



Water System Advisory Committee (WSAC)
May 9, 2018 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
Room 4901
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Joel Carsley	Y	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Steven Cole	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Paul Reed	Y	Kathy Curry	Water System Policy Liaison
Rodney Schauf	Y	Judi Gladstone	Strategy & Governmental Affairs Division Director
Teresa Stern	Y	Joan Kersnar	Drinking Water Planning Manager
Michael Godfried	Y	Alex Chen	Division Director, Water Planning and Program Management
Kat Dej-Panah	Y	Guest	
Wendy Walker	Y	Annie Saunders	Guest
Ky Lewis	Y	Noel Miller	CDWAC Alum
		Rhea	Guest

1. Regular Business

- WSAC Chair Rodney Schauf opened the meeting at 5:36 PM.
- Meeting notes from April were reviewed and approved.
- Sheryl indicated emergency exits and exit procedures.

2. CAC Program Updates

- **All-CAC Meetings.** General Manager/CEO, Mami Hara, will be presenting at the May 16 All-CAC Meeting. Members were encouraged to join and learn more about her vision for the Utility, interact with other Committees, and reflect together on the presentations from SPU Executive team. Kathy added that each Committee will be presenting highlights from the previous year, and solicited volunteers to help present. **Wendy Walker volunteered to assist the WSAC Chair.**
- **June 13 Cedar River Watershed Field Trip Planning:** Kathy encouraged members to attend. **A CAC member shared** that while they cannot attend, they appreciate the effort to coordinate field trips and have greatly enjoyed all past field trips.

3. Reclaimed Water

Judi Gladstone, Strategy and Governmental Affairs Division Director, provided an overview on Reclaimed Water and past SPU studies that provide context to how this topic is considered in SPU’s Water System Plan and water supply. Judi covered the history of Reclaimed Water, considerations for utilization, and focused on the 2009 SPU Study results which looked at water supply and water quality benefits for both

reclaimed water and alternatives. The full 2009 report can be found here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/util/Documents/Reports/WaterReports/ReclaimedWaterEvaluation/index.htm>

- **A CAC Member inquired** about King County’s analysis of anticipated distribution costs. Staff explained that King County doesn’t analyze distribution costs since they intend there to be a water utility or other provider who distributes the reclaimed water.
- **A CAC member felt** that some individuals opposed the Brightwater facility because it did not support a future decentralized system. They asked if SPU foresees a future with more than just a north and south treatment plant. Staff responded that there is potential for it and used the Bullitt Foundation building as an example. They said it would depend on the future of technology, as well as potential future changes to treatment plant requirements such as the need for filtration of endocrine disrupters.
- **A CAC member** asked why a reduction of nitrogen discharge into Puget Sound was a primary consideration in SPU’s study. Staff responded that nitrogen is considered a one of the biggest water quality problems in Puget Sound, so it was used as an indicator of water quality benefit.
- **A CAC member** referenced the study results which showed a potential benefit equivalent to .04% of the total amount of nitrogen currently discharged from King County’s existing treatment plants. They asked what the negative impacts are of the nitrogen currently being discharged, and inquired if King County is exploring ways to reduce that impact. They wanted to understand what number would equate to a “meaningful impact to nitrogen reduction” Staff explained that treatment of wastewater discharge is done to meet standards, but noted that there has been discussions regarding standards for nitrogen. They also explained the heightened downstream impacts of nitrogen/discharge, where less water turnover takes place, stating that geographic-specific impacts will need to be considered when exploring future requirements. **Staff will follow-up on this question.**
- **A CAC member** wanted to know if King County is exploring SPU’s analysis results about the benefit of higher treatment level at the Renton plant. **Staff said they will follow-up on this question.**
- **In response to a Committee question,** staff explained the water quality levels used for reclaimed water.

