

ATTACHMENT NO. 4

Summary of Issues and Significant Changes - Sanitation

General Sanitation Overview

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) has been responsible for the County sanitation functions effective January 1, 1995, as part of the County's reorganization process. The Sanitation Zones ("SZ" or "Zone"), which are owned and operated by Sonoma Water, include Airport-Larkfield- Wikiup, Geyserville, Penngrove, and Sea Ranch. The County Sanitation Districts ("CSD" or "District") which are operated by Sonoma Water under contract include Occidental, Russian River, Sonoma Valley, and South Park.

Generally, and for the past several years, costs have been increasing in the sanitation budget requests due to price increases for services and supplies, continuation of the capital replacement programs (described later in this narrative), cost of salaries and benefits, and the effort to improve service. As a result, the FY 2026/2027 sewer service rates are proposed to increase between 3.5% and 8.9% for the various Zones and Districts. The rate increases for these Zones and Districts are necessary to fund operating and capital program expenditures.

Each of the districts and zones faces more stringent water quality regulations, which increases operational and capital costs. Most of the districts and zones are relatively small and that means a smaller ratepayer base is responsible for these increasing costs.

Sonoma Water has undertaken an effort to implement capital replacement programs within the sanitation Zones and Districts. The purpose of the programs is to provide for long-term replacement of existing facilities that have reached the end of their useful life or must be upgraded to comply with increasingly stringent regulatory requirements. The districts and zones range in age from 70-plus years (Sonoma Valley, Occidental) to 40 years (Russian River, Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup) and they all face financial challenges. Given the facilities life span, the aging infrastructure of collection and treatment systems require ongoing replacement and maintenance projects. The cost of the programs is financed, when possible, through operating transfers from the operations fund at each Zone or District to the construction fund of that Zone or District. If the operations fund does not have sufficient cash available for transfer to the construction fund, a transfer will not be made for that fiscal year and the scheduled capital replacement projects may be delayed until the next fiscal year.

In January 2000, Sonoma Water staff held a Sanitation Workshop presenting a summary of operating and regulatory issues associated with sanitation systems operated by Sonoma Water, providing information regarding past operating practices, changes in the regulatory environment, the estimated cost of sanitation services, and strategies for addressing current and future operating issues. Three levels of service and their costs were identified for each of the sanitation systems and are described below.

Minimum Level of Service: Includes services necessary for the protection of public health, employee safety, and public safety.

Standard Level of Service: Includes services necessary to operate and maintain the sanitation systems in order to limit or reduce the risk of (1) service interruption, and (2) violations of the respective National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or Waste Discharge Requirements issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Boards. A Standard Level of Service is obtained when net operating revenues, calculated as operating revenues less services and supplies, are positive.

Asset Preservation Level of Service: Includes services and programs necessary to provide for a Standard Level of

Service plus investments needed to replace or upgrade capital equipment. An Asset Preservation Level of Service is obtained when net operating revenues, calculated as routine operating revenues including subsidies from the General Fund less routine operating expenses (excluding debt service, capital equipment and transfers to construction), meet or exceed annual depreciation costs.

Rate increases, discussed in more detail below, have been proposed with the objective of meeting the Standard Level of Service for most entities. Three entities are meeting the Asset Preservation Level of Service and two entities are proposed at Minimum Level of Service as the General Fund could not support additional transfers at this time.

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the budget requests, and applicable rate increases, proposed in each Zone and District. All annual service charges are presented in terms of cost per equivalent single family dwelling (ESD).

Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$7,054,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$6,172,000 and non-routine expenses are \$363,000, for a total of \$6,535,000. The net operating revenues are \$520,000, which is not sufficient to cover budgeted debt service of \$664,000 which will be paid in part from fund balance.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 are \$523,000, which will fund costs for equipment (\$23,000), and Future Improvements (\$500,000).

In FY 2026/2027, a Sonoma Water General Fund contribution is estimated to be \$450,000 to fund routine operational costs and sludge removal.

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$1,552, representing a 7.5% increase (or \$108) from FY 2025/2026. Due to the General Fund contribution, the requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide a Standard Level of Service. In order to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, this Zone's net operating revenues would need to exceed its depreciation expenses of \$1,191,000.

Geyserville Sanitation Zone

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$1,168,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$791,000 and non-routine expenses are \$383,000, for a total of \$1,174,000. The net operating revenues are -\$6,000. There are no debt service payments.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$15,000, which will fund costs for equipment.

In FY 2026/2027, a Sonoma Water General Fund contribution is estimated to be \$500,000 to fund routine operational costs, sludge removal, and a groundwater study.

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$1,824 representing an 8.6% increase (or \$144) from FY 2025/2026. Due to the General Fund contribution, the requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide a Minimum Level of Service. In order to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, this Zone's net operating revenues would need to exceed its depreciation expenses of \$53,000.

