Town of Yacolt

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May 19, 2009

Scott Sawyer, Public Works Director	City of Battle Ground
Monte Brachman, Public Works Director	City of Camas
Jeff Sarvis, Public Works Director	City of La Center
Steve Wall, Public Works Director	City of Ridgefield
Brian Carlson, Public Works Director	City of Vancouver
Trevor Evers, Public Works Director	City of Washougal
Pete Capell, Public Works Director	Clark County
Doug Quinn, Water Director	Clark Public Utilities
John Peterson, General Manager	Clark Regional Wastewater District

RE: Coalition Funds for North County Sanitary Sewer

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Town of Yacolt is interested in completing key planning activities necessary for the eventual development of a sanitary sewer system within the Town limits to promote growth within the north county and to protect our drinking water aquifer and watershed. On May 18, 2009, the Town Council received unanimous recommendation from a Citizen's Advisory Committee to move forward with the next steps of sewer planning with the desired outcome being completion of an adopted Wastewater Facilities Plan. Consequently, the Town Council has also unanimously voted to move ahead with a Wastewater Facilities Plan.

Such a plan would be a very important step for the Town as it would put the Town in a position to begin the process of developing financial alternatives for the eventual implementation of an actual sewer system - including the seeking of grant and loan funds, the establishment of system development charges, creation of developer requirements, and/or the ability to establish an initial monthly sewer rate to help fund land acquisition, monitoring, sampling, and other preconstruction activities. The ability to do any of these activities is very limited at this time, but would be much improved with the approval and adoption of a Wastewater Facilities Plan.

Yacolt has moved forward deliberately and proactively over the past several years in order to be in a position to acquire sanitary sewer service. Yacolt has been careful and prudent in its growth and zoning so as to not negatively affect the area. The Town has also borrowed money to complete a Yacolt-specific General Sewer Plan and worked in cooperation with the Sewer Coalition Planning Study partners during the ongoing regional coordinated planning efforts. Attached is an overview of the steps that Yacolt has taken.

It is the Town Council's intent to continue working cooperatively with our partners in future coordinated planning efforts. It is also the Town Council's request that a portion of the remaining Clark County Sewer Cooperative Proviso funds be allocated toward the Wastewater Facilities Planning effort. It is estimated that $375,000 would be adequate to perform facilities planning, site selection, and groundwater/surface water monitoring and modeling tasks that would be required by Ecology. Such an allocation would allow Yacolt to get to the key next step required to seek design/construction funds, to set up system development charge and developer requirements, and to consider establishing a customer rate charge to help fund additional monitoring/testing/pre-construction sewer activities. Without these proviso funds, the Town would be in a difficult position of not being able to move forward.

Thus, the Town is requesting your support that $375,000 be allocated to a Yacolt Wastewater Facilities Plan with the remainder of the $3,100,000 being available for other short-term regional needs.

While Yacolt does not currently have a sanitary sewer utility, we are still impacted by the need for service just as the other jurisdictions within Clark County. If there are concerns related to Yacolt's participation, a possible option might be:

1. LEVEL OF PARTNERSHIP. Yacolt will not initially join into a "Consortium" or "Comprehensive" regional arrangement since they don't have a sewer system and funding/timing of a system has not yet been determined. However, Yacolt will continue to be a partner with all other agencies at a "Coordination" level.

2. FUTURE FUNDING PURSUITS. Upon completion of a Wastewater Facilities Plan, Yacolt will seek grants and loans with Sewer Coalition partner's political and administrative support.

3. SEWER SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION. It is acknowledge that there are many steps to be completed before actual implementation can occur including public outreach, project financing, permitting, land acquisition, etc. At this time, it is not known what sort of impacts Yacolt's inclusion in a Consortium or Comprehensive regional arrangement would have. Future inclusion into a regional group by Yacolt will be dependent upon review of regional and local affordability and mutual agreement of the regional partners and the Town per whatever terms of governance are established by Interlocal Agreements.

The Town staff and elected representatives have enjoyed being involved in the Sewer Coalition Planning Study. We have found the process to be a very positive example of agencies working cooperatively towards a common vision. We look forward to continue to work together in the future and we appreciate your support of our efforts to achieve an adopted Wastewater Facilities Plan.

