

# On the Horizon

The maxim “you can’t know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been” sums up the purpose of our first Sustainability Report. As the first in a series that we plan to publish regularly, this report establishes our baseline, or yardstick, for measuring our sustainability performance in the coming decades. We now know “where we’ve been.”

Overall, we’re pleased with this initial assessment of our performance. MSD’s energy consumption has fallen year over year for the last 5 years, we have maintained an excellent record in water quality regulatory compliance, and our new fluidized bed incinerators at the Mill Creek plant are generating fewer air emissions. We’re especially proud of our productive relationships with community partners, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion within MSD, and providing a robust internship program to high school and college students. Finally, our financial strength is one of our key assets, as reflected in our improved bond rating. In the last 2 years, we have put several mechanisms in place to protect this essential asset, including a financial policy and a structured approach to risk management.

At the same time, our 2009 baseline assessment of sustainability performance shows that several areas need improvement. Many of these are, in fact, areas of opportunity. In our operations, for example, we can further reduce GHG emissions, lower chemical consumption, and increase our recycling rate. All of these have the potential to lead to cost reductions. In the area of social and community performance, we will continue to expand the ways in which we foster and improve stakeholder relationships. In addition, we will monitor our progress toward achieving small business enterprise (SBE) participation goals. Financially, our main challenge for the future will be to keep sewer rates affordable while paying for Project Groundwork infrastructure projects.

We have two over-arching goals in enhancing our sustainability performance into the future:

- **To operate as efficiently and effectively as we can.** Within the operating parameters of our sewer and wastewater treatment systems and within the natural and built environment in which we work, we will continue to focus on reducing the primary environmental impacts and costs of our operations: energy consumption, GHG emissions, air emissions, and chemical consumption.
- **To create sustainable communities in our region.** Through the Communities of the Future initiative and Project Groundwork, as well as other ongoing initiatives, we will continue to work with other government agencies and community partners to create a high quality of life, deliver high quality treated wastewater, and help promote a vibrant economy in our region.

Ultimately, we are striving to correct the CSO issues we have inherited from the past and to build an attractive future based on a foundation of smart, sustainable decisions.

