

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Sitting/Acting as the Governing Body of Water Environment Services

Policy Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: 8/1/17 **Approx Start Time:** 11:30 a.m. **Approx. Length:** 30 minutes

Presentation Title: WES Communications and Engagement Report and Recommendations

Department: Water Environment Services

Presenters: Greg Geist

Other Invitees: Gary Schmidt, Amy Kyle, Shelly Parini

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

Water Environment Services ("WES") is seeking approval to create a single WES Advisory Committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area. WES is also requesting the Board to consider the request from the cities of Gladstone, Happy Valley, Milwaukie, Oregon City and West Linn to create an elected officials forum for the BCC and city elected representatives to discuss matters of concern pertaining to policies and the future of wastewater within WES' service area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

After the formalization of the Water Environment Services partnership between Clackamas County Service District No. 1 and the Tri-City Service District in the fall of 2016, WES developed a comprehensive communication and engagement outreach initiative to help it better understand what it needs to do to strengthen its relationship with the communities it serves.

Between January and April 2017, WES undertook several efforts to evaluate its internal and external communications and public involvement practices. Thousands of people were made aware of the input opportunity via emails, mailed notices, social media, open houses, phone calls and meetings.

WES held a special meeting on June 27, 2017, with members of the Tri-City Service District, CCSD No. 1 and regional advisory committees to ensure their input and ideas were included in the assessment and recommendation process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

Is this item in your current budget? X YES NO

What is the cost? \$15,000

What is the funding source? Rate Revenue

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

How does this item align with your Department's Strategic Business Plan goals? A strong advisory committee and appropriate technical and subcommittees help build trusting and sustaining relationships with the communities we serve and our ratepayers.

How does this item align with the County's Performance Clackamas goals? Community input helps ensure that Clackamas County will achieve its goals of building a healthy economy and strong infrastructure.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS: Adoption of the staff recommendation below for a single WES advisory committee would result in one advisory committee representing the business of the Tri-City Service District, Clackamas County Service District No. 1 and the Surface Water Management Agency of Clackamas County, under the umbrella of the new WES entity. To effectuate that purpose, the BCC would need to formally establish the WES Advisory Committee, adopt formal bylaws, and adopt resolutions dissolving each of the existing advisory committees.

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION: WES continues to sustain and strengthen its relationships with its stakeholders and customers at both the regional and local levels for the purpose of maintaining a strong and fully functioning operation that supports surface water and wastewater services in Clackamas County.

OPTIONS:

- 1. WES Advisory Committee Structure and Elected Officials Forum**
 - a. Authorize WES to create a single advisory committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area.
 - b. Authorize County administration staff to create an Elected Officials Forum to discuss matters of concern pertaining to policies and the future of wastewater within WES' service area.

- 2. WES Advisory Committee Structure**
 - a. Authorize WES to create a single WES Advisory Committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area with adjustments requested by the Board.
 - b. Do not move forward with the creation of an Elected Officials Forum.

- 3. Do not create a single WES Advisory Committee or Elected Officials Forum.**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Staff respectfully recommends that the Board of County Commissioners, acting as the governing body of WES, approve Option 1:

WES Advisory Committee Structure and Elected Officials Forum

- a) Authorize WES to create a single WES Advisory Committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area; and
- b) Authorize County administration staff to create an Elected Officials Forum to discuss matters of concern pertaining to policies and the future of wastewater within WES' service area.

ATTACHMENTS:

- WES Communications and Engagement Assessment Executive Summary and Recommendations
- WES Power Point Presentation

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____
Department Director/Head Approval **GG** _____
County Administrator Approval _____

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Greg Geist @ 503-742-4560

WES COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As Clackamas County moves forward after the formalization of the Water Environment Services partnership, WES is reaching out to its customers and stakeholders to better understand what it needs to do to strengthen its relationship with the communities it serves.

After 30 years of excellent service, WES wants the public to understand that its mission remains to protect public health, the environment and the county's economic vitality. WES also wants its customers to understand how they can be involved in the conversation about services and issues that affect their communities and businesses.

