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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FALLS CITY WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, PRELIMINARY DESIGN 2018-2020

1. How does the City of Falls City address wastewater in our community?

The City of Falls City operates a STEG/STEP wastewater system that was constructed in the mid 1980's with a drain field that is currently located under the public Falls City High School football field. Approximately 48% of current city households are served by the STEG/STEP system while the remainder of residents maintain their own individual septic tanks. In the late 1980's, the City was able to get approval from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to allow some discharge of treated effluent (wastewater) into the Little Luckiamute River between November and April.

With the constraints of our current permitted system, the number of customers, and size of our current drainfield, wastewater effluent has surfaced in the drainfield (the High School Football field) multiple times and has contaminated it, sometimes causing cancelation of scheduled games. This problem is expected to continue into the future due to all of the waste being directed toward this outdated drainfield. In August 2017, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality notified the City of concerns for the failing community drainfield which will result in subsurface flows of sewage endangering the public and water quality of the Little Luckiamute River drainage system.

2. What is being proposed to address the issues and concerns summarized above?

In order to maintain permits with DEQ, all Oregon cities that maintain some kind of public wastewater infrastructure are required to maintain Wastewater Facility Plans (WFP). The most recent Falls City Wastewater Facilities Plan was approved by DEQ and adopted by the City in 2013. The Facilities Plan can be accessed on the city website, www.fallscityoregon.gov, on the "major documents center" page. The plan looked at adding additional effluent to the current drainfield location but there was not enough land at the present location. Therefore, the WFP recommends constructing two one-acre facultative wastewater treatment lagoons and adding a new discharge location to the Little Luckiamute River. Upon completion, the drainfield under the football field could be abandoned, which eliminates the chance of contamination to the football field.

In November 2017, the City, working with Business Oregon-Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA) and the Regional Solutions Team (RST) from the Governor's Office, submitted a funding application for a grant to complete final design engineering, an environmental review, and to complete a rate study to set rates and cost estimates for the proposed wastewater improvements. The City received a \$330,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award in March 2018.

To be clear, this funding package provides only for the design and engineering phase of the project. The actual construction of any proposed improvements will be performed at a later date and will require a separate funding

package. The current 2-year project would include identification of a viable location for a new treatment plant; the design of a new treatment plant including new facultative wastewater lagoons (to provide secondary treatment and storage) prior to discharge; design for a new outfall diffuser into the river; a rate study; and a significant environmental impact study. The proposed design work also includes the design of approximately 1,500 feet of gravity sewer line that will enable the decommissioning of the existing Fair Oaks Pump Station. Plans to eliminate the Fair Oaks Pump Station were made in the year 2000 but the Fair Oaks Pump Station bypass was never built due to budgetary restraints.

3. Why is the City considering growing its STEG/STEP wastewater system [M1][CB2]? [r3]

4. If the project is completed, how will it impact the community?

- Environmental Impact:
 - Significantly lower toxicity effluent discharge into the Little Luckiamute River [CB4]. Reduce public health risks.
 - Elimination of effluent surfacing on the High School Football field.
 - Compliance with DEQ regulations.
- Growth Potential:
 - ~~Will replace current septic to tie into the STEP system [CB5]~~
 - The new system will not expand the current system to more users, but will provide a foundation that will allow the City to add-on in the future. The current system is maxed out with no ability to add-on for growth.
 - If/when additional users can be added, the costs of maintenance decreases for each individual user.

5. What is the difference between a facultative lagoon system and an aerobic-anaerobic system [J66] lagoon?

Rickreall vs Brownville and smell, pictures etc. A "facultative" lagoon system _____. An "aerobic" lagoon system _____. The proposed lagoons for Falls City are known as facultative lagoons. These are different than the lagoons commonly seen at agricultural facilities (e.g., Rickreall). Agricultural wastewater lagoons tend to operate in an anaerobic condition that generate odors that are offensive to some. Facultative lagoons are sized to operate under aerobic conditions and do not emit the same odors. Facultative lagoons are a very common wastewater treatment process for municipal systems like Fall City. Many nearby Cities utilize facultative lagoons (e.g., Brooks, Tangent, Philomath, Brownsville, Mt. Angel, and others) and do not report odor problems.

6. What public hearings will be held?

The Falls City Council plans to hold a town hall meeting for all interested parties to discuss the total scope of the project, what needs to be completed in order to maintain permits, and what next steps look like. The tentative town hall meeting is scheduled for [JG7][CB8] at the Falls City ~~Fire Hall~~ Community Center.

7. What are these new lagoons proposed to do?

The current drainfield location under the Falls City High School football field does not have enough capacity to continue to serve as the current drainfield and meet DEQ permitting rules. The project engineer is looking for a site adjacent to or near to the Little Luckiamute River that also:

- does not have steep slope
- provides a large piece of undeveloped land (approx. 15 acres is estimated to be needed)
- Has appropriate soil conditions
- Is in relatively close proximity to the City (i.e., reduces the overall pipeline lengths)
- Is in relatively close proximity to the Little Luckiamute River (i.e., reduces pipeline lengths)
- What else?

See attached “potential/prospective” map.

8. What if a property owner does not want to sell their land for the lagoons?

All property owners within the potential/prospective map area will be contacted in order for the City to engage their interest as potential sites. As part of the outreach process to prospective property owners, the City is required to use the language provided by the CDBG program federal rules, since the CDBG program is providing some of the grant funding for the project. If you are one of these property owners and are contacted, this does not mean the City is commencing any action to try and purchase or condemn your land. It is simply a process to gauge individual property owner’s interest in selling some portion of land to the City for this project.

10. If I sell my land to the City for the lagoons, will this cause my property taxes to go up?

No. If you sell your land for the lagoons, the City land will be partitioned off and will no longer be included within your total assessed value, as determined by the Polk County Assessor. Your property tax bill is tied to a) the assessed value on your property, and b) the tax rates applied to that property by the taxing jurisdictions such as school districts, park districts, county, and city. The lagoon project itself should have no impacts upon properties currently within or outside of city limits. However, by increasing the potential of wastewater service within the current city limits and increasing the potential for property owners to further partition (or divide) their land, it could be argued that the total project could increase property values to property within the city limits.

11. What happens if the City takes no action?

The risks and fees associated with operating out-of-compliance with DEQ is untenable for the City. Over half of the City’s residence would not be able to connect to the STEP system. In addition, property owners with current on-site septic that have failures in the future may not be able to meet new septic regulations as established by Polk County and the State of Oregon. Without the ability to replace or repair their existing septic systems and without an ability to improve the City STEP system, we cannot currently take on new customers/connections.

12. Related to the new lagoons and other potential upgrades, will the current residents have to pay for any of this?

New developments are required to pay system development charges (SDCs) which help fund public infrastructure expansions needed for future development. SDCs are expended by the City’s Capital Improvement Plan, which is available on the City’s website. New developments are also responsible for all costs associated with tying into an existing system – such as costs of lines, pump stations, etc. The City received a CDBG grant to help with the final

design, environmental review, and potential property acquisition. Funding for the actual construction of these improvements has yet to be identified but the City plans to pursue all grant opportunities available to us as well as any low interest loans to help us continue to comply with state and federal requirements.

13.

INSERT AERIAL MAP WITH PRELIM BOUNDARY AREA FROM CHRIS