



# Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

## AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC Water) is a bi-county agency directed by a board of six commissioners, three each from Prince George's County and Montgomery County. The commissioners are appointed by the respective jurisdiction's Executive and confirmed by its County Council.

WSSC Water is responsible for providing water and sanitary sewer service within the Washington Suburban Sanitary District, which includes most of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and which, in Montgomery County, excludes the Town of Poolesville and portions of the City of Rockville.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is the programming of planning, design, land acquisition, and construction activities on a yearly basis for major water and sewerage facilities. These facilities may be necessary for system improvements and/or service to existing customers, to comply with Federal and/or State environmental mandates, and to support new development in accordance with the counties' approved plans and policies for orderly growth and development.

The CIP submission includes all major projects, defined as extensions, projects, or programs involving water and sewer facilities. Major projects include: water mains 16 inches in diameter or larger, sewer mains 15 inches in diameter or larger, water or sewage pumping stations, force mains, storage facilities, and other major facilities.

The section following this narrative ordinarily shows only the WSSC Water project description forms (PDFs) for which the Executive recommends changes to the Commission's request. Those PDFs would be preceded by project briefs which provide a description of the change and the Executive's rationale. The complete set of PDFs submitted by the Commission can be found on the WSSC Water website at <http://www.wsscwater.com>.

In addition, a report noting the Commission's request by project follows the same report outlining the County Executive's recommendation by project. For this year's proposed CIP budget, these additional documents will not follow this narrative given that the Executive is not recommending changes to the budget proposed by WSSC Water.

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Brian Halloran of WSSC Water's Budget Division at 301.206.8214 or Rafael Pumarejo Murphy of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2775 for more information regarding this agency's capital budget.

## CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW

This narrative applies only to the Montgomery County and bi-county water and sewerage projects. Projects that serve only Prince George's County are not included.

### **Agency Request**

The total of \$2.47 billion in six-year expenditures proposed by the WSSC Water for FY23-28 is \$388.1 million (18.6 percent) above the FY22-27 approved total of \$2.08 billion. The increase in six-year costs is the net result of: 1) cost changes in both the water and sewer projects; 2) prior deferral of CIP costs that were unaffordable in FY20, FY21, and FY22 which are now deferred into FY23-28;

and 3) new projects which focus on critical system and facility maintenance.

The FY23-28 CIP request includes 55 ongoing projects, 11 closeout projects, and 5 pending closeout projects. There are 13 new projects (including Information Only projects).

The following table compares the proportion of funding for Montgomery, Prince George's, and bi-county projects in the Commission's proposed CIP:

<b>WSSC WATER PROPOSED FY23-28 CIP</b>						
<b>MONTGOMERY COUNTY/PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY/BI-COUNTY SPLIT</b>						
	<b>FY23</b>		<b>6-Year</b>		<b>Total Cost</b>	
	<b>\$ (000)</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>\$ (000)</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>\$ (000)</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Montgomery County Water Projects	2,621	0.5%	9,165	0.4%	9,237	0.2%
Montgomery County Sewer Projects	5,512	1.1%	64,133	2.6%	75,388	1.9%
Prince George's County Water Projects	63,887	13.2%	159,229	6.4%	220,139	5.6%
Prince George's County Sewer Projects	57,691	11.9%	220,426	8.9%	405,337	10.3%
Bi-County Water Projects	122,746	25.4%	997,880	40.4%	1,242,966	31.7%
Bi-County Sewer Projects	231,518	47.8%	1,021,814	41.3%	1,970,429	50.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>483,975</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,472,647</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,923,496</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
All Montgomery County Projects	8,133	1.7%	73,298	3.0%	84,625	2.2%
All Prince George's County Projects	121,578	25.1%	379,655	15.4%	625,476	15.9%
All Bi-County Projects	354,264	73.2%	2,019,694	81.7%	3,213,395	81.9%

Source: WSSC Water Proposed FY23-28 CIP

## **Executive Recommendation**

The County Executive recommends adoption of the FY23-28 CIP as proposed by WSSC Water.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Add three new Montgomery County Sewer projects that upgrade critical waste water pump stations and force mains that are reaching the end of their functional life expectancy.
- Add two new information only projects that maintain WSSC Water's service capacity, including improving the resiliency of critical facilities to climate change impacts.
- Continue development of capital projects aimed to address long-term issues in water and sewer management.
- Continue construction of the Piscataway Bio Energy Project that addresses biosolids management while generating renewable energy.
- Continue water and sewer line infrastructure reconstruction, replacing and rehabilitating 37 miles of water mains and 26 miles of sewer main in FY23.
- Continue to address the consent decrees with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) related to the Potomac Water Filtration Plant and the Trunk Sewer Reconstruction Program.
- Continue to support operations at DC Water's facility in Blue Plains. Support for Blue Plains projects represents 25.9% of the bi-county and Montgomery County's WSSC Water six-year CIP.

