,608,845
M Street Trunk Rehabilitation	109,243,545
Cathodic Protection Program	5,628,068
Lake Hills Boulevard Siphon Replacement	9,420,168
Bellevue Interceptor Rehabilitation	40,474,049
SPO Eastgate Interceptor Rehabilitation Phase IV	14,573,521
Force Main Inspection Access	101,166,039
West North Creek Force Main Rehabilitation	106,237,454
Interbay Force Main & Odor Control	73,680,942
Vashon WWTP Outfall Upgrade	22,685,189
SPO Kent Cross Valley and May Creek Interceptors Rehabilitation	29,579,575
ESI Section 8 Rehabilitation	116,463,447
ESI Section 10 Rehabilitation	1,698,726
East North Creek Force Main Structural Lining or Replacement	22,072,566

Kenmore Interceptor Landfall Structure Rehabilitation	92,577
Juanita Interceptor Rehabilitation	936,498
ESI Section 13 Rehabilitation Phase II	8,205,904
ESI Section 2 Rehabilitation Phase III	765,746
Asset Management - Plants	\$ 2,426,439,445
Structures / Site Improvement	\$ 48,951,040
Biosolids Transportation	10,301,889
Biosolids Site Development	11,136,247
Biosolids Agricultural Equipment	1,163,831
Biosolids Forestry Equipment	3,470,756
Electrical / I&C	87,654,479
Roof Replacements for WTD Facilities	1,259,395
Mechanical Upgrade & Replacement	88,988,552
Lab Camp	15,403,904
WTD Ovation Control Systems Upgrades	2,408,326
VFD Replacement	21,729,030
Uninterruptable Power Supply Lifecycle Management Program	33,810,545
WTD CMMS Upgrade	4,383,580
Richmond Beach PS MCC and Switchboard Replacement	42,393
SP Biogas and Heat Systems Improvements	29,461,255
Medina PS MCC & Generator Replacement	1,715,630
WPTP LSG Piping Replacement	3,795,525
Environmental Lab LIMS Upgrade	582,642
Lakeland Hills Install Generator	214,085
Jameson/Arcweld Buildings Replacement	2,241,012
WTD Roofing Program 2023-2028	10,505,002
West Point Propane System Improvements	16,246,461
Brightwater Neuros NX-300 Blower Replacement	6,131,443
Matthews Park PS Odor Control Replacement	27,737,648
SP Influent Gates & Actuators Replacement	9,046,952
Hidden Lake PS Raw Sewage Pump Replacement	22,582,348
South Plant Barscreen Upgrade	14,878,720
WPTP Critical Gate Refurbishment	209,952,658
SP RAS Pods 1-4 Piping and Component Replacement	36,616,439
Brightwater Operations Center Roof & HVAC Replacement	9,616,903
Small Generator Replacement at Various Offsite Stations	19,475,107
South Plant Chemical ORT System and Dewatering Carbon Scrubber Improvements	5,265,821
South Plant Raw Sewage Pump #3 Replacement	11,951,177

