



Brightwater

T R E A T M E N T S Y S T E M

King County hears public comments at Draft EIS hearings

Four public hearings on the Brightwater Draft Environmental Impact Statement drew about 320 people eager to learn more about the project and submit formal comments on the Draft EIS. The series of meetings, which included an open house with information and displays, took place in the cities of Woodinville, Bothell, Edmonds, and Kenmore.

King County mailed about 60,000 summaries of the Draft EIS to residents, businesses, and property owners who could be affected by the proposed facilities. In addition, the meetings were advertised in local and regional newspapers and on King County's Web site.

Over 50 people made formal oral comments in the hearing rooms, either choosing to speak publicly or one-on-one to a court reporter. Participants also visited the open house displays where the project team answered questions about the Brightwater project.

Forms were available for people to submit written comments. All comments carry equal weight and will receive a response in the Final EIS.

Here is a brief summary of what we heard in the testimony at the meetings:

Proposed Route 9 treatment plant site

Participants pointed out that the Route 9 location requires more miles of pipeline than the Unocal site and may have greater impacts. Some suggested the site is too far from a major water body. They stressed the need to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from possible contamination from spills.

Participants wondered whether there were adequate emergency services in the area if a spill should occur and what would happen during power outages. There was concern the valley setting of the site could trap potential odors and cause them to linger in the area, as they now do from other industries. There were concerns about traffic congestion.

Proposed Unocal treatment plant site

Participants noted that the Unocal site would require significantly more soil excavation, which would result in more trucks and more wear and tear on

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The Brightwater Draft EIS comment period began Nov. 6, 2002 and ended Jan. 21, 2003. Besides hearing over 50 public comments at the December hearings, more than 500 individuals and organizations submitted written comments. Our environmental planning team is carefully reviewing each comment, which will receive a response in the Final EIS when it is released in late 2003.

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King County
Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
**Wastewater Treatment
Division**

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Area residents review a map of the proposed conveyance pipelines. Since most tunneling will be up to several hundred feet underground there will be few, if any, impacts to surface streets and neighborhoods.

the roads. They asked for more information about slope stabilization, particularly regarding earthquakes. They expressed concern about impacts, including potential spills, on a popular waterfront area that includes a dog park, walking areas, and recreational facilities. People asked for more information about traffic impacts, including construction-worker parking. They pointed out that the Edmonds plant already serves several local sewer districts in the area.

Conveyance system

Some people said they were just beginning to learn more about the conveyance system. People expressed concern about odors from conveyance facilities. There were questions about how specific sites for conveyance facilities would be selected and what the construction impacts might be.

Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement



Participants had comments on the document and State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) process. People felt the Draft EIS lacked detail on some issues. Some

asked for more technical information about traffic, aquifers, air quality and economic impacts. Participants suggested additional geotechnical information be gathered on the Route 9 site. People suggested that the air quality analysis include site-specific data on air currents. Some thought the Draft EIS comment period should be extended. People suggested that in addition to the SEPA responsible official, local elected officials should attend the public hearings.

Suggestions for mitigation

Among the many suggestions, participants urged the county to set aside funding as a guarantee that odor won't cause a problem in the area.

Decision-making process

People asked whether the slowing economy would delay the need for Brightwater. They expressed concern that the King County Executive is responsible for making the decision on the system, although many of the proposed facilities would be in Snohomish County.

What's next

The Final EIS will address the questions and comments we received from the public during the Draft EIS comment period, which ran from Nov. 6, 2002, to Jan. 21, 2003.

The public can still be involved in the project by attending upcoming design guidelines workshops and seminars, or by contacting us to express their ideas or concerns. The Final EIS will be released later this year. 

Frequently asked questions at the Draft EIS Hearings

Q. The Route 9 site is twice as big as the Unocal site. If Brightwater were built at Route 9, would the county use additional land to build other county facilities?

No, the Route 9 site will host only facilities needed for Brightwater. The larger space allows for greater flexibility in treatment plant design that could lead to greater efficiency of operation. The site will also allow larger landscaped buffers to help the plant fit in better visually with the community. Some of the land may be developed for parks, nature trails, or other amenities, such as a water resources education center, if the community chooses them as part of the mitigation agreements.

Q. How does King County buy property?

King County routinely buys property for many projects and programs, and has rarely used condemnation to acquire land. King County prefers to work with property owners to negotiate a fair, mutually agreeable purchase price. An appraisal process helps determine property values, and property owners are also invited to submit independent appraisals to the county for consideration. Relocation benefits will be offered to owners and tenants whose property is purchased. Besides buying property, King County will need to purchase easements, or the right to use an owner's property for a specific purpose. We will need easements to cross private property for access, drainage, utilities, and pipeline and tunnel crossings.

Q. King County's existing South Treatment Plant and West Point Treatment Plant both get odor complaints. How can you assure us that Brightwater won't smell?

King County is designing Brightwater with state-of-the-art odor control technologies and processes. Steps taken to prevent odor from being a problem at Brightwater include:

- Keeping odorous processes covered and enclosed, and treating the air before releasing it into the environment.
- Treating air in multiple stages: Three stages of air scrubbing will be provided to ensure odors are eliminated, which is more than what is generally provided at typical treatment plants.
- Installing back-up units: Additional odor "scrubbers" will treat the air even during maintenance. That is beyond what is typical at other plants.
- Planning for the worst case: The odor control facilities will be designed as if stagnant air and high wastewater flows were present every day. Those events are unlikely to happen together, and operating as if these conditions were always present gives us an extra level of odor prevention.
- Improving our existing system: King County is planning odor control improvements at our existing plants and throughout our system.

