



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks

**Wastewater Treatment Division**

# RATEPAYER REPORT



*Creating Resources from Wastewater*

# A message from the King County Executive...

## Dear community member:



Thank you for taking the time to read the Wastewater Treatment Division's Ratepayer Report.

Communicating with ratepayers has long been an integral part of our business, whether it's hosting treatment plant tours, holding public meetings or workshops, attending community events, conducting surveys, soliciting community input on project plans, or keeping people informed about wastewater construction projects under way in their neighborhood.

 ~~In keeping with this practice, we've developed this newsletter to share information about a proposed \$2.25 increase in the monthly sewer rate, bringing it to \$30.20 per month. I am also proposing a \$1.39 per month increase in the capacity charge levied to newly connecting customers that they pay in addition to their monthly sewer bill, bringing the amount to \$47.64. If adopted by the King County Council, these new rates will take effect on Jan. 1, 2009.~~

The revenue from the rate and capacity charge will cover the cost of carrying out crucial infrastructure projects outlined in the King County Council-approved Regional Wastewater Services Plan, a 30-year comprehensive plan to ensure we have enough wastewater treatment capacity to protect public health and the environment for our growing population.

In addition to population growth, many of our facilities will reach the end of their useful lifespan, and we need to continue investing in maintaining and upgrading our system to ensure the next generation enjoys a quality of life that makes this region a great place to live, work and play.

The King County Council will begin review and discussion of our 2009 rate proposal this spring. As this process gets under way, we want you to understand not just how these rate increases could impact sewer bills, but how your sewer bill is an investment in clean water with tangible returns.

It's all too easy to take clean water for granted. But clean water isn't cheap, and we don't attain it by inaction. It takes a combination of planning, investment and the support of elected representatives, business leaders and community members like you.

We hope this newsletter increases your understanding of the business we do and the service we provide, and the important role wastewater treatment plays in preserving our natural resources and quality of life.

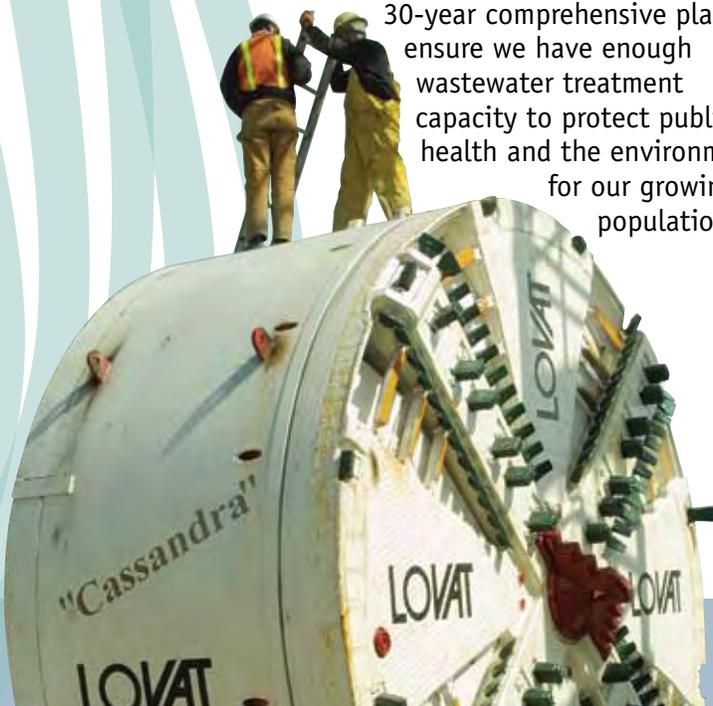
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Sims".

Ron Sims  
King County Executive

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# The history of our mission

*From this...*



In the 1950s, wastewater flowed largely untreated into Lake Washington and Puget Sound and many rivers and smaller lakes, fouling water and making a sullied mess of local beaches.

In 1958 the voters created Metro and developed a regional wastewater treatment system based on watersheds as opposed to political boundaries.

Shortly after Metro was formed, construction began on the county's two existing regional treatment plants, West Point in Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood and South Treatment Plant in Renton, which were officially up and running by 1966. By the late 1960s, regional water quality began improving dramatically.

In 1994, King County assumed authority of Metro and its legal obligation to treat wastewater for 34 local jurisdictions and local sewer agencies that contract with King County.



*Clean water starts here. An employee at work at South Plant in Renton.*

*To this...*



## King County's Wastewater Treatment Division – a clean-water agency

**Our mission is to protect public health and enhance the environment by treating and reclaiming water, recycling solids and generating energy.**

### Fast Facts About the System

**Population served** – 1.4 million

**Area served** – 420 square miles

**Sewage treated** – about 200 million gallons per day

**Septic waste treated** – 15.1 million gallons per year

**Regional treatment plants** – 2

**Local treatment plants** – 1 on Vashon Island

**Treatment plants in construction** – 2

**Wet weather treatment plants** – 4

**Pump stations** – 42

**Regulator stations** – 19

# *A regional system - serving our local partners and you*

**Under the regional system** established by voters in 1958, the local sewer utilities no longer build and operate their own individual treatment plants.

The local sewer agencies that contract with King County (listed at right) manage, operate and maintain 5,100 miles of collection pipes along with numerous pump and regulator stations. The local agencies collect wastewater from residences and businesses and transport it to King County's regional system of pipelines, tunnels and treatment plants.

The amount the local utility pays King County for this service is based on the current wholesale monthly sewer rate of \$27.95 and the number of customers the local utility serves.

The monthly sewer rate you pay to your local utility includes the county's monthly wholesale rate of \$27.95, plus the rate set by your local sewer utility to cover its costs in building, operating and maintaining its local collection system.

