

## **16 – PLANNING AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

---

This chapter describes the planned organization and staffing to develop the capacity of the Wastewater Utility to implement this Plan through six core services. This structure is modeled after the program developed and used successfully by the Storm and Surface Water Utility for the past 15 years. The chapter identifies the overall long-term goal and strategy for planning and program implementation that will guide this organizational capacity building over the next six years. These strategies are in response to challenges and issues described in Chapter 10. For each core service, this chapter specifies an objective and actions for 2007–2012, and the planned staffing level. Strategies and actions are summarized in Chapter 17.

### **GOAL**

Ensure that the wastewater system is managed efficiently and effectively.

### **STRATEGY**

*Strategy 1. Organize and develop the Wastewater Utility to reflect the City’s comprehensive approach to water resources management by implementing six core services.*

The six core services are:

- Planning, Policy and Program Management (PPPM). Planning for long term needs, developing policies, and managing programs; annual budgeting.
- Capital Facilities (CFP). Planning, scoping, budgeting, tracking and monitoring construction of public infrastructure projects.
- Operation and Maintenance (O&M). Maintaining pipes, pump stations, Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP systems) and community onsite systems; responding to sewer overflows and other emergencies; constructing small-scale repair projects.
- Development Review, Code Enforcement and Technical Assistance (DR/CE/TA). Implementing wastewater regulations for new and existing private development; giving technical support to staff, customers and developers.

- Monitoring, Research and Evaluation (MRE). Tracking environmental health implications of wastewater management. Ensuring that the program incorporates new technologies as they become available.
- Public Involvement and Education (PIE). Supporting community participation in onsite sewage system management, infiltration and inflow reduction and other community-based actions.

**Figure 16.1** illustrates how these core services will function in concert. PPPM develops and manages plans, policies and programs, in response to City policies, State/federal regulations and identified system needs. These are implemented by CFP and O&M (public infrastructure), DR/CT/TA (private infrastructure and customers), and PIE (citizens and businesses). The results in terms of program effectiveness are monitored by MRE, which feed evaluative information back to PPPM for use in modifying policies or programs.

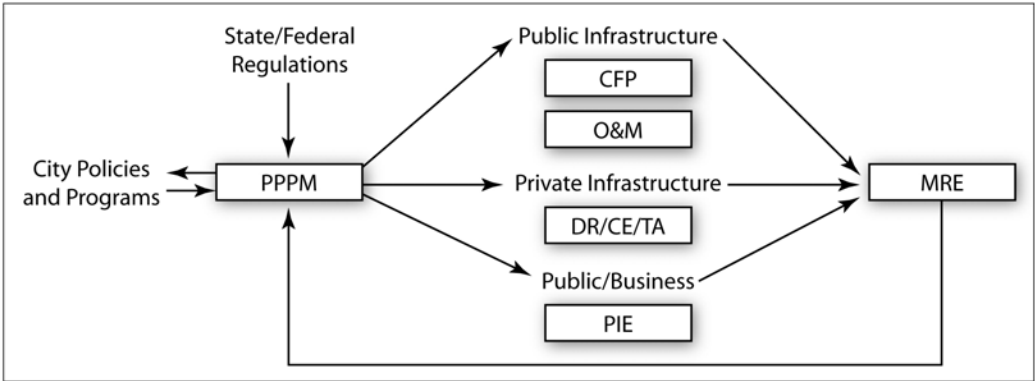


Figure 16.1. Relationship among Wastewater Utility Core Services

**PLANNING, POLICY AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

Planning, Policy and Program Management is perhaps the most essential core service of the Wastewater Utility. This core service will maintain oversight of all Wastewater Utility services and keep them oriented towards overall City goals and policies. Staff will provide analysis and technical support to develop and employ best practices in wastewater management policies and programs. Many work efforts are expected to originate with an identified shortcoming and result in a policy or project to address the need. Staff will seek to understand and resolve wastewater problems within the context of other City needs and goals.

This service will be both proactive, looking into the future to anticipate needs and challenges, and reflective, looking at results to determine whether course correction is needed. Much of the work will focus on resolving the conflicts of protecting public and environmental health while minimizing financial impacts to

individuals, developers and rate payers. These are inevitable in implementing appropriate conveyance, treatment and disposal techniques in an increasingly urban setting. The importance and complexity of this work will intensify as Olympia grows and areas more distant from the Budd Inlet Treatment Facility develop.

