

**Murray Basin Combined Sewer Overflow Project  
Community Advisory Group**

**Meeting 1 Summary**

**Prepared for  
King County Wastewater Treatment Division**

**June 9, 2010**

**Prepared by**

 **EnviroIssues**

101 Stewart Street – Suite 1200  
Seattle, WA 98101  
(206) 269-5041

## Meeting Information

Meeting #1

Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fauntleroy Community Services Agency Building (Old Fauntleroy School)

9131 California Ave SW

## Attendance

### CAG members

- John Comick
- Jim Coombs (alternate for Bill Beyers)
- Kate Dee
- Cheryl Eastberg (Seattle Parks - Ex Officio)
- Patrick Gordon
- Scott Gunderson
- Chris Jansen
- Vlad Oustimovitch (Fauntleroy Community Association)
- Chas Redmond
- Donna Sandstrom
- Don Stark
- Ron Sterling
- Linda J Sullivan (King County WTD)

### Facilitation team

- Penny Mabie (Envirolssues)
- Brian Feldman (Envirolssues)

### WTD Staff and Consultants

- Christie True (King County WTD)
- Martha Tuttle (King County WTD)
- Shahrzad Namini (King County WTD)
- Jeff Lykken (TetraTech)

## Welcome and Introductions

Penny Mabie, meeting facilitator, welcomed participants to the first Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. Penny led a round of introductions and provided a brief overview of the planned agenda. This meeting is an organizational meeting intended to be an introduction to the CAG process. The meeting goals and objectives are listed below:

- Introduce CAG members and process.
- Establish group expectations.
- Review mission statement and operating guidelines.
- Define and agree upon group ground rules.
- Clarify group objectives.
- Provide input to King County on the June 19<sup>th</sup> Technical Session.

## Opening Remarks

Christie True, Director, King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD), thanked everyone for their participation and interest in the Murray Basin combined sewer overflow (CSO) project. Christie noted that the County and the group share a common interest in creating a clean and healthy Puget Sound and a sewer system that works as intended. She indicated the best possible outcome from this group is a choice of alternatives that the group is happy with, or at least finds acceptable. The worst possible outcome from the CAG process is an alternative that no one finds acceptable. No is not an acceptable answer and a solution must be reached. Christie also explained that the County must stay within the outlined schedule to remain in compliance with permits issued from the Department of Ecology (Ecology). The County is committed to working with the CAG, re-looking at alternatives and looking at new combinations of alternatives that could meet County objectives.

## Questions and Discussion

- Ron Sterling asked why the schedule is unalterable and who set this schedule. Where in the process are the Duwamish River Combined Sewer Overflow projects in relation to this one.
  - Christie True responded that the County has prioritized CSO projects based on the potential impacts to public health. In particular, beach projects are scheduled first due to the recreational uses and impacts to the public. The County is required by State and Federal law to bring sewer systems into compliance and the beach projects are first in the overall CSO master schedule. The master schedule is viewable in the County's Regional Wastewater Services Plan and is a condition of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

**ACTION:** Send Master CSO schedule to the group.

- John Comick asked if the County will be out of compliance with a state or federal permit if it fails to meet this schedule and is the permit set for the entire system or each individual location.
  - Christie True indicated the County could be out of compliance with both state and federal laws. Each individual CSO location must meet a permit standard, but the entire system also must meet standards to prevent a problem from being moved from one place to another. It is important that all the parts and the whole system works and is compliant with regulations.
- Chris Jansen commented that cities larger than 1,000 residents are required to have a NPDES permit. Chris asked if the City of Seattle's NPDES permit relates to the County's plan.
  - Christie True answered, yes, the city also has CSOs to control and that the City of Seattle and King County stay coordinated and work together. The

city system flows into the County's system and any changes must be approved to make sure the systems remain well integrated. In some instances combined projects are possible but in other areas projects are separated when the systems are independent.

- Ron Sterling commented that a City of Seattle CSO outfall pipe is located off Lowman Beach.
- Kate Dee asked if the system relationship between County and city systems could be explained further.
  - Christie explained that the City of Seattle has local pipes that serve individual properties and bring wastewater and stormwater to the County system. The City has roughly 90 CSO locations and the County has 38, many of which have already been brought into compliance. The County's CSOs are typically larger because they are collecting from large local areas.
- Don Stark commented that a "Sewer 101" would be extremely helpful to understand how these systems work and their relationship to one another.
- Jim Coombs commented that he believes the meeting on June 19 will include a "Sewer 101" and asked when this information is expected to be published on the County website?
  - Linda J Sullivan, King County Wastewater Treatment Division, explained that these materials will start appearing on the website on June 11, 2010 and will all be available by June 19, 2010.
- Donna Sandstrom asked if other groups, similar to this one, have been formed for other projects. If so, how do the projects relate together.
  - Christie True explained that each community is different and in the four beach CSO projects there are four different types of alternatives being considered.
  - Linda added that some basins do not have CAGs like this but the complexity in Murray has led to the development of this group.

