



City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ERIC JOHNSTON, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
CC: MAYOR KIM LUND
SUBJECT: R.G. HALEY SITE CLEANUP/CORNWALL AVE LANDFILL CLEANUP AND SALISH LANDING PARK PROJECT UPDATE
DATE: MARCH 11, 2024

BACKGROUND:

The City of Bellingham owns portions of two adjacent [Model Toxics Control Act \(MTCA\)](#) cleanup sites known as the R.G. Haley site and the Cornwall Avenue Landfill site. Both sites are located at the south end of Cornwall Avenue on the Bellingham Bay waterfront.

The [R.G. Haley](#) site is the location of the former R.G. Haley wood treatment facility. The cleanup site consists of approximately 6 acres of uplands and approximately 60 acres in water. The City of Bellingham and the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) entered an [Agreed Order](#) in 2010 to perform a remedial investigation/feasibility study and later entered into amendments of the Agreed Order related to engineering and design for the cleanup of the site. A public comment period on a proposed Consent Decree covering the construction of the cleanup, between the City of Bellingham, the Port of Bellingham and the Washington State Department of Ecology is open for public comment until March 12, 2024. The current estimated construction cost of the R.G. Haley remediation is approximately \$28,300,000. Additional prior costs associated with the investigation, planning, design and permitting exceed \$6,000,000. The DOE Remedial Action Grant program has funded 50% of all eligible costs to date. The City has matched the DOE grant from the Environmental Remediation Fund. In addition, the City is or will be seeking contribution from other potentially liable parties.

The [Cornwall Avenue Landfill](#) site is the location of the former Cornwall Avenue municipal waste landfill. The site was used as the City's landfill from 1954 to 1965. The cleanup site consists of approximately 13 acres of uplands and approximately 3.5 acres in water. The City of Bellingham, along with the Port of Bellingham and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, is under a [Consent Decree](#) from 2014 for remedial cleanup of the site. The current estimated construction cost of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill remediation is approximately \$17,000,000. The DOE Remedial Action Grant program has funded 50% of all eligible costs to date. The City and Port have a cost sharing agreement related to this site and have funded the non-grant portion of costs according to that agreement. Funds from the City have come from the Environmental Remediation Fund. The Port of Bellingham has been the project manager of this site but is currently transferring that role to the City as the City will conduct construction of the cleanup in conjunction with the Haley cleanup and Salish Landing Park Phase 1 work.

In conjunction with the remedial cleanup construction at both sites the City will complete phase 1 of [Salish Landing Park](#). Phase 1 improvements of the Salish Landing Park will include utilities, trails, plantings, parking, artwork, and beach creation. Phase 1 park construction will occur during the cleanup project construction as constructing those improvements would otherwise require digging into the cleanup cap, incurring additional costs and risk. Phase 2 of the Salish Landing Park will include further park development. The design of the Phase 2 improvements has not yet been finalized. Future phases may include restrooms, concessions, additional parking, and other park amenities. The current estimated cost of the Salish Landing Park Phase 1 improvements is approximately \$2,400,000. The final estimated construction costs for the Salish Landing Park Phase 2 are currently estimated at \$13,000,000.

CURRENT STATUS:

Design on the remedial cleanup activities for both R.G. Haley and the Cornwall Avenue Landfill are nearing completion and permits are under review. Project bidding is expected to occur in late 2024 and construction is expected to start in 2025. Applications for additional grant funding from the DOE Oversight Remedial Action Grant program were submitted in early March for the 2025-2027 State biennium. A Public Works Board loan application will also be prepared in mid-2024 for the eligible portion of the Cornwall Avenue Landfill site.

LIST OF FUNDING OPTIONS:

The total cleanup construction costs, including Phase 1 park costs, are currently estimated at approximately \$47,700,000. The City expects DOE Oversight Remedial Action Grants to cover up to 50% of the costs. In addition, the City will seek contributions from potentially liable parties. Staff are exploring various funding strategies and will return to Council with an explicit funding plan as part of the budget process.

RECOMMENDATION ACTION:

None at this time.