



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

**September 14, 2016 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		Sheryl Shapiro	CDWAC Liaison and CAC Program Manager
Tom Grant	Y	Julie Burman	WSAC Liaison
Faon O'Connor	N	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Melissa Levo	Y	Alex Chen	Director, Water Planning & Program Management Division
Kelly McCaffrey	P	Madeline Goddard	SPU, Deputy Director, Drainage and Wastewater Branch
Teresa Stern	N	Kevin Burrell	SPU Drainage and Wastewater Branch
Kyle Stetler	N		
Rodney Schauf	N		
Paul Reed	Y		
Michael Williams	N	Guests	
Chelsea Jefferson	N	Michael Godfried	Guest
CDWAC		Ann McKinney	Guest
Clifford Armstrong III	P	Ben Billick	Guest
Schyler Hect	Y	Tushar Khurana	Guest
Patrick Jablonski	Y	Colum Lang	Guest
Christina Ciampa	Y		
Seth McKinney	N		
Noel Miller	Y		
Devin O'Reilly	Y		
Gary Olson	Y		
Evan Osborne	N		
Mariella White	Y		

ACTION ITEMS

- Natasha / Sheryl to send out the City Council link for live (or archived) viewing of 9/16 hearing along with Mayor's packet and City Council Confirmation Questions for nominated SPU Director, Mami Hara
- Sheryl to send out an email regarding the Protect Our Waters Forum brainstorm for possible future topics
- Sheryl to distribute the link for the Salmon Field Guide Order form
- Member Agreement: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- Media Release: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- Bios/Images: Due by 9/23.
- Roster: Sheryl passed around the roster for Committee members to provide updates as needed.
- REMINDER: The October meeting has been moved to the 3rd Wednesday of the month: Oct. 19th.

These items are for consideration for follow-up in the future

- Committee members expressed interest in better understanding the financing of water LOB projects, and the internal prioritization / screening process. Alex said he would request time from the SPU Rates Manager to discuss.

Follow-up to ACTION ITEMS from previous meetings:

- Sheryl has requested information from staff on the impacts of chemical root treatments to trees growing into sewer mains to follow-up on the questions from the June meeting presentation on the CMOM (Capacity Management and Operations Maintenance) Roadmap. We expect to have that information at or before the November meeting.

1. Regular Business

Opened the meeting at 5:36PM

- CDAC Co-Chair, Devin O'Reilly opened the meeting and reminded attendees to sign-in.
- Committee Members, SPU staff, and guests introduced themselves.
- Meeting notes from August were approved.
- Sheryl introduced a new Business agenda item: Safety. Sheryl indicated emergency exits, bathrooms, and noted that she would be following up with further information on emergency procedures at a future meeting.

2. Investigating Side Sewer Assistance Options for SPU Customers: Kevin Burrell, SPU Drainage and Wastewater Branch

Kevin gave a brief introduction on his professional background, including his past experience as Executive Director of ECOSS (Environmental Coalition of South Seattle). He then gave an overview of his policy project and described the goal of delivering a policy recommendation to SPU leadership in 2016. The recommendation will lay out examples or approaches that SPU may consider in the future to help customers with side sewer issues, and the costs related to repairing and replacing them.

Kevin solicited feedback from the committee on their past experiences with side sewers. Each year SPU gets 400-600 calls from property owners encountering issues related to side sewers. Kevin noted that most customers may not realize they have side sewers, nor that they are responsible for them. [A Seattle Times article \(http://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/a-dirty-secret-side-sewers-can-become-a-homeowners-nightmare/\)](http://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/a-dirty-secret-side-sewers-can-become-a-homeowners-nightmare/) reported that the number of permits for side sewer repairs is increasing. They also reported the number of failures is increasing, though Kevin noted he would need to check the accuracy of the figures reported in the article. He noted that there appears to be a relationship between the average age of Seattle infrastructure, the average age of buildings with repair permits, and the increasing numbers of side sewer repairs in Seattle.

So why is it important to us as the utility? Kevin explained that side sewer failures can cause backups into homes and businesses, as well as nearby properties, which is a risk to public health and the environment, and costly to property owners. When customers call SPU regarding a sewer backup, 87% of the time, he said, the issue is related to their side sewer. Despite this, he said this issue also increases SPU's cost when we send crews out to resolve issues that are actually occurring on private property. As a result, it increases SPU staff time and resources which may increase customer rates. Private side sewer repair and replacement costs can be expensive and may pose a hardship to many families and businesses. These reasons, he explained, are why SPU is currently looking into how other cities and utilities approach the issue, and also identify options which include considerations of service equity relative to the cost of side sewer repairs.

