ALCOSAN Public Officials Briefing

Tuesday, August 6, 2012
8:00 – 9:30 AM
Sheraton Station Square

Meeting Summary

This briefing was convened for elected and municipal officials in the ALCOSAN service area at the release of the Draft Wet Weather Plan. There were 14 people in attendance. Legislators and staff included State Representative Randy Vulakovich and his Legislative and Outreach Director and a representative from State Senator Jay Costa's office. Municipalities represented were Neville Township, Brentwood Borough, Churchill Borough, Greentree Borough, Kennedy Township, Shaler Township, and Ingram Borough.

Art Tamilia welcomed the attendees and gave an introduction to the purpose and content of the meeting. Jan Oliver presented an overview of the wet weather issue and the Draft Wet Weather Plan including the following topics:

- Brief ALCOSAN history and system overview
- Wet weather overflow issues
- Regulatory requirements
- Process of evaluating and selecting solutions
- Selected Wet Weather Plan and Recommended Wet Weather Plan
- Affordability analysis
- Implementation plan
- Municipal and public involvement

Key topics covered during the discussion section of the meeting included:

1. **Coordination Among ALCOSAN And The Customer Municipalities Regarding Projected Municipal Improvements**

The discussion included the relationship between the projected improvements to the municipal sewer systems and ALCOSAN's WWP. ALCOSAN explained how it has integrated the evolving municipal improvements and their costs into the overall costs of the WWP and the affordability analysis.

There was additional discussion about the distribution of the cost burdens among the municipalities and the inter-municipal allocation of costs for joint improvements. For planning purposes, the municipal improvement costs were equally distributed among the municipalities in the draft WWP. ALCOSAN anticipates that it will revise the affordability analysis within the WWP once the municipalities have had opportunities to determine their inter-municipal distribution of costs for municipal improvements.

2. **Anticipated Project Cost And Potential Funding**

The potential for funding assistance with the implementation of the WWP was discussed. ALCOSAN noted that there are currently no large-scale funding programs for wet weather control programs such as ALCOSAN's WWP; the overflow control requirements are an unfunded mandate. ALCOSAN continues to work with the state and federal legislative delegations and with its fellow wastewater agencies nationally towards a workable and sustainable funding mechanism.

3. **Modeling Demonstrating Mitigation Of Sewer Overflows Through Green Infrastructure**

The discussion included the use of ALCOSAN's hydrologic and hydraulic models to estimate the ability of green infrastructure to reduce overflows. Based on some simplifying assumptions, preliminary modeling performed by ALCOSAN's basin planners indicated that green infrastructure and other municipal source control measures could help decrease the amount of overflows, and provided an initial indication of some areas where it could provide the most benefit. ALCOSAN's adaptive management approach allows for the incorporation of future source control measures including green infrastructure if proposed by the municipalities in their Municipal Feasibility Studies.

4. **Consolidation Of Smaller Municipal Sewer Systems Into The ALCOSAN System**

The regional consolidation of municipal sewer systems was discussed. ALCOSAN noted that it recognizes the institutional challenges and has undertaken the Regionalization Study with the assistance of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. The Study evaluates various institutional and ownership scenarios for ALCOSAN and was initially scheduled to be completed at the end of this year (2012).

5. **Details of Water Quality Standards**

ALCOSAN explained the basis for the Water Quality Priority alternative, one of the three control programs that could be implemented through 2026 within the affordability limits of the ALCOSAN service area. The Water Quality Priority alternative gives highest priority to controls which most significantly decrease the amount of bacteria discharged during wet weather to the river areas with the highest recreational use.

ALCOSAN Public Officials Briefing

Monday, August 6, 2012
5:30 – 7:00 PM
I.B.E.W.

Meeting Summary

This briefing was convened for elected and municipal officials in the ALCOSAN service area at the release of the Draft Wet Weather Plan. There were 8 people in attendance. The Field Director for United States Representative Tim Murphy was present. Municipalities represented were Ben Avon Heights Borough, Swissvale Borough, Whitaker Borough, Etna Borough, McKees Rocks Borough, and Stowe Township.

Arletta Scott Williams welcomed the attendees and gave an introduction to the purpose and content of the meeting. Dave Borneman presented an overview of the wet weather issue and the Draft Wet Weather Plan including the following topics:

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- Wet weather overflow issues
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Key topics covered during the discussion section of the meeting included:

1. **Discussion Concerning the Proposed Deep Tunnels And Other Infrastructure**

There was discussion of the potential schedule for construction of the proposed storage and conveyance tunnel system, which is tied to a new tunnel dewatering pump station and expansion of ALCOSAN's Wood's Run Wastewater Treatment Plant. Upon approval of the WWP by the regulatory agencies, there will be several years of design work on the tunnel, pump station and the wastewater treatment plant expansion before the tunnel construction begins. According to the current schedule, tunnel construction would start in the 6th year.

