

Attachment B: Summary of Questions and Answers for Questions from the Planning Commission

The following summarizes the questions and answers taken during two study session presentations to the Redmond Planning Commission held on March 31, 2021 and April 21, 2021 regarding the *2021 General Wastewater Plan Update*.

Planning Commission Questions & Answers March 31

Question: Does the plan account for in-fill that may replace single family housing with multi-family residential housing?

Answer: Figure 3-3 in the plan shows the “development potential” for parcels within the entire City based on current zoning. The plan assumes single family residential areas are “fully developed.”

Isolated, dispersed multi-family in-fill projects in residential areas will not result in a wastewater capacity issue. Unless large areas with residential zoning density are substantially increased—for example, changing an entire plat from R4 to R7—there should not be any capacity issues with this type of in-fill.

Question: Do people want to change from septic to the municipal system? Who pays for the cost of the transition?

Answer: Generally, we find people are happy with septic systems until they fail. When they fail, people would like an immediate remedy by connecting to the City’s wastewater system.

The City requires properties that have failed septic system and are within 200 feet of access to the municipal wastewater system to connect to the City’s system rather than replace the septic system. The owner of the septic system pays for the construction and for connection fees.

Question: Are there grant programs that help transitions?

Answer: Staff research on this question found that there are financial programs to help cover the repair failing systems (see the [Craft 3](#) program). King County also provides some assistance for low income customers to help pay for the capacity charges for new customers connecting to the county’s wastewater system. This information is available in the [frequently asked questions portion of the County’s sewer capacity charge webpage](#). We did not find programs that help individuals address the cost of transitioning from septic to sewer.

The City’s Utility Strategic Plan contains a strategy aiming to replace all “high-priority” septic systems within the City. High priority septic systems are those that have a high likelihood of failure or whose failure has the high potential to create a health risk or impacts to the environment. Evaluating financial assistance needs will be one of the considerations that the City needs to address as it designs a program that aims to implement this strategy.

Question: Can extreme weather events affect our wastewater system? Can a 100-year rain-event, for example, impact the sewer system?

Answer: Redmond has separate systems for stormwater runoff and wastewater. Rainwater can enter the wastewater system at pipe joints, through manhole covers, and due to leaking pipes. The City works

to limit this infiltration of rainwater into the wastewater system. To ensure the City maintains capacity and prevents sewer overflows, the updated wastewater plan's system analysis moved from a 20-year sewage flow/rain event as used to develop previous plans, to a more conservative analysis that uses a 100-year flow/rain event.

Question: Will the transition of areas off septic to sewer, create capacity issues that makes the transition cost prohibitive? What about areas with critical areas served by septic, do these create issues with this transition?

Answer: The transition of residential areas from septic to sewer should not create capacity issues for the system. Transition in land use such as a change single family residential to multi-family, or single family residential to commercial are instances are where we could see constraints on the existing system.

Critical areas and steep slopes are not typically a factor limiting the ability to transition from septic to sewer.

Question: The developer is responsible for upsizing pipe upstream of their development?

Answer: The developer is responsible for upgrading pipe on the *downstream portions* of the system to ensure sewage flows into the City's network of pipes, lift stations, and other conveyance infrastructure.

Planning Commission Questions & Answers April 21

Question: How are capacity wastewater charge, wastewater, stormwater charge calculated?

Answer: The King County Wastewater System Capacity Charge is a charged that King County levies on new customers connecting the regional sewage treatment system. It pays for extensions to regional conveyance systems and regional sewage treatment facilities. [The frequently asked questions section of the King County Wastewater System Capacity Charge Webpage](#) provides details on fees for different types of customers and other fee setting information.

The City's wastewater fees are calculated based on the potable water coming into the residence or business. The assumption is that the amount of water coming in will be roughly equal the amount of water leaving via the wastewater systems. In some cases, properties with large irrigation systems will set up separate potable water accounts so that they are not overcharged for wastewater service.

The City's stormwater fees are a set fee for each single-family parcel. For commercial and multi-family residential properties, the City uses the amount of impervious area on each parcel to calculate fees.

Question: Properties with failing septic systems are required to connect to the City's wastewater system?

Answer: Yes. If a parcel with failing septic is within 200 feet of access to the City's wastewater system, the owner of the failed system is required connect to the City's wastewater system.

Question: How often is the sewer plan updated?

Answer: The last major update to the plan was in 2009. Edits and revisions to the plan also occur when there are major updates to the Redmond zoning requirements. Also, there are numerous minor and major amendments to the Plan in between updates to the General Wastewater Plan.

Question: Are the Marymoor lift stations considered a temporary fix?

Answer: The lift stations had to be updated to meet current zoning density in that area. The new lift stations have a 20 to 30-year life span. If the area is again up zoned within the life span of these facilities, the utility will need to upgrade these stations again to ensure wastewater capacity matches the demand.

Question: Is staff referring to the Envision Sustainability Checklist—or similar other checklists-- to help guide our infrastructure and design and building considerations?

Answer: We have not yet used such checklists. The City’s new sustainability initiative is relatively new, and we expect conversations about sustainability and construction practices will increase as that program gains momentum. We welcome references and other input that will support efforts to explore this topic.

Question: Are you looking for guidance from the long-range planners to determine where growth can currently occur, and identifying where growth can occur in the future?

Answer: Wastewater Utility staff sought guidance from the Long-Range Planning during development of the plan update. Although the plan update relies on current zoning, the Utility recognizes, and is engaged with, the Redmond 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update. We anticipate that we will revisit this plan when the population estimates and expected growth patterns in the Redmond 2050 planning effort become more certain.

Question: What programs and outreach has occurred to gauge interest and opportunity to move people off septic?

Answer: The Utility Strategic Plan calls for “high priority” septic systems to connection with the wastewater system. Utility Staff anticipates that implementing this strategy will require a separate planning process to create a focused program designed to promote the switch from septic to the wastewater system. Designing such a program will require staff seek input from people who currently have septic systems to determine: a) their willingness to transition off them, b) the factors that would motivate them to make this change, and c) the factors preventing them from making this change.

Question: How does collaboration with the other jurisdiction work? Are they on the same schedule for their WW functional plans, and are we reviewing their plans?

Answer: We communicate with both Bellevue and Kirkland and review their plans as the State requires during the development of wastewater functional plans. We are looking to create an agreement with Kirkland to address issues along the 132nd Ave NE Corridor. The City also is very close to finalizing a set of agreements with the City of Bellevue.

Question: Does stormwater runoff on the 132nd Ave NE Corridor create any issues for the septic in that area?

Answer: In Redmond, stormwater and Wastewater are collected separately. As a result, we are not seeing any stormwater caused issues with regarding to existing septic systems in this area.