



## Our wAAter Public Advisory Group Meeting #4 Summary

Meeting Date: January 25, 2023

Meeting Time: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Location: 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD (Independence Room)

Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works (DPW)	HDR	Public Advisory Group
George Heiner	Hannah Billian	Tammy Domanski, Anne Arundel Community College Environmental Center
Chris Murphy	Rahkia Nance	Sally Hornor, Magothy River Association
Beth O'Connell	Meghan Robinson	Lloyd Lewis, Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association (CEPA)
Karen Henry	Brian Balchunas	Doug Nichols, Greater Severna Park Council
		Tim Williams, Water Environment Federation (retired)
		Jerry Pesterfield, Heritage Harbor

### Welcome

Rahkia Nance opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanked them for volunteering their time and participating in the Our wAAter Public Advisory Group.

### Purpose and Objectives

Rahkia Nance reviewed the agenda and objectives of the fourth meeting:

- To review the needs for the water, wastewater, and stormwater programs
- To participate in a prioritization and weighting exercise for use in evaluating program needs.

### Program Needs and Project Scoring

George Heiner provided an overview of the typical project drivers and program needs for water, wastewater, and miscellaneous water/wastewater.

- Chris Murphy explained the historic reliance on water from Baltimore City and noted that the driver for the East/West Transmission Main project is to provide a backbone from the eastern portion of the system (Arnold Water Treatment Plant) to the western portion of the system (Airport Square).
- George Heiner noted that the Maryland City Water Reclamation Facility Expansion has already been completed.

- Sally Hornor asked if the County provides funding for the septic upgrades. George Heiner explained that this funding is administered through the Health Department.
- Tim Williams asked why the County would remove the connection to Baltimore City water supply. Chris Murphy explained that the County has been improving the water system to increase resiliency. For example, the East/West Transmission Main and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) will provide redundancy to the water system.

Hannah Billian explained the scoring criteria (primary objectives and sub-objectives) that were developed for the County to prioritize the various program needs.

## **Weighting Exercise**

Hannah Billian noted that the County had completed a weighting exercise for the primary objectives and sub-objectives, and she asked the Advisory Group to go through a similar exercise. It was noted that the exercise was for informational purposes only. After a brief discussion, the group assigned a weight to each primary objective that reflected their relative importance.

The total weight of the objectives and each sub-objective added up to 100%.

The group agreed on the following weights for the primary objectives:

### **Objectives:**

- Safeguard the Environment – 41%
- Customer Service – 39%
- Financial Sustainability – 20%

After discussing each sub-objective, the group agreed on the following weights:

### **Safeguard the Environment**

- Meet Regulatory Obligations – 19%
- Watershed Protection and Restoration – 31%
- Sustainable, Forward-thinking Use of Natural Resources – 29%
- Resiliency/Ability to Adapt – 21%

### **Customer Service**

- Maximize Public Health, Safety, Welfare, and Equity – 75%
- Provide for Reliable Services – 25%

### **Financial Sustainability**

- Affordable for Customers – 40%
- Partnered Financial Support – 35%
- Economic Impact – 25%

## **Final Discussion, Wrap-Up, and Next Steps**

Hannah Billian shared the weighted prioritization criteria from the County and compared that data to the weights the group determined during the meeting. Generally, the criteria weighting results were aligned with the weighting results. The largest difference was in the weighting of the “Meet Regulatory Obligations” sub-objective. The Public Advisory Group rated “Meet Regulatory Obligations” lower than the County with a combined weight difference of 8 percent for this sub-objective. The primary reason for this was that the group considered meeting regulatory obligations to essentially be mandatory, and therefore

such projects should automatically have the highest priority. The remaining sub-objective weights were all within 6 percent of the County's weighting results.

Advisory group input through the weighting exercise is vital to gain additional perspective from members of the community on their priorities for water infrastructure, public health, and the environment. This input will seed further discussion to inform the adaptive management structure of the Our wAAter program and the County's Integrated Management Plan. One such modification in the future could be separating out or further dividing discretionary from mandatory projects, or to examine differentiating features within regulatory driven projects.

Rahkia Nance thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged the participants to provide their feedback to her through email ([rahkia.nance@hdrinc.com](mailto:rahkia.nance@hdrinc.com)) on the Integrated Management Plan by February 3. The project team will present the updated project ranking and feedback during the fifth Public Advisory Group meeting, scheduled for February 22, 2023.