

City of Blaine
Request for Council Action
Meeting Date: September 27, 2021

Subject: Authorizing submittal of requests to Whatcom County for American Rescue Plan Act disbursements to assist with water and sewer infrastructure projects

Department: City Manager

Prepared By: _____
(Digital Signature)

Agenda Location: Consent Agenda Council Action Unfinished Business

Attachments:

1. North Harvey Pump Facility Flyer
 2. Blaine Sewer Rehabilitation Project Flyer
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Background/Summary:

Whatcom County has received \$44.0 million in American Rescue Plan Act (the Act) funding. Distribution of the funding from the Act is such that the County received dollars on a per capita basis, so some of the distributed funds relates to population living in the cities within the County. The County Executive has developed a proposal for distributing the County’s allocation to various focus areas including public health, housing security, childcare capacity expansion, and infrastructure. The County Council has reviewed the preliminary plan and provided input. Final allocations will need to be approved as part of the County’s budget process. The County has a biennial budget and processes a mid-biennium amendment which would occur at the end of 2021.

The County Executive has requested proposals from various public agencies, County departments, and non-profit organizations to distribute funds for uses permitted under the Act. After consulting with the Executive’s office, we have developed two proposals for submittal to Whatcom County. They are for a water pump station at North Harvey Road and the sewer conveyance rehabilitation project in the Lettered Street neighborhood. The first project is described in Attachment 1, and the second in Attachment 2. The attachments are one-page flyers intended to introduce the project and the funding request. At this time the County has not created a formal application, but they may do so in the future.

The North Harvey Pump Facility flyer describes a pump station to boost pressure for areas adjacent to and east of North Harvey Road. Preliminary design and cost estimates indicate the project to cost \$1.5 million. The scalable pump station will be expanded with additional pumps as development in East Blaine increases water demand. The flyer establishes key project funding parameters that the Council needs to consider before the request is forwarded to the County. The two commitments outlined in the flyer are (1) using \$500,000 of the City’s ARPA allocation for the project, and (2) requesting a state ARPA allocation of \$500,000 for the project. The state request would become part of the City’s legislative agenda. Including the two elements in the request to the County commits the City to these future actions.

The Blaine Sewer Rehabilitation Project flyer outlines the \$7.5 million City sewer project currently in design. The request to the County is for \$2.5 million to help fund the project. The flyer does not

describe it, but the remainder would come from money borrowed for the project and \$500,000 balance remaining in the prior allocation from the State for water, sewer, and electric infrastructure.

A third project was considered for a request to the County. That is the Downtown Streetscape Rehabilitation. This \$1.7 million project has a \$500,000 funding shortfall and we considered requesting a contribution to that project. However, the project may not be eligible under the limits of the Act, and we felt that the water and sewer infrastructure project were more appealing. There is also no doubt that they are fundable in the Act. We continue to look at other alternatives for closing the funding gap, but we do not recommend seeking funding through the County's American Rescue Plan Act program.

Budget Implications: Current Budget New Budget Request Non-Budgetary

Requesting funds from Whatcom County has no budget impacts. Receiving funds will increase revenues in the future.

Recommendation:

The City Manager recommends that the City Council authorize the administration to submit American Rescue Plan Act allocation requests for the North Harvey Pump Station and the Blaine Sewer Rehabilitation project to Whatcom County.

Reviewed By:

City Manager _____ Finance Director _____ City Clerk _____
(Digital Signature) (Digital Signature) (Digital Signature)

North Harvey Road Booster Pump Facility

Funding Request: \$500,000



Request: The City of Blaine requests \$500,000 of the County ARPA infrastructure allocation to help build a water booster pump station and related infrastructure to serve the current community and prepare for the residential growth that is occurring in East Blaine. The City intends to contribute \$500,000 of the City’s ARPA funding to the project and is seeking a \$500,000 capital allocation from the State to complete the project funding. As development continues in the service area, developers will add pumps to expand pumping capacity and develop additional service lines to distribute potable water to new homes.

Issue: Whatcom County is in need of additional housing. The County's Business and Commerce Committee has identified workforce housing as the single largest issue curtailing economic development. Young adults raised in the County are finding it impossible to remain in the County due to high housing costs. The City of Blaine’s and Whatcom County’s comprehensive plans have indicated a need for significant expansion to occur in East Blaine to support the expected population increase. Given that, the East Blaine area is projected to support almost 40% of the city’s housing stock need over the next 20 years. Most of the area is at an elevation higher than what can be served by the existing water distribution system. The City has determined that a water booster pump station for Blaine’s current water system service area is required to provide the necessary water infrastructure concurrent with upcoming residential and business development.