Kevin explained that the cost of side sewer repair and replacement projects can vary greatly from one parcel to the next, depending on grade/topography, soil, distance between building and connection point at the sewer main, sewer contractor repair methods, and street and right of way restoration costs. Plus, other unforeseen variables like unpermitted buildings built on top of side sewers, or side sewers that are shared between neighboring parcels forcing financial negotiation when repairs are required, etc. Kevin explained how these considerations were being incorporated into the options analysis / ranking criteria prioritization. SPU is also asking the following equity questions:

- ✓ Does the solution address customer costs?
- ✓ Would many people be eligible?
- ✓ Does the solution require a lot of effort on the customer's part to understand and take part in?
- ✓ Could the solution account for socioeconomic differences that exist in Seattle?

In addition, the policy effort included research side sewer management by other large cities within the US. Kevin gave an overview of the results of that research and initial approaches they've documented for their draft policy recommendation. Kevin noted that Brian Landau, DWW Policy staff, will be returning to the CDWAC-WSAC group in the next 1-2 months to present an update on the progress of developing policy on Sewer Backup Prevention.

- **A Committee member** provided his past experience working on side sewers related to Thornton Creek, including citizen science work.
- **Committee member comment:** I had a side sewer that was clogged with roots and had to bring in heavy equipment and replace it. It was very expensive.
 - **Staff response:** That's a common theme.
- **Committee member question:** Do you have an approximate number of side sewers in the City?
 - **Answer:** Yes, I'll get into that. [~133,000 sewer connections in Seattle]
- **Committee member question:** What percent of people that have side sewer work done actually apply for a permit? Could be a lot more work going on with side sewers than we know about.

- **Answer:** We don't know the answer to that.
- **Committee member question:** Can you talk about what the costs are to SPU?
 - **Answer:** When customers call, we send SPU crews out to investigate and determine if we can solve the issue in our own sewer main, or if the issue is in a side sewer on private property. In some cases, the cause may be unclear, so SPU will continue to investigate the nature of the problem and do some additional analysis. We spend staff time and resources trying to address the problem. So that's an increase in cost.
- **Committee member question:** Are those repair permits mapped?
 - **Answer:** Yes, to the extent that we have available data. I've done an analysis that's still in draft. It's really all over the City though.
- **Committee member comment:** And trees are getting bigger, which means root issues (re: additional impact on side sewer repair rate).
- **Committee member question:** When you look at the statistics, can you look at unique identifiers to determine if the same customers are coming back again and again?
 - **Answer:** I have not done that exact analysis but you could do an address sort, and get a fairly reasonable estimate or rate of occurrence. There are some gaps in our Code that would be problematic to complete this analysis, but it might still reveal some interesting details.
 - **Additional staff comment:** To explain, imagine you take your car into a mechanic after hearing a noise and the mechanic may say you need to replace the whole engine. If you think you might have a leak in your side sewer, our code does not require customers to replace the whole side sewer from the building to the main. Some property owners get permits but may make a small repair or replace a short section of the side sewer – as you might a portion of your engine, but not necessarily the whole engine, or the whole car. That's why some customers may experience issues multiple times if they elect to make discrete repairs when full replacement is potentially warranted.
- **Committee member question:** Are there many improvements in technology that can help identify/diagnose problems and solve them less expensively- like chew up roots that haven't destroyed the pipe?
 - **Answer:** Typical investigations involves a CCTV (Close-circuit television) which is relatively inexpensive and less intrusive than repairs or replacement projects. This technology is being used more frequently it appears during real estate transactions. It helps buyers/sellers to understand potential liability and risk related to side sewers. CCTV contractors can look at the integrity of pipe and let customers know if they encounter obstructions or if a section of pipe is completely broken or collapsed. But they can't do it once something has happened, or in the middle of a backup when the pipe is full of water. When it can be done, there is an education/outreach opportunity for our customers, because it's preventative and relatively inexpensive.
- **Committee member question:** So that would be similar to the water service? (slide 16; "Utility maintains some portion of side sewer between sewer main and building")
 - **Answer:** Yeah, it's not unlike it. Some large cities take this approach.
- **Committee member question:** Do you have an idea what the cost is to the municipality on a per-service or per-customer basis for the customer assistance options you've investigated?
 - **Answer:** No. These examples are also all funded in different ways and for different reasons and our analysis has not looked at the business case or economics. For example, some cities or utilities that are under Consent Decree for sanitary sewer overflows simply have to spend rate payer dollars. There are various ways to go about it.