Q. The economy is slowing down, so do we still need Brightwater if our region isn't growing as fast as planned?

The need for Brightwater was based on 30- to 50-year population projections. Sectors of the economy are bound to change, but long-term projections show our population is expected to grow. According to a January 2002 report from the state Office of Financial Management, more births than deaths will continue to be an important contributor to our state's growth. As for economic impacts on regional population, history shows these growth spurts or contractions have not lasted long. The "Boeing Bust" of the 1970s and a severe recession in California in the early 1990s – followed by the tech boom – prompted short-term changes in our regional growth. However, long-term projections, even considering the current economic downturn, point to population increases in the Greater Puget Sound region. If population growth significantly slows, we can delay expanding the plant, now scheduled for 2040. Meanwhile, recently published information still indicates that Brightwater is needed by 2010 to manage and treat our region's growing volumes of wastewater. 

Other opportunities to be involved in 2003

Many opportunities will be available for the public to be involved in the Brightwater project throughout 2003 and beyond.

Community members can take part in design guidelines workshops to help plan the style and architecture of Brightwater. Community meetings and seminars will be planned so people can learn more about other aspects of the project, like conveyance. For details on upcoming meetings and events, visit our Web site or contact King County. (See below)

Send us your comments, concerns or ideas.

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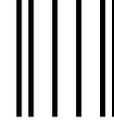
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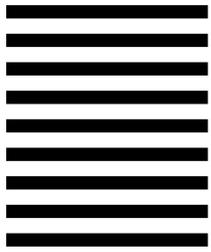
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Project Web Site

Learn more about the project and important decision-making milestones by visiting us at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wtd/brightwater/>



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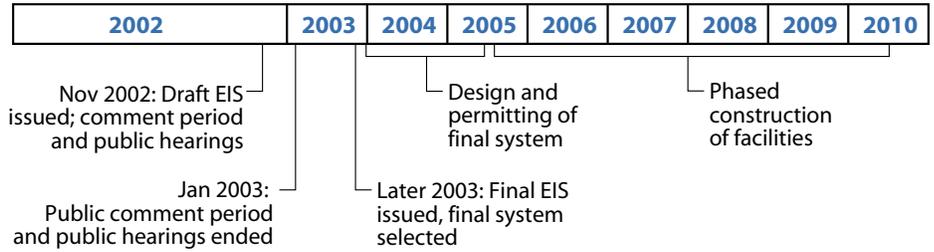
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The Draft EIS formal comment period has closed. However, we still value your opinions and suggestions on many facets of the Brightwater project. Is there a topic you'd like us to cover in a seminar or workshop? Do you have design ideas for facility architecture or landscaping? Please let us know.

Projected Brightwater Timeline



Geotechnical borings unearth soil secrets

The Brightwater system will have conveyance pipelines to carry influent (untreated wastewater) to the treatment plant and to carry effluent (treated wastewater) to the outfall deep in Puget Sound. These pipeline tunnels will be built underground hundreds of feet below the surface along much of their length using highly sophisticated tunnel boring machines.

Before tunneling can begin, our engineers will need to gather additional soil and groundwater samples along the proposed conveyance corridors. These samples will reveal the condition and characteristics of soils, helping us learn about important engineering issues, including soil stability and quality. The work crews also will be installing groundwater observation wells in the soil borings. The wells will aid in gathering data to determine water flow characteristics, levels and pressures. This information will help engineers design the system and determine the best location for building the tunnels.

Beginning in January, work crews will be out along the conveyance corridors conducting geotechnical borings, a series of tests that use drilling machinery to bore deep into the ground to gather geological data. Work crews will be at various locations in north King and south Snohomish counties.

In almost all cases, the work will take place during regular business hours. Drilling sites will be on

road shoulders, less-traveled streets and vacant or low-use areas of private properties near the public right-of-way. King County will contact neighborhoods where crews are scheduled about five to seven days before any work takes place. Residents and business owners will receive a flier with contact information should they have specific questions or concerns, either before or during the work.

If a geotechnical boring crew were to come to a neighborhood, residents might see a truck 20 to 80 feet long with its attached drill rig and possibly another support truck such as a pickup nearby. The crews will have two to seven workers operating the equipment and gathering soil samples.

Because each geotechnical boring will take from two days to two weeks to complete, impacts will be of short duration. The most common impacts to expect will be construction noise and visual impacts from the truck. The boring hole itself will be 50 to 400 feet deep and only 6 to 12 inches in diameter. Once the work is complete, the hole will be capped. The borings do not mean construction of Brightwater has begun.

Geotechnical borings are routinely taken for projects like Brightwater. Similar geotechnical work took place before building the Mercer Street Tunnel for the Denny Way Combined Sewer Overflow Control Project in Seattle. 



Learning about soil characteristics helps us design the tunnels and select the best techniques and equipment for the job.



Before King County starts work, residents will receive advanced information including how to contact us for assistance.



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Produced by the King County
Department of Natural
Resources and Parks
FIRST QUARTER 2003
0301BNewsletter.p65 wgab



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