

**KING COUNTY/CITY OF CARNATION
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
DECISION PROCESS
MARCH 15, 2004**

Overview

King County and the City of Carnation began working together in 2003 to find a suitable site for a new wastewater treatment plant, a conveyance pipeline, and an appropriate use for the highly treated water and/or a discharge location. This facility, which will treat up to 500,000 gallons of wastewater per day, is due to be operational by 2007.

At this time two sites within the city limits of Carnation are under consideration for the treatment plant, the city-owned site at the end of Entwistle Street and the Weckwerth concrete site southeast of downtown. Three possibilities are being considered for the discharge and/or reuse of the highly treated water from the plant. The discharge options include: an outfall into the Snoqualmie River at the Carnation Farm Road Bridge, an upland infiltration site south of the city, and wetlands enhancement at the Stillwater Wildlife Area north of the city. Conveyance pipelines would link the plant to these various discharge options.

The City of Carnation has contracted with King County to identify and analyze possible sites for the treatment plant, conveyance pipeline, and effluent discharge. King County will design, build, and ultimately operate the wastewater treatment plant. Carnation residents will pay for the system through new wastewater rates and/or connection charges.

The City and County have conducted numerous public meetings related to the siting process, and a wastewater treatment citizen advisory committee provided their opinions and feedback throughout the spring/summer of 2003. Currently a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to fully analyze all of the proposed alternatives. The results of the environmental evaluations in the EIS will be one of several factors, which will be considered in making a decision on the final alternative. These factors and the decision making process are described in this document.

Decision Authority

King County will have the ultimate responsibility to ensure that the wastewater treatment plant, conveyance pipeline and discharge are designed and constructed to meet regulatory requirements, and operated effectively, efficiently, and with minimal impact on the environment. For this reason, King County Executive Ron Sims has the ultimate decision-making authority.

The Executive will make his decision in close consultation with the Carnation City Council. The City Council is already receiving regular information and briefings on the site selection process, and will continue to be involved as the EIS and other analyses are completed. The Executive will also consult with the King County Council, in particular the council member representing District 3.

Decision Process

Although the preparation of the draft EIS is currently underway for the proposed project, the environmental information contained in the EIS is just one factor in the final siting decision. For example, an EIS does not consider costs. Costs and several other factors will also contribute to the decision. Those factors are described in the next section of this document. In this section, the decision process is laid out. A tentative decision timeline is attached at the end of this document.

In April 2004 both the County Executive and the Carnation City Council will be asked to review and approve the decision criteria and process described in this document. The City Council will be asked to formally approve this process in April 2004, before the draft EIS is issued for public review and comment.

The draft EIS is scheduled for completion in late spring 2004. The City Council will be given a briefing on the draft EIS and provided an opportunity to submit comments during the public comment period.

In the summer of 2004, County staff will brief City Council on the other decision factors that are not addressed in the EIS. This briefing will help prepare the Council to conduct its evaluation of those factors.

Comments will be addressed in the final EIS, which will be completed in early fall 2004. Completion of the final EIS will enable both the City Council and the County Executive to move forward with their comprehensive evaluation of the treatment plant and discharge alternatives.

In fall 2004, County staff will present their findings and recommendations on the wastewater treatment plant site, conveyance pipeline and discharge alternative to the County Executive and the Carnation City Council. The evaluation will be presented verbally and in writing, and will include a discussion of the results of the final EIS as well as all the other decision factors (financial, community, environmental, engineering and policy) presented later in this document. The City Council will then review the findings/recommendations and prepare a memorandum to the County, which responds to the County's recommendation on the final alternative.

The City Council will respond by outlining their own conclusions, areas of agreement/disagreement, and possibilities for change/compromise to the County's recommends. This response will be completed by fall 2004.

County staff will then brief the County Executive on the results of the evaluation including the final EIS, other considering factors, the County's recommendation and, most importantly, the City's response. The Executive will review this information and carefully consider the City's response and comments in selecting the best option for Carnation's wastewater treatment plant, conveyance pipeline and discharge location.

The Executive will then communicate the County's final decision – and the rationale supporting it – back to the Carnation City Council and the public by the fall 2004. Every attempt will be made to ensure that the City and the County have agreement on the final decision. If an agreement can not be reached, then according to the Sewer Services Agreement, the City may choose to cancel the Agreement. The City would then be responsible for treatment services and reimbursing the County for work conducted to date.

Final design and permitting of the new facilities is anticipated to last through mid-2005 when construction will commence. Carnation's new wastewater treatment system is due to be up and running by mid-2007.

KEY DECISION FACTORS

The decision on where to locate the City of Carnation's wastewater treatment plant, conveyance pipeline and associated discharge will be made according to the following factors. All factors will be considered equally; the order here does not imply a ranking of greater importance between one factor and another.