To guide the communications and engagement assessment, WES developed the following goals and desired outcomes:

2017-2020 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT GOALS

1. Consistently engage stakeholders regarding operations, rates and capital construction projects to ensure input is available to inform decision-making related to wastewater treatment and protection of rivers and streams.
2. Maintain and enhance relations with the business community, local governments, resident ratepayers and clean water advocates.
3. Ensure the Board of County Commissioners understands and has access to opinions and input from stakeholders related to the wastewater systems and protection of rivers and streams.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Strengthened relationships with ratepayers.
- BCC receives public input to aid decision-making relating to WES.
- Increased visibility of WES as protector of public health, the environment, and ratepayer dollars.
- Enhanced "good neighbor" efforts.
- Strengthened communications between WES and BCC.
- WES staff is well informed and engaged.
- A unified and balanced WES brand that supports surface water and wastewater services.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

In early 2017, WES invited community members to engage in the conversation about how it can keep its customers and stakeholders informed and involved regarding the future of wastewater and surface water services in Clackamas County. This report summarizes initial feedback gathered at WES open houses, through online surveys sent to WES information subscribers, key stakeholders and business associations, face to face conversations and also via social media channels.

WES also held a special meeting on June 27, 2017 with members of the Tri-City Service District, CCSD No. 1 and regional advisory committees to ensure their input and ideas were included in the assessment and recommendation process.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Open houses at the Tri-City plant and participation in online survey show high interest in wastewater treatment and WES

- More than **180** people attended one of four open houses and tours in January and February. More tours are needed to handle the demand/interest.
- **More than 100 open house attendees (86%) said they were “very satisfied” with WES services, while 13 more (12%) said they were “somewhat satisfied.”**
- Many tour attendees and online survey respondents said they appreciated being asked for input.
- About **400** people accessed the online survey to give feedback on communications.
- In collective, more than 500 people provided feedback.
- **Overall, public responses for WES services are quite positive**

Business Feedback

- Businesses want to stay engaged and informed. Several expressed an interest in participating on a committee or advisory group if that would help keep WES projects on track and on time.
- Concerns exist about potential moratoriums. Keeping the economy strong is a top priority. There is a desire for stability and predictability in WES decision-making processes.

Giving Input and Receiving Information

- The majority of respondents to the online survey and at the open houses prefer online and digital methods, such as a survey, to provide input and receive information.
- Calling a WES staff member or BCC representative also is a highly-preferred method to give input.
- WES employees have had much success engaging and educating ratepayers face to face and encourage more opportunities for direct engagement.
- People also report they prefer to obtain information about WES from County emails, printed mailings, local newspapers, and social media.
- Several respondents admitted to not being aware of how the wastewater system and districts operate and what their utility payment is used for.
- People report WES services are critical to the health and well-being of our environment, economy, quality of life, and communities.
- Committee members and businesses emphasize WES must remain cost-effective and proactive in protecting its clean water investments over the long term.
- Committee members reinforce WES needs to ensure rate payers and the communities it serves have a voice at the table with regards to fees, policies, rules and regulations and future investments.
- Community members support WES' desire to engage with its stakeholders on a consistent basis and in a variety of ways for the purpose of building trusting relationships with the communities it serves.
- As it relates to growth, all groups indicated that WES needs to be more proactive in telling its story and helping its customers understand what it does and why it matters, regionally and locally.

Based on input received from survey participants, conversations with key stakeholders and input from advisory committee members, WES is proposing the following shifts in both its communications and community engagement practices.

- Public participation platforms for WES to share information:

WES Open Houses: Continue to offer open houses at the Tri-City and Kellogg Water Resource Recovery facilities to those prototyped in 1Q 2017.

WES Community Outreach and Education: Continue scheduling informational presentations for WES Director and Leadership Team that provide opportunities to tell the WES story, educate the community, and allow for input from ratepayers who live, work and own businesses within the service area.

Current efforts include: WES “Road Show” presentations to business associations, rotary clubs, community planning organizations, chambers, city councils, and environmental advocacy groups. Plus, open houses and tours, direct mailings, bill inserts, newsletters, articles in various publications, social media, printed advertising, county website, information tables.

- Public participation platforms for WES to consult with stakeholders:

Online WES Community: Continue building and leveraging WES subscriber network which currently has almost 7,000 subscribers. Create online panels, subgroups of online community for soliciting input on key issues relating to specialty areas, such as surface water.

- Public participation platforms for WES that involve stakeholders.

WES Technical Workgroup: WES will convene a forum where professional and technical staff from WES and all served member cities’ public works departments can meet to discuss collaborative efforts on technical issues such as wet weather flows, inflow and infiltration, growth, billing practices, working agreements, mutual aid, information sharing, etc.

Tri-City Good Neighbor Committee: Create a Good Neighbor Committee similar to that which serves the Kellogg facility. Ensure neighbors who live, work or own businesses within a designated radius of the Tri-City Water Resource Recovery Facility have an opportunity to offer input on issues related to current and future construction efforts. Committee members will be encouraged to weigh-in on civic investment decisions benefiting their community. Examples include: pathways, beautification efforts, public amenities, lights and other projects.