This also explains why your monthly bill comes from your local sewer utility instead of King County – because people do not connect directly to our regional sewer system. (King County does directly bill newly connecting customers for the capacity charge they pay in addition to their monthly sewer bill – for more information see Page 14).

The local agencies that pay King County for collecting and treating their wastewater are important stakeholders who advise Wastewater Treatment Division management and staff as well as the King County Executive and Council on issues related to sewage collection and treatment.

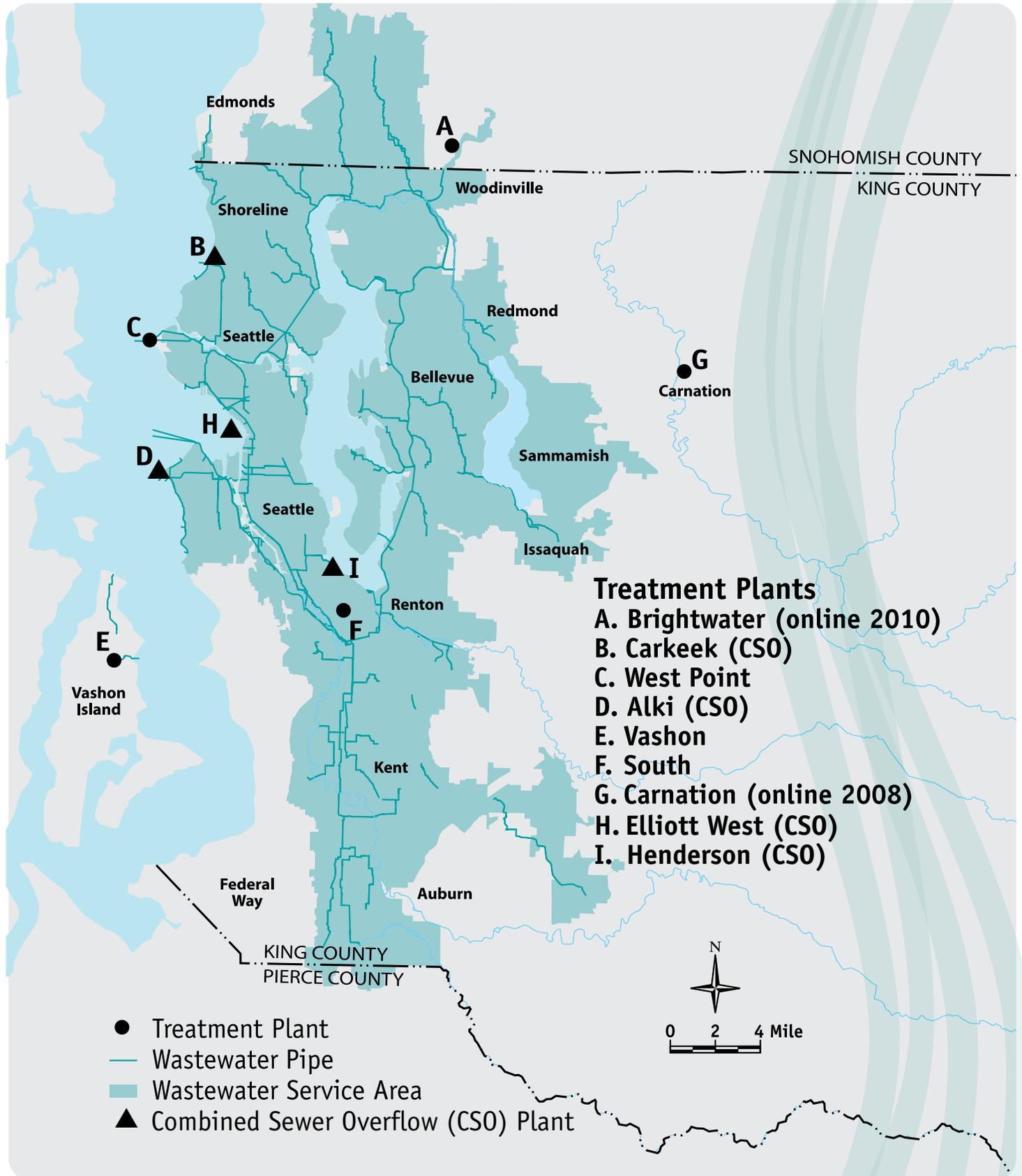
## **Why a regional system?**

There are several advantages to a regional system. It is less expensive overall to construct and operate a few large treatment facilities rather than numerous smaller ones. It allows costs to be spread over a larger customer base, which helps keep rates stable. Everyone contributes and everyone benefits from clean water and a healthy environment – our natural amenities, including Lake Washington and Puget Sound, are a true regional treasure and it's the collective responsibility of everyone to protect them.

## *The customer agencies served by King County*

Alderwood Water & Wastewater District  
City of Algona, Public Works  
City of Auburn, Public Works  
City of Bellevue, Utility Services  
City of Black Diamond, Public Works  
City of Bothell, Public Works  
City of Brier, Public Works  
City of Carnation, Public Works  
Cedar River Water & Sewer District  
Coal Creek Utility District  
Cross Valley Water District  
Highlands Sewer District  
City of Issaquah, Public Works  
City of Kent, Public Works  
City of Kirkland, Public Works  
City of Lake Forest Park, Public Works  
Lakehaven Utility District  
City of Mercer Island, Maintenance  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
Northeast Sammamish Sewer & Water District  
Northshore Utility District  
Olympic View Water and Sewer District  
City of Pacific, Public Utilities  
City of Redmond, Public Works  
City of Renton, Public Works  
Ronald Wastewater District  
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District  
City of Seattle, Public Utilities  
Skyway Water and Sewer District  
Soos Creek Water & Sewer District  
City of Tukwila, Public Works  
Valley View Sewer District  
(formerly Val Vue Sewer District)  
Vashon Sewer District  
Woodinville Water District

# Our service area and facilities



# The wastewater treatment process

**That flush** may be the end for you, but for us, it's only where we get started.

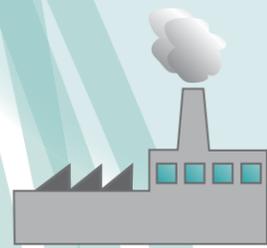
On an average day, you'll likely use about 75 to 100 gallons of water. After you flush a toilet, brush your teeth, wash clothes, or take a shower, that "used" water leaves your house, but it doesn't go away.