There was also discussion about Retention Treatment Basins or RTBs. A RTB is a combination wet weather flow storage and treatment facility. Captured wet weather flow is stored during wet weather events for later drain-down and transport to the wastewater treatment plant through ALCOSAN's regional conveyance interceptor system. When the volume of captured wet weather flow exceeds the storage capacity of the RTB, the units function as a settling basin analogous to the primary treatment basins at the wastewater treatment plant. Solid materials are removed from the wet weather flows via screening and settling, and then the flows are disinfected to control bacteria before discharge to a receiving stream.

2. **Rates and Rate Increases**

ALCOSAN noted that rate increases in the range of 10-12 % during the implementation of the WWP are anticipated, resulting in rates in 2026 that are roughly double relative to current rates. All of the rate projections include both ALCOSAN and municipal charges. Future rate increases will occur as necessary to keep pace with the implementation of the WWP, including new borrowing that will be necessary. These projections relate to the $2 billion, 2026 program. ALCOSAN's current rates remain quite low compared to those in other cities.

Concern was raised about residents' abilities to pay increased rates. The Manager of Etna Borough urged that the stakeholders work together to reduce the costs of the WWP.

3. **Acceptability by Regulators Of The Recommended Plan And Whether Renegotiation Will Require A New Consent Decree**

There was discussion as to the acceptability of the $2 billion Recommended Plan for 2026 to the regulatory agencies. ALCOSAN noted that it has been working with the regulatory agencies through the development of the WWP and has made the case that the $3.6B (Selected Plan) satisfies the CD requirements and the $2B (Recommended Plan) is the responsible approach, given what the region can afford. There was further discussion as to whether the current consent decree would be revised or replaced. Upon regulatory approval, the WWP will be an enforceable document. Modifications to the consent decree might also be necessary.

4. **System Performance**

There was discussion about post-construction performance standards for the WWP. The Plan includes a post-construction monitoring and evaluation period. If the post-construction evaluation indicates that the regulatory requirements are not being met, ALCOSAN will be required to submit a revised Wet Weather Plan to the regulatory agencies.

5. **Municipal Infrastructure Improvement Costs**

The estimated costs of improvements to the municipal sewer systems that will be required are $530 million. ALCOSAN explained that each municipality will be responsible for funding improvements necessary to their own sewer systems.

ALCOSAN Public Officials Briefing

Tuesday, August 7, 2012
8:00 – 9:30 AM
Sheraton Station Square

Meeting Summary

This briefing was convened for elected and municipal officials in the ALCOSAN service area at the release of the Draft Wet Weather Plan. There were 20 people in attendance. Staff members were present for State Representatives Dom Costa, Nick Kotik, Matt Smith, Wayne Fontana, and Dan Frankel. Municipalities represented were Trafford Borough, Mt. Oliver Borough, Edgewood Borough, Greentree Borough, Swissvale Borough, Pleasant Hills Borough, Fox Chapel, Upper St. Clair Township, and Baldwin Borough. Of those present, there were six consulting engineers who provide services to a number of municipalities.

Art Tamilia welcomed the attendees and gave an introduction to the purpose and content of the meeting. Dave Borneman presented an overview of the wet weather issue and the Draft Wet Weather Plan including the following topics:

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Key topics covered during the discussion section of the meeting included:

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The discussion included the relationship between the projected improvements to the municipal sewer systems and ALCOSAN's WWP. ALCOSAN explained how it has integrated the evolving municipal improvements and their costs into the overall costs of the WWP and the affordability analysis.

There was additional discussion about the distribution of the cost burdens among the municipalities and the inter-municipal allocation of costs for joint improvements. For planning purposes, the municipal improvement costs were equally distributed among the municipalities in the draft WWP. ALCOSAN anticipates that it will revise the affordability analysis within the WWP once the municipalities have had opportunities to determine their inter-municipal distribution of costs for municipal improvements.

2. **Anticipated Project Cost And Potential Funding**

The potential for funding assistance with the implementation of the WWP was discussed. ALCOSAN noted that there are currently no large-scale funding programs for wet weather control programs such as ALCOSAN's WWP; the overflow control requirements are an unfunded mandate. ALCOSAN continues to work with the state and federal legislative delegations and with its fellow wastewater agencies nationally towards a workable and sustainable funding mechanism.

