



# **COUNCIL PUBLIC FORUM**

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

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## **APPROVED MINUTES**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mayor Jennifer Massey  
Council President Jessica Chilton  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Russell Hubbard  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

### **STAFF PRESENT**

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director  
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager  
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### **OTHERS**

Brady Preheim	Mrs. Harrison
Howard Blumenthal	Brad Mercure, Consor
Lydia Ivanovic, ColPac	Bill Evonuk, Consor

### **OPEN PUBLIC FORUM – 6:06 p.m.**

#### **WASTEWATER CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

##### **1. Project Introduction**

Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher introduced the Wastewater Capacity Improvement Project. He explained that about five years ago, when he joined the City, he discovered that the last comprehensive infrastructure evaluation was done in 1989. At that time, the population was about 7,500, compared to the current population of nearly 15,000. Zaher emphasized the importance of understanding the City's infrastructure to make informed decisions and avoid potential problems such as urban growth boundaries issues, sewer overflows, and economic development challenges.

##### **2. Project Update**

Bill Evonuk from Consor provided an overview of the project, which involves improvements in three basins: 4, 6, and 5. He explained that the project aims to increase capacity in the City's sewer system, reduce the risk of sanitary sewer overflows, enhance reliability, and support future development. Evonuk mentioned that the project would be split into two separate construction projects, with basins 4 and 6 improvements coming first, followed by basin 5 improvements a few years later.

Brad Mercure then detailed the specific improvements for each basin:

1. Basin 4: Involves about a mile of piping, starting near the Wastewater Treatment Plant and running along various streets. The project will upsize existing pipes and add new diversion piping.

2. Basin 6: Includes about two miles of piping, starting near the intersection of Port Avenue and Old Portland Road. The project will upsize existing pipes and add new diversion pipes.
3. Basin 5: Located primarily along S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the undeveloped S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way, this project will upsize existing pipes and realign sewer lines.

Mercure also discussed the potential impacts on residents, including traffic disruptions, noise from rock excavation, and temporary service interruptions. He assured that the contractor would be required to minimize interruptions, maintain access, and restore disturbed areas.

### **3. Project Funding Update**

Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager Jenny Dimsho provided an update on the project's funding sources. She mentioned that the City had received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of about \$2.5 million, which funded the design, environmental review, and permitting for all three basins.

Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux discussed the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, which will fund the actual construction of the sewer project. She explained that it's a low-interest loan, generally between 1% to 3%, with the possibility of an even lower interest rate if they qualify for the equivalency component. The loan is also eligible for principal forgiveness of up to \$3 million, which essentially operates like a grant.

### **4. Questions and Discussion**

Councilor Hubbard asked about the impact on sewer fees. It was clarified that the loan repayment is already incorporated into the City budget through user rates, with a 7% increase each year until 2027.

Council President Chilton expressed concerns about the impact on the community, particularly for seniors living in the affected area of Avamere. She acknowledged the need for the project but worried about the disruption it would cause.

Councilor Hubbard inquired about the integrity of the existing pipes. Brad Mercure confirmed that many of the pipes are older and have issues, but this project specifically addresses size and capacity improvements.

### **5. Public Comment**

- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. Raised several questions and concerns:
  - He hoped the project wouldn't significantly increase sewer rates for existing ratepayers to accommodate growth.
  - He inquired about the impact on a trail in the S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street right-of-way and requested more information about the timeline and extent of work in that area.
  - He asked about the effectiveness of previous sewer lining work in reducing inflow.

Dimsho and Evonuk addressed his concerns, explaining that the work in the S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street area would be trenchless through the wetland to minimize impact, and that the previous sewer lining helped with inflow but not capacity.

### **6. Closing Remarks**

Zaher emphasized the thoroughness of the design process and the effort to minimize environmental impact. He acknowledged that while this is the largest project in the City's history, it's not as visibly exciting as other projects but is crucial for the City's infrastructure.

Mayor Massey stressed the importance of exceptional communication with the community about the project's impact and timelines. Zaher agreed, stating that lessons learned from previous projects would be applied to ensure effective public relations throughout this project.

**CLOSE PUBLIC FORUM – 6:42 p.m.**

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey  
Jennifer Massey, Mayor