



AGENDA REPORT

City Council Meeting

TODAY'S DATE: July 31, 2025

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Holly Ellis, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Wastewater Treatment Plant – Community Bond Survey Results

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The City of Sandpoint owns and operates one wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that discharges into the Pend Oreille River. Portions of this plant date back to the 1940s, with many components now obsolete, deteriorated, or undersized. Although staff have generally maintained treated water quality that meets regulatory discharge requirements, the risk of component failure threatens future compliance and water quality.

Reconstructing the WWTP is a high priority for the City. The 2019 Wastewater Facility Plan outlined the need for a new facility with a design capacity of approximately 10.7 million gallons per day (mgd), with costs now projected to exceed \$60 million. The 2023 Wastewater Collection Evaluation Plan provided additional assessment of the collection system and, together with the Facility Plan, informed the 2022 utility rate study and subsequent rate adjustments implemented to begin funding future improvements. The City is actively working on a Preliminary Engineering Report as the next step to progress the project.

To finance this major capital project, the City plans to leverage a mix of revenue sources, including phased utility rate increases, bonds, and low-interest loans, while aggressively pursuing state and federal grants to minimize impacts to ratepayers.

The City recently conducted a community survey to assess public awareness of the WWTP's age, condition, and operational risks; gather feedback on environmental and regulatory concerns related to potential untreated discharges; and evaluate support for reconstruction of the facility. The survey also sought to understand residents' willingness to support a bond measure to help fund the project, either phased or entire rebuild. The survey was distributed through multiple channels, including text deployment, social media, emails, and the City website, to ensure broad public engagement.

NEXT STEPS

Staff and the consultant team will continue outreach and education efforts, addressing community questions and providing additional project information. On August 20, 2025, staff will return to City Council to request formal consideration of placing a bond measure on the November 2025 ballot to partially fund the WWTP reconstruction. Work is also underway to complete the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) in accordance with DEQ requirements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

ACTION:

No action is requested at this time. This update is provided for Council information only.

WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED?

ATTACHMENTS:

Community Survey <https://www.sandpointidaho.gov/public-works-utilities/page/city-sandpoint-wastewater-treatment-plant-survey>