



## STATEMENT ON INDEPENDENCE

WSP was retained under Master Agreement No. 67580 to conduct an independent evaluation and audit (peer review) of the Patuxent 48-inch Raw Water Main, Allentown Road Water Main Replacement, and South Osborne Road Water Main Replacement projects. Our mandate was to provide an objective and impartial review, grounded in verifiable evidence, with conclusions that are unbiased, evidence-based, and free from subjective interpretation. WSP developed and applied a process and methodology for the independent review founded on industry standards and best practices.

### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW STANDARD.**

For WSP, an “independent” standard means that judgments are made objectively, without bias or predisposition, and that reported results are supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence. This is consistent with ISO 19011:2018, which frames independence as the basis for auditor impartiality and emphasizes an evidence-based, risk-based audit process.

### **METHODOLOGY AND EVIDENCE CONTROLS.**

**Uniform, transparent methodology.** WSP developed a documented, repeatable approach across all three projects to minimize subjectivity and enhance comparability: comprehensive document and record reviews; compliance verification; construction-record audits; structured interviews with project personnel and stakeholders; root-cause analysis across planning /design /procurement /construction /outreach; and community /stakeholder feedback synthesis. The method and traceability of sources are reflected in the project peer review memos and public-facing materials. This methodology meant that all assessments and recommendations are based on the factual record of the review and can be readily traced to the information that was gathered and documented in each report.

**Evidence sufficiency and appropriateness.** We based findings on sufficient, appropriate evidence and maintained review logs that allow another qualified professional to understand the procedures performed and the basis for our conclusions. This included corroborating testimonial information against official records and independent sources to reduce over-reliance on any single perspective. This methodology meant that WSP based conclusions on the sufficiency of the comprehensive information that was available and did not rely on any one source.

**Analytical neutrality (triangulation) to avoid bias.** We triangulated inputs—documents, records, interviews, and data—before forming conclusions. Where viewpoints conflicted, we resolved them through traceable evidence and criteria, not opinion, to keep results unbiased and evidence-driven. (See project memos for the traceability of sources consulted.) This methodology limited any inherent bias in the assessment and recommendations.

**Clear criteria and reporting.** We stated scope, criteria, methods, and bases for conclusions in neutral language, enabling readers to see what was assessed, how it was assessed, and why the evidence supports the result. This methodology supports the transparency of our approach, allowing anyone who reads the reports to develop their own understanding of the projects and the report summaries.

### **CONCLUSION**

WSP’s evaluation and peer review were performed independently and presented objectively, in accordance with ISO 19011 principles. By using a transparent, replicable methodology, corroborating multiple lines of evidence, and maintaining reviewer independence and quality management, our results are **objective and impartial, grounded in verifiable evidence, and free from subjective interpretation.** WSP believes our independent review approach meets industry standards and resulted in unbiased, defensible reports and focusing on process improvements for WSSC Water.