- **Committee member question:** Speaking from personal experience, National Water is a national insurance company that I have insurance with. It's roughly \$100 year and covers up to \$5k for repairs of damage to side sewer line. We used them, and it didn't cost us anything to repair ours. It covers waterline and side sewer line. Keep in mind though that with this insurance plan, it only covers the pipes on your property. Also, between your property and where the main is located is not covered, and that can be expensive. So I'm interested in hearing more about that.
 - **Answer:** These warranty programs were popular a few years ago in other parts of the country. Like any insurance or warranty program, you have to weigh that risks of what they will or will not cover.
- **Committee member question:** If you are sharing a side sewer with your neighbor, is it up to you and your neighbor to decide how to manage the repair? Do you find yourself with a mediator?
 - **Answer:** Yes, it's a complicating factor. You're only responsible up to your property line. In my case, I'd have to get my neighbors permission to repair my side sewer in their front yard.
- **Committee member comment:** Regulatory or Code Solution [Slide 20]: that's a really good idea.
- **Committee member question:** I think that every time there is a real estate transaction, you can have a requirement before that occurs that it has to be inspected.
 - **Answer:** We have to always consider all of our stakeholders. Business, real estate industry, homeowners. For example, in the past, the real estate industry nationally has not looked favorably at that option, and we want to consider the implications of economic growth in the region. There are some jurisdictions that use this approach, but it's written into their Consent Decrees; that's what driving them and that changes things. Also, I looked at how many properties change hands versus the number of side sewer permits in a given year, and the correlation is really low. Only 3-4% of property transactions were associated with side sewer permits. But the number of transactions may appear artificially high, because of re-finance, etc. So using that data can be a little confounding.
- **Committee member comment:** During the transaction/sale of a home, requiring a side sewer inspection and asking the homeowner to take responsibility -- That's the time when the money is available. The cost is small, so I would want to promote something like that in Seattle. Also, I want to note that there is a technology available outside of this country where you can repair a side sewer by putting chemicals into the sewer and it seals large gaps in the sewer; cost is significantly less and chemicals don't go into sewer. It would be good to see if they're valid for the City.
 - **Answer:** We've used this repair approach in Seattle already so it is already part of the suite of tools in our toolkit. The product is called SANIPOR. From an engineering perspective, it may help a customer solve a repair need, but it may not fix a pipe that simply needs to be replaced.

3. Preparation for 9/28 All-CAC Meeting with SPU Director, Mami Hara: Members and Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

In preparation for the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting with nominated SPU Director Mami Hara, CAC Program Manager Sheryl Shapiro invited CDWAC/WSACAC members to contribute questions to be asked of Mami at the meeting. She noted that Mami would be interested to hear what CDWA/WSAC members feel is important from a customer perspective.

Sheryl distributed index cards and provided time to reflect, followed by a facilitated discussion. She asked Committee members to frame their questions in terms of philosophy and interests, to keep the questions broad stoke as Mami will just be settling into her new role and will not yet be completely up to speed with SPU specifics. She said more-focused LOB questions could be entertained at a later point.

Madeline Goddard provided a brief overview on Mami Hara's professional background. She suggested Committee members view her LinkedIn. She said we are lucky in that she understands Drainage and Wastewater better than most other LOBs Mami believes strongly in community partnerships and will strive to continue moving forward what SPU has been working on in that arena. She encouraged Committee members to ask direct questions.

Sheryl noted that she would also be emailing CAC members for additional questions. She said she would distribute the full list of Committee member's questions via email.

