



# Meeting Minutes

## Utility Advisory Committee

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

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**Thursday, October 6, 2016**

**5:40 PM**

**City Hall, Room 207**

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curtz.

**1.A Roll Call**

**Present:** 5 - Chair Thad Curtz, Vice Chair Michelle Barnett, Committee member Roger Wilson, Committee member Austin Hildreth and Committee member Arland Schneider

**Absent:** 4 - Committee member Dever Kuni, Committee member Steve Fossum, Committee member Jeremy Twitchell and Committee member Chase Gallagher

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

[16-1105](#) Approval of September 1, 2016 UAC Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

**4. Public Comment - None**

**5. Announcements from UAC and Staff - None**

**6. Business Items**

[16-1106](#) Wastewater Topics (Side Sewer Ownership, Septic to Sewer, S.T.E.P. Permitting)

Public Works Engineering and Planning Supervisor Eric Christensen presented wastewater regulation policy information. Staff would like feedback and recommendations on the following topics:

- Ownership of side sewers
- Revisions to the Septic to Sewer Program
- Revisions to regulations for Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (S.T.E.P.) systems

### Side Sewers

A side sewer is defined as the sewer line "between the building and the sewer main and includes the connection to the City's sewer main" and is the responsibility of the homeowner. The City has dealt with a number of side sewer failures where ownership issues are contentious and can take years to resolve. It also consumes staff time and sewage releases and sinkholes can have health and safety implications. Staff researched the ownership authority of side sewers of nearby jurisdictions. The UAC received an attachment in their meeting packet showing different ownership options.

With support from the City legal department, staff proposes that the homeowner will have ownership from the cleanout to the house if a cleanout exists, or is installed, at the property line. City staff will be required to request Council approval to make this change with the City's municipal code. The UAC is supportive of the City's recommendation regarding side sewers.

### Septic to Sewer Program

All the jurisdictions in Thurston County have a regional goal to convert septic to municipal sewer if properties are within 200 feet of a sewer or if the septic is failing. It is well documented that septic systems have adverse impacts on groundwater and stormwater. Conversions to sewer service are expensive for homeowners and the cost is still too high even with waiving the City's general facility charge. The City has set up a fund within the capital budget to extend sewers into existing neighborhoods, particularly where there is a high environmental risk or failing septic systems. This would provide financial assistance to homeowners for septic conversions.

### S.T.E.P.

The City's 2007 Wastewater Management Plan significantly restricted the use of S.T.E.P. systems. Restrictions on S.T.E.P. systems were based on additional cost to maintain them by the City and odor/corrosion problems associated with elevated hydrogen sulfide concentrations. Current regulations permit the use of S.T.E.P. systems only to serve existing lots adjacent to existing S.T.E.P. mains. This has left a number of subdividable properties and small investors without an option for sewer service.

Staff proposes changes that would allow additional limited extensions of S.T.E.P. mains and S.T.E.P. system connections. Specifically, where S.T.E.P. sewers are currently available, staff proposes to allow one short plat (up to nine homes) on an existing property located adjacent to existing S.T.E.P. mains. Short plats would allow infill on small properties. Larger properties could realize modest cost recovery under the proposed scenario but would eventually be required to construct a regional sewer pump station and subdivide through the long plat process.

The UAC is supportive of staff's recommendations for changes to the code regarding S.T.E.P. The UAC requested feedback from staff in a year to see how many S.T.E.P. systems are added once this code is changed to allow them.

The UAC will draft a recommendation letter to Council in support of staff's wastewater policy proposals. Staff will utilize the letter when they bring the items to Council. Each policy will go to Council as separate items.

**The recommendation was recommended for approval.**

[16-1107](#)      Sea Level Rise Response Plan - Update

Public Works Water Resources Director Andy Haub provided a briefing on the City's sea level rise response planning efforts. City staff will use the remainder of 2016 to set up a formal planning process for 2017. The City is working with interjurisdictional partners in Olympia such as the Port, State of Washington and LOTT.

Staff launched a new feature on the City's sea level rise website. The feature is an interactive map that depicts sea rise and flooding in the downtown. Committee members suggested showing on the map the roads that would close due to the flooding.

Staff will continue to provide updates/briefings to the UAC on sea level rise and climate change. The UAC will include this topic on their 2017-2018 workplan.

**The report was received.**

**7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curtz.