## **Objective and Planned Actions**

### ***2007–2012 Objective***

1. By 2008, the PPPM core service will be fully operational and adequately supporting wastewater decision-making processes.

### ***Actions***

***1. Manage implementation of this Plan.*** Maintain oversight of all Wastewater Utility core services and keep them oriented towards overall City goals and policies.

***2. Analyze existing policies and potential revisions, interpret regulations, and help implement necessary changes.*** Wastewater policies and the associated regulations are often complex and difficult to implement on a case-by-case basis. The financial interests of individual property owners, developers and the City can conflict as the challenges of conveying wastewater from increasingly outlying areas to the Budd Inlet Treatment Facility become more demanding. Resolving these conflicts is both difficult and necessary.

***3. Provide policy and technical resources to proactively manage emerging issues and needs.*** Make expertise available in response to community and leadership concerns.

***4. Establish supportive coordinating staff relationships with LOTT and neighboring jurisdictions.*** Staff will create more regular communication and relations among wastewater staff of LOTT, Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston County Environmental Health Division. Potential interjurisdictional issues and opportunities include:

- Developing LOTT satellite facilities and options for routing wastewater.
- Exploring opportunities for system interties to increase efficiency, for example by eliminating the need for pump stations.
- Cooperating to implement more proactive onsite sewage system management.

**5. Evaluate the effectiveness of all programs and projects, and prepare the Plan update for 2013–2018.** Planning for long-term service, potential extensions, and growth needs is vital to development of a coherent, effective regional wastewater system. Staff will track progress towards the goals and annually reconsider priorities during budgeting and capital facilities planning.

### **Staffing**

Currently the Planning, Policy and Program Management core service is budgeted for 0.75 FTE. This Plan includes an increase of 0.15 FTE.

## **CAPITAL FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

Capital facilities are publicly funded construction projects to meet a community need, such as safely conveying wastewater from homes and businesses to treatment facilities. Wastewater projects include repair or construction of gravity sewers and pump stations. Capital projects are financed through utility rates, general facilities charges (GFCs) paid by new development for connecting to and utilizing existing City wastewater systems, and loans.

Each year, City Council updates and approves a new six-year wastewater capital facilities plan. Capital facilities funds support engineering design, construction management, planning and administration.

### **Objective and Planned Actions**

#### ***2007–2012 Objective***

1. By mid-2007, the Capital Facilities core service will be initiating and supporting construction of the projects identified in the Plan. Projects will be completed in a timely manner in order to avoid reactive decisions.

#### ***Actions***

- ***Manage capital facilities project planning, scoping, funding and tracking.*** Staff will manage capital project development in support of the construction design and construction services provided by the Public Work's Technical Services and Wastewater Operation and Maintenance staff. The projects of the multi-million dollar program require active evaluation, prioritization and financial tracking as well as coordination with other City work efforts.

### **Staffing**

This core service is currently budgeted for 0.5 FTE. Staff is responsible for capital facilities project planning, scoping, funding and tracking. No increase is

planned. Wastewater Utility staff draws on Technical Services engineering staff and outside consultants for technical analysis and construction management. Technical Services employees and consultants, including designers, engineers and inspectors, are funded from individual project budgets.

## **OPERATION & MAINTENANCE**

The Wastewater Utility's operation and maintenance services are familiar to many people, who see crews at work cleaning sewer pipes around the city. Operation and maintenance field crews maintain, repair, and upgrade the City's extensive wastewater infrastructure to prevent spills and repair leaks. This core service is responsible for operating and maintaining:

- Approximately 166 miles of sanitary sewer pipe.
- 27 regional pump stations servicing neighborhoods.
- Over 1,500 STEP systems and three community onsite sewage systems.

In addition to predictable operations and maintenance work, the crews regularly:

- Responds to emergency sewer overflows.
- Helps customers resolve wastewater problems on their private property.
- Completes small-scale repairs.

Increasingly, operations and maintenance work is scheduled to optimize service delivery. (See Appendix C-3 for a detailed discussion of O&M services.)

