

## Mayor's 10-point Water Quality Initiative and Water Utility Standards

Progress-to-date: September 12, 2007

### Water Quality

1. Develop wellhead protection plans for all wells by 2010. Four wellhead protection plans are currently under contract for completion in 2007. The Utility's 2007 operating budget contains funding for wellhead protection plans for four additional existing wells. The 2007 capital budget contains funding for a wellhead protection plan for one new well to be constructed in 2007. Thus, nine wellhead protection plans will be completed in 2007, bringing our total to 16 out of 25 wells. The Utility's operating budget request for 2008 contains funding for four wellhead protection plans for four additional existing wells. The 2008 capital request contains funding for protection plans for two new wells. Thus 22 wellhead protection plans should be completed by the end of 2008. This is well within our projection of completing wellhead protection plans for all wells by 2010. State law requires us to have protection plans for only three of our existing wells.
2. Continue manganese flushing and monitoring plan and chlorine monitoring. The citywide sampling and monitoring plan for manganese for 2006 was completed in October 2006. The impacts and results of the 2006 uni-directional flushing program have been evaluated and a report has been completed. The 2007 flushing program began on March 25 and is ongoing. Additional positions for flushing crews have been hired. Wells with high levels of manganese have been put on standby status, one has been shut down, and a filter will be installed on one next year. Chlorine levels are monitored daily and a standard operating procedure for chlorine levels has been approved by the Board
3. Strengthen the connection between water issues and public health. Director of Public Health, Dr. Thomas Schlenker, has been appointed as an ex officio member of the Board of Water Commissioners. Public Health staff and Water Quality staff of the Utility are in contact do discuss issues on a weekly basis.
4. Assemble a technical water quality peer review task force by fall 2006. Four scientists serve on the technical water quality peer review task force, including an environmental microbiologist, an environmental toxicologist and two hydrogeologists. Quarterly meetings of the task force are being held. Additional individuals may be invited to join the task force as we determine areas of expertise needed for the group.

### Infrastructure Standards

1. Accelerate efforts to replace aging infrastructure. The Utility's 2007 capital budget includes \$5 million for routine water main replacements and \$1 million for lead service replacements. The water main replacement funding reflects a \$2.6 million increase (a 108% increase) over the 2006 budget. The 2008 capital budget request contains \$5.3 million for water main replacement and \$360,000 for other facility improvements. These budgets are consistent with the recommendations of our December 2005 Infrastructure Management Plan. The Utility has completed its financial model for projecting the financial needs and impacts of Utility budgets and expenses. It shows a need for rate increases of approximately 8% per year over the next two years to fund near-term infrastructure replacement and other capital and operating expenses. A siting plan and public participation program for a well to replace Well No. 3, the oldest unit well in our system, is underway.
2. Continue the lead service replacement program. The lead service replacement program continues on schedule for completion prior to the January 2011 deadline established in the consent agreement with Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources. As of September 2007, 88% of Water Utility lead services had been replaced and 83% of property owner lead services had been replaced.
3. Provide annual updates and training for the Emergency Response Plan. An internal Utility staff committee is working on updates to the Utility's Emergency Response Plan. Following this update, training on the plan will be scheduled. The Utility is also actively involved in City planning and training for emergency response, establishing a City emergency response center, continuity of operations plans, pandemic planning, and Incident Command training.

### **Customer Service Standards**

1. Develop an enhanced Water Utility Website. The Utility has completely redesigned and reorganized its website, which now has a new look and provides easier and more logical access to information by the public. A page that allows residents to enter their address and get specific information about water quality in their well area was implemented April 1.
2. Track and report on customer concerns regarding water utility operations and water quality. The Utility maintains an automated Water Quality Correspondence database that tracks and maps water quality reports and complaints from receipt to resolution. Water quality issues were also added to the City's report-a-problem website and can be reported through an "Ask Us/Tell Us" feature on the Water Utility website.
3. Develop and implement a customer survey in 2006. A customer telephone survey was conducted in October by a professional survey firm. The survey covered questions related to water quality, billing, cost of service, and general satisfaction with the Water Utility. Over 400 Water Utility customers were surveyed. Based on the results of this telephone survey, a more detailed mailed survey has been completed.
4. Develop and implement a customer satisfaction card. A customer satisfaction card to solicit feedback at points of contact with customers and a process for doing so, which is being developed by an employee design team, is nearing completion.

