



# City of Warrenton

## Capital Request for Wastewater Treatment Plant

### Why We Need State Assistance:

- Our population growth and wastewater treatment load has exceeded projections.
- The current treatment plant, built and bonded in 2006, will be paid off in 2026; but first exceeded its design limits in 2015.
- Despite aggressive mitigation efforts to gain more efficiency while meeting increasing DEQ requirements, without a new treatment facility online by 2029, Warrenton will have to initiate a development moratorium due to wastewater treatment capacity.
  - This will threaten the development of roughly 450 housing units, which would account for most of the expected housing development in Clatsop County in the next 5-10 years.
    - Clatsop County has the most severe per capita rate of homelessness.
- Low and middle income housing projects rely on sufficient sewer capacity. Warrenton has projects in the queue but currently does not have the resources to complete the new sewer buildout necessary to accommodate regional housing needs.

### **About Warrenton: pop 6,277 (2020 census) w/ 17.7 sq. mile UGB**

Warrenton is the fastest-growing city in Clatsop County and the largest by area. From 2010 to 2020, the population increased by 25.8%, overall growing by no less than 21% over the past three census counts. The city's permanent property tax rate is \$1.6701, generating an annual income of \$1.19 million. The FYE 2025 budget has a spending authority of \$43.8 million, including all grants received. For its population and service area, Warrenton is a distressed/poor city. Nevertheless, we have taken a more aggressive position on rate increases than most cities in the region. The average single family unit utility bill is \$150 each month. The largest cost of that is sewer representing 58.2% of the base rate bill. On average sewer bills have increased 4.5% every year.

Additionally, the city implemented System Development Charges (SDC) in 2012 to fund new wastewater, storm sewer, and water projects.

### **Current Facility Challenges**

The current treatment plant was built in 2006 and first exceeded DEQ Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) thresholds in 2018 with seven more incidents of exceeding designed monthly BOD load since. The plant has a maximum daily load of 2.3 million gallons per day and was first exceeded in 2015. Since then it has been exceeded at least 11 times. The maximum monthly flow rate has also been exceeded three times starting in 2020. The city has had to deploy capital reserves to meet changing DEQ requirements in 2018 and 2021 and has been aggressive in reducing Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) into its stormwater lines across the city to scrape every bit of capacity out of the existing plant. The plant is currently operating at 95-97% capacity.

Due to increased requirements by DEQ in 2018 and 2021, the city is working hard to avoid potential penalties in the short term to ensure the current facility can last until a new facility comes online in 2029.

Warrenton has been a preferred location for housing and commercial development in Clatsop County. The City has increased utility rates, utilized capital reserves, and applied for a loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. However, to ensure that ratepayers do not bear the entire an outsized burden for the new infrastructure, the City of Warrenton is requesting \$4 million in lottery bonds to help complete the project.

### **Why MBR vs SBR Treatment?**

Membrane Bioreactors (MBR) plants have less sludge production and produce significantly cleaner effluent with lesser concentrations of bacteria, TSS, BOD, and phosphorous than Sequencing Batch Reactor plants. They also can be used to treat pharmaceuticals. Overall, the city feels this is the best technology for the environment, and to ensure future compliance with ever tightening regulations on effluent.

### **North Coast Region Needs Warrenton's New Wastewater Treatment Plant**

There are 2,772 housing units currently, with a 450 unit Planned Unit Development (PUD) ready to build once greenlighted by the City, and a 120 unit manufactured home and/or long-term stay RV park being actively discussed for development. However, the city only has enough capacity to accommodate approximately 200-300 housing units total to be developed alongside the projected handful of single-family homes over the next two years. Additionally, those units will be required to pre-treat their wastewater in order for the sewer treatment plant to not be over capacity. The 450 unit Fort Pointe development will represent the largest single housing project in Clatsop County history and is a mixed development including low income, middle class, and housing for higher earners like doctors and executives—which is currently a limiting factor for retaining doctors at both local hospitals.

Questions, Comments?  
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