

Thurston County Board Briefing

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| <u>Briefing Date/Time:</u> | Wednesday, July XX, 2022 | | |
| <u>Office/Department & Staff Contact:</u> | Storm & Surface Water Advisory Board (SSWAB) – Jaclynn Simmons Chair; Nancy Winters, Vice Chair CPED – Larry Schaffner (x4106); Christine Chaput (x5486) Public Works – Tim Wilson (x5831) | | |
| <u>Topic:</u> | Annual briefing by members of the Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board | | |
| <u>Purpose:</u> (check all that apply) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information only <input type="checkbox"/> Decision needed <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up from previous briefing | Optimal Time Frame for Decision is: (dd/mm/yyyy) | |
| <u>Synopsis/Request/Recommendation:</u> <i>(One or two sentences identifying your primary objective for this session)</i> | | | |
| This informational briefing will report on the recent work and upcoming priorities of the County's Storm & Surface Water Advisory Board (SSWAB), including recommendations for of the BoCC's consideration. | | | |
| <u>Background</u> | | | |
| <p>SSWAB members have been entrusted by the County Commissioners to provide public involvement and accountability through their recommendations for preserving and protecting the water resources of Thurston County.</p> <p>Resolution No. 15450 (<i>Attachment A</i>), directs the SSWAB to hold a special meeting with the BoCC annually to “report and provide recommendations on the Storm & Surface Water Utility work programs, its progress, needs and future direction.” Improving stormwater management is a critical element in recovering and improving water quality throughout Thurston County. Changing stormwater permit requirements and evolving responsibilities bring broader demands on the County's Storm & Surface Water Utility (Utility) staff and resources. SSWAB members continue to appreciate and welcome the opportunity to communicate directly with the Commissioners.</p> <p>The nine-member (currently with one vacancy) SSWAB (<i>Attachment B</i>) supports compliance with the County municipal stormwater permit's public involvement and participation requirement as well as several initiatives in the County's Strategic Plan, including #13-Increase opportunities for informed and effective civic engagement.</p> | | | |
| <u>Key Roles and Responsibilities of SSWAB</u> (per Resolution No. 15450, Section 2) | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide public involvement and accountability within the rate boundary where the County collects Storm & Surface Water Utility rates and charges. • Review and provide recommendations to Utility staff and the Board of County Commissioners on the Storm & Surface Water Utility annual work program, budget, Capital Facility Plan (CFP), rates, and policy proposals. | | | |

- Carry on regular communications with the public, other agencies, and other water resource concerned groups to bring a broad water resource perspective to the Utility.

Year in Review – Implementation of SSWAB’s Roles and Responsibilities

Stormwater Management Program Plan Review and Comment- Helped fulfill the County’s municipal stormwater permit’s requirement for public involvement and participation, including the development, implementation, and update of the County’s *Stormwater Management Program Plan*.

Utility Program Review – SSWAB requested and received presentations on the following:

- Stormwater treatment and monitoring
- Storm and Surface Water Utility fiscal reporting
- Stormwater Capital Facility Plan - Related Communications
- Proposed low impact development (LID) code revisions
- SPLASH (i.e., the Utility’s annual ratepayer newsletter) redesign
- Stormwater Utility performance metric updates
- Utility Rate Credit Incentives
- Overburdened Communities
- Thurston County Healthy Forests Projects
- County’s municipal stormwater permit annual report submittal to the Department of Ecology
- Stormwater Management Action Planning

Collaboration with other Interest Groups – Continuing to attend meetings and working with other groups, including Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Thurston County Shellfish Protection District, Lake Management Districts, League of Women Voters, Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs), and other municipalities.