## **Objective and Planned Actions**

### ***2007–2012 Objective***

1. During 2007–2012, the efficiency and effectiveness of Wastewater Utility operations and maintenance will be improved by better allocation of resources to critical needs.

### ***Actions***

- ***Develop and maintain condition assessment and life cycle costing processes.*** Tracking the condition of critical system components allows timely response to infrastructure replacement needs. Life-cycle costing allows high maintenance components to be replaced when cost-effective.
- ***Continue STEP system and community onsite system maintenance.*** Procedures will be evaluated and updated to reduce emergency calls and unnecessary service. STEP system inspections will be done bi-annually

instead of annually. This reduction will minimize or eliminate the need to hire additional staff as approximately 700 new STEP systems come online in the next five years, while still ensuring adequate protection of environmental and public health.

- ***Increase capability for small-scale repairs.*** Repairs identified through the condition assessment will increasingly be done by Utility crews, rather than private contractors.
- ***Implement Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies.*** Field crews need up-to-date, detailed information on infrastructure components as they work. Field access to GIS technology will allow efficient retrieval of comprehensive information about the infrastructure.
- ***Continue developing the maintenance management system.*** The management system reduces system-wide maintenance in favor of site-specific maintenance designed to meet the needs of the specific component. High maintenance components will be serviced frequently; low maintenance ones will be delayed.
- ***Implement systematic staff certification and training programs.*** Safety certifications will be highly managed and tracked. Overall wastewater management competency and associated certification will increase consistent with the State of Washington Wastewater Collection Personnel Association recommendations. During the next six years, all sewer operations staff will be trained at the Wastewater Collection Specialist I level; the Operations Supervisor will be trained at the Specialist II level.
- ***Better manage equipment inventory.*** Ensure that frequently needed supplies and emergency response equipment is readily available.
- ***Complete risk assessment and implement emergency response plan.*** Appendix C-4 describes the City's emergency response procedures for sewer overflows and other wastewater emergencies. This plan parallels and is coordinated with the LOTT Alliance Sanitary Sewer Overflow Emergency Response Plan (October 2005).

## **Staffing**

Currently the Operations and Maintenance core service is budgeted for 8.83 FTE, including a field lead/supervisor, technicians and maintenance workers. This Plan includes an increase to 10.08 FTE in 2008 to staff the increased workload expected for small repair projects.

## **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND CODE ENFORCEMENT**

While the capital facilities and operations and maintenance core services are responsible for the public wastewater infrastructure, this core service focuses on the review of new private wastewater facilities, technical assistance for existing systems on private property, and actions on violations. Existing services are inadequate to meet current intentions for a well-planned future system that fulfills our expectations system effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Objective and Planned Actions**

#### ***2007–2012 Objective***

1. By 2008, the Development Review, Technical Assistance and Code Enforcement core service will support private and public decisions about operation and expansion of the regional infrastructure.

#### ***Actions***

***1. Review proposed new wastewater systems.*** Staff will work with property owners and developers during plan review to ensure compliance with local and State wastewater regulations, and increase technical support to the Community Planning and Development Department (CP&D) permitting and inspection processes. New emphasis will be placed on managing wastewater flows in accordance with long-term gravity system goals for utilizing existing pipe capacity, minimizing pump stations, and increasing the potential to serve areas of infill and onsite sewage systems. Design of new development systems will better meet overall community and Wastewater Utility needs.

***2. Enforce illicit discharge regulations.*** Illicit discharges to the public sewer systems increase maintenance needs and impact LOTT Alliance treatment facility performance. For example, the discharge of fats, oils, and greases from food establishments clogs downstream pipes, creating increased need for routine maintenance and emergency response. Additionally, LOTT struggles to treat unpredictable effluents. Other discharges are toxic and inappropriate. Staff will better address these, consistent with existing regulations.

***3. Provide technical assistance to wastewater customers as needed.*** As wastewater concerns and regulations become more complex and demanding, customers request assistance from the City. Wastewater staff will assist customers regarding such issues as sewer lateral replacement, odor control, STEP maintenance and OSS management.

