



**Combined Meeting of Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
And Creeks, Drainage, and Wastewater Advisory Committee (CDWAC)**

August 12, 2015 Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 4901

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
WSAC		Alex Chen	SPU Water Planning and Program Manager
Tom Grant	N	Rachel Garrett	SPU Communications
Jessy Hardy	N	Madeline Goddard	SPU Drainage and Wastewater Deputy Director
Chelsea Jefferson	Y	Jeanne Muir	SPU Communications Consultant
Kelly McCaffrey	N	Kelly O'Rourke	SPU Communications
Kyle Stetler	Y	Chris Clark	Guest
Rodney Schauf	Y	Matt McDonald	Guest
		Evan Osborne	Guest
CDWAC		Teresa Stern	Guest
Kendra Aguilar	N		
Marilyn Baylor	N		
Suzie Burke	Y		
C'Ardiss Gardner Gleser	N		
Schyler Hect	Y		
Kaifu Lam	Y		
Seth McKinney	Y		
Noel Miller	Y		
Devin O'Reilly	N		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Joan Kersnar, WSAC Policy Liaison	Y		
Sheryl Shapiro, CDWAC Policy Liaison and CAC Program Manager	Y		

Action Items:

- ✓ Heidi and Sheryl will send CDWAC's and WSAC's emails to Rachel Garrett so they can be added to the Ship Canal Water Quality Project's listserve.
- ✓ Heidi and Sheryl will send out a Doodle poll to check Members' availability for an October 27th all-CAC meeting.

Regular Business

- Committee Members, SPU staff, and guests introduced themselves.
- CDWAC/WSAC June meeting notes are approved.

Water Supply Update, Alex Chen, SPU Water Planning and Program Manager, and Kelly O'Rourke, SPU Communications

- There are four stages in water curtailment employed in a drought: advisory, voluntary, mandatory, and emergency.
 - SPU just moved into Stage 2 – Voluntary Curtailment.
- Alex showed four graphs that can be found each week on the SPU website at (latest version): http://www.seattle.gov/util/cs/groups/public/@spu/@water/documents/webcontent/spu01_005041.pdf
- The graphs show the Seattle water service area's cumulative precipitation, snowpack, combined reservoir storage, and the average 7-day water consumption. The information is updated every week. As of August 9:
 - Cumulative precipitation for 2015 is somewhat less than the average from 1946-2005.
 - Generally, more rain falls in the watershed area than it does in the city of Seattle. When the City gets 35 inches of rain, the watershed will generally get 100 inches.
 - The rainfall for 2015 was similar to the 1946-2005 average, but started to fall below it in April.
 - We are seeing below historic flows in the rivers feeding into the reservoirs.
 - Cumulative snowpack is much less in 2015 than the 1971-2000 average from 1971-2000.
 - It's also much less than in 2014.
 - Combined reservoir storage in April and May was higher than in 2014 and the 1984-2014 average, but began to fall below those levels in June.
 - We filled the reservoirs early with rainfall in anticipation of very low snow pack.
 - In April and May, storage levels were above normal, and we advised SPU customers that the water supply was good and to use water as they usually do (that is, use it wisely).
 - However, the summer has been much drier and warmer than usual and people are using more water for irrigation to make up for it.

- Now the water supply is fair, and we're asking SPU customers to reduce their water use by 10%.
 - We still have 60% of our typical water storage for this time of year. We want to make that last as long as possible, because it's uncertain when we'll get substantial rainfall.
- The graph of the average 7-day water consumption compares 2015 to 2014, to the 1985-1991 average, and to the 1999-2008 average.
 - Average water use decreased in 1992 in response to a drought and remained low.
 - 2015 average water use was higher than 2014 and higher than the 1999-2008 average in June and July, but is now coming down to 2014 levels.
 - The key comparison is with the 1999-2008 average.
 - In the past, water use has peaked around August.
 - In 2015, water use peaked in July.
 - There's been 20-30% more water use this June than in the last couple of years.
- The blue line indicating the combined reservoir storage from 1984 – 2014 also illustrates the three seasons of water supply.
 - From October to March is usually flood season, so we try to keep storage in the reservoirs down to make room for water to mitigate flooding.
 - We start to get less rain in March and April, so that begins refill season, which goes until the summer.
 - Summer is drawdown season, when we use more of the stored water for people and fish.