2021 SSWAB Recommendations – At the July 2021 BoCC briefing three overarching recommendations were proposed to the BoCC, specifically:

1. Adopt or instruct the Utility to utilize SSWAB’s recommended performance metrics.
 2. Study the effectiveness of the County’s pet waste pollution prevention program, including mapping Utility-sponsored pet waste station locations (with the Utility’s asset management system).
 3. Develop a business plan for the Utility to guide proactive strategies, planning, and set level of service.
- 1. Performance Metrics** – SSWAB members desire Utility programs that are effective, proactive, fiscally responsible, and responsive to ratepayers’ priorities. Based on review of Utility programs, SSWAB determined that was important to develop key performance metrics to effectively communicate these priorities to Utility ratepayers.

Staff provided an update of the SSWAB’s Stormwater Utility Performance Metrics at the June 2022 SSWAB Meeting. *Appendix C* includes a summary of each performance metric. SSWAB will continue to look for effective ways to create a feedback process with ratepayers to continually update the metrics. Soliciting SSWAB’s input, County staff have done an excellent job with SPLASH, the annual ratepayer newsletter. SSWAB suggested including the performance metrics in its next publication.

2. **Pet Waste Stations** – County staff produced a map of where one or more pet waste dispenser stations were given to a neighborhood (*Appendix D*). This is a great start as the mapping allows for an assessment of pet waste dispenser station's geographic distribution to aid in assuring equity by identifying underserved communities. SSWAB's broader vision includes maintaining individual station locations in the Utility's asset management system as well as conducting a study to evaluate the program's effectiveness for improving water quality by reducing bacteria contributions from pet waste (e.g., Does the pet waste station program contribute to reducing bacteria from pet waste, are pet waste stations being maintained with a continuous supply of waste bags, etc.?).
3. **Business Plan Development** – During last year's briefing, SSWAB discussed the importance and value of developing a business plan for the Utility. SSWAB's envisions such a plan to articulate the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for each of the different departments/programs within the County and how they integrate within the Utility and support each other. In addition, providing a description of goals and mission, coupled with an organization chart, would assist in communicating to the ratepayers how their fees are utilized. It was great news to learn that the BoCC supported this recommendation and approved funding for a comprehensive Stormwater Utility assessment over the next biennium.

During our July 2021 meeting, SSWAB reached consensus to recommend that any future Utility rate study consider providing stable funding to support the County's pollution identification and correction (PIC) program as a means to augment any grant funding the County can secure to support this program. SSWAB also recommends the Utility's comprehensive assessment, include a rate study to assess funding adequacy to support Utility-funded programs and other related resources (e.g., staffing and equipment) to support existing and projected program needs.

Areas of Focus for 2022

- Continue to communicate the Utility to ratepayers via:
 - Key performance metrics (i.e., level of service provided)
 - Utility fiscal reporting (i.e., revenue and expenditures)
 - Obtaining feedback from ratepayers to continually refine performance metrics reported on
- Provide feedback on proposed:
 - Stormwater capital facilities projects
 - *Stormwater Management Program Plan* revisions
 - Content for the annual *SPLASH* ratepayer newsletter and other outreach materials
- Engagement during the Utility's comprehensive planning effort, including rate studies
- Assist Utility with efforts to integrate restoration projects into the Stormwater Capital Facilities Plan
- Continue to identify opportunities for stormwater management collaboration with other municipalities and WSDOT
- SSWAB Member Transition/Succession Planning (several upcoming member term end dates)

Documents Attached:

- *Attachment A* – SSWAB Resolution 15450
- *Attachment B* – SSWAB membership map

- *Attachment C – 2021 Calendar Year Performance Metric Update*
- *Attachment D – Pet Waste Dispenser Locations*

Summary & Financial Impact:

The SSWAB meets annually with the BoCC to report and provide recommendations on issues affecting the County's Storm & Surface Water Utility.

Affected Parties:

Residents, property owners, and businesses in unincorporated Thurston County; the Storm & Surface Water Utility; and County departments with stormwater and water resource-related responsibilities (i.e., CPED, Public Works, Public Health & Social Services, Central Services, and Information Technology).

Options with Pros & Cons:

Not applicable – Informational Briefing

Board Direction:

Feedback sought on SSWAB's recommendations

Next Steps/Timeframe:

Not applicable – Informational Briefing