Committee member ideas:

- What's her general vision for SPU
- How would you explain our next decade of opportunities and challenges to a third grader?
- Her thoughts on how she carries SPU forward with all our climate threats
- How will she be pushing green infrastructure (green roofs and stormwater runoff)?
- Question about her experience in Philadelphia, about the unique things they've done with regards to drainage and wastewater.
- What kinds of ideas is she bringing with her to the system in Seattle? The aging system?
- Ideas about public outreach and equity. What kind of tools has she used to reach underrepresented communities in the City?
 - Community engagement/spreading the word
 - Ensuring broad outreach
- How does she plan to address the growth and change in Seattle's population, especially the move towards more multi-family sector?
- How does she see this particular CAC playing into SPU? Relationship between CACs and SPU. Her experience with community engagement; Seattle is a very community-driven, policy-wonky place. How does she compare her experience there to here? In terms of her experience working with Advisory Committees.
- How the CACs can take a stronger advisory role
- What is important to her in a public servant? What qualities does she look for?
- What are some of your first impressions of SPU, formed during the interview process and your first two weeks here?
- Philadelphia is a great City. Why leave Philadelphia to come to Seattle?
- Submitted electronically: The Water management and/or conservation at Philadelphia
- Submitted electronically: How did the PWD set rates and structure for water
- Submitted electronically: How did the PWD work with climate change adaptation and planning and the impacts on water

- Submitted electronically: How can SPU incorporate sustainable purchasing practices into procurement for the various lines of business?
- Submitted, electronically: What do you see as the most significant challenge for SPU in the next 5 years and what can we do to overcome it?
- Submitted electronically: What do you see as the most significant unrealized opportunity for SPU and what can we do to realize it?
- Submitted, electronically: What do you see as the role of the citizen advisory committees and how do you see the potential for this role to evolve in your tenure?
- Submitted electronically: How can SPU continue to grow with our growing city while meeting customer's expectations and keeping rates increases at a stable level close to inflation?

Guests ideas:

- I went to University in Philadelphia. It's a shrinking city in terms of population and derelict buildings. In terms of GSI, you have open space in Philly. Here, we are densifying. So how would she modify her GSI approach since we are densifying?

In addition to the questions for Mami, Sheryl said that each Committee would have a chance at the 9/28 All-CAC meeting to brief Mami on highlights of their work. The CAC Officers were nominated to provide that briefing. She noted that some of this may go in Councilmember Herbold's update as well. Sheryl invited CDWAC-WSAC members to discuss the content of that briefing, such as issues CDWAC-WSAC has talked about, or things that merited weighing in on at the municipal level. The following suggestions were made by Committee members:

- Field Trips: Longfellow Creek trip, and educating the whole Committee on the creek structure and what has been done/what can be done. Education and opportunities to see the things that have been done. Seeing projects and programs definitely add value to our work.
- Specific times we helped with communications. Times we have reviewed materials to make sure it's legible, relatable, informative or useful to a human being. One example was in the SPU campaign, "Make it a Straight Flush" which was focused on education on what is truly "flushable" and the impacts of other inappropriate materials being disposed of in the toilet on our wastewater system.
- Appreciate both in/out communication opportunities. A couple years ago we did the meetings in communities as part of Strategic Business Plan outreach. I felt very useful as a Committee member, sitting with SPU staff in my neighborhood, hearing what folks cared about.
- Offering direct feedback to the DWW Director.
- The opportunity to connect us to SPU staff.
- With the recently completed the CAC Charter, we feel better prepared for more "Advisory" work in the future; more defined pathways to that kind of responsibility.

Sheryl asked for any additional highlights to be emailed this week. She said Mami will review these questions in advance.

4. Asset Management Overview for Drinking Water: Alex Chen, Director, SPU Water Planning and Program Management Division

Alex provided an overview, reviewing the definition of and essential elements of SPU's Asset Management approach. He explained that an Asset Management Strategy begins with a full inventory of assets and their conditions, evaluating the level of service goals (and which assets meet those goals), determining which assets are most critical in meeting service level goals, and minimizing life cycle costs (such as operation and maintenance, emerging technologies, and non-monetary factors).

Alex then gave an overview of Strategic Asset Management Plans (SAMPs), discussing the process for analysis and renewal. He shared with Committee members the Asset Class table, which identifies existing or needed SAMPs, as well as those currently being updated. He asked committee members for feedback on what aspects of Asset Management they would be more interested in hearing about.