## **Organizational Details**

### **Mission Statement**

The group reviewed draft Operating Guidelines. Penny asked the group if the mission statement captures the group's purpose and explained an updated mission statement would be developed based on this meeting discussion.

In response to a question about schedule, Linda explained the group is operating under Ecology's mandate that the County must submit a facilities plan by the end of 2010.

Ecology is considering the County's request for a six-month extension but at this time the County is still required to have a decision by November 2010. The County has added time in the schedule beyond what was stated at the spring public meetings but the CAG must still work on a timeline.

### **Questions and Discussion**

- Don Stark commented that there has been previous discussion indicating that the group should look at a larger framework and look at the Barton Basin CSO as well as the Murray Basin CSO.
  - Linda responded that the Barton and Murray CSO projects have the same deadline, but many other technical differences. The relationship between the two basins will be presented at the upcoming technical meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Patrick Gordon commented that Vlad's email captured the question the group has about the relationship between the two basins. Both areas are trying to achieve the same goal and are looking for opportunities which are beneficial to the system. The mission statement should include the sentiment that the group must ultimately find an acceptable solution.
- Donna Sandstrom suggested that the problem should be considered in a holistic fashion through considerations of the entire stormwater problem. The CAG has been funneled to focus on this one CSO but the issue is based in all four drainage basins.
- Christie True commented that the mission statement should include the idea that the County and the CAG are partners in finding the best alternative.

### **Operating Guidelines**

Penny introduced draft Operating Guidelines for the CAG and led the CAG through a discussion of the draft. She noted an important ground rule is for all meetings to start and end on time out of respect for all the members. She asked CAG members to be concise in their comments and explained that everyone has a responsibility to represent information accurately. The goal of the CAG is to produce consensus on a preferred alternative. Consensus does not mean that everyone is 100 percent satisfied with the alternative, but that they feel it is an acceptable solution. The group is not intended to vote but can do so if deemed necessary by the group. In this situation the outlier's viewpoints will also be captured.

Penny explained to group members that they have the responsibility to keep their communities and neighbors informed about the project. She added that it is important to note that when a member of the CAG cannot attend a proxy is acceptable. It is the group member's responsibility to ensure their proxy is brought up to speed and can contribute to group discussions and represent the member's interests.

The group is intended to be inclusive and include all group members in group communications. When speaking with others, try not to characterize the views and opinions of others and be accurate and honest. At subsequent meetings we will give more meeting notice to community members and the general public will be encouraged to attend the meetings and given the opportunity to provide comments to the CAG.

### **Questions and Discussion**

- Chas Redmond asked if it is acceptable to share group files with community groups and organizations.
  - Penny explained that any meeting materials available on the County website are OK to be reposted on other websites.
- Kate Dee asked for clarification regarding how future meetings will be announced to the public.
  - Martha explained that meeting announcements will be made on the King County website meeting page, the West Seattle Blog and to other media outlets. Meeting announcement postcards are mailed out to the community for any community meetings, such as for the project community meeting last March.

**ACTION:** Penny will make revisions to the draft Operating Guidelines and distribute to the CAG for comments.

### **Technical Session Overview**

Linda indicated the upcoming technical session on June 19, 2010 is a direct outcome of the spring public meetings where community members requested additional technical information. The purpose of the technical session is to provide a “Sewer 101” and explain how the information used to select the three alternatives was collected. Additionally, a whole library of technical documents about this basin will also be available on the County website.

At the session, overviews of some of these documents will be provided as the level of technical information can be difficult to understand. The entire set of technical documents can be provided to the group upon request. The information is available to anyone who would like these details, but the reports will likely be beyond the level of information the general public is interested in.

### **Questions and Discussion**

- Kate Dee commented that most people will not be able to understand the technical information and it will likely lead to misunderstandings about the project. The demand for technical information is likely due to community members not understanding why the list of alternatives was narrowed down to three.