King County works with your local sewer agency to take the sewage from your home or workplace, clean it, recycle it, and return it safely to the environment.

*Sewage travels through miles of pipelines before entering a treatment plant.*



Homes & Businesses



Industries

**WASTEWATER SOURCES**



Local Sewer Pipes

**Water & Solids**

**Regional Sewer Pipes & Pumps**

*Overflows of sewage and stormwater can sometimes occur in older areas of Seattle during heavy rains. Though these combined sewer overflows (CSOs) are 90 percent stormwater, they can impact water quality and pose public health risks. King County has a program to control CSOs and meet water quality standards set by Department of Ecology.*

*Once at the treatment plant, trash and dirt are removed and taken to a landfill.*

*The organic solids, made up of human waste and food waste, are removed from the water through natural biological processes that use bacteria, oxygen and settling tanks to separate the water from the solids.*



**REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS**

**Clean Water**

**Additional treatment**

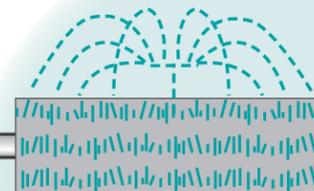
PUGET SOUND

*All organic solids removed from the water are treated in a separate biological process that creates nutrient-rich biosolids, which can be used as a fertilizer and soil amendment. Waste gas from the digester process is captured, scrubbed and turned into natural gas or electricity.*

**Energy Recovery**



**Biosolids Recycling**



**Reclaimed Water**

*The treated water is then disinfected and either returned to Puget Sound or treated further for industrial or irrigation uses.*

**RECYCLED & REUSED PRODUCTS**

## Protecting water quality starts with you



**Don't trash the system.** Putting trash in toilets and drains can clog our pipes and damage our pumping equipment.

**Think 'green' when you can.** Choosing environmentally friendly, biodegradable household cleaning and personal care products minimizes the entry of harmful chemicals into the environment.



**Disconnect.** Too much water in the system creates overflows and pollutes the environment – disconnect downspouts from the sewer system and redirect them to lawns and gardens.

**Conserve.** Conserving water reduces your monthly bill and prevents excess water from entering the system, so there's less to treat.

# Our services



*West Point Treatment Plant in Seattle*



*South Plant in Renton*

## Treatment

Residents, businesses and industries in our 420-square mile service area create enough wastewater to fill 300 Olympic-sized swimming pools – each **day**.

Multiply that times 365, and you get an idea of the magnitude of the Wastewater Treatment Division's responsibilities.

During extreme storms like those we experienced in December 2006 and 2007, peak flow volumes can easily exceed 700 million gallons per day.

Regardless of weather conditions or flow volumes, King County is required to protect people and the environment by meeting its state and federal permit standards – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Conveyance

Our regional wastewater treatment system includes 353 miles of pipelines – that's just about the distance from Vancouver, B.C. to Salem, Oregon.

The conveyance system also includes 42 pump stations and 19 regulator stations, which operate around the clock to get the wastewater where it needs to go.

Division employees must continually inspect, monitor and maintain these facilities to ensure they're performing reliably in all types of weather and flow conditions.



*Our pipes range in diameter from 12 inches to 14 feet. Some of these pipes are more than 100 years old.*



*The York Pump Station near Redmond was designed to fit into its rural surroundings.*

## Reducing Infiltration and Inflow

About 75 percent of the peak flows traveling through King County sewer lines during winter storms began the journey as clean water that entered the system through cracked pipes, leaky manholes, improperly connected storm drains, down spouts and sump pumps. Most infiltration and inflow, or I/I, originates in the local sewer system or on private property.

Because extra water in the sewer pipes can strain capacity, cause overflows and cost ratepayers money, King County's I/I control program is partnering with local sewer agencies to develop cost-effective programs to better control I/I.

## Reclamation

### Taking the "waste" out of wastewater

The Wastewater Treatment Division does more than just treat wastewater – we create resources from the wastewater we treat.

Continued investments in new process technologies and programs enable us to produce natural gas and electricity, water for irrigation and industrial processes, and biosolids to nourish soil and benefit agriculture and forestry.

Reusing and recycling helps conserve resources while keeping pollution and waste out of the air, our landfills and local water bodies.

### Source control—keeping pollution out of the system

The Wastewater Treatment Division also operates an Industrial Waste Program that was the first of its kind in the nation when it was introduced in 1969. Our employees enforce pollution control regulations while educating companies about environmental protection and pretreating industrial waste.

Industrial wastewater pretreatment prevents dangerous substances from getting into the sewer system and damaging facilities, harming plant workers, killing marine life or reducing water quality and the quality of our biosolids and reclaimed water.