## **SPENDING CONTROL LIMITS**

In order to reduce the magnitude of water and sewer rate increases, the Montgomery and Prince George's County Councils adopted a

spending affordability process in April 1994. The process requires the counties to set annual ceilings on WSSC Water's water and sewer rates and debt (both bonded indebtedness and debt service), and then to adopt corresponding limits on the size of the capital and operating budgets.

While the spending limits technically apply only to the first year of the six-year program, the purpose of the limits includes controlling debt, debt service, and rate increases over the longer term. The FY23 spending control limits adopted by the Montgomery County Council are shown below with their outyear projections. For FY23, while WSSC Water proposed a 9% rate increase and the County Executive recommended a 7% increase, the Montgomery and Prince George's County Councils set a 6.5% rate increase.

The chart below list the various spending control limits for FY23 and outyear projections for FY24-28.

<b>FY23 WSSC WATER SPENDING CONTROL LIMITS ADOPTED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL (AND OUTYEAR PROJECTIONS)</b>						
	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>
New Debt Requirement (\$000)	\$430,093	\$397,210	\$374,496	\$371,511	\$358,063	\$330,000
Total W/S Operating Budget (\$000)	\$859,374	\$927,362	\$992,035	\$1,043,393	\$1,080,019	\$1,135,776
Debt Service (\$000)	\$328,423	\$349,645	\$379,953	\$402,747	\$423,708	\$443,517
Average Rate Increase	6.5%	8.5%	6.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%

Source: Montgomery County Council Resolution 19-1034 and WSSC Water Proposed FY23 SAG

## WSSC WATER'S LEVEL OF BONDED INDEBTEDNESS

### Debt Service

The County Executive and County Council monitor WSSC Water's bonded indebtedness and debt service level. Total outstanding water and sewer bond debt has risen 43.4 percent since FY17, and total water and sewer debt service is up 30.5 percent over the same period, as shown in the following table:

<b>WSSC BONDED INDEBTEDNESS AND DEBT SERVICE</b>						
(\$ in Millions)	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ESTIMATED</b>
	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>	<b>FY19</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>
End of Fiscal Year - Total Outstanding Bond Debt (Includes Bond Anticipation Notes)	\$2,813.4	\$3,202.4	\$3,339.9	\$3,423.1	\$3,640.3	\$3,887.0
Outstanding Water and Sewer Bond Debt	\$2,625.6	\$3,030.4	\$3,177.8	\$3,264.6	\$3,486.2	\$3,765.7
Total Debt Service - All Operating Funds	\$250.7	\$275.1	\$292.7	\$292.3	\$292.0	\$316.8
Debt Service as a % of Total Operating Exp.	36.3%	38.0%	37.6%	38.2%	39.0%	37.2%
Debt Service in Water/Sewer Operating Exp.	\$236.7	\$257.5	\$275.4	\$279.7	\$281.8	\$309.0
Water/Sewer Debt Service as a % of Total Water/Sewer Operating Expenditures	35.1%	36.5%	36.3%	37.2%	38.3%	36.7%

Source: WSSC Water Budget Division

The debt service ratio is projected to be 37.4 percent in FY23. The table below lists projected debt ratios for FY23-28.

<b>PROJECTED WSSC DEBT SERVICE RATIO UNDER THE COUNTY'S APPROVED SPENDING CONTROL LIMITS</b>						
	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>
Debt Service as a % of Total Water and Sewer Operating Expenditures	37.4%	37.7%	38.3%	38.6%	39.2%	39.0%

Source: WSSC Water FY23 Proposed SAG

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## Debt Capacity

State law provides for the option of a tax levy against all assessable property in the Washington Suburban Sanitary District by Montgomery and Prince George's counties to pay for the principal and interest on WSSC Water bonds. This provision, which would be exercised only if requested by the WSSC Water, does not constitute a pledge of the full faith and credit of the two counties. The amount of debt that WSSC Water issues is therefore a factor in rating agency assessments of the credit worthiness of Montgomery County. In addition, increasing levels of debt service can lead to increases in the combined water and sewer rate.

## "INFORMATION ONLY" PROJECTS

WSSC Water is obligated by State law to submit for CIP review and approval only major water and sewerage projects. However, the Commission undertakes other kinds of capital projects which are shown separately in the CIP. These "Information Only" projects may be included for a number of reasons, including: fiscal planning purposes; to improve the reader's understanding of the full scope of a specific set of projects; or in response to a request from one or both of the county governments. "Information Only" projects are subject to review and approval as part of the annual WSSC Water Operating and Capital Budgets, which are acted on by the Council in the spring.