Financial

Wastewater treatment is new to the City of Carnation. Both residents and businesses are currently using septic systems. While these have been adequate in the past for the City, many aging systems are beginning to fail. Failing systems have led to public health concerns and the City has not been able to take advantage of economic development opportunities due to the lack of centralized wastewater treatment.

City businesses and residents will have to pay for the new sewer system through new wastewater rates and connection charges. The anticipated rates will have a significant impact on City residents. In evaluating the various alternatives against this financial criterion, Executive Sims and the Carnation City Council will be asking the following types of questions:

- ◆ How do the treatment plant sites compare in terms of overall cost? Are there cost differences associated with the purchase price of the two properties? Are there differences in the capital costs associated with building on each of the sites? Are there differences in the anticipated operation and maintenance costs associated with each site? Would the selection of one site over another enable King County or the City to reduce its system costs?
- ◆ How do the discharge options compare in terms of overall cost? Do the alternatives differ in relation to the land or easements that would be required? What about right-of-way purchases? Do the alternatives differ in terms of construction costs? What about long-term operation and maintenance? Would the selection of one alternative over another enable King County or the City to reduce its overall system costs?
- ◆ State and/or federal grants may be available to assist with the development of Carnation's new wastewater facilities, depending on the type of treatment and discharge selected. By obtaining these grants, it may be possible to implement the new system by charging lower wastewater rates to Carnation residents. Is one of the system alternatives likely to be more effective than the others in leveraging grant funding? Might it be possible to use this funding to lower wastewater rates?

The source(s) of information to be used to evaluate this factor include:

- The King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan
- The City of Carnation comprehensive sewer plan and facilities plan
- Staff memo on availability of grants

Community

Many potential impacts to the community from the new wastewater treatment system will be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement. Both the Executive and the City Council will evaluate this information as they weigh one alternative against another. The primary questions that have been asked by the community to date, and that will remain priorities for the Executive and City Council include:

- ◆ Are there differences in the way the two treatment plant sites function within their neighborhoods? Is one site fundamentally more suited for the plant than the other due to possible visual impacts? What about possible impacts such as traffic during construction? Is either site more suited than the other for mitigation opportunities – for example, can plant odors be more effectively prevented/mitigated at one site over another?
- ◆ Likewise, how do the discharge alternatives compare in terms of interaction with the surrounding rural community? Does one of them have substantially fewer community impacts?

The source(s) of information to be used to evaluate this factor include:

- Draft EIS and Final EIS

- City staff memo on how treatment plant sites function within community
- County staff memo on discharge sites

Environmental

Environmental impacts will be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement, and this analysis will provide important information for both the Executive and the Carnation City Council. The key environmental questions that have been raised to date include:

- ◆ How do the alternatives compare in terms of overall protection of biological resources? Does one of the options – whether it is a treatment plant location or discharge alternative – do a fundamentally better job of protecting biological resources?
- ◆ Are there any cultural resources in the vicinity of either of the plant sites or discharge options? Are there differences between the alternatives in this regard?
- ◆ How do the discharge alternatives compare in terms of water quality protection? Does one of them do a fundamentally better job of enhancing/protecting surface and groundwater quality?
- ◆ How do the discharge alternatives compare in terms of water quantity? Will one of them do a better job of protecting against flooding in the area?

The source(s) of information to be used to evaluate this factor include:

- Draft EIS and Final EIS

Engineering

Ultimately, the design and engineering of Carnation’s wastewater treatment facilities must result in a system that can be built, and that will operate effectively well into the future. The plant and discharge options under consideration are based on well-proven technologies. Examples of the questions will be used to compare the various alternatives include:

- ◆ Do any of the treatment plant sites or discharge options provide an advantage in terms of meeting the schedule outlined in the agreement between the City and County for development of the treatment plant?
- ◆ Does either of the treatment plant sites or discharge options have advantages over the others in terms of flexibility? For example, can one of them be more easily modified should operational needs change in the future?
- ◆ Does either of the options consume less energy than the another? Is any more cost effective in terms of energy use and/or cost?

- ◆ Do any of the alternatives provide significant differences in terms of the ability to manage flows during emergencies? Do any of the options have advantages over the others in this regard?
- ◆ Are there risks associated with either of the treatment plant sites or the discharge options? What is the long-term operational experience associated with these proposed technologies?
- ◆ Will any of the treatment plant sites or discharge options provide for safer, more reliable operations in comparison to the other alternatives?

The source(s) of information to be used to evaluate this factor include:

- King County facilities plan
- City of Carnation comprehensive sewer plan and facilities plan

Policy Considerations

In addition to the other criteria listed here, it will be important to evaluate how well the various alternatives contribute to the advancement of important policy issues. Neither King County nor the City of Carnation operates in a vacuum; both are part of the greater Puget Sound region, and are interdependent with other jurisdictions, regulatory agencies, and the natural environment. To that end, the decision on where to site the new wastewater treatment facilities must also be weighed against broader policy considerations.