❖ Committee Member Question: When will you start pumping the Chester Morse Reservoir?
 ➤ Answer: We will begin pumping Chester Morse when levels decrease, possibly preparing in early September so we can begin pumping in October.

❖ Committee Member Question: What reservoirs does the graph include?
 ➤ Answer: The graph includes reservoir storage of Chester Morse Lake, Masonry Pool, Lake Youngs, and South Fork Tolt.

❖ Committee Member Question: Is SPU still considering moving to a more flat rate structure, and if so, could that lead to increased water usage?
 ➤ Answer: We currently have a three tiered rate structure, so customers pay more for water as they use more water, which encourages conservation. Earlier this year we had considered going to two tiers rather than three, but as a result of discussions with the City Council and with the Mayor, for now, we plan to keep three tiers.

California is not selling as much water because of their drought and the required curtailment measures, so to maintain the water system some utilities have had to impose a drought

surcharge. SPU had to do that in 1992 and customers were unhappy. Now we have a contingency fund against unanticipated conditions, such as selling less water in a drought and we are not planning a drought surcharge anytime in the near future.

Kelly O'Rourke continued the update.

- As Alex mentioned, there are four stages in water curtailment employed in a drought: advisory, voluntary, mandatory, and emergency. SPU just moved into Stage 2 – Voluntary Curtailment.
 - At each step we take different actions to augment supply and control demand.
 - We start by reminding people to be efficient in their water use. Then we ask them to curtail water use, and finally, if needed, we require curtailment.
 - Right now we're asking residential and commercial customers to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 10%.
 - Ability to curtail may vary. Some business may be able to reduce their water use by 40% (for example, a golf course that cuts their watering in half), while some residential customers may already be using little water and may only be able to reduce that by 5%.
- SPU is managing water curtailment collectively with Everett and Tacoma, and we've all set up one website to help us do this: www.savingwater.org.
- Kelly passed out "Voluntary Stage Top Tips" for water curtailment.
 - A lot of water is being used now for irrigation, so we've included a lot of curtailment ideas concerning outdoor water use, like letting your lawn go dormant, and limiting plant watering to twice a week.
 - There are also tips for indoor water curtailment, like reducing showering time, fixing leaks, and only washing full loads of dishes and laundry.
- We've done a lot of media interviews about moving the water supply condition from "good" to "fair." We are doing outreach to ethnic media and are translating curtailment information into nine languages.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: I noticed sprinklers on in Roanoke Park in the late afternoon (when they really should only be on before 8am or after 7pm). Has SPU spoken with the Parks Department about water curtailment?
- Answer: Yes, we are having conversations with our wholesale customers (other cities who purchase SPU water) and with the Parks Department and our other large customers. We want to walk our talk. Some irrigation systems are high tech and programmable. However, others have to be manually turned on or off, so they have to do the watering when employees are available during the day.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: In the past when SPU has asked customers to voluntarily reduce their use by 10%, has that target been achieved?

- Answer: I understand that our customers have been very responsive, and usually meet or exceed the curtailment target. Customers have become more efficient over time. The Seattle population has grown, but water demand has remained the same. Seattle used to use 350 million gallons per day; now we use 200 million gallons per day. Our population continues to grow, and we want to maintain the conservation ethic.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Is water curtailment better achieved by residential or commercial customers?
- Answer: I don't have hard data on that, but suspect that it may be easier for residential customers to comply with curtailment requests.
 - Suzie Burke, a CDWAC Member, added that the Health Department mandates some commercial water use for cleaning dishes and laundry in restaurants and hotels, and these requirements don't change when there's a drought.

