



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

Ord. No. 2024-131: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept grant funds in the amount of \$50,000,000.00 from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Capital Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Public Utilities' Combined Sewer Overflow project in the Utilities category by \$50,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding the Combined Sewer Overflow project.

To: City Planning Commission
From: Land Use Administration
Date: May 21, 2024

PETITIONER

City of Richmond, Department of Public Utilities (DPU)

PURPOSE

To amend Ord. No. 2023-073 adopted May 8, 2023, which adopted the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2024, and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$50,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Environmental quality and appropriate the revenues by amending the FY2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget for the Combined Sewer Overflow project.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Richmond's combined sewer system (CSS) serves approximately 12,000 acres and is comprised of 25 active outfalls.

For the past 50 years, the City has been proactively improving the CSS and the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), with approximately \$780 million invested (adjusted to 2024 dollars) to reduce combined sewage volume and bacteria discharged to improve water quality in the James River. In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 1064 (2020 Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Law). The 2020 CSO Law establishes specific timeframes for the development and implementation of an Interim Plan and a Final Plan to satisfy the requirements of any existing Special Order by Consent that has been issued for the CSS. The City of Richmond has developed and submitted this Interim Plan and is finalizing the Final Plan for submission by the July 1, 2024 deadline. The City has an existing "Special Order by Consent" with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for their combined sewer system that was amended in 2020 to incorporate the requirements of the 2020 CSO Law.

The City is in the process of implementing the 10 projects identified in the 2021 Interim CSS Plan. Consistent with the requirements of the 2020 CSO Law, these projects will be completed by 2027. These Interim Plan projects and several other CSO projects are being funded through State ARPA CSO grant funding. The Final Plan projects will further improve CSS performance beyond the post-Interim Plan conditions.

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Master Plan

This request supports Goal 16: Clean Water in the Richmond 300 Master Plan, which aims to “Improve local water quality and manage the built environment to enhance and protect natural assets such as the James River.”

Community Outreach

DPU has engaged in significant community outreach, both over the life of the forty-plus-year life of the CSO Program, as well more recently over the past two years. These efforts have included a public stakeholder group with two community representatives from each of the nine City Council districts, as well as presentations to City Council standing committees and individual Council District meetings. The stakeholder meetings began in May of 2022 and continued through early 2024. The stakeholders initiated further public outreach to their districts via meetings, newsletters and informal discussion. There has also been significant media outreach to inform the public about this crucial project.

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