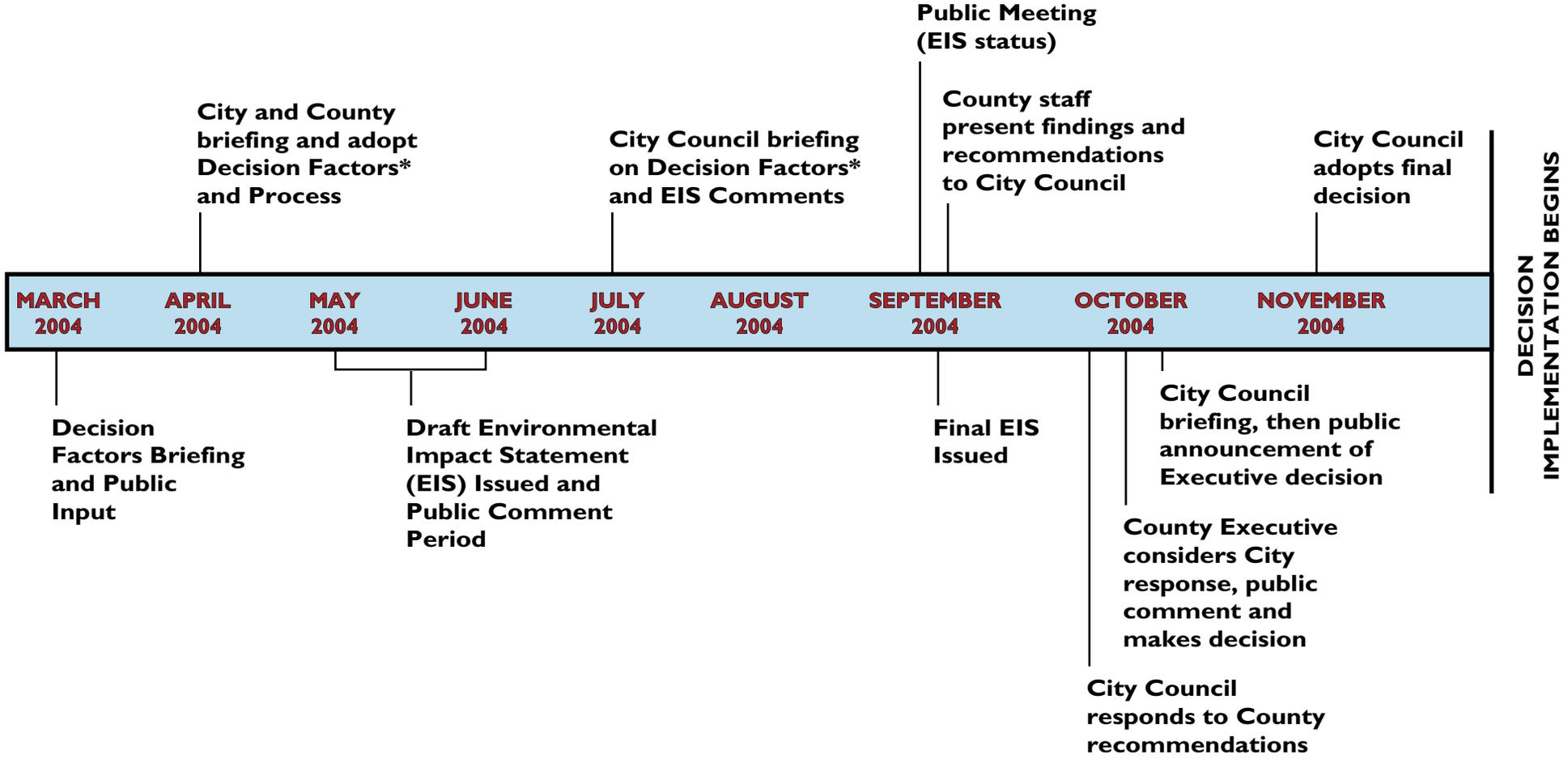
- ◆ Do any of the alternatives contribute significantly to sustainability in our region? How do they measure up against each other in this regard?
- ◆ Do any of the alternatives contribute in a significant way to the greater good of the region and/or the community? Are we able to achieve other policy objectives through the use of one alternative over another?
- ◆ Do any of the alternatives create or enhance partnerships that contribute to the overall greater good or lower costs?
- ◆ Are there differences in how each of the alternatives can enhance regional cooperation? Is one more effective than the others in developing stronger regional partnerships?
- ◆ Which of the options will provide the greatest opportunity for water reuse, which is an important emerging policy direction throughout King County?

The source(s) of information to be used to evaluate this factor include:

- City and County staff memos

PROPOSED

**CARNATION WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
DECISION PROCESS TIMELINE**



*Decision Factors include financial, community, environment, engineering and policy considerations