## External Communication Standards

1. Improve public outreach and education. The Board of Water Commissioners and the Joint Board of Health for Madison and Dane County held joint hearings on June 13 and November 28, 2006. Eight additional public meetings have been held for customers in each of the four well service areas where levels of manganese are highest. Additional presentations have been provided to civic clubs, neighborhood associations and other groups. A three-meeting series of neighborhood public meetings were held in the East Isthmus on a variety of water issues. Five meetings have been held with neighborhood associations. Information has been added to the website and other materials developed for public distribution. Letters, notices or postcards are being sent directly to customers affected by specific utility activities. A Water Quality Listserve has been developed and regular Water Quality Updates have been issued. We have filled the Water Quality Manager position. The new manager is working on a variety of public outreach and education efforts, including communicating and working closely with neighborhood associations. Meetings have been held with the editorial boards of both major newspapers. A Communications Subcommittee of the Water Utility Board has developed an External Communications Plan for the Utility. A public information officer position for the utility has been proposed and is undergoing a review and approval process.
2. Hold at least one public meeting a year. Eight public meetings were held in 2006, and six have been held so far in 2007. Additional meetings are being scheduled for this year, and other meetings will be scheduled as needed.
3. Review the emergency reporting plan. An internal Utility staff committee is currently reviewing notification procedures in the event of an emergency as part of an overall review and update of the Utility's Emergency Response Plan.
4. Create a citizen focus group. A citizen focus group met on several occasions to review the Utility's Drinking Water Quality Report, webpages, and other material for public distribution.
5. Actively pursue collaborative relationships with neighboring water utilities. A local water utility group has been formed in order to meet and address issues important to water utilities in the greater Madison area. Five meetings of this group have been held since February and more are being scheduled. Two near-term issues that will be addressed are (1) regional groundwater management, and (2) emergency mutual aid and response. A meeting was held November 13 with Monona Water Utility, and an agreement is being negotiated for an interconnection of two water systems that could be used in the event of emergency needs. The General Manager is on a steering committee to implement a utility emergency mutual aid and response network statewide.
6. Communicate regularly with Alders, Water Board, agencies and organizations. Regular communication has been established with alders, the Water Board, Utility employees, the Mayor's office, the media and the public through the Water Quality Update listserv. Additional meetings and telephone conferences have been held with individual alders regarding water quality and other utility issues affecting their districts. A meeting was held with new alders to discuss drinking water issues and questions. Communication with the Department of Natural Resources has improved, and the General Manager gave a presentation to Department managers about recent events and to discuss additional ways to improve communication between the department and the utilities it regulates. Regular communication

continues with the U.S. EPA, national water associations and other water utilities. The General Manager serves on Board of Directors of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and on the board of the American Water Works Association Research Foundation.

### Internal Communication Standards

1. Contract with an outside consultant to conduct a utility-wide self-assessment, gap analysis and strategic improvement plan with maximum involvement of management and staff. A contract for this work was executed in September 2006. An amendment to the contract has been approved for work through the end of 2007. An employee assessment team completed the process of interviewing all employees and gathering information regarding the "gap" and potential improvements the utility can make. The consultants completed a Final Draft Strategic Plan, which they presented to the Water Board in February 2007 and which the Board adopted in March. A Strategic Plan Steering Committee of Utility employees has been formed to implement the plan, and nine design teams have been formed to address specific issues within the Utility. One of the design teams formed is specifically tasked with looking at ways to improve internal communication within the Utility.
2. Begin immediate development and implementation of more participatory management processes. Regular all-staff meetings are scheduled and are being held monthly. Monthly labor-management meetings are also being held. Regular communication with employees is being accomplished through the Water Quality Updates, emails to all employees regarding Utility issues, and monthly all-employee meetings facilitated by members of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Employee teams are being utilized to solicit information, suggestions and recommendations for major decisions and issues. The strategic plan steering committee is meeting to determine priorities for other employee design teams for specific projects.
3. Require management training for top Water Utility management. The General Manager recently participated in a Leadership Skills seminar and sessions on "Leading and Motivating Employees," "Global Water Utility Trends," "Communicating in High Concern/Low Trust Situations," and "Greater Public Investment through Branding: Building Trust and Support for Infrastructure Investment." The new Water Quality Manager has attended comprehensive supervisory training. The new Operations Manager has also taken and is being scheduled for the supervisory training. All managers on the Utility management team participated in Leadership Development training in February and in comprehensive Communications Skills training in March. Managers are also scheduling other management training, and training for all managers was held for Workplace Violence and Improving the Workplace Environment. The Strategic Planning consultants have developed management training recommendations as part of the Strategic Plan, which will be pursued. Top management recently underwent training on personnel issues with a representative from City HR.
4. Assist the President of the Board to make board meetings more focused on major water quality and infrastructure issues. Efforts have been made by the General Manager and the Board president to refocus Board agendas. There have been discussions regarding this at recent Board meetings, and all Board members have been asked for input on this issue. There has been a renewed effort by the Board President to encourage input from the public at Board meetings, including utility employees, and there has been an increase in such input. A special Board meeting to discuss Board policies, procedures, strategies and priorities was held in March.