WES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

WES recognizes and values the vital lines of communication between elected officials, technical staff, ratepayers, stakeholders and businesses within the WES service area of Gladstone, Happy Valley, Johnson City, Milwaukie, Oregon City, West Linn, and its unincorporated communities. In the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, WES understands that a strong advisory committee and appropriate subcommittees help build trusting and sustaining relationships with the communities it serves and its ratepayers.

The following recommendations are intended to represent a long-term goal for a new WES advisory committee structure that would be most ideal from an operational and administrative staff standpoint while simultaneously honoring the request from local elected officials to have a reliable platform for communicating with the BCC on matters relating to wastewater governance.

Staff respectfully recommends that the Board of County Commissioners, acting as the governing body of WES, approve Option 1, which a) authorizes WES to create a single advisory committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area; and b) authorizes County administration to create an Elected Officials Forum to discuss matters of concern pertaining to policies and the future of wastewater within WES' service area.

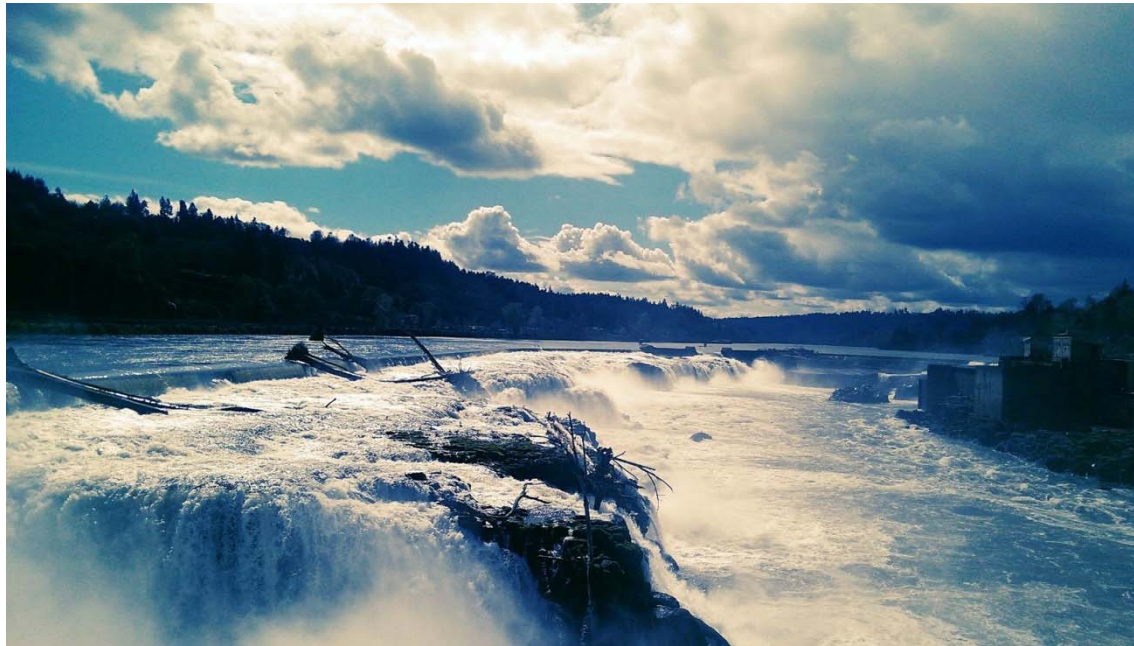
WES Advisory Committee:

Authorize WES to create a single advisory committee, with the budget committee as a subset, for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on wastewater and surface water issues in the WES service area. The committee would contain equitable geographic representation from throughout the service area and would meet bi-monthly (every two months).

- Proposed Membership of Water Environment Services Advisory Committee (WESAC):
 - 6 ratepayers from cities within the service area
 - 2 ratepayers from unincorporated Clackamas County resides in the service area
 - 2 elected officials (one from rate zones 1 and 2)
 - 2 environmental representatives
 - 2 home builders from development community
 - 2 businesses owners or managers from service area
 - 1 non-voting member from WES management
 - 1 non-voting member from BCC
- Proposed Duties and Responsibilities: WESAC would, as requested, review, discuss, debate and make recommendations to the BCC on policy issues and programs of service area, and long range planning processes; and provide WES with feedback on policy, rules and regulations, financial and planning initiatives. WESAC budget committee, a subset of the advisory committee, would consider the operating/capital improvement aspect of WES' annual budget and its long term financial plans as prepared by staff and updated periodically, major policy issues or any other matter as directed by the BCC or as requested by WES staff.

