
FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

This final Environmental Impact Statement, prepared under the provisions of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), accompanies and supports the Executive's Preferred Plan (EPP). The EPP proposes a new (third) treatment plant located in north King or south Snohomish County. This ultimately 54-million gallon per day (mgd) "North Treatment Plant" would receive wastewater flows from parts of King County's current service area that lie north and east of Lake Washington. Under this plan, the West Treatment Plant would remain at its current average wet weather capacity, while the East Treatment Plant would be expanded in stages to an ultimate capacity of 135 mgd by 2020.

Along with approaches to wastewater conveyance and treatment and combined sewer overflow control, the plan also discusses application of treatment end products—biosolids and reclaimed water—and financing.

The Final EIS addresses and compares at a programmatic level the probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the EPP and the other service strategies discussed in the Draft RWSP. This "programmatic-level" EIS provides information necessary to decide on an overall plan of action, but more detailed or "project-level" review would be required before any element of the plan would be implemented. The FEIS will support the Metropolitan King County Council's adoption of a Regional Wastewater Services Plan.

REVISED POPULATION AND WASTEWATER FLOW ESTIMATES

As a result of comments on the Draft RWSP, assumptions about population growth in the region, particularly beyond 2020, have been reviewed and revised. It was determined that in the draft growth had been forecast to be greater than would likely occur and a different model was used in the Executive's Preferred Plan. As a result of this effort, estimates of population growth have been lowered by approximately 9% at 2030 and 30% at 2050, yielding a reduction in wastewater base flows of 7% and 25% at those years, respectively.

This reduction in estimated population growth resulted in a reduction in estimated wastewater flow during the same time period. In turn, facilities could be delayed and/or constructed at a smaller size than proposed in the *Draft Plan*. The Service Strategies described in the Draft Plan and Draft EIS have been revised in Part I of this Final EIS to reflect these modifications.

Since future population growth is uncertain, King County will revisit population growth assumptions when designing wastewater facilities to ensure that constructed facilities are neither overbuilt nor underbuilt.

PROPOSED LISTING OF CHINOOK SALMON UNDER ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

In February 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service proposed listing the Puget Sound Chinook salmon as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). King County is working in cooperation with Pierce and Snohomish Counties and local governments to develop a response to the listing that will allow the area to thrive economically while enhancing and improving salmon habitat. The Executive's Preferred Plan provides the flexibility to modify our facilities and programs to address changing conditions. For example, the EPP would allow production and use of reclaimed water to augment regional water supplies, thereby benefiting salmon streams by avoiding additional withdrawals for drinking water. (The County will conduct detailed studies to determine the feasibility of discharging highly treated reclaimed water to Lake Washington and the Ship Canal for the purpose of protecting in-stream flows.) As the ESA response is developed, King County will coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies including the National Marine Fisheries Service, tribal governments, and citizens to ensure our wastewater facilities will benefit salmon restoration programs in Puget Sound.

ORGANIZATION

This Final EIS is divided into two parts:

Part I The Executive's Preferred Plan

Part II Full Text of Draft EIS, Revised in Response to Comments

Part I is divided into two sections. The first section highlights the environmental aspects of the EPP. This section describes the EPP and its probable operating (long-term) adverse environmental impacts as well as mitigation measures for these impacts.¹ The second section describes revised service strategies 1, 2 and 4, how their environmental impacts, as revised, compare to those described for these strategies in the Draft EIS, and how all four revised strategies compare to each other.

Part II consists of the revised text of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The text has been revised to reflect comments received but has not been changed to reflect service strategy revisions described in Part I.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW

The SEPA environmental review of the RWSP began with scoping in the fall of 1994. Scoping consisted of six open houses and notices in several newspapers. Sixty-nine written comments were received. (See Part II, page 1-4 for more detail.)

¹ The EPP is based on Service Strategy 3. It reflects the new population and flow estimates and public comment.

The Draft RWSP, Draft Financing Plan and Draft EIS were issued on May 7, 1997. The public comment period for these documents ran from May 7 to August 5, 1997. During that period, King County held five combined open house/public hearings to present information, answer questions and take public testimony on the RWSP and Draft EIS. These hearings were held in downtown Seattle (June 11), Renton (June 18), Shoreline (June 24), Bellevue (June 30) and Woodinville (July 16). King County advertised these hearings with large display ads in seventeen different regional and local newspapers; the ads ran on multiple dates for many of the larger papers such as the Daily Journal of Commerce, Seattle Post Intelligencer, Seattle Times and the South County Journal. In addition, County staff presented information on the RWSP at many community meetings held throughout King County.

During the comment period, seventy-five commenters provided a total of 381 comments as either hearing testimony or written comments. The 75 commenters fell into the following categories: 55 private individuals or organizations, 12 local government agencies, 5 state agencies, 1 federal agency and 2 tribes. The comments and King County's responses to them are provided in a separate appendix to this Final EIS. This document also contains a summary of the comments and the results of King County's RWSP public opinion summary. To obtain a complete copy of the public opinion summary, call the King County Wastewater Treatment Division, Environmental Planning Unit at 206-684-1714.

NEXT STEPS

After the publication of the Executive's Preferred Plan and this accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement, the King County Executive will submit the plan to the Metropolitan King County Council. The Council is expected to adopt a plan late in 1998 so implementation can begin in 1999.

When the plan is adopted, the Wastewater Treatment Division will begin to implement it. The plan discusses the timing of projects.

As discussed in Part II, page 1-4, the SEPA environmental review of the RWSP and its projects is a phased review. This programmatic EIS is the first step in that review. For most major projects under the RWSP the next review step will be a project-specific environmental review. These later reviews will evaluate potential site and project-specific environmental impacts and discuss related mitigation measures.