**4. GIS support.** Technical staff will manage and support computer technologies for various planning and O&M staff.

## **Staffing**

The Wastewater Utility has budgeted 0.5 FTE for this core service. No increase is planned.

## **MONITORING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring, Research and Evaluation is a new core service for the Wastewater Utility. It will provide the information needed to plan, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the Wastewater Utility, and keep Olympia up to date with current and emerging wastewater technology.

### **Objective and Planned Actions**

#### ***2007–2012 Objective***

By 2008, the Monitoring, Research and Evaluation core service will support the integration of wastewater practices with other water resources responsibilities.

#### ***Actions***

- 1. Provide resources for wastewater-related surface and ground water monitoring.*** Wastewater must be contained and managed in order to meet local, State, and federal expectations for healthy water quality. Contamination from public sewers and onsite systems is often diluted and intermittent, yet capable of closing shellfish beds, violating surface water standards and making groundwater undrinkable. Monitoring and problem isolation is often time consuming. As needed, Wastewater Utility resources will supplement existing City environmental monitoring programs, especially the Groundwater Protection Program and the Stormwater Ambient Monitoring Program.
- 2. Evaluate performance in meeting objectives in this Plan and recommend course corrections as needed.*** Developing an effective wastewater utility will require several years. Ongoing data collection and evaluation will be important as the Wastewater Utility moves forward.
- 3. Develop and maintain information systems for onsite system management.*** This includes the time-consuming tasks associated with maintaining a database of onsite system locations, and tracking failures, inspections, certifications and hookups. Thurston County records and reporting system will be fully utilized.
- 4. Explore and evaluate new and innovative wastewater technology.*** Staff will actively pursue potential new technologies such as those suggested in Chapter 15,

evaluate their feasibility and cost-effectiveness, and make recommendations for application in Olympia.

## **Staffing**

The Wastewater Utility currently has budgeted 0.5 FTE for this core service. No increase is planned.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION**

Public and environmental health requires a participatory and responsible community. Public involvement and education activities traditionally have been supported by the City of Olympia as an essential service of resource management programs. Public involvement and education has had a limited role in the Wastewater Utility; future roles will increase but remain modest for the next six years.

### **Objective and Planned Actions**

#### ***2007–2012 Objective***

By 2008, the Public Involvement and Education core service will have adequate capacity to support implementation of Plan priorities.

#### ***Actions***

***1. Support implementation of Plan priorities, particularly increased City management of onsite sewage system and incentives for conversion to public sewer.***

Work efforts will include:

- Inform onsite system owners of new requirement to submit inspection report every three years (if approved).
- Send periodic reminders of the inspection report requirement.
- Inform onsite system owners and infill lot owners of incentives and opportunities for conversion of existing systems and hookups on infill lots.
- Coordinate with Drinking Water Program to inform residents in Drinking Water Protection Areas and other groundwater sensitive areas about monitoring results and special program activities.

***2. Keep customers informed about Wastewater Utility activities, regulatory and rate changes.*** Primary communication tools will include Wastewater Utility bill inserts, media releases and direct mail.

*3. Coordinate with regional partners in planning and implementing wastewater educational activities as feasible.* In past years, the Wastewater Utility has helped fund onsite system maintenance workshops. Similar opportunities will be explored under this Plan.

*4. Inform and involve customers and other stakeholders in wastewater planning activities.* Staff will keep the community well informed on emerging wastewater issues. Activities may include direct mail to stakeholders, media information, focus groups and workshops. Key issues will include OSS management and conversion programs, potential gravity system extensions and the need for water quality improvement.

### **Staffing**

The Wastewater Utility currently has no FTEs budgeted for this core service. The Plan includes an increase of 0.1 FTE in 2007.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

In addition to these Utility core services, the Public Works director's office provides accounting, strategic communications and gateway services. The City's Administrative Services Department provides billing, payroll, financial planning and cash management.

Like other City departments, the Wastewater Utility is responsible for its share of the City's overhead expenses. These include a portion of the costs of Public Works administration and other City departments (e.g. City manager, legal and administrative services; computer and telephone networks; building rental, vehicles, insurance, maintenance and janitorial services).

The Wastewater Utility also pays an 8.5 percent State utility tax and business and occupation taxes, based on total annual wastewater revenues.