Sincerely,

Joe Warren
Mayor
Town of Yacolt

Attachment

TOWN OF YACOLT
SEWER FACT SHEET

STEPS ALREADY TAKEN TOWARDS POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF A SEWER SYSTEM

1. The following sewer studies have been completed:
   a. Town Of Yacolt General Sewer Plan by EES Consulting, February, 2002.
   b. Preliminary Alternative Feasibility Study for the Yacolt Wastewater Management Committee by Clark Public Utilities and Clark County Department of Community Development, December, 1999
   c. Yacolt Sewer Feasibility Study by Wallis Engineering, February, 1997
   d. Town of Yacolt Wastewater Facilities Plan by Encon Corporation, May, 1976.
   e. 2003 CPU septic study – in partnership with Clark Public Utilities (2003-2004)
2. In partnership with Clark Public Utilities, implementation of a septic monitoring program began in 2003. With an initial PWTF loan for a study, State Revolving Funds (SRF loan) was obtained and modification to existing septic tanks was performed.
3. Upgrade of septic system requirements to protect groundwater.
4. Completion of a draft General Sewer Plan with funding from a Public Works Trust Fund loan and Sewer Coalition Planning Study proviso funds (2008-2009).
5. Participation in Sewer Coalition Planning Study meetings and workshops (2008-2009).
6. Participation in the East Fork Lewis River (EFLR) modeling and loading studies by Ecology (2008-present).
7. Completion of a Citizens Advisory Committee Process to gather input and recommendations from the public (2009).

NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

1. Development of a Wastewater Facilities Plan including site selection for future facilities – Goal – proceed in 2009, contingent on Coalition funding.
2. Acquiring a load limit for the East Fork Discharge in case that is the direction of discharge selected. Will proceed in 2009.
3. Testing, Monitoring, and Modeling of Soils, Groundwater, and Surface Water as required by Ecology to Support Wastewater Facilities Plan. Goal – complete in conjunction with the Facilities Plan development
4. Public Education and Outreach within Yacolt, Will proceed in 2009
5. Determine process and general timing for annexation and down zoning of lot sizes.

DESIRED OUTCOME OF FACILITY PLANNING

1. Ecology approval of a plan for implementing a central sewer system.
2. Development of a long-term plan that protects the Town's drinking water aquifer and local watersheds, while also providing a vision for how the Town could provide sewer service to a growing community.
3. Bring the planning process to closure.
4. Improve the potential that the Town could be the location for a proposed new high school serving the North County area as well as a new grade school addition.
5. Gain the ability to establish system development charges and/or sewer rates to fund land acquisition and engineering activities
6. Gain the ability to require new development to install dry sewer infrastructure and pay system development charges.
7. Gain the ability to seek design/construction grants and loans.

REQUESTED LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION WITH COALITION PARTNERS

1. It is requested that a portion of the remaining Proviso grant funds be provided to the Town to fund a Wastewater Facilities Plan and the associated site selection, testing, monitoring, and modeling. The amount requested to fund this activities is $350,000-400,000.
2. The Town would continue to participate in any coordinated regional planning efforts.
3. The Town would separately seek funding for land acquisition costs.
4. The Town would request political and logistical support from its regional partners with regards to future funding searches.
5. The Town would continue to evaluate all ownership, operation, and management opportunities.

WHY THIS REQUEST IS IMPORTANT TO THE TOWN

1. This request is consistent with the recommendations provided to the Town Council by the Citizen's Advisory Committee.
2. Completing the Facility Planning process creates many possibilities for development of funding and finance possibilities for a future sewer system.
3. Completing the Facility Planning process will keep the Town proactive to potential impacts from failing septics rather then be reactive.
4. The Town does not have any current revenue streams that could be used to fund Facility Planning. The completion of a facility plan would create the possibilities for creating sources of revenue.
5. The Town does not have other viable options for funding the Facility Planning process. By completing the planning process with this next step in the process, the Town would be maximizing the value of current and past investments by taking the process further than has been done in the past.
6. The Town considers this project to be consistent with a regional goal of performing coordinated long-range sewer planning within the County and in particular within the north county area.
7. This planning effort will provide the Town with a key step towards the eventual implementation of a sewer system which could help the Town with economic development and residential growth.

8. This planning effort also would allow the Town to proactively prepare for implementing a sewer system to address water quality concerns in the aquifer and surface water bodies.
9. The amount requested by the Town is a small fraction of the $3.1 million in remaining proviso funds and is an even smaller fraction of the near-term capital sewer costs that will be expended by North County agencies. The Town recognizes that there would still be future funding hurdles to overcome prior to actually constructing a system, but this facility planning work would be a key step for the Town.

WHY THIS REQUEST IS REASONABLE

1. The proviso funds were designated for North County sewer cooperation. Yacolt is in the North County and has been actively engaged in the coalition planning efforts.
2. While most of the proviso money will likely be used for the benefit of the City of Ridgefield's short-term needs, the money was not specifically designated by the legislature nor Ecology to a single agency and ideally the money should provide benefit to each of the north county agencies involved in the planning process.
3. Yacolt has been and continues to be proactive in its long-range planning approach to sanitary sewer.
4. Yacolt has been proactive in planning and protecting its groundwater facilities.