Penngrove Sanitation Zone

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$2,115,500. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$1,357,000 and non-routine expenses are \$560,000, for a total of \$1,917,000. The net operating revenues are \$199,000. There are no debt service payments.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$744,000, which will fund costs for equipment (\$15,000), Penngrove Force Main Replacement (\$729,000)

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$2,476, representing a 7.8% (or \$178) increase from FY 2025/2026. The requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, as net operating revenue exceeds this District's depreciation expenses of \$129,000.

Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$1,249,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$289,000 and non-routine expenses are \$979,000, for a total of \$1,268,000. The net operating revenues are -\$19,000. There are no debt service payments.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$7,500, which will fund costs for equipment.

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$1,966, representing an 8.9% (or \$160) increase from FY 2025/2026. The requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide a Minimum Level of Service. In order to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, this Zone's net operating revenues would need to exceed its depreciation expenses of \$53,000.

Occidental CSD

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$2,050,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$998,000 and non-routine expenses are \$1,038,000, for a total of \$2,036,000. The net operating revenues are \$15,000. There are no debt service payments.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$474,000, which will fund costs for equipment (\$15,000), and the Occidental-Graton pipeline project (\$459,000).

In FY 2026/2027, a Sonoma Water General Fund contribution is estimated to be \$1,318,000 to fund routine operational costs, and Sanitary Sewer management Plan and Sewer Capacity Analysis.

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$3,294, representing a 4.7% (or \$148) increase from FY 2025/2026. Due to the General Fund contribution, the requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide a Standard Level of Service. In order to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, this Zone's net operating revenues would need to exceed its depreciation expenses of \$279,000.

Russian River CSD

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$10,609,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$7,617,000 and non-routine expenses are \$2,426,000, for a total of \$10,043,000. The net operating revenues are \$567,000, which is sufficient to cover budgeted debt service of \$124,000.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 are \$290,000, which will fund costs for equipment (\$15,000), Increase Capacity Improvements (\$202,000), and a state grant funded Force Mains, Lift Stations, Headworks Geotechnical Drilling Post-Construction Mitigation (\$73,000).

In FY 2026/2027, a Sonoma Water General Fund contribution is estimated to be \$2,145,000 to fund routine operational costs, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) upgrades to improve wastewater process controls, collection system rehabilitation and repairs, capacity improvements, and wet weather sewer hauling services.

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$2,696, representing an 8.5% (or \$210) increase from FY 2025/2026. Due to the General Fund contribution, the requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide a Standard Level of Service. In order to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, this District's net operating revenues would need to exceed its depreciation expenses of \$1,634,000.

Sonoma Valley CSD

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$22,294,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies) are \$13,665,000 and non-routine expenses are \$3,350,000, for a total of \$ \$17,015,000. The net operating revenues are \$5,280,000, which is sufficient to cover budgeted debt service of \$ 3,264,000.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$3,324,000 which will fund costs for equipment (\$155,000), trunk main replacement phase 5 (\$1,715,000), influent/effluent pumping and piping upgrade (\$625,000), Hooker Creek Trunk Main Seismic Mitigation (\$49,000), Effluent Recycled Water Line Replacement (\$730,000), and 5th street west and hayes street main repair (\$50,000).

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$1,514, representing a 6.0% (\$86) increase from FY 2025/2026. The requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, as net operating revenues exceed this District's annual depreciation expenses of \$4,493,000.

South Park CSD

The budgeted operating revenues for FY 2026/2027 are \$5,218,000. The routine operating expenses (Services and Supplies and Sewer Capacity Rights) are \$2,525,000 and non-routine expenses are \$1,073,000, for a total of \$3,598,000. The net operating revenues are \$1,620,000, which is sufficient to cover debt service budgeted at \$219,000.

The Construction Fund budget and other capital expenses (equipment, etc.) requested for FY 2026/2027 is \$4,097,000, which will fund equipment (\$15,000) and design of the Santa Rosa Avenue sewers project - Todd to E. Robles (\$218,000), Barbara-Winston Collection System replacement project (\$3,456,000), Robin Way, Eddy Drive & Barbara Drive Sewer Replacements (\$43,000) and McMinn & Hughes Sewer Funding Agreement (\$365,000).

The requested annual service charge for FY 2026/2027 is \$1,274, representing a 3.5% (or \$42) increase from FY 2025/2026. This increase is necessary to meet obligations to the City of Santa Rosa in completing the required work on the collection system. The requested budget will fund the programs and services necessary to provide an Asset Preservation Level of Service, as net operating revenues exceed this District's annual depreciation expenses of \$470,000.