*Last year, King County produced more than 114,000 tons of biosolids, enough to fertilize 7,000 acres of farms and forests, and make compost for landscapes and gardens.*



*Methane gas is captured, scrubbed and turned into energy that's used to power plant processes or sold to local utilities. King County's plants produce about 5 megawatts of electricity a year that's used onsite, enough to power 500 homes annually, and the 5.3 million therms of natural gas produced at our plants is enough to heat more than 16,500 homes in a year.*

*Our treatment plants produce about 293 million gallons of reclaimed water each year. In addition to conserving fresh water, reclaimed water reduces effluent discharges to Puget Sound.*

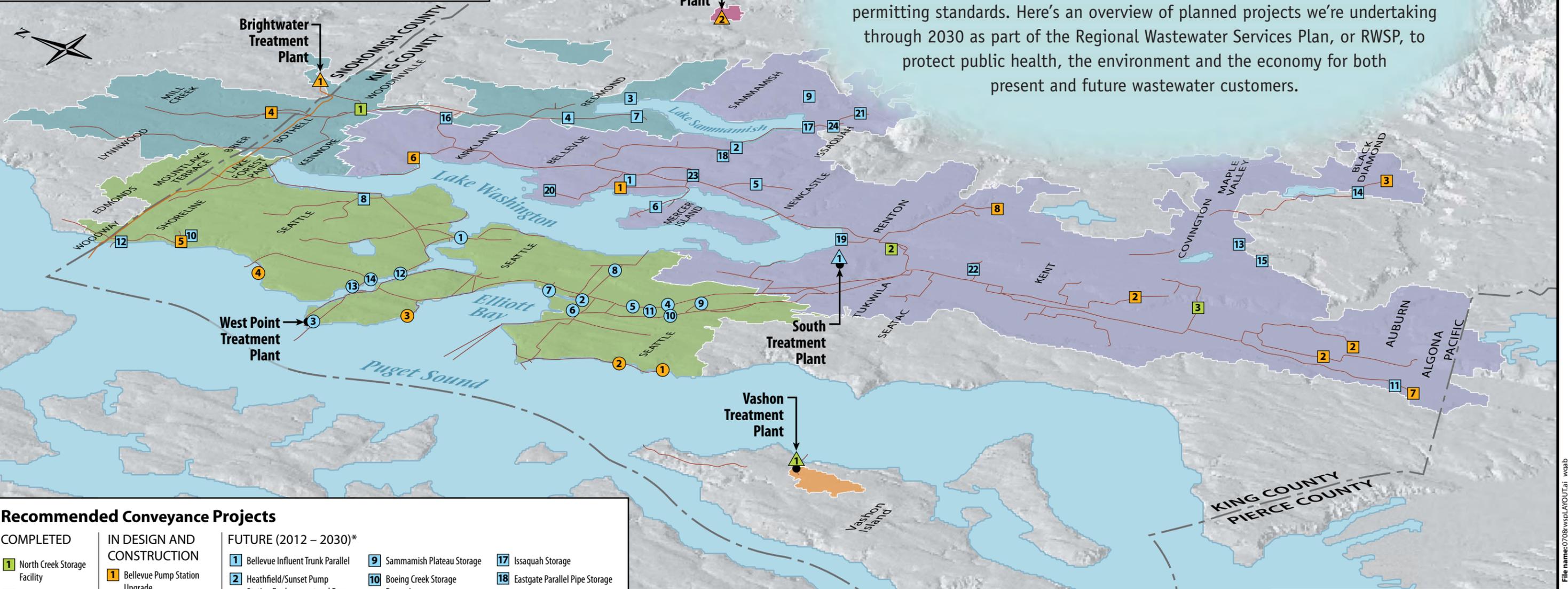


*An employee takes a sampling device from a manhole to monitor wastewater.*

# System investments

## Regional Wastewater Services Plan Treatment Plant Projects

- | COMPLETED  | UNDER CONSTRUCTION   | FUTURE  |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Upgrades to Vashon Treatment Plant</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Brightwater Treatment Plant (2010)</li> <li>2 Carnation Treatment Plant (2008)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Increase South Plant Capacity to 135 mgd (2029)</li> </ul> |



## Capital projects...

With another million people expected to make their home in the Puget Sound region by the end of the next decade, King County needs to make sure its regional wastewater system keeps pace with growth and meets permitting standards. Here's an overview of planned projects we're undertaking through 2030 as part of the Regional Wastewater Services Plan, or RWSP, to protect public health, the environment and the economy for both present and future wastewater customers.

## Recommended Conveyance Projects

- | COMPLETED   | IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION  | FUTURE (2012 – 2030)*  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 North Creek Storage Facility</li> <li>2 Eastside Interceptor Section 1</li> <li>3 Mill Creek Relief Sewer</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Bellevue Pump Station Upgrade</li> <li>2 Kent/Auburn Conveyance System Improvement Project</li> <li>3 Black Diamond Storage</li> <li>4 North Creek Pipeline</li> <li>5 Hidden Lake Pump Station and Sewer Improvement Project</li> <li>6 Juanita Bay Pump Station Replacement Project</li> <li>7 Pacific Pump Station</li> <li>8 Fairwood Interceptor Sewer Project</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Bellevue Influent Trunk Parallel</li> <li>2 Heathfield/Sunset Pump Station Replacement and Force Main Upgrade</li> <li>3 Sammamish Plateau Diversion</li> <li>4 Northwest Lake Sammamish Interceptor Parallel</li> <li>5 Coal Creek Siphon and Trunk Parallel</li> <li>6 North Mercer and Enatai Interceptor Parallels</li> <li>7 Lake Hills Trunk Replacement</li> <li>8 Thornton Creek Interceptor Parallels</li> <li>9 Sammamish Plateau Storage</li> <li>10 Boeing Creek Storage Expansion</li> <li>11 Algona Pacific Trunk Stage 1</li> <li>12 Richmond Beach Storage</li> <li>13 Soos Pump Station D with Conveyance</li> <li>14 Soos Pump Station H with Conveyance</li> <li>15 Soos Pump Station B with Conveyance</li> <li>16 York Pump Station Modifications</li> <li>17 Issaquah Storage</li> <li>18 Eastgate Parallel Pipe Storage</li> <li>19 Bryn Mawr Storage</li> <li>20 Medina Storage</li> <li>21 Issaquah Creek Highlands Storage</li> <li>22 South Renton Interceptor Parallel</li> <li>23 Factoria Pump Station and Trunk Diversion</li> <li>24 Issaquah Interceptor Section 2 Parallel</li> </ul> |

\* Modifications or changes to future projects may occur based on new information gathered in future years.