SP Mixed Sludge Line Replacement	22,693,263
Generator Power Systems Lifecycle Management Program	15,896,773
West Point Electrical Improvements	404,329,747
WPTP Oxygen Generation System Refurbishment	15,078,850
North Beach Pump Station Upgrade	30,932,408
Lakeland Hills PS Facility Replacement	128,198,697
Offsite Standby Generator Retrofit with Load Bank Connections	10,033,642
STP Pods 5 and 6, 30" RAS Distribution Header Replacement	7,472,021
Murray PS Raw Sewage Pump Upgrade	24,676,342
South Plant Biogas Scrubbing System Upgrade	100,751,381
South Plant Electrical Improvements Program	70,481,048
Offsite Level Controls and Communication Upgrade	476,484,434
South Plant Screening Dewatering Units Replacement	11,303,441
HVAC Replacements and Refurbishments	14,548,415
South Plant Secondary Odor Control Storage System Improvements	2,808,548
West Point Sodium Hypochlorite System	2,949,986
South Plant Santler Building Redevelopment	50,207,702
West Point IPS / EPS Pump Refurbishment Program	22,008,044
South Plant Flow Control Structures (#1-4) Component Replacement	8,952,055
Carnation TP Controls Replacement	5,805,681
Yarrow Bay PS Permanent Emergency Backup Generator	1,543,567
Vashon TP SCADA Controls Replacement	5,805,681
Denny Way RS Outfall Gate Replacement	2,148,755
WTD Standby Generator Fuel Storage ATG (Automatic Tank Gauging) Upgrade Program	144,572
STP Aeration Tank Rehabilitation	34,013,844
WPO Murray PS Upgrade	2,616,451
Membrane Lifecycle Replacement Program Brightwater and Carnation	902,267
West Point Secondary Clarifier Mechanism Refurbishment	802,353
SP DAFT Tank Rehabilitation	63,779,156
Lake Ballinger PS Upgrade	796,424
West Point EPS Isolation Gate Rehabilitation	17,491,221
WPTP Instrument & Service Air Replacement	19,971,985
WPTP C1/C2 Pipeline Replacement	397,001
WPTP Heat Loop Refurbishment	1,263,504
WPTP GBT Replacement	1,038,175
WPTP PE and RAS Pipe Restoration/Replacement	45,618,816
PIMS Replacement	888,447
Ovation Evergreen Control Systems Lifecycle Management Program	23,392,029
WPTP Grit Classifier Replacement	7,359,822

Chinook Research Vessel Replacement	2,132,100
Capacity Improvement	\$ 1,142,365,880
WPTP OGADS Replacement	\$ 1,669,296
Black Diamond Payments	3,383,681
North Mercer Island & Enatai Interceptors Upgrade	38,415,620
Sammamish Plateau Interim Capacity	1,628,282
West Point Digestion Capacity Expansion	250,190,026
South Plant Primary and Secondary Clarifier Retrofit	6,470,602
Brightwater Aeration Basin No. 4	45,428,796
Brightwater Membrane 9 & 10 Cassettes	3,313,897
WPC Multiple Locations Conveyance Rerouting to Rainier Vista (South Park - Analysis Only)	6,145,556
Treatment Planning Program	38,445,669
Richmond Beach PS Upgrade	28,789,079
Richmond Beach Edmonds Interceptor Parallel	10,513,782
Brightwater Aeration Basin No. 5	6,026,841
Black Diamond Trunk Capacity Upgrade	164,391,988
Garrison Creek Interceptor Replacement, Realignment, and Diversion	14,173,165
South Plant Digester Capacity	19,346,037
Lake Hills and NW Lake Sammamish Interceptor Upgrade	152,451,573
BW Basins & Cassettes (11 & 12)	14,671,059
Brightwater Centrifuge No. 3	5,026,360
Boeing Creek Trunk Replacement and Parallel	835,661
South Plant Primary and Secondary Clarifier Upgrade	1,791,611
Coal Creek Siphon & Trunk Parallel	153,671,044
Brightwater Digester Capacity	1,230,794
Medina Pump Station Upgrade	43,618,526
Sammamish Plateau Diversion	112,165,420
West Point Secondary Clarifier Capacity Expansion	1,774,805
Soos Creek Cascade Relief Interceptor No. 2 Upgrade	16,796,707
Operational Enhancements	\$ 211,332,094
Technology Assessment and Innovation Project	\$ 25,174,831
Process Replacement/Improvement	33,729,478
BW Aeration Basin Optimization	3,006,322
Carkeek CSO Dechlorination System Modifications	2,783,917
Sunset/Heathfield RSP Replacement	91,768,273
SPO Black Diamond PS RSP Replacement	20,091,640
Brightwater Influent Pump Station Optimization	6,584,835

