



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: December 10, 2019

DATE: November 19, 2019

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dwayne Smith, P.E., Division Director, Engineering and Capital Projects
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THROUGH: Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Assistant County Manager
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SUBJECT: Discussion and possible direction to staff to pursue: 1) the development of the framework for a memorandum of understanding between Washoe County and the City of Reno establishing the rights and responsibilities for the conveyance, treatment and effluent management of waste water flows from new development in all service territories; 2) the development of the framework to exchange existing sanitary sewer customers between Washoe County and the City of Reno based on their location within the respective jurisdictions' service territory; 3) the development of alternative effluent management strategies in the South Truckee Meadows with a focus on commodity rate modifications in conjunction with long-term commitments through user agreements; and, 4) the coordination of the existing operational baseline with associated recommendations for possible future operational strategies of the Washoe County and City of Reno waste water treatment facilities located in the North Valleys. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

Over the last few decades, and in response to new development in Washoe County, both Washoe County and the City of Reno have entered into agreements and established policies to allow for the conveyance and treatment of waste water flows at either Washoe County and City of Reno treatment facilities. As the pace of development has increased, and various policies changes have occurred, there have been additional challenges for both the development community and for staff resulting in less than efficient project review and conditioning efforts, while increasing complexity for new customers and associated service and billing processes. Recently, in response to this issue, Washoe County and the City of Reno successfully developed an agreement in the Cold Springs area that clearly establishes the rights and responsibilities for each jurisdiction in a clear and efficient manner for both staff, new development and customers seeking municipal sanitary sewer service.

Building on that success, staff is seeking direction to continue to collaboratively develop the framework for new development in the remaining areas where unincorporated Washoe County and the incorporated City of Reno waste water service territories overlap. The framework goal is to create efficient process for new customers and staff

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beginning with the development and conditioning of construction plans and the payment of required development fees leading to the establishment of a new customer based upon respective collection and treatment service areas.

Staff is also seeking direction to develop a strategy with the City of Reno to exchange existing sanitary sewer customers based on collection and treatment service areas. Under current agreements and policies, there are multiple areas where unincorporated County residents convey sewer to City of Reno treatment facilities and where City of Reno residents convey sewer to County facilities. This perpetuates multiple challenges for the billing and collection of required fees as well as challenges associated with the maintenance, repair and replacement of the collection systems.

In response to the need for Washoe County to explore multiple alternative effluent management strategies, specifically in the South Truckee Meadows effluent service area, staff is seeking direction to develop recommendations that may include commodity rate modifications within long-term user agreements to establish new customers and work with existing customers who presently use treated waste water for irrigation and construction purposes.

Recently, Washoe County and the City of Reno management have requested that staff explore possible alternative operational strategies for the existing waste water treatment facilities located in the North Valleys. Initial work to develop recommendations would be to identify potential alternative operational baseline recommendations for each facility. Working jointly with staff from each organization, recommendations for possible future operational strategies with associated short and long-term costs would be provided for discussion and potential direction.

With direction from the Board, staff will continue to develop efficient and cost-effective alternatives for current and future customers as well as exploring alternative operational strategies that provide cost effective waste water service that meets current and future needs of the community. These alternatives will focus on environmental, health and safety needs of our customers and staff while also recognizing our commitment to our regulators and the other waste water service providers in the region. The alternatives will be presented to the Board for further direction.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Stewardship of our community.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On December 11, 2018, the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding between Washoe County and the City of Reno establishing the rights and responsibilities for the conveyance, treatment and effluent management of wastewater flows from the StoneGate Master Planned Community to the Washoe County Cold Springs Water Reclamation Facility

BACKGROUND

Within the last few years, Washoe County has completed facility planning work for the Cold Springs, Spanish Springs, and South Truckee Meadows service areas and is

currently working with the City of Reno on a joint facility plan for the Lemmon Valley and Stead service areas. These facility plans initially affirm the current conditions including service areas, customer numbers and types, and provide a condition assessment of existing infrastructure including piping, lift stations, treatment facilities and treated effluent management practices. With this baseline development, projected growth rates and volumes within each service territory is developed. The resulting recommendations address needs within the collection, treatment and effluent management portions of the waste water utility. These studies allow for timely decision making and identification of the most cost-effective approach to provide the most efficient service to the customer.

FISCAL IMPACT

While staff intends to rely on financial data generated through planned Utility rate studies, there may be some additional financial analysis that will be required for this requested direction to staff. Any associated contracts for this work will be brought to the Board for review and possible approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners provide direction to staff to pursue: 1) the development of the framework for a memorandum of understanding between Washoe County and the City of Reno establishing the rights and responsibilities for the conveyance, treatment and effluent management of waste water flows from new development in all service territories; 2) the development of the framework to exchange existing sanitary sewer customers between Washoe County and the City of Reno based on their location within the respective jurisdictions' service territory; 3) the development of alternative effluent management strategies in the South Truckee Meadows with a focus on commodity rate modifications in conjunction with long-term commitments through user agreements; and, 4) the coordination of the existing operational baseline with associated recommendations for possible future operational strategies of the Washoe County and City of Reno waste water treatment facilities located in the North Valleys.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to provide direction to staff to pursue: 1) the development of the framework for a memorandum of understanding between Washoe County and the City of Reno establishing the rights and responsibilities for the conveyance, treatment and effluent management of waste water flows from new development in all service territories; 2) the development of the framework to exchange existing sanitary sewer customers between Washoe County and the City of Reno based on their location within the respective jurisdictions' service territory; 3) the development of alternative effluent management strategies in the South Truckee Meadows with a focus on commodity rate modifications in conjunction with long-term commitments through user agreements; and, 4) the coordination of the existing operational baseline with associated recommendations for possible future operational strategies of the Washoe County and City of Reno waste water treatment facilities located in the North Valleys."