## Recommended Combined Sewer Overflow Control Projects

- | IN DESIGN (TO BE COMPLETED IN 2012)   | PROJECTS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION DURING 2015 – 2030*  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Barton Street</li> <li>2 Murray Avenue</li> <li>3 South Magnolia</li> <li>4 North Beach</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Chelan Avenue</li> <li>7 King Street/Kingdome</li> <li>8 Hanford at Rainier Avenue</li> <li>9 8th Avenue S</li> <li>10 West Michigan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Terminal 115</li> <li>12 3rd Avenue W</li> <li>13 Ballard</li> <li>14 11th Avenue W</li> </ul> |  |

\* Modifications or changes to future projects may occur based on new information gathered in future years.

- Brightwater Service Area
- West Service Area
- South Service Area
- Carnation Service Area
- Vashon Service Area
- Existing Wastewater Pipeline
- Brightwater Conveyance

# Clean-water projects now under way

Here is a list of some of the major projects now under way to upgrade and replace aging facilities, expand existing ones and build new facilities to provide enough wastewater treatment capacity for the region's growing population.

**Brightwater Treatment System:** Construction is well under way on the \$1.8 billion Brightwater treatment system, the county's largest clean-water project in 40 years. In 2008, we'll spend about \$150 million to begin building facilities to process solids, control odors and power the plant. The North Mitigation Area, which includes 40 acres of open space at the north portion of the treatment plant site, is scheduled to open for public use in late 2008.

We've budgeted about \$200 million in 2008 for construction on the conveyance system, which includes a pump station in Bothell and a 13-mile-long wastewater pipeline that will run 40 to 450 feet below ground from the Brightwater Treatment Plant north of Woodinville to Point Wells north of Shoreline. All four tunnel boring machines will be running this year, and construction will start on the 600-foot-deep marine outfall this fall.

**Carnation Wastewater Treatment Facility:** In 2008, we will complete construction on the \$20 million wastewater treatment plant to replace aging septic systems in the City of Carnation. The project includes a 59-acre wetland enhancement project at Chinook Bend Natural Area that will use reclaimed water from the new Carnation plant to improve fish and wildlife habitat along the Snoqualmie River. The Chinook Bend Natural Area will serve as the primary discharge point for the plant.

**Juanita Bay Pump Station Replacement Project:** We'll complete construction on a new pump station project in north Kirkland that will double pumping capacity to 30.6 million gallons per day.

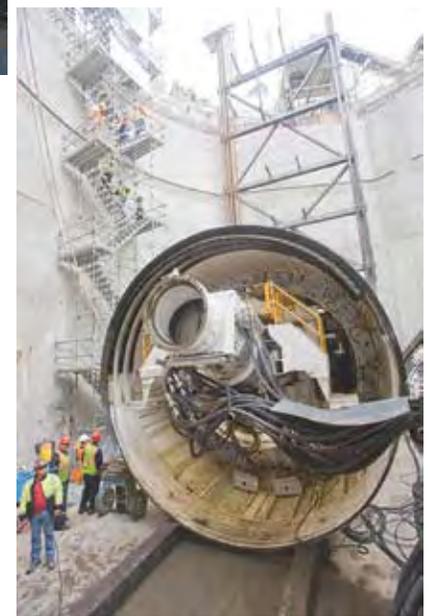
**Hidden Lake Pump Station/Boeing Creek Trunk:** We're replacing the existing 40-year-old Hidden Lake Pump Station with a new 6.8-million-gallon-a-day pump station and 12,000 feet of new sewer trunk line near Boeing Creek in Shoreline.

**North Creek Interceptor:** In 2008, King County and Alderwood Water and Wastewater District will move ahead on an \$18.9 million project to expand capacity in the North Creek Interceptor, which carries wastewater from a large portion of south Snohomish County to King County's wastewater treatment plants.

**Combined Sewer Overflow Control:** The county will continue its program to reduce combined sewer overflows, or CSOs, that occur in older parts of the system during heavy rains, degrading water quality and posing public health risks. The Puget Sound Beaches project will focus on CSO control near four popular Seattle recreation areas.



*Construction begins on a treatment plant process tank building on the Brightwater site north of Woodinville.*



*A tunnel boring machine named Luminita was launched at the North Creek portal in Bothell in 2007 to begin digging one segment of the 13-mile Brightwater conveyance tunnel.*



*Mitigation at the Brightwater plant site includes replacing auto wrecking yards and industrial uses with attractively designed buildings, restored habitat and open space for public use.*

**Sediment Management Program:** This program enables King County to proactively address historical sediment contamination near combined sewer overflow locations in Puget Sound. The county just completed a \$3.6 million project to remove about 14,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment at the old Denny Way outfall near Myrtle Edwards Park.

**Lower Duwamish Waterway Cleanup:** We'll continue our commitment to cleaning up contaminated sediments, implementing source control actions, and complying with agreements with regulators and local governments. We'll also continue collaborating with the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle and The Boeing Company on the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund site, which is part of a long-term cleanup effort.

