



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO. **11**

For the meeting of: June 5, 2018

Date: May 9, 2018
To: Board of Supervisors
From: John H. Ford, Planning and Building Director *[Signature]*
Subject: Samoa Wastewater Planning Project

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1. Receive an update on the progress of the Samoa Wastewater Planning Project; and
- 2. Provide direction to staff as needed.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The source of funding is a Planning Grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

DISCUSSION:

This staff report provides an update on the progress of the Samoa Wastewater Planning Project, which is entirely funded by a SWRCB Planning Grant.

Prepared by *[Signature]*
John Miller, Senior Planner

CAO Approval *[Signature]*

REVIEW: Auditor _____ County Counsel *[Signature]* Human Resources *[Signature]* Other _____

TYPE OF ITEM:
 Consent
 Departmental
 Public Hearing
 Other _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
Upon motion of Supervisor *Bass* Seconded by Supervisor *Fennell*
Ayes *Bass, Fennell, Sunclberg, Bohm, Wilson*
Nays
Abstain
Absent

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Board Order No. Resolution 16-130
Meeting of: November 15, 2016

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: 6/5/18
By: *[Signature]* Kathy
1 Hayes, Clerk of the Board

The purpose of this project is to develop a regional wastewater system on the Samoa Peninsula to reduce water quality impacts from wastewater which is currently discharged to groundwater through existing percolation ponds and individual leach fields. The project would benefit the towns of Samoa, Fairhaven, and Finntown, Samoa Peninsula Union School, existing industrial uses, the Samoa boat ramp and RV park, and smaller commercial operations located on or near the City Eureka of Eureka Samoa Field. This project aligns with the efforts of the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District (HBHRCD) to permit the ocean outfall pipe at the Redwood Marine Terminal II (RMTII) for municipal use.

Project components include the design of a wastewater treatment plant and collection system, an evaluation of construction cost and user rate feasibility, environmental review, grant application submittal, land use approvals, permitting, funding and construction.

This project is now underway on several levels. A consultant team of GHD Inc. and SHN Consulting Engineers & Geologists completed the preliminary design, evaluated construction costs and user rate feasibility, and is in the process of reviewing the project's environmental impacts.

The Samoa Peninsula Wastewater Project Planning and Design Study was released in March 2018 (<https://humboldt.gov.org/2364/Long-Range-Planning-Projects>). The study concludes that a sewer system that serves existing residential uses in Fairhaven and Finntown, commercial, recreational, and institutional developed on the Samoa peninsula outside Samoa and the Town of Samoa Phase I with 100% grant funding, would have projected user rates within the range of existing sewer rates for the local area. Without 100% grant construction funding, the rates would be well above most other local area rates, may not be sustainable, and may prevent community support and acceptance of this proposed wastewater treatment system. The study concludes that the project's success requires the capital costs be covered in full with grant funding to make the project economically feasible and sustainable in the long term. The project team has been working closely with the SWRCB Division of Financial Assistance to target available funding and structure the project to best qualify for 100 percent grant funding. The project schedule calls for construction funding applications to be submitted between October and December 2018.

Also, the Town of Samoa submitted an application to the (Regional Water Quality Control Board) RWQCB to permit the use of the ocean outfall pipe for disposal of wastewater from that site. That application is expected to be approved in October of this year.

One necessary component of the project includes an amendment to the Humboldt Bay Area Plan to allow residences in Fairhaven to connect to the wastewater system. Currently the Plan only allows connections for residential users in the Town of Samoa. There are two options for those amendments:

1. The Plan could be amended to specify the existing uses that may be connected to the wastewater system as exceptions to the other policies in the Plan. This approach would prevent connections for new development from being approved; or
2. The Urban Limit Line in the Plan could be expanded to include the areas proposed to be served, which would enable existing and new development to connect to the system.

At a recent meeting with representatives from the RWQCB, Samoa Peninsula Fire Protection District (SPFPD), Planning and Building Department, and the consultants, Coastal Commission staff indicated preliminary support for the first option - providing exceptions in the Plan to allow existing residential and industrial uses to connect to a centralized wastewater treatment plant. They seemed to think that amendment would be fairly straightforward and supported by the Coastal Act.

They expressed concerns with the second option because of potential inconsistencies with that amendment and the Coastal Act. There are legal lots within Fairhaven that cannot currently be development due to lack of wastewater service. Some lots are in proximity to sand dune habitat, and some area not. Coastal Commission staff expressed concern that encouraging new residential development in Fairhaven to connect to the wastewater system would be potentially growth inducing, and could result in damage to existing environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA's) in the area which may not be consistent with Coastal Act policies. They also expressed concerns with approving new development at risk from sea level rise hazards, which are the primary focus of a separate HBAP update currently being worked on by the County.

RWQCB staff were also supportive of the first option. They stated that for the funding request to be successful the project would need to have a high level of buy-in from all the involved state agencies and the community, and they thought the first option would provide the necessary support. They were concerned that the second option to allow new development to connect to the system may generate negative public comment that could derail the funding request.

Given these considerations, Planning staff and the consultants propose moving forward with the project in two ways - one that develops the project to serve only existing development in the near term, and the second would evaluate the potential for new development to receive connections in the future. This approach has policy implications that staff wants the Board to understand and have the ability to discuss, hear from the public and ask questions about.

The Samoa Wastewater Planning Project involves significant public outreach and Tribal consultation. One of several community meetings was held on Wednesday January 10, 2018 and an initial meeting with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers was held on March 9, 2018. A public scoping meeting for the preparation of the environmental impact report will be held on Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Fairhaven Fire Station. Your Board will be notified when additional public meetings are scheduled.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost of preparing this report and the staffing requirements for the project total \$2,848 this fiscal year to date. All these expenses were covered by the SWRCB grant revenue on a reimbursement basis. There is no impact to the General Fund. Future project related expenditures and funding would be the responsibility of the PCSD (Peninsula Community Services District).

This project is intended to protect and promote a safe, healthy, economically vibrant community and meets the Board's strategic framework in many ways, including:

- provide for and maintain infrastructure by supporting the development of a new wastewater system in an area with water quality problems;
- create opportunities for improved safety and health by addressing a potential threat to ground and surface water quality; and,
- protect vulnerable populations by supporting the development of infrastructure for a disadvantaged community.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

There are numerous agencies actively involved in this project. The SPFPD, soon to be PCSD, will be the applicant to permit the operation of the wastewater plant, applicant for construction grant funding, and ultimately the operator of the wastewater system. The HBHRCD owns and operates the ocean outfall pipe that will be the means by which treated effluent will be discharged and will be a beneficiary of the new wastewater system. The State Water Boards-RWQCB will permit and regulate the wastewater treatment plant and – SWRCB is funding the planning grant and is supportive of a subsequent construction grant application, both of which are working actively with project staff towards a successful project. The California Coastal Commission

certifies amendments to Local Coastal Programs and is working with project staff to identify approaches to allow the wastewater project that they can support.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.