- SPU has 187 customers that account for 20% of our revenue.
 - These are the institutional customers that use a lot of water, like the University of Washington, hotels, public schools, and the Seattle Parks Department.
 - We have account representatives assigned to be special concierges for these customers to make sure they advised of curtailment requests.
- Kyle Stetler, WSAC Chair, reported that he is a representative on the recently convened Water Shortage Advisory Group.
 - The group includes a wide range of representatives, including fisheries, tribes, landscapers, and nurseries.
 - They had a meeting last Wednesday, and there was a good discussion with lots of input.
 - Shortly after the meeting, SPU moved to Stage 2 water curtailment measures.

Natural Drainage Systems (NDS) Partnership Opportunities, Rachel Garret

- Natural drainage systems are also called green stormwater infrastructure, or GSI. GSI uses natural processes like rain gardens (gardens designed with specific plants and soil that encourage water to infiltrate, or soak in) and cisterns to slow, capture, and clean polluted stormwater runoff before it enters our lakes, rivers, and streams.
- CDWAC and WSAC had a conference call on July 15th to learn about the Draft 2015-2020 GSI Implementation Strategy.
- GSI is part of the plan to protect Seattle's waterways. Using GSI, we hope to reduce the amount of untreated stormwater runoff that flows into our creeks.
 - The goal is to manage 400 million gallons of stormwater with GSI each year by 2020, and 700 million gallons per year by 2025.
- In May of this year, the City Council approved a plan to put in roadside GSI near Pipers, Thornton and Longfellow Creeks.

- SPU will be partnering with other City agencies like Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to get this done.
- Rachel is here today to talk about ways that communities can partner with SPU to bring GSI to their neighborhoods.
- She showed the GSI information located on SPU's website:
<http://www.seattle.gov/util/EnvironmentConservation/Projects/GreenStormwaterInfrastructure/index.htm>
- Rachel referred to a handout, "*Right Place, Right Project: A Community Guide to Partnership Opportunities.*"
 - On Page 3, there's a map that shows which areas of the City are potentially suitable for GSI.
 - Green areas are potentially suitable for all GSI approaches, including infiltration.
 - Some areas are not suitable for infiltration because of steep slopes, underlying bedrock, or contaminated soil. These areas are shown in yellow, and are potentially suitable for non-infiltration GSI, like cisterns, green roofs, tree planting, and permeable soil or pavement that has an underdrain.
- She also showed a website: www.700milliongallons.org, a joint project with King County.
 - We haven't yet done any user testing on this website, but would like to get the Committee Members' input on the site's functionality.
 - The Rainwise Program has been moved to this site.
 - You can check your address to see if you are eligible for a Rainwise rebate.
 - Rebates are limited to private property owners in areas with combined sewer overflows (the rain gardens help to keep some stormwater runoff out of the sewer, so they help to reduce combined sewer overflows).
 - We are considering expanding the Rainwise rebate areas to include creek basins.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: How much stormwater runoff does the Seattle area have in a year?
- Answer: This may not be precisely quantified yet, but it is billions and billions of gallons. As long as it is not overwhelmed, West Point Station is treating the stormwater runoff from the combined sewer system.
- ❖ Committee Member Comment: Someone would have had to quantify the total runoff amount in order to come up with a goal of 700 million gallons managed with GSI.
- ❖ Committee Member Comment: GSI addresses the low hanging fruit in managing stormwater runoff. There are lots of positive things about rain gardens. One is that the program educates

people about the problem. Lots of runoff comes from residential properties and people are not aware of it.

