

News Release

December 17, 2021



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A Big Step forward in Funding for City's Wastewater Treatment Plant - *an historic capital project for the City of Fredericksburg*

(Fredericksburg, VA) December 17, 2021 – The City of Fredericksburg is proud to announce that Governor Ralph Northam has included \$27 million in funding in his two-year budget proposal for the City of Fredericksburg’s wastewater needs. This significant proposed investment by the Commonwealth is part of the Governor’s historic funding for the Chesapeake Bay and clean water infrastructure, as well as important water conservation and clean water accessibility initiatives. If funding successfully is maintained in the upcoming Virginia General Assembly session, the City will use the critical funds to achieve part of its required Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.

“This is monumental news for the City, for our rate paying citizens and businesses, and for our environment. Funding at this level would significantly relieve the burden on our city tax payers, while helping to keep the City within federal and state requirements, to ensure exceptional water treatment for our residents while improving our efforts to preserve the Rappahannock Watershed,” said Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw. “Although these mandated wastewater treatment plant upgrades meet state and federal requirements, we are pleased that their implementation build on the City of Fredericksburg’s decades of commitment to support a healthy Rappahannock River and Chesapeake Bay,” she continued.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade is the largest public works project in Fredericksburg’s history, and must be completed no later than early 2026. This project is expected to cost in excess of \$80+ million dollars. Rate payers have already endured a significant large utility rate increase in FY 2020, a second in FY2022, with a third one planned in the coming fiscal year to support this project. A rate study update is currently underway, and it will likely require additional increases in coming years, even with robust Virginia support.

Once completed, the Fredericksburg wastewater treatment plant will be among the most technologically advanced such facilities in Virginia.

The City Council also is working very closely with the Fredericksburg area General Assembly delegation including Delegate-elect Tara Durant, Delegate-elect Phillip Scott, Senator Bryce Reeves, and longtime City friend, Senator Richard Stuart. Senator Stuart was instrumental in advocating the \$27 million add to the Governor’s budget.

Senator Stuart and Delegate Scott have both also co-authored legislation for the coming General Assembly Session to add the City of Fredericksburg to the Enhanced Nutrient Removal Program (ENRC)

list. This is a select list of Virginia wastewater treatment plants that offer improvements that lead to extraordinary local water quality advances. If passed, being added to the ENRC list effectively prioritizes the City's wastewater treatment plant for additional state monetary support. The City has also applied and has been granted permission to utilize the Commonwealth of Virginia's Revolving Loan Fund, which currently has interest rates in the 1% range. Lastly, the City will pursue in earnest the Wastewater Quality Improvement Funds (WQIF) to the maximum extent of our projects qualification.

"As other federal and state opportunities arise, you should be assured that the City will be in pursuit. The City will work to meet and exceed its obligation to the Commonwealth, and will continue to seek any viable source of assistance to ensure that ratepayers, many of whom are on fixed incomes, are supported to the extent possible," stated City Manager Tim Baroody.

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