Board of County Commissioners Elected Officials Forum:

Authorize County administration staff to create a forum where elected representatives from WES service area cities have opportunities to communicate concerns and feedback directly to the WES governing body, composed of members from the Board of County Commissioners.



WES Communications and Engagement
Report and Recommendations
August 1, 2017

WES Communications and Engagement

2017-2020 Community Involvement Goals

- Engage with stakeholders
- Maintain relations with the business community, local governments, resident ratepayers, and clean water advocates.
- Ensure BCC has access to opinions and input from stakeholders related to the wastewater systems and protection of rivers and streams.



Communications and Engagement Assessment Process

Assessment Process

WES invited community members, businesses, and WES joint advisory committee members to engage in the conversation about how it can keep its customers and stakeholders informed and involved regarding the future of wastewater and surface water services in Clackamas County.

More than 500 individuals contributed to the assessment via open houses, online surveys, and business feedback.

More than 100 open house attendees (86 %) said they were “very satisfied” with WES services, while 13 more (12 %) said they were “somewhat satisfied.”



Communications and Engagement Assessment Summary

Business Feedback

- Businesses want to stay engaged and informed. Several expressed an interest in participating on a committee or advisory group if that would help keep WES projects on track and on time.
- Concerns exist about potential moratoriums. Keeping the economy strong is a top priority. There is a desire for stability and predictability in WES decision-making processes.



WES Public Involvement Plan

- Expanding WES Open Houses and Tours
- Strengthening WES Community Outreach and Education
- Strengthening Online WES Community
- Creating Tri-City Good Neighbor Committee
- Creating Technical Advisory Team
- Tell the WES Story



Feedback from Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

Why is the work of WES important to your community?

- WES services are critical to the health and well-being of our environment, economy, quality of life, and communities
- WES must remain cost effective and proactive in protecting its clean water investments over the long term
- WES needs to ensure that ratepayers and communities have a voice at the table with regards to fees, policies, rules and regulations and future investments
- WES needs to engage with its stakeholders on a consistent basis and in a variety of ways for the purpose of building trusting relationships with the communities it serves
- As it relates to regional growth, WES needs to be more proactive in telling its story and helping its customers understand what it does and why it matters to customers and region



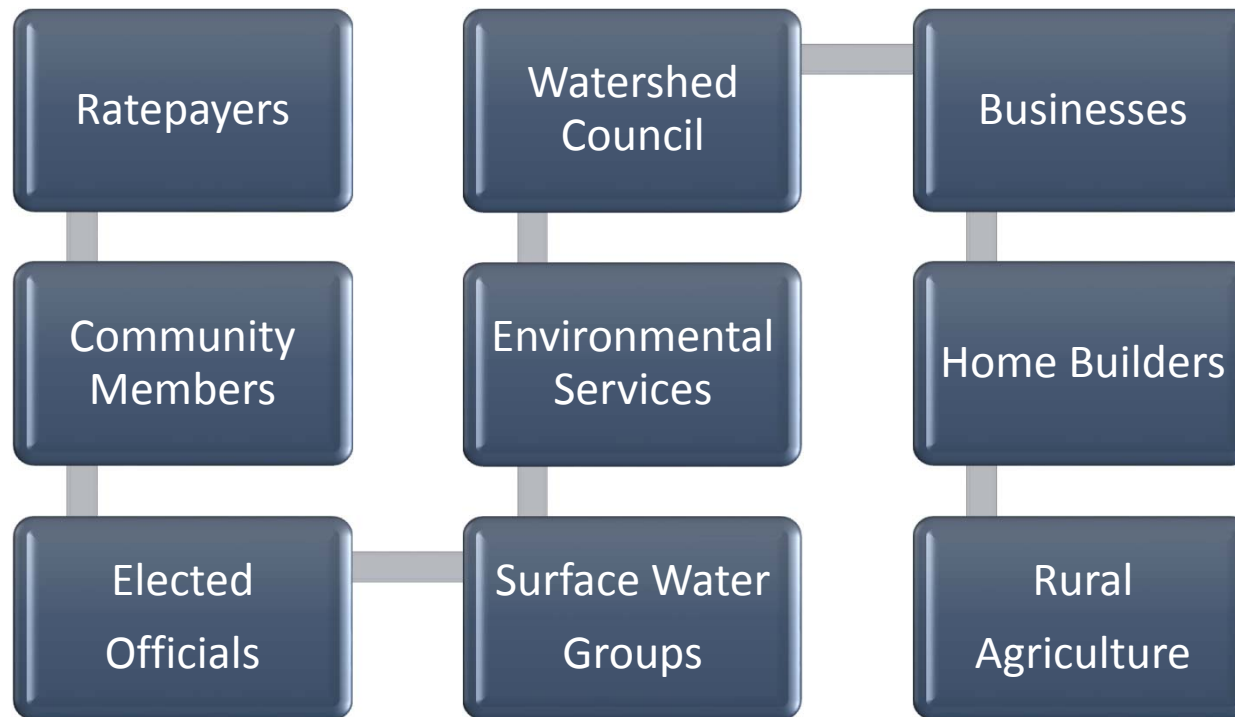
Feedback from Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