**53rd Avenue Pump Station:** Construction will begin in 2008 at this Alki pump station to increase system reliability and help make the facility a better neighbor. The county will install new odor control equipment, upgrade the facility's electrical and mechanical systems and double the size of the below-ground pump station.

**Ballard Siphon:** To protect water quality in the Lake Washington Ship Canal, King County is investing \$13.3 million in the Ballard Siphon Project, which will rehabilitate a 70-year-old wooden sewer pipe that extends across the floor of Salmon Bay near the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks.

**Kent/Auburn Conveyance System Improvement Project:** This project will expand capacity in the rapidly growing south portion of King County's service area by adding approximately five miles of pipes in Kent, Auburn, Algona and Pacific.

**Black Diamond Wastewater Storage Facility:** The county will invest in an underground wastewater storage facility in the City of Black Diamond that will extend the life of existing equipment and defer the need to build additional new conveyance pipes and pumping facilities for several years.

**South Plant Odor Control Improvements:** To be a good neighbor and protect air quality in the South Treatment Plant's host community, we'll invest \$7 million to upgrade odor control systems at the 42-year-old treatment plant.

**Emergency Generator Program:** Since 2002, King County has installed emergency backup power systems in nearly all of its offsite facilities to help prevent sewage backups during electrical outages. In 2008, the county will invest about \$3.7 million on projects to install new generators in the Barton and Murray pump stations in West Seattle, and on project plans to replace or rehabilitate aging generators at other facilities.

### *Being a good neighbor...*

*Protecting our regional quality of life isn't our only goal. We also take pride in building and operating facilities that are good neighbors in communities that host our facilities. Odor control, landscaping, attractive architecture, construction mitigation and even public art help our facilities blend in and meet community standards.*

# Protecting our assets

**It would cost** about \$20 billion to build King County's wastewater system from the ground up today, and the value of our facilities as they now stand is estimated at about \$4 billion.

Naturally, we put a high priority on managing and maintaining our buildings, treatment plants, pump stations, manholes, pipelines, as well as the property surrounding them.

The county's Asset Management Program oversees inspection of the regional treatment system, repairing and replacing aging facilities and developing plans to address ongoing system issues.



*Sonar inspections and closed-circuit cameras help inspection crews detect pipe deterioration.*



*One of our biggest ongoing asset management challenges is directly related to the age of the system – pipe corrosion. Investments in repairing and rehabilitating these aging pipes will help prevent system failures, overflows and costly emergency repairs.*



*Employees install coatings, linings and sealants to extend the life of our pipelines and equipment.*

# Planning for growth

**Planning and building** new wastewater infrastructure is extremely complex. It can easily take a decade or more to go from identifying a project need to cutting the ribbon on a newly completed facility.

Because investments in wastewater infrastructure are significant, the Wastewater Treatment Division's system planning has checks and balances to ensure decisions reflect the interest of the regional ratepayers, who ultimately pay for these investments.

King County carefully reviews local comprehensive plans and compares growth projections to census data and population forecasts prepared by the Puget Sound Regional Council. The county also looks at its own wastewater flow and monitoring data, which has historically proved highly accurate and reliable.

The Wastewater Treatment Division regularly delivers reports on the status of its comprehensive plans to the King County Council and other stakeholders. On very large projects, such as Brightwater for example, the council might appoint its own independent monitoring consultant to review project plans, schedules and associated cost trends during construction. Additionally, the King County Council presides over the budget process and votes to set sewer rates, providing additional oversight on financial matters.

**Though clean water is our ultimate goal, the Wastewater Treatment Division also defines success by running an agency that is well-managed, fiscally responsible and compliant with its state and federal pollution control requirements.**

# Where does your money go?

**Wastewater infrastructure** is crucial for protecting water quality and economic vitality, and supporting jobs and growth while maintaining our region's natural assets like beaches, lakes and rivers.

King County's wastewater utility is entirely funded by the ratepayers who invest in our programs and services through their monthly rate and capacity charge bills. We take seriously our obligation to provide the highest levels of service and accountability to our ratepayers.



Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Services are leading global financial firms that rate corporate stocks and municipal bonds according to risk profiles. In 2007, the firms assigned a very high rating to the Wastewater Treatment Division's bonds, citing:

- Strong management practices
- Continued positive financial performance
- Strong economy, solid rate base and large service area
- Commitment to a capital improvement plan

## Revenues

King County's adopted wastewater budget for 2008 includes about \$234 million in revenue from the sewer rate and about \$28 million in revenue from the capacity charge. The 2008 budget also includes about \$15 million from investments and about \$7 million from other income such as fees for industrial waste and sewage removed from septic tanks.