4. Water System Plan Topic Discussions

At a previous meeting, WSAC members expressed interest in dividing the 2019 Water System Plan (WSP) into sections that could be more digestible. Members electronically volunteered for topics they were interested in, read about that topic in the WSP, and then prepared to share their impressions and feedback with the rest of the Committee. The full group then had time to decide:

- What comments, if any, WSAC would like to provide on the WSP by June 1; or
- What comments could be developed further for a letter or verbal comments to the City Council in the fall of 2018.

Water system policies, procedures & standards (Chapter 1, Section 1.2 and elsewhere); Ky Lewis
Ky provided an overview of the policies described in the WSP. He wondered why there were so few policy statements and policy information included in the plan. Staff explained that the 2007 WSP introduced the policies and provided more information about them. A CAC member inquired as to whether the 2019 WSP explicitly states that the policies are carried forward from the 2007 plan. Staff said it did.

Ky also noted that the WSP did not appear to include a specific policy on Environmental Justice and Service Equity. CAC members thought it would be valuable to include an Environmental Justice and Service Equity policy in the WSP, noting their Committee role in viewing programs/policies with a social justice lens. A CAC member shared an idea for a policy statement: “Regardless of your community, SPU will work with you to provide / ensure you have access [to clean drinking water].” Staff relayed that, to include such a policy in the WSP, it would need to first exist as a stand-alone policy that is SPU-wide.

Water supply resources in Chapter 2; Teresa Stern

Teresa shared highlights from this section, noting that it felt good to read that Seattle’s water supply is secure until at least 2060 and to read about evolving climate change modeling.

Teresa suggested adding "rainwater harvesting" to 2.4.1.4 Future Supply Opportunities. *Editorial comment: staff have since confirmed that rainwater harvesting is already noted under Future Supply Opportunities in the second to last bullet on p. 2-33 in 2.4.1.4.*

Teresa also suggested that WSAC consider encouraging SPU’s continued climate change study, continued conservation efforts, and continued consideration of rainwater harvest and reclaimed water use as related to future water supply needs. Several CAC members indicated that they supported this.

Water conservation programs in Chapter 2; Joel Carsley

Joel provided an overview of SPU conservation programs. Joel suggested expanding and strengthening bulleted considerations for selection of measures incorporated into SPU's conservation program that are described in 2.3.3.1.

Joel asked about whether conservation performance metrics could be improved. For example, with free fixtures or installations, rather than reporting on the number of households served, would there be a way to quantify the benefit, possibly relative to Program cost? Staff agreed that this would be a great discussion for the future, to look at the cost-effectiveness thresholds for things that can be directly measured, and examine how to best quantify the benefit. Also, we could look at how to examine goals for programs such as the toilet rebate, when there are very few remaining toilets that are eligible for replacement through this program.

A CAC member asked what the number of “households served” means in terms of whether the program is reaching those that need it most. Another CAC member asked what kind of conversations SPU is having with low income communities to determine what they need/want and asked how SPU advertises low-income programs to ensure those that need it know about it. Staff said there could also be a future

discussion around SPU's methods for reaching low-income community members, including discussion on how SPU's Utility Discount Program works.

Climate change in Chapter 2; Wendy Walker

Wendy appreciated that this section begins with a definition, differentiating climate variability from climate change.

Wendy suggested considering adding more details to support the conclusions described in 2.4.1.3, and suggested considering describing possible climate driven water quality changes and algae blooms in this section and/or suggested referencing that this is described in Chapter 3 on Water Quality & Treatment.

Wendy echoed the previous CAC comments around encouraging continued SPU climate change study. A CAC member expressed interest in understanding the broader City / regional response to climate change, and how SPU is tying together, sharing resources, and/or using similar climate models.

Wendy suggested correction of an apparent typo. in 2.4.1.5, 3rd paragraph, first sentence: "in contract to" should be "in contrast to" the historically high frequency. *Editorial comment: this typo. error has been corrected.*

Wendy also encouraged adding further context to the statement in 2.4.1.5 that describes SPU benchmarking fire risk management best practices with other land managers. She asked why comparing the performance of SPU's fire risk management practices to that of other land managers is useful?