- Madeline Goddard, SPU's new Deputy Director of Drainage and Wastewater, reported that she has toured the King County West Point Wastewater Treatment Plant. It treats 90 million gallons a day. In heavy rainstorms, it can treat up to 400 million gallons per day. 700 million gallons per year treated by GSI may not seem like a lot, but every drop helps. GSI also builds community involvement, helps mitigate urban flooding, and adds beauty. Every drop managed by GSI is less money that we have to spend in capital improvements.
- ❖ Committee Member Question: How much is being spent on the GSI program?
- Answer: The program's funding is packaged with an increase in street sweeping and building a new water treatment facility in South Park. Rachel will look up the amount for GSI and report back. Amount for the Natural Drainage Systems Partnering Program is currently projected at about \$36 million. Funding for Natural Drainage Systems partnering is included in SPU's rate path through 2020. The effect of stormwater programs on rates is minimal. More information on stormwater program funding can be found on p. 19 of the Plan to Protect Waterways Executive Summary:
<http://www.seattle.gov/util/cs/groups/public/@spu/@drainsew/documents/webcontent/01030100.pdf>.

Ship Canal Water Quality Project, Rachel Garrett & Jeanne Muir

- Rachel began by showing a short video about the project, which can be found at:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZCqMfUoiMw>
- The project will affect parts of Ballard, Fremont, Wallingford, and north Queen Anne.
- Jeanne is SPU's consultant outreach lead, and she brings input from key stakeholders back to SPU's technical project planning group.
- Rachel and Jeanne explained that SPU is conducting broad outreach about the project in a phased approach, moving layer by layer.
 - So far, we've interviewed 11 different community leaders.
 - We've also attended numerous community fairs and festivals.
 - We received a lot of input from people at the Ballard fair and at the Fremont Seafood Fest.
 - We are hearing lots of support for the project at this early stage.
 - We also did a large mail survey (more information on that below).
 - Now we are beginning our outreach to community and business organizations, asking what we should consider in project planning and environmental impacts.
- ❖ Committee Member Question: Why is the project sized to hold 15 million gallons?

- Answer: State and federal law requires that we reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to no more than one overflow per outfall per year on average. A 15 million gallon holding tank near the Ship Canal will allow us to meet that requirement.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: SPU did consider having smaller holding tanks at each of the outfalls, but that would have been a lot more expensive than this one larger project. She added that there's a 125 year old tunnel in the same area, which was placed there for a similar reason.

- Rachel noted that the Ship Canal Water Quality Project is SPU's biggest capital project to date. SPU is spending a lot of time and effort on outreach to get communities involved.

Ship Canal Water Quality Project: Survey Results

- SPU conducted a survey about the project from June 2 – July 8, 2015.
 - We mailed a paper copy of a questionnaire to a random sample of 10,000 households in Ballard, Fremont, Wallingford, and Queen Anne neighborhoods (see outlined area in map).
 - The questionnaire could be completed using the paper version or online.
 - 1,584 households completed the questionnaire (1186 on paper and 398 online)
 - The response rate was 16%.
 - Data was weighted by age and gender to conform to the 2013 American Community Survey.
 - The biggest age group of respondents was 25-34 years.
 - The project does not go very far into Wallingford, so more surveys were sent to people living in Ballard and Fremont.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: How do the respondents' demographics compare with the area's demographics?
 - Answer: Income and race are pretty reflective of the area.
 - Suzie Burke, CDWAC Member added that in Fremont, the 25-40 year age group is the biggest, which is similar to the survey respondents biggest age group of 25 – 34. Also, 54% of survey respondents are renters, which again is very similar to the 56% of the population in Fremont who are renters.

 - The overall margin of error is +/- 2.6%.
 - We used a response scale of 1-7 to avoid the tendency to default to the middle number.

- Key findings included:
 - The majority (80%) were not aware of the project before hearing about it in the survey.