The FY23-28 "Information Only" projects include the Water and Sewer Reconstruction projects, Engineering Support Program, Laboratory Division Building Expansion, Energy Performance Program, Specialty Valve Vault Rehabilitation Program, Other Capital Programs, D'Arcy Park North Relief Sewer, the Water Storage Facility Rehabilitation Program, RGH Building Upgrades, and Anacostia Depot Reconfiguration.

The total FY23-28 budget for the "Information Only" projects is \$2,023.3 million, a 3.5 percent increase from the \$1,955.0 million approved for the FY22-27 CIP. This increase is primarily the result of the addition of two new projects focused on maintenance and upgrades to WSSC Water's service infrastructure, including improving climate change resilience at key facilities.

Total proposed FY23-28 spending on the Water and Sewer Reconstruction "Information Only" projects will decrease by \$32.0 million (2.5 percent). The accompanying metrics for miles of water main replacement and sewer main rehabilitation can be seen below in the following table.

<b>SMALL WATER AND SEWER MAIN RECONSTRUCTION INCLUDED IN WSSC'S PROPOSED FY21-26 CIP</b>								
	Approved	FY21-26						FY23-28
	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	Total
Water Main Replacement (mi.)	31.4	37	40	47	50	50	50	274
Sewer Main Rehabilitation (mi.)	31	31	31	30	30	30	30	182

Source: WSSC Water Budget Division

## PROGRAM FUNDING

The WSSC Water CIP is funded through a variety of sources described below.

### WSSC Water Bonds

The WSSC Water raises revenue for CIP projects by issuing water and sewer bonds. These bonds are amortized through periodic charges to the users of water and sewer services. Bond funding for the FY23-28 six-year CIP, as recommended by the County Executive, is \$3,280.5 million.

### PAYGO (Pay-As-You-Go)

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WSSC Water uses current revenues to help fund the capital program and thereby reduce the need for debt financing. PAYGO funding for the FY23-28 six-year CIP, as recommended by the County Executive, is \$400.0 million.

## **System Development Charge**

The System Development Charge (SDC) is a charge to new development to pay for the part of the CIP which is needed to accommodate growth. The WSSC Water collects SDC revenue from charges to builders based on the number and type of plumbing fixtures installed in new construction projects. The County Executive recommends that \$178.9 million in SDC funds be used to fund growth projects from FY23-28.

## **State Aid**

The total State Aid budgeted for the FY23-28 six-year CIP and recommended by the County Executive is \$306.4 million. WSSC Water asserts that all Commission projects receiving State Aid conform to the requirements of local plans, as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act.

## **Federal Aid**

The total Federal Aid budgeted for the FY23-28 six-year CIP and recommended by the County Executive is \$11.8 million.

## **Municipal Financing**

The WSSC Water CIP contains projects in which neighboring jurisdictions such as the District of Columbia and the City of Rockville join the Commission in financing the construction of sewerage facilities serving the metropolitan area. These jurisdictions contribute an agreed-upon share of the project cost. A total of \$35.4 million in project expenditures is recommended to be financed by these jurisdictions during FY23-28.

## **Contributions**

When the actual costs of water and sewerage facilities required to serve new development are estimated to exceed expected revenues, the difference may be financed by developers in the form of contributions. Contributions toward CIP projects are estimated at \$35.5 million from FY23-28.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The Montgomery County CIP review process for WSSC Water is governed by laws and regulations of the State of Maryland, the Charter of Montgomery County, and the Montgomery County Code. Relevant projects authorized for Montgomery County review include only Montgomery and bi-county water and sewer projects.

The Montgomery County Executive reviews relevant WSSC Water CIP proposals and includes them, along with comments and recommendations, in the Executive's Recommended Capital Improvements Program Budget. After a public hearing and subsequent committee work sessions, the Montgomery County Council approves by resolution WSSC Water's six year capital program and annual operating and capital budgets, with modifications as desired.

Bi-county projects are projects located completely or partially within Montgomery County or Prince George's County that are designed to provide service in whole or in substantial part to the other county. A proposed bi-county project may be disapproved only with the concurrence of the governing body of the county which is to receive the designated service. However, the county in which the project is to be physically located has the authority to direct modifications in project location and scheduling, provided that such modifications or changes do not prevent the service from being available when needed.

This authority to modify the project location may only be exercised during the year in which the project is first introduced. Thereafter, the authority to make modifications is limited to those changes that would not result in substantial net additional costs to WSSC Water, unless the county directing the modification reimburses WSSC Water for any additional net cost increases resulting from the

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modification.

WSSC Water is responsible for constructing approved capital projects on a schedule as close as possible to the schedule set forth in the adopted CIP. The Commission is limited to undertaking only those projects which are scheduled in the first year of the program. However, it is not obligated to implement any project determined to be not financially feasible.