- Scott Gunderson commented that the list of alternatives could be made understandable if a short summary of each was provided.
- Patrick Gordon noted that a matrix evaluation where each of the alternatives is compared against the same criteria would be extremely helpful to see why certain alternatives are advantageous against others.
  - Shahrzad Namini, King County Wastewater Treatment Division, commented that the pros and cons of each alternative are available and a matrix could be constructed for the group to use. This information could also be posted to the web.
- Donna Sandstrom noted that usability appears to be an issue on the County website and many are having trouble finding information. The group needs to clarify assumptions about what people know about the project and make the website easier to navigate.
- Chas Redmond asked if it would be possible to record the meetings for playback to other community members or interested parties.
  - Linda noted it is a possibility and the team will explore the idea further.

ACTION: Check into videotaping the technical session.

## **June 19 Technical Session Agenda Overview**

Linda explained the agenda to the June 19 Technical Session will be made available on the County website by Friday, June 11. She commented that the section “What do facilities look like in our neighborhoods and parks?” potentially places the County in a difficult situation. The County would like to present this information to the public but does not want to seem like it is narrowing the range of alternative to certain sites, or that it has already made a selection. Linda added that a discussion about how the facility could be integrated into Lowman Park would be beneficial but does not want to confuse the public into thinking the park is the only alternative being considered. The meeting will include information about all nine of the alternatives for the Murray Basin.

### **Questions and Discussion**

- Chas Redmond commented that the Meadow Brook Pond Facility operated by Seattle Public Utilities is so large; many residents cannot imagine what these facilities would look like at Lowman Beach. A visual may be helpful to determine that but could certainly make it seem like the County has already selected that location.
- Donna Sandstrom commented that the agenda could lead one to believe that the County has zeroed in on Lowman Beach Park. It is reassuring to hear the County say that other alternatives are possible.

- John Comick noted that the impacts of the project need to be addressed if the project cannot be moved to another neighborhood. The timeline of two years for construction and limited access is not acceptable to many community residents.
- Jim Coombs commented that realistic answers to questions are needed from the community and the County.
- Donna Sandstrom mentioned she would like to see context for why these issues are important and what other green alternatives could be considered. For example, why stormwater is important to the ecosystem and what can be done on an individual basis should be included in the session.
- Chris Jansen noted that the information presented to the public to date was very difficult to follow. An interactive function that explained the site and the situation would be much more beneficial to the general public.
- Kate Dee suggested that a picture of a really nice park above treatment facilities would be really impressive. It would help the public to see a nice park, with grass and vegetation instead of Astroturf, above these facilities.
- Patrick noted that an important message to relay about putting the facility in the park would be that the trees are removed. A pretty picture could be disingenuous to the unique situation in that park. The presentation at the June 19 meeting needs to state that the County is interested in community input.
- Don Stark commented that the extra effort to make one alternative more attractive than the other alternatives does not look good when trying to say that one alternative is not favored.
- Jeff Lykken, King County consultant, commented that the group is asking for a lot of technical information and the goal of the next meeting is to ensure that all meeting attendees understand how the basin works regardless of the alternative selection.
- Ron Sterling indicated he is concerned about the process and doesn't believe these meetings will produce the results the County is looking for in the minimum time allowed. The group should explore the idea of a message board for group use.
  - Penny indicated that this idea is a possibility. The County has promised the process will be transparent to the public so further discussion about this is required.

**ACTION:** Explore use of message board for between meeting work.

## Work Plan Discussion

Penny presented a draft list of topics for the CAG. Those topics were based on insight gleaned from the stakeholder interviews conducted prior to the CAG's first meeting. The work plan currently contains these topics:

- CSO program regulations and drivers overview from Washington State Department of Ecology
- Four approaches to CSO management – how/has King County considered them as options?
- Overview of Seattle Parks Department's approach to siting infrastructure in Seattle parks
- Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) – how has GSI been considered in Murray Basin as a means to reduce CSOs required size of storage
- Murray Basin CSO alternatives
- Murray Basin CSO alternatives selection criteria

Based on this meeting's discussion, Penny suggested adding the following items to the draft work plan list:

1. Sewer 101.
2. Barton Basin Alternatives.
3. CSO program briefing.
4. Stormwater and how it contributes to CSOs.

## Action Items

- Send CAG members the County master CSO project schedule from the NPDES permit.
- Ground rules will be added to future agendas.
- Develop a matrix to compare all the alternatives with the same criteria. A summary of each alternative will be included.
- Donna, Martha and Jim will discuss user interface issues on the County's CSO website.
- Explore videotaping the June 19<sup>th</sup> Technical Meeting.
- Discuss a message board or other forms of online communications.
- Penny will make revisions to the draft Operating Guidelines and distribute to the CAG for comments.