Water Quality and Treatment in Chapter 3; Kat Dej-Panah

Kat said that she appreciates how each section in Chapter 3 that discusses water quality risks also addresses how SPU manages them. A discussion ensued among members regarding the technical background required to understand this section, particularly regarding contaminants.

As part of the group's discussion on this chapter, it was suggested that a good future topic for a WSAC meeting would be a presentation on SPU's Water Quality and Treatment, including discussion of the contaminant candidate list, and specifically addressing why some contaminants are of low concern to SPU. It was also suggested that the group would like to hear more about how and why SPU manages algae blooms in Lake Youngs, and how invasive and nuisance species are generally managed.

Water Transmission System in Chapter 4; Paul Reed

Paul gave an overview of Chapter 4, describing how the transmission system differs from the water distribution system. He discussed the age of the infrastructure, and typical materials used. Paul noted that he was particularly impressed by the detail provided on the process for monitoring, maintaining and replacing the pipes and the technology used to identify weaknesses or leaks. Paul focused on the possibility of earthquake damage to this infrastructure, stating that the WSP implies that the plan to implement seismic changes is still in process, and that SPU hasn't identified what we need to do, though work has been done to isolate the system into sections for emergency repairs. Paul said he feels the

biggest catastrophic risk to our City is a large earthquake and anticipates more discussion on seismic considerations in the future.

Paul stated that he thinks that the proposed improvement timeline sounds longer than is desirable. He suggests revising the Water System Plan to include a more specific timeline for possible improvements. Paul suggested further clarifying and narrowing the timelines for the terms “long-term” and “near-term” where used in the improvement timeline discussion. The group discussed whether there are industry standards for these terms, and expressed that they felt that near-term is, at most, 5 years. They also felt that specific timelines should be placed on the major improvements to the system that have been identified and suggested that SPU consider revising "near-term" and "long-term" terminology to accurately reflect applicable timelines.

Several WSAC members suggested that they would like to encourage SPU to continue to prioritize needed seismic improvements. Staff noted that the results of a seismic study are largely done, including a list of recommendations. However, there is a process to inform other City departments of those recommendations before they can be shared more widely. There was a request for a future topic presenting the study background and process for the seismic report, even if the recommendations are not ready to be reviewed.

Water Distribution System in Chapter 5; Michael Godfried

Michael said he felt the plan was well-written, free of jargon and easy to read. He also noted that it lays out the distribution system well and that he appreciates the focus on the five critical pump stations requiring improvements.

Michael encouraged added emphasis on the future investments needed to address aging water distribution (and transmission) system and seismic risk. He suggested moving water mains, seismic risk and pump stations to the top of the Section 5.5 Implementation/Action Plan. It was also suggested that the Asset Management Plan for the distribution system water mains be a future WSAC meeting topic.

Capital Improvement Budget in Chapter 6; Annie Saunders [Guest/Prospective Member]

Due to meeting time constraints, Annie quickly summarized the highlights of Chapter 6 and suggested that SPU consider clarifying which projects have been approved.

Financial Program in Chapter 7; Annie Saunders [Guest/Prospective Member]

Annie also quickly summarized information from Chapter 7 that explains how SPU addresses debt service coverage and debt financing. She tied this back to utility rates and the relationship between increased rates and debt reduction.

WSAC Liaison, Kathy Curry, thanked Committee members for investing their personal time to prepare for this exercise. She noted that time would be set aside on the July WSAC Meeting Agenda for the group to continue to discuss WSP topics and themes for possible WSAC comment, and then time would also be set aside during the August WSAC meeting to determine how they will fit into a letter or verbal

comments that would be provided to the City Council in the Fall, tentatively scheduled for 9:30 am on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2018.

6. Community Insights, Around the Table

Ran out of time.

Adjourned 7:40 PM