What types of experiences or knowledge would be helpful on the new WES Advisory Committee?



Feedback from Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

What are the different community interests or stakeholder groups that should be represented on the new WES Advisory Committee?



Feedback from Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

What agenda topics would be useful to discuss in the new WES Advisory Committee setting?

Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rates• SDC's• Budget• Surcharges
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital Planning• Wastewater Expansion• Surface Water Issues• New Technologies
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity• Financial• Economic Development• Rules and Regulations

Public Involvement Recommendations



WES Advisory Committee Structure Recommendation

- Recommendation: Authorize WES to create a single advisory committee for presentation, discussion, and recommendations on surface water and wastewater issues in WES' service area. Ensure equitable geographic representation from throughout service area.

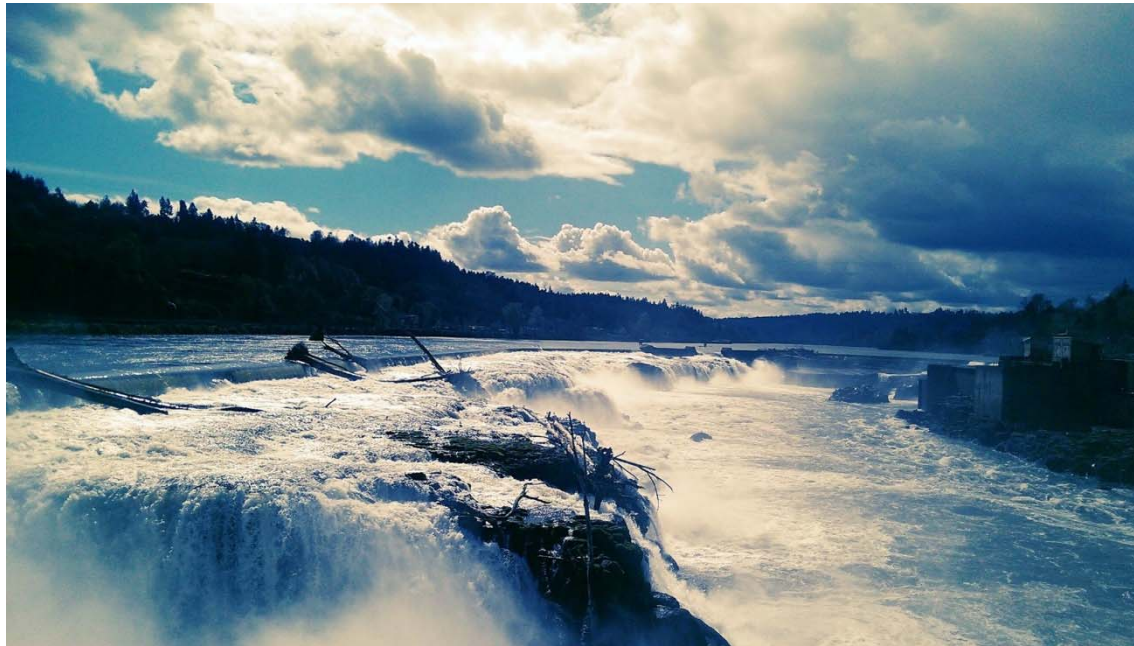
- Membership to include:
 - 6 ratepayers from service area cities
 - 2 ratepayers from the unincorporated portion of Clackamas County that resides in service area
 - 2 elected officials (one from rate zone #1 and rate zone #2)
 - 2 environmental representatives
 - 2 home builders
 - 2 businesses owners or managers from service area
 - 1 non-voting member from WES management
 - 1 non-voting member from BCC



BCC Elected Officials Forum Recommendation

- Recommendation: Authorize County administration staff to create an Elected Officials Forum to discuss matters of concern pertaining to policies and the future of wastewater within the WES service area.





Questions