Options included:

1. How SPU authorizes large dollar spending for long-term projects
 2. Operation & Maintenance
 3. SAMP plans in more detail, focusing on one asset class.
 4. Umbrella/overall: Every 6 years we make a Water System Plan.
- **Committee member question:** What is "appurtenances"?
 - **Answer:** This is attached to this asset class. For example, valves associated with a large diameter pipeline.
 - **Committee member question:** What are "Utilidors"?
 - **Answer:** It's a big, buried tunnel, and sometimes it will have a sewer or water pipe. It's an alternative to directly burying the pipe underground so people can go in and inspect.
 - **Committee member question:** On your priority, you have high on Landsburg, yet under last updated it says "does not exist." What's happening there?
 - **Answer:** Generally, if there's a "does not exist", it's a signal that the SAMP is a high priority. The first part of an asset management strategy is understanding your assets. If we don't have information about them yet, that makes them important to create, unless there's something more pressing.
 - **Committee member question:** Having more info about the financing of these projects and the steps taken would be interesting and informative for the group.
 - **Answer:** Are you more interested on the bond process, or how we justify internally?
 - **Committee member response:** The two are connected. The request for CIP expenditures always exceeds the capital available. Interested in the screening process.
 - **Answer:** I can have our Rates Manager come and talk about that. We have a separate process for the purpose of issuing bonds.
 - **Committee member question:** With all of your SAMPs, does SPU use a specific computer program designed for SPU or utilities that helps you and/or has this already been all mapped out, like the lifetime of your systems, that continually updates and red flags for you any concerns? Is there an operating system that does that?
 - **Answer:** There is a maintenance work order system. It does feed into our assets, and helps us maintain, puts out prevent work orders, and helps provide data on how the system is performing
 - **Committee member question:** Updates of the long-range Plan is always interesting.
 - **Answer:** We'll be coming back to you with the early elements of the Water Plan shortly, in the coming months.

- **Answer (Julie):** In October, Joan Kersnar is going to provide overview of the plan and ask where you want to be involved, and the SPU Senior Economist is going to discuss the draft water demand forecast that is a key piece of our planning process.
- **Guest question:** If you're updating SAMPs, can you review the previous ones? Have you found them to be very valuable?
 - **Answer:** We do version control and we do our best to try to follow up with each one. That said, every year is a new set of challenges and things to think about. So we try to treat them as dynamic documents.
- Sheryl asked Committee members to keep these topics in mind as we discuss 2017 Work Plan.

5. Protect Our Waters Forum: Exploring Future Topics: Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

TABLED due to lack of meeting time remaining: Sheryl said this topic isn't time sensitive. She will send an email on this.

6. CAC Program Updates: Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

Sheryl provided some CAC Program updates:

- Charter: There was a round of applause from the Committee on completing this.
- Member Agreement: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- Media Release: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- ORCA Passes: A sign-up was provided for those interested.
- Bios/Images: Reminder to review and provide updates, as needed. Due by 9/23, in time for meeting with Councilmember Herbold.
- Roster: Sheryl passed around the roster for Committee members to provide updates as needed.
- REMINDER: The October meeting has been moved to the 3rd Wednesday of the month: Oct. 19th.

7. Around the table

Committee members shared interesting updates and upcoming events:

- A Committee member noted that they missed the July Longfellow Creek field trip, but reported out on tour provided by Sheryl at a later date for the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Conservation staff and an SHA staff member whose work is in community building at High Point. This SHA staff is excited to continue the work Sheryl started awhile back in education and connecting residents and students to Longfellow Creek and the natural drainage system at High Point. .
- Sheryl shared about the Longfellow Creek Watershed Council. Next year is the 25th Anniversary of the Watershed Action Plan. She is hoping that the community will organize an event to commemorate the work accomplished as well as stimulate new activities for the future.
- A Committee member shared that 21 citizens along Thornton Creek have expressed interest in involvement in a monitoring program. They said this effort was being done in cooperation with SPU's Jonathan Frodge. They are initially testing for *e-coli* on southern branch, with a "fairly easy but reliable citizen test."

- A Committee member shared about their field trip to the Cedar River Watershed Educational Center with a nonprofit with whom they work. They said they would strongly recommend the tour.
- A Committee member shared details about the Seattle Design Festival. They said the 9/15 celebration at Harbor Steps is a festival with art, music, installations and drinks celebrating design firm, GGLO.
- A Committee member shared that the Southwest Youth and Family Services in Southwest Seattle/King County is having their Annual Gala on October 1. More info on the website: <http://www.swyfs.org/>

Sheryl provided some CAC Program updates:

- Shared the arrival of a Committee members' newborn child.
- Provided a current membership roster; check for membership status.
- Shared several activities happening this Saturday in South Park:
 - Seattle Fiestas Patrias 2016
 - Terminal 117 Project in the Duwamish
- Salmon Field Guide orders. They have extended the date to 9/30. Sheryl will send out the link.

Adjourned 7:36 PM