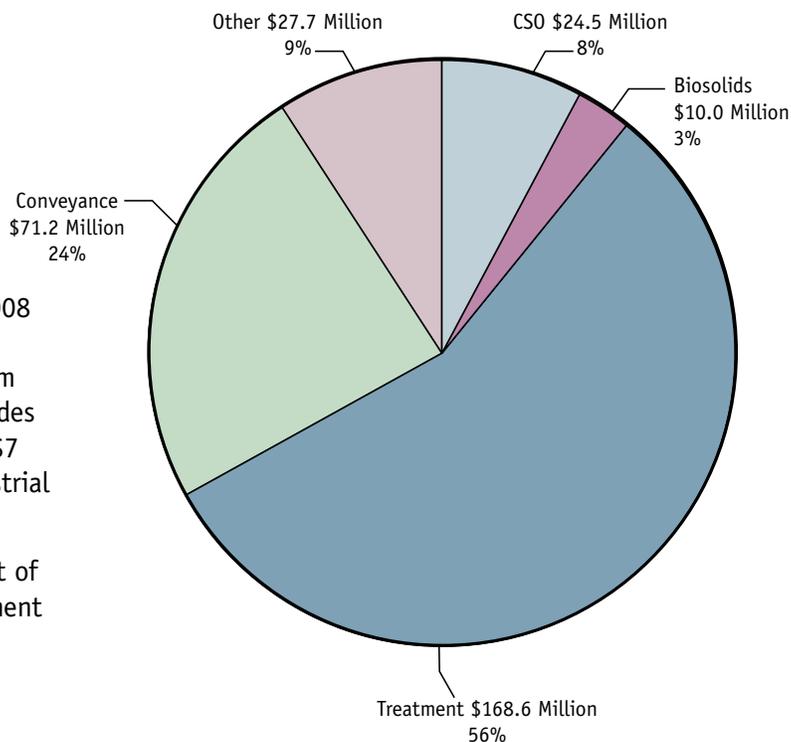
King County also borrows bonds to fund the cost of construction projects under its capital improvement program.

## Expenditures

Of the total revenue (about \$302 million), the Wastewater Treatment Division is budgeted to spend about \$100 million to operate and maintain its facilities and about \$202 million for planning, designing and building facilities.

## Our annual budget – \$302 million

### Where the revenue goes



# Investments in our infrastructure—rate and capacity charge increases ahead

 ~~We're proposing a wholesale rate increase of \$2.25 from \$27.95 to \$30.20, and a \$1.39 increase in the capacity charge from \$46.25 to \$47.64 that would begin on Jan. 1, 2009.~~ The funding is needed to cover the costs of expanding and maintaining our system over the next several years.

We recognize these costs are significant. But we can't wait to take care of our infrastructure needs. It's one thing when traffic backs up on a congested road—it's quite another matter when the wastewater system backs up. Delaying critical projects would mean system failures, overflows and fines from regulatory agencies, and in the worst case, a building moratorium that could devastate the regional economy.

The rate increase will help cover the costs of the debt service on the bonds we plan to issue to fund vital capital projects. It will also provide revenue to defray the costs related to maintaining, replacing or repairing aging facilities and equipment so the system continues to operate reliably, and to ensure the treatment facilities are meeting regulatory requirements under state and federal laws.

The capacity charge increase will provide the revenue to expand the system and build more wastewater facilities to serve our growing region.

## *The rate and capacity charge—what's the difference?*

### **The rate supports operations and maintenance**

The monthly wholesale sewer rate paid by all customers generates the revenue we need to cover the cost of maintaining, operating and supporting our existing system, and covering debt service on the bonds we issue to fund the capital improvement program.

### **The capacity charge supports system expansion**

Since 1990, King County has levied a capacity charge on new connections to the sewer system, which these new customers pay in addition to their monthly sewer bill. The capacity charge helps King County cover the cost of sewer improvement and expansion projects needed to serve new growth.

Newly connecting customers are directly billed by King County for the capacity charge.

Elected officials, sewer utility representatives and jurisdiction officials were all involved in King County's decision to implement a capacity charge to ensure that "growth pays for growth".

It's been almost a decade since the King County Council adopted the Regional Wastewater Services Plan. And we're now at the point when we're building some of the largest and most complex projects.

Additional challenges include current market forces – a construction boom, high prices on fuel, concrete and steel, inflation, and a competitive labor market for skilled construction workers.

Over the next three years, we will borrow \$1 billion in bonds to fund these vital projects.

After 2012, once the bulk of borrowing bonds to fund the cost of Brightwater has been completed, we project that rates will again stabilize for many years in the future.

### **Setting the rate and capacity charge**

The Wastewater Treatment Division sends its rate proposal to the King County Executive each spring. After review, the rate proposal goes to the King County Council for further deliberation. The council is required to adopt the sewer rate by June 30 for the following year. King County's overarching goal is to keep rates level for several consecutive years whenever possible.

*King County can help property owners and real estate professionals better understand the capacity charge, when it might apply and the range of payment options available. For more information, please call 206-296-1450 or TTY 711.*

**Detailed information about the rate and capacity charge is available on the Web at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wtd/homepage/rate/> or by calling 206-684-1280 or TTY 711.**

# About us

## Our agency and staff

**Headquartered in downtown Seattle**, King County's Wastewater Treatment Division has been committed to protecting and improving water quality for more than 40 years. The agency employs about 600 people who plan, design, build and operate treatment facilities.

Our employees also enforce regulations to reduce harmful waste discharged to the system, and we educate the public and businesses on ways to protect water quality.

To our agency, success means clean water. It means honoring our legacy while keeping a promise to another generation that our beautiful environment will be there for them to enjoy.

It also means being accountable to our ratepayers and operating a well-managed agency.

## Productivity initiative

In 2000, the Wastewater Treatment Division implemented its Productivity Initiative Program, which is modeled on the business practices in private industry. Its goal: to make the division the most efficient publicly operated treatment system in the nation while maintaining a high level of service.

The King County Council and Executive allow the division flexibility to run its business in exchange for meeting established productivity goals and business targets.

Since 2000, the Productivity Initiative has saved ratepayers about \$42.8 million.