- Once they had read the project description and information about combined sewer overflows, almost all (97%) reported that they understood the purpose of the project.
 - More than three-quarters (76%) had interest in learning more about the project.
 - Almost half (47%) of the respondents appear to have been somewhat aware and knowledgeable of combined sewer overflows before the survey.
 - The vast majority (95%) are supportive of the project to some degree, with almost two-thirds (63%) very supportive.
 - The most important design features are:
 - Reduction of sewage overflows
 - Environmentally responsible design
 - Odor control
 - The most important potential construction impacts are:
 - Traffic congestion
 - Access to my home and/or business
 - Air quality
 - Noise
 - More than half (52%) want to receive project updates.
 - Respondents expressed concern about parking during construction, especially in Ballard.
 - The project site itself will take out two parking lots.
- ❖ Committee Member Comment: It's important to plan for where the contractors will park.
- ❖ Guest Comment: The boundary for surveying people is very close to the project's actual location. But people that don't live in the area still use the area.
- Response: We did limit this survey to people living very near the project to limit costs, and because we wanted statistically significant results from that group. The parking concerns are also about customers and clients being able to access businesses, and we do plan on additional outreach to commuters at some later point in the process.
- ❖ Committee Member Question: Will the project's cost be included on the fact sheet?
- Answer: The cost will be on the project's frequently asked questions (FAQs) to be posted on the project web page, and will explain that the cost is already included in the rates through year 2020.
- ❖ Committee Member Question: Who designed the survey?
- Answer: A consultant who specializes in survey work designed it, and then SPU and King County reviewed and tailored it to this project. Parts of the survey are based on King County's standard pre-construction survey.
- ❖ Committee Member Question: Is the response rate typical?
- Answer: Yes, the response rate was 16% and that is typical.

- Rachel explained that the project fact sheet will continue to evolve, so Committee Members can let her know if they have input about it.
- The project website has been updated recently and will continue to be updated.
- We're doing a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for this project.
 - From now until August 24th, the public has an official opportunity to comment about environmental impacts for the SEIS scoping period. Committee Members can comment as individuals or as a group.
- Noel Miller, Co-Chair of CDWAC, asked Committee Members whether they wanted to comment as a group.
 - The group agreed not to comment at this time, but wanted to continue to receive updates about the project.
- ✓ Heidi and Sheryl will send CDWAC's and WSAC's emails to Rachel so they can be added to the project's listserve. (these have already been added.)

CAC Logistics

- Next week is the CDWAC-WSAC field trip to the Maple Leaf Reservoir.
 - The tour will be from 6:30 – 7:30pm.
 - Committee Members should wear sturdy shoes.
 - SPU will provide hard hats.
- The next all CAC meeting will be on September 30.
 - Topics will include the SPU website and the CAC website.
- We had tentatively planned another all CAC meeting for October 28th to review the equity analysis of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
 - ✓ However we are now looking at October 27th due to the speaker's availability, and will be sending out a Doodle poll on this date to the CACs.

Around the Table

- Sheryl reported that she and Marilyn Baylor, a CDWAC Member, attended the Mayor's outreach program, Seattle at Work, in Greenwood.
 - The event includes a neighborhood walk through with community leaders.
 - They had lots of good interaction with the community there.
- Sheryl will be sending out information on more outreach opportunities, including neighborhood farmers' markets. She proposes that, beginning in the fall, Members each attend one outreach event per quarter.
- Suzie Burke reported that Fremont's Oktoberfest will be September 18-20, and people can sign up online to volunteer to pour beer.
- Rodney Schauf reported that he attended a Puget Sound Regional Council meeting today, and there was a lot of discussion about natural drainage systems.
 - He added that the Sheraton Hotel in Seattle had a goal of a 30% reduction in energy use by 2020, and after getting involved with the Seattle 2030 District, they have nearly

attained that goal already. (The Seattle 2030 District is a groundbreaking high-performance building district in downtown Seattle that aims to dramatically reduce environmental impacts of building construction and operations through education and collaboration across every sector of the built environment.)

- Noel reminded Members that the next meeting is September 9th.

7:33pm, meeting adjourned.