Brightwater Biogas Conditioning	7,927,593
WPTP GBT Foul Air System Improvement	1,490,686
West Point Digester Mixing System Improvements	256,753
Alki Permanent Standby Generator	18,517,767
Planning & Administration	\$ 167,483,324
RWSP Conveyance System Improvements	\$ 69,895,567
RWSP Local Systems I/I Control	8,728,241
Water Quality Capital Outlay	6,995,985
WTD Capital Project Formulation	24,314,601
WTD Capital Projects Closeout	2,924,357
Capital Project Oversight	3,010,223
RWSP Update (formerly Clean Water Plan)	31,715,771
PA Allowance	19,898,579
Resource Recovery	\$ 259,882,047
Reclaimed Water Planning & Infrastructure	\$ 16,079,332
WTD Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	4,399,416
West Point Digester Gas Optimization	9,982,240
BW Reclaimed Water Storage	58,446,384
Brightwater Digester Gas Optimization	32,371,786
WP Digester Gas Optimization Phase 2	12,030,723
Class A Loop Biosolids Facility	99,471,315
Brightwater Space Heating - Heat Pump Installation	10,484,292
South Plant Co-Digestion	354,715
West Point solar PV installation over Primary Clarifiers	9,544,106
West Point Digester Circulation Pump Replacement	2,195,898
South Plant Digester Circulation Pump Replacement	1,744,328
Brightwater Digester Circulation Pump Replacement	827,005
Sewer Heat Recovery, Renewable energy projects - Long term planning	164,149
WTD Solar Program	1,767,694
Loop Biosolids Compost Pilot at SP	18,666
Regulatory	\$ 5,931,262,266
Comp Planning & Reporting	\$ 66,205,384
Mitigation Site Maintenance and Monitoring	27,513,642
Non-Project Specific - NOAA	241,763
Sediment Management Plan	57,353,826
CSO Control & Improvements - Magnolia	1,147,544

Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station	1,531,004
Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund	63,684,704
CSO Control & Improvement	28,929,983
Joint Ship Canal WQ CSO Control	54,040,241
Water Quality Improvement Alternatives	593,880
WP Power Reliability Improvements	2,959,521
WP Power Quality Improvements	4,861,453
PSNGP Nutrient Reduction Evaluation	15,447,793
University and Montlake CSO Control Program	1,215,701,370
Elliott West CSO Compliance	5,252,544
Nitrogen Removal Optimization: Near-term Capital Program	23,828,638
STP Secondary Aeration Modified Ludzak Ettinger Retrofit (Additional Nitrogen Optimization I	186,192,569
Elliott West Wet Weather Treatment Station	481,120,202
West Duwamish CSO Control	94,098,699
STP Aeration Tank Foam Wasting Control (Additional Nitrogen Optimization Investment)	44,670,654
Nitrogen Removal Optimization Mid-term Capital – Sidestream Treatment (Additional Nitrogen	123,000,908
Mouth of the Duwamish CSO Control Program	3,374,000,000
Supplemental Compliance Allowance	58,885,942
Resiliency	\$ 402,506,586
Climate Adaptation Planning Program	\$ 35,425,987
WP Life Safety Capital Improvements Program	4,495,082
West Point Primary Sedimentation Area Roof Structure	20,216,401
WPTP Power Monitoring Upgrades	353,312
WPTP Admin/Ops Center Seismic Upgrades	31,341,443
SPTP Influent Pump Station Seismic Upgrades	26,923,829
West Point Maintenance/Effluent Pump Station Structural Retrofits	24,607,599
Matthews Park PS Structural Retrofits	17,091,203
WTD Resiliency Rollup	9,822,756
South Plant Effluent Pump Station Structural Retrofits	6,866,899
Interbay Pump Station Structural Retrofits	6,868,229
Matthews Park PS Flood Protection Upgrade	4,260,669
WPTP Passive Weir for Emergency Bypass	11,535,875
Duwamish PS Structural Retrofits	4,031,893
South Plant Digester Equipment Building Structural Retrofits	3,117,742
63rd Avenue PS flood Protection Upgrade	1,262,457
63rd Avenue PS Liquefaction Retrofits	580,021
Murray PS Flood Protection Upgrade	838,721
York PS Flood Protection Upgrade	747,198

WPTP Raw Sewage Pump Replacement	192,119,272
Total - CIP - Capital Spending Forecast_2026 Proposal	\$ 11,351,889,441