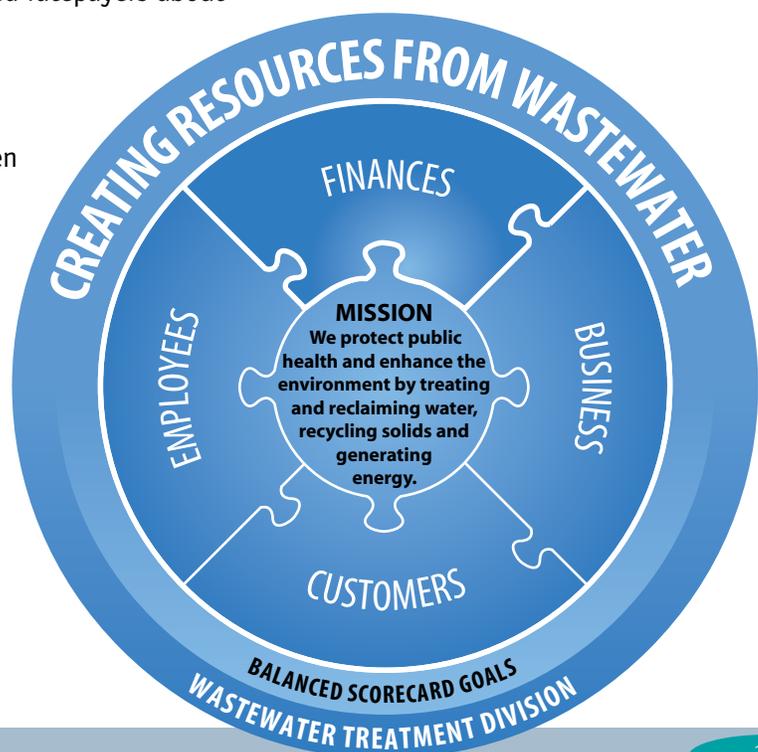
## Balanced scorecard

As part of the Productivity Initiative, we've been using a Balanced Scorecard system to measure performance since 2001.

The Balanced Scorecard sets objectives and measures from four different perspectives that are intended to work together – to create a “balanced” set of measures to ensure efficiency/productivity efforts don't jeopardize the division mission of protecting public health and the environment, and maintaining customer service.



*Investing in employees by providing relevant training, proper equipment, access to technology and career advancement opportunities pays off by helping our division maintain a highly skilled, competent workforce.*



# Community matters

The **Wastewater Treatment Division** has many opportunities for people to stay informed and involved in clean-water issues.

Much more detail about the Wastewater Treatment Division—projects, programs, upcoming events and even directions to our facilities—is available on the Web at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/WTD>.

The Wastewater Treatment Division can also arrange a speaker for your next community or neighborhood meeting.

Please call us at 206-684-1280 or 711 TTY Relay to learn more.

## Come see for yourself

Free tours of King County's treatment facilities are available for your neighborhood, school or community group by calling 206-684-1280.

*Sharing information at the Duwamish River Festival.*



Hidden somewhere in this picture is a plant that cleans a hundred million gallons of sewage every day.

If you can't see it, thank Bob Kildall and other neighbors.



*People can provide comments and ask questions at public meetings.*



*Nearly 3,000 students tour our plants each year.*

## 2007 awards

### National

**National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System  
100 percent Permit Compliance**

*Peak Performance Platinum Award*

Wastewater Treatment Division: West Point and South Treatment Plants

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

**Certified Biosolids Environmental Management System**

*Platinum Level Certification Status (1 of 15 nationwide)*

Wastewater Treatment Division: Biosolids Unit

National Biosolids Partnership

### Local

**Juanita Bay Pump Station Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit Compliance**

*2006 Silver Certificate*

Wastewater Treatment Division: Major Capital Improvement Unit

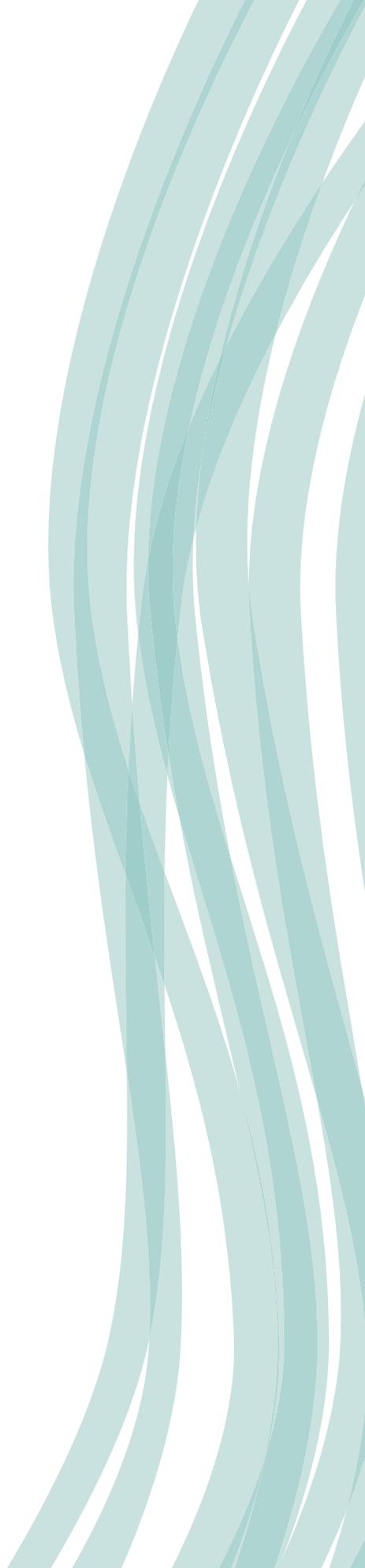
King County Industrial Waste Program

**South Plant New Administration Building Team**

*Excellence in Green Building*

Wastewater Treatment and Solid Waste Divisions

King County Green Building Team



Alternative formats available. Call 206-684-1280 or TTY Relay: 711



**King County**

**Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks**  
Wastewater Treatment Division  
King Street Center  
KSC-NR-0503, 201 S. Jackson St.  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

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*Creating Resources from Wastewater*



# RATEPAYER REPORT