3. **Modeling Demonstrating Mitigation Of Sewer Overflows Through Green Infrastructure**

The discussion included the use of ALCOSAN's hydrologic and hydraulic models to estimate the ability of green infrastructure to reduce overflows. Based on some simplifying assumptions, preliminary modeling performed by ALCOSAN's basin planners indicated that green infrastructure and other municipal source control measures could help decrease the amount of overflows, and provided an initial indication of some areas where it could provide the most benefit. ALCOSAN's adaptive management approach allows for the incorporation of future source control measures including green infrastructure if proposed by the municipalities in their Municipal Feasibility Studies.

4. **Consolidation Of Smaller Municipal Sewer Systems Into The ALCOSAN System**

The regional consolidation of municipal sewer systems was discussed. ALCOSAN noted that it recognizes the institutional challenges and has undertaken the Regionalization Study with the assistance of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. The Study evaluates various institutional and ownership scenarios for ALCOSAN and was initially scheduled to be completed at the end of this year (2012).

5. **Details of Water Quality Standards**

ALCOSAN explained the basis for the Water Quality Priority alternative, one of the three control programs that could be implemented through 2026 within the affordability limits of the ALCOSAN service area. The Water Quality Priority alternative gives highest priority to controls which most significantly decrease the amount of bacteria discharged during wet weather to the river areas with the highest recreational use.

ALCOSAN Public Officials Briefing

Tuesday, August 7, 2012
5:30 – 7:00 PM
Sheraton Station Square

Meeting Summary

This briefing was convened for elected and municipal officials in the ALCOSAN service area at the release of the Draft Wet Weather Plan. There were six people in attendance. The Community Development Representative was present from United States Representative Mike Doyle's office. Municipalities represented were Monroeville, Brentwood Borough, Peters Township, and Ross Township.

Art Tamilia welcomed the attendees and gave an introduction to the purpose and content of the meeting. Jan Oliver presented an overview of the wet weather issue and the Draft Wet Weather Plan including the following topics:

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Key topics covered during the discussion section of the meeting included:

1. **Regulating Agency Acceptance Of Two-Year Design Storm**

There was discussion about the regulatory acceptance of ALCOSAN's proposal to provide a two-year level of control for sanitary sewer overflows. ALCOSAN explained that it believes the proposal is acceptable and that the issue is still under discussion. ALCOSAN has been meeting with the agencies regularly and have briefed them on its analysis.

2. **Timeline For Completion Of The Recommended Plan**

ALCOSAN clarified that it is proposing to complete the Recommended Plan by the September 2026 consent decree deadline. The Recommended Plan is a sub-set of the controls in the Selected Plan.

3. **Water Quality Sampling as an Indicator Of River Clean-Up**

There was discussion about ALCOSAN's water quality assessment program. ALCOSAN's program includes sampling and water quality modeling prior to, during and after the implementation of the WWP to monitor the progress towards cleaning up the rivers.

4. **Addressing Upstream Issues That Are Out Of Downstream Control**

The implications of water quality degradation that occurs upstream of the ALCOSAN service area were discussed. ALCOSAN's water quality assessment program will help identify water quality problems for which the ALCOSAN service area is not responsible. Nationally, the USEPA is attempting to address such issues through its Integrated Planning Framework that is intended to foster integrated solutions across physical and institutional jurisdictions.

5. **Model Findings Regarding Points Of Connection Between Municipal And ALCOSAN Systems**

The meeting discussed the relationships between the municipal collection sewer systems which are upstream of the points of connection (POCs), and ALCOSAN's regional conveyance interceptor sewer system downstream of the POCs. ALCOSAN and the municipalities have conducted comprehensive flow monitoring and developed complex hydrologic and hydraulic models to allow for an understanding of wastewater flows to the points of connection under various current and future conditions. These flow monitoring results and models served as the bases for the alternatives analysis conducted by ALCOSAN in developing the WWP and by the municipalities for their respective feasibility studies. The scheduling of ALCOSAN's improvements downstream of the points of connection will need to be synchronized with the municipal improvements upstream of the points of connection.

6. **Assumed Federal Funding**

ALCOSAN explained that the financial analysis in the WWP assumed no federal funding assistance. ALCOSAN noted that there are currently no large-scale funding programs for wet weather control program such as ALCOSAN's WWP. ALCOSAN continues to work with the state and federal legislative delegations and with its fellow wastewater agencies nationally towards a workable and sustainable funding mechanism.