

Cascade Water Connections Working Group Meeting #3

September 10, 2009, 8 am – 11:30am
Kirkland City Hall, Peter Kirk Room
123 Fifth Ave., Kirkland

Welcome

The Cascade Water Connections Working Group convened for its third meeting on September 10, 2009. Lewis Michaelson, Katz and Associates welcomed everyone. The group was informed that Cascade Vice Chair, Mary-Alyce Burleigh was not able to make it to the meeting as intended because she was serving jury duty.

Review of August Meeting Summary and Follow-Up Materials

Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates, asked the group if there were any questions or comments regarding the summary of the second meeting or the follow-up materials that were sent after the meeting.

Comment: A suggestion was made to revise the wording of the summary to properly reflect why a sensitivity analysis without financial considerations is being done.

Lewis Michaelson informed the group that the meeting schedule is changed. The next meeting will take place on December 10 at Bellevue City Hall. There will be no meetings in October or November.

Presentation

Michael Gagliardo, Director of Planning, Cascade Water Alliance, gave a presentation to the group that provided detail about how individual projects ranked in different scenarios. The scenarios were based on:

- Cascade Board and Staff criteria weighting
- Cascade Water Connections Working Group criteria weighting
- Financial Criteria Ranking with the elimination of using past investments as a sub-criterion
- Quadrant Analysis that ranks projects without consideration of financial criterion and plots the results against the unit price of each project

Detail about how each project ranks within the different scenarios can be found in the accompanying presentation. The list of projects changed slightly from the previous meeting because the Chambers Creek project is now considered a subset of options that expand the Tacoma system rather than a separate project.

After comparing the different scenarios, the group reached several conclusions. When comparing the project rankings based on Cascade board/staff versus the Connections Working Group, the differences were minimal. The top-ranked projects were still top-ranked, and the bottom-ranked projects were always bottom-ranked. The same held true when past investments was removed as a subcriterion from the financial criteria. Using the quadrant approach, which removed the financial criterion altogether, produced greater variability in the ranking of the top and middle tier projects. However, the projects in the bottom-ranked tier remained the same.

The Cascade Water Connections Working Group agreed that the following projects should be eliminated from evaluation in the next phase:

- Lake Washington
- Direct Potable Reclaimed
- Snohomish River
- Desalination
- Satellite Reclaimed
- Stormwater Capture
- Tacoma Light
- Chambers Creek

The next step is to build portfolios of projects. Portfolios will be combinations of projects that are each designed to meet future water demands, but in different ways. The same criteria will generally be used to rank the portfolios. However, there may be refinements in the weightings of the criteria and the definitions of the sub-criteria. Cascade Water Alliance would like to receive feedback on the types of portfolios the working group wants to see. Possible portfolios could include:

- “Green” (least impact to the environment)
- Contract supply sources only
- Permanent supply sources only

Analysis of the portfolios will also consider rate impacts, both total and the rate of increase, since steep, rapid increases are undesirable.

Elaine Kraft, Communications Director, Cascade Water Alliance also asked what other intangibles should be looked at when considering projects and portfolios. Answers from the group included:

- Public perception
- Regional interests beyond King County
- Emergency response
- Control over sources

- Timing between demand and supply
- Social equity
- Opportunity (coordination with other projects, grants)

A discussion ensued about the challenges of obtaining final approval for Lake Tapps water rights. Cascade Water Alliance is looking at a very long development schedule of potentially 50–100 years for which there is no precedent. Cascade is currently working with the Department of Ecology on formalizing a development schedule that recognizes the unique aspects of this project.

Questions and comments from the group on the presentation included:

Q: Why is TCP Wheeling considered an interim project since the supply is permanent?

A: It is considered interim because it can only supply two specific geographic locations, Tukwila and Skyway.

Comment: From a local government standpoint, contracts are always considered interim supply.

Q: Was a sensitivity analysis done where certain criteria or factors were given additional weight to see how that affected the scoring of the projects?

A: Criteria were very similar in weights so we did not feel it was useful to disregard that and distribute all the weight to one criteria.

Q: What is the projected water demand in the future?

A: In 2060 the projected average day demand is about 65 million gallons per day. With currently available permanent supplies that leaves a shortfall of about 40 million gallons per day. That leads to the next step of putting together portfolios of projects.

Comment: The emotional criterion is not captured in the scoring of Brightwater Reclaimed. It would be hard to sell the public on using reclaimed water.

Response: Brightwater Reclaimed is considered to only supply non-potable (i.e, irrigation) needs, which is more acceptable to the public. Going forward, public acceptance considerations may need to be more explicit when looking at portfolios of projects.

Q: Does the 65 million gallons per day include both potable and irrigation needs?

A: Yes, to the extent these demands are supplied by Cascade members (i.e., a golf course with its own water right is not considered in the demand forecast.)

Q: Why does the Lake Tapps project drop down in rank when financial considerations are removed but come back when unit costs are figured in?

A: Lake Tapps is a big project so the unit costs are very good.

Comment: Anywhere else in the world Lake Washington would be considered a dream water source.

Response: Yes, but historic institutional hurdles and waters rights issues are a huge problem when considering Lake Washington as a source for drinking water.

Comment: It is inherently easy to pick just one or two sources to solve the whole problem, but it might be better to look at multiple smaller sources to achieve the same goal.

Comment: It might be good to develop a portfolio that includes multiple smaller projects from a reliability and redundancy standpoint.

Q: Why do we need to look at portfolios? Is there a need to plan ahead for some sources so that other interests cannot claim the source?

A: It is too costly to pursue every option at once. Portfolios provide a plan that addresses need, timing, staging, and demand management.

Comment: Portfolios also help address seasonal and environmental mitigation considerations.

Comment: Cascade could look at a portfolio based on land-use needs.

Comment: Cascade needs to consider how projects and portfolios reach overarching goals. This could include a component of public education.

Comment: Sometimes you reach a point where science only takes you so far. Then subjective decisions come into play.

Comment: Potable water use for the region is approximately 85% indoor and 15% outdoor. Conservation methods mostly include hard-wired items such as plumbing and building codes. Our conservation programs do not “chase” behavior because that is hard to predict.

Q: How is climate change addressed?

A: Climate change will be included in the sensitivities to demand. Luckily, between work done by the Forum and UMass, there is a lot of information regarding the potential effects of climate change on the region. Specifically, when looking at Lake Tapps we will use the climate change information to help inform contingency planning.

Comment: Make sure to translate and clarify words so that they are understandable.

Adjourn and Next Steps

Michael Gagliardo let the group know that Cascade would work to provide more detail for the remaining projects. Then they will work to develop a mix of portfolios of supply options that meet the projected demand.

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2009, at Bellevue City Hall.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Attendees

Working Group Members

Walt Canter
Steve Hirschey
Bob James
Michael Johnson
Joan Kersnar
Ralph Mason
Tim McDowd
Linda McCrea
Beth Mountsier
Bob Pancoast
Lydia Reynolds-Jones
Anna Rising
Denise Smith
Dr. Leon Stucki

Board and Staff

Michael Gagliardo, Cascade Water Alliance
Elaine Kraft, Cascade Water Alliance
Betty Spieth, Langton Spieth

Facilitation Team

Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates
Bryan Jarr, Katz & Associates