Solution: The portion of the subarea that is near and east of North Harvey Road will require a new pressure zone and major improvements to provide adequate service. This includes a new booster pump station, 12-inch looped trunk lines, and a new reservoir. The initial phase of the project is installation of the first pump in a new pump station building with adequate electrical service to serve this scalable solution. The City has already completed the design phase of the project.

Utility Rates: Mitigating the cost of developing the water booster pump station will allow the city to mitigate increases in utility costs for families and businesses in the service area.

ARPA Eligibility

Water and Sewer Infrastructure:
“...the interim final rule provides these [local] governments with wide latitude to identify investments in water and sewer infrastructure that are of the highest priority for their own communities...”

Source: Department of Treasury
Interim Final Rule

Illustration Pending

Blaine Sewer Rehabilitation Project

Funding Request: \$2,500,000



Request: The City of Blaine requests \$2.5 million to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing sewer conveyance system. The work will include repairing existing sewer lines and adding a new line to alleviate flow restrictions in 90-year old lines. This work will be undertaken in an area on the east side of the City and Interstate 5. The repaired areas will aid in accepting increased demands from the continuing residential construction in the East Blaine area. The total cost of this project will be approximately \$7.5 million of which the City of Blaine is requesting \$2.5 million in ARPA funding from Whatcom County.

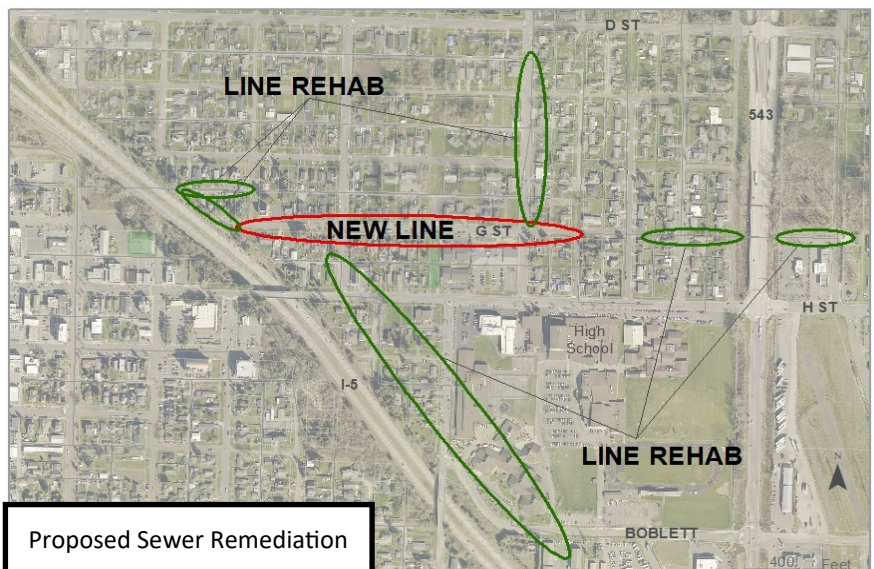
Issue: Existing sewer pipes have settled due to changing soil conditions around the pipe beds causing slumping. Pipes are cracked and crumbling in some locations. The degraded system is leading to liquid blockages and debris stopping normal gravity flow toward the wastewater treatment facility. The various segments with these conditions have led to a few manholes collecting wastewater and percolating through their covers into the streets during extreme flow events. The existing conveyance infrastructure of pipes, manholes, and lift stations is the main route for wastewater movement from the City's east side residential area and industrial and manufacturing areas.

Solution: The City is coordinating to reconstruct part of the existing wastewater infrastructure and to add a new bypass line. This is being done in order to alleviate existing problems and to ensure adequate future capacity. Under the proposed project 1,550 feet of new 18-inch wastewater main will be installed at the head end for the sewer to accept the mass flows that will result once the East Blaine development extensions are operational. In addition, over 1,700 feet of existing wastewater mains will be rehabilitated including rebuilding up to five manholes to manage existing flows and augment future capacity.

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Proposed Sewer Remediation