



AGENDA REPORT

Department

DATE:	April 15, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Daniel Chavarria, PE, Director of Public Works Mary Phelps, Water Resource Division Manager Jose Valenzuela, Junior Engineer
Subject:	Emergency Justification for the Repair(s) of the Dornan Tunnel Sanitary Sewer Line
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no impact on the General Fund. The funding for this project will be paid from Wastewater Enterprise Funds (Account String: 40322931-400708-22110).
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	City staff is recommending City Council authorize the issuance of task authorization to Veolia to award and manage subcontracts with W.R. Forde Construction, Inc. to repair the Dornan Tunnel Force Main Sanitary Sewer Line. The line has caused multiple sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) over the past several years and needs to be repaired.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	ADOPT a resolution for the Emergency Justification authorizing Veolia Water to manage (on behalf of the City of Richmond) the subcontract with W.R. Forde Construction to repair the Dornan Tunnel Force Main Sanitary Sewer Line in an amount which shall not exceed \$465,000 – Public Works Department (Jose Valenzuela 510-620-69455/Mary Phelps 510-621-1269/Daniel Chavarria 510-620-5478).

DISCUSSION:

On December 31, 2022, the existing sanitary sewer force main that conveys flow through the Dornan Tunnel in Point Richmond failed. This resulted in a sanitary sewer overflow (SSO). Veolia, the City-contracted sewage treatment plant operator along with our emergency on-call contractor, Bay Hawk, Inc., responded promptly and installed a temporary bypass system using rigid hoses resting on the concrete encasement inside the tunnel (Attachment 1).

This temporary pipeline has been in place since January 2023, with the intent the City would work towards a full line replacement. The initial engineer's estimate the City received to replace the sanitary sewer line in the Dornan Tunnel was more than \$2 million. This would result in closing the tunnel, diverting traffic, and causing major inconveniences to residents located in Brickyard Cove and restricting access to George Miller Park and Keller Beach. Both the park and beach are operated and maintained by the East Bay Regional Parks District.

The temporary pipeline was working effectively until March 2023, when a car hit the pipe causing a rupture and a reportable SSO. The pipe was repaired quickly and effectively by Bay Hawk, Inc. The temporary pipe operated successfully until December 2023, when as the result of vandalism the pipe was damaged, once again resulting in a reportable SSO, which required another repair by the City's on-call contractor, Bay Hawk, Inc (Attachment 2).

The emergency designation is due to the recurring failures (traffic accidents, vandalism, etc.) of the temporary sewer piping in the Dornan Tunnel, which have resulted in multiple sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). Given that the City is legally required to limit SSOs under the 2018 Baykeeper Settlement Agreement, these repeated incidents demonstrate an urgent need for permanent repairs to prevent further overflows, regulatory violations, and potential environmental damage.

The City is subject to strict regulatory reporting requirements regarding sanitary sewer overflows to Baykeeper. Baykeeper refers to San Francisco Baykeeper, an environmental watchdog organization that enforces the Clean Water Act to protect the San Francisco Bay from pollution. The 2018 Baykeeper Settlement Agreement was the result of a lawsuit that held the City of Richmond accountable for excessive SSOs (Attachment 3).

The issue is that, per Paragraph 13 of the Settlement Agreement, starting January 1, 2025, Richmond shall have no more than two (2) SSOs from the same sewer line segment or maintenance holes within any calendar year. Given Dornan Tunnel's history of failures and SSOs, any further incidents could place the City in non-compliance, potentially leading to legal action, fines, and additional oversight from Baykeeper. In order to achieve this goal, the City is required to allocate annual capital funding to cover the cost of these mandated repairs.

The revised Sanitary Sewer System Waste Discharge Requirements (SSS-WDR) (Executive ORDER WQ 2022-0103-DWQ) prohibits any discharge from a sanitary sewer system, discharged directly or indirectly through a drainage conveyance system or other route, to waters of the State (Attachment 4).

City staff met with Veolia to discuss the best solutions regarding either the repair or replacement or rehabilitation of sanitary sewer line. Veolia suggested utilizing closed circuit television (CCTV) function to view and determine the condition of the line. After Veolia reviewed the CCTV, it was decided the sanitary sewer line could be repaired with cured in place piping (CIPP). Veolia checked the on-call contractor's list to determine which vendor was certified to perform CIPP process for sewer line repairs.

W.R. Forde was selected because they are the only contractor certified to perform CIPP repairs at this scale. Additionally, W.R. Forde is an existing on-call contractor for the City (per the previously adopted—but now expired—Resolution 52-19) (Attachment 5). While an RFQ is currently being prepared for future on-call construction services, an RFQ was not issued specifically for this project due to the urgency of the repairs and the need to avoid further SSOs. There is no formal warranty on the pipe material. Nonetheless, Veolia has assured City staff that the CIPP liner will not restrict flow and is expected to last at least 20 years under normal use. If additional warranty details are needed, the City may need to confirm directly with Veolia or W.R. Forde.

This repair will eliminate the temporary bypass and mitigate the risk of pipeline failure resulting in future SSOs. The cost for this repair, including Veolia's mark-up was less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), thus saving the City millions of dollars that can be used in other areas of the collection system for much needed repairs (Attachment 6).

The Engineering Department has reviewed the plan along with Veolia and is of the opinion that this is the best permanent solution for the Dornan Tunnel sanitary sewer line. Therefore, City staff is requesting the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Emergency Justification approval for the repairs of the Dornan Tunnel sanitary sewer line (Attachment 7).

Image: First sanitary sewer overflow that occurred from the broken line that is encased in concrete



SYNERGISTIC POLICIES:

Safety and health of public and environment.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Resolution 108-21

Attachment 2 – Veolia Task Authorization – Dornan Tunnel Sanitary Sewer Line repairs

Attachment 3 – Baykeeper Settlement Agreement

Attachment 4 – 2022 SSS-WDR Order No. 2022-0103 DWQ

Attachment 5 – Resolution 52-19

Attachment 6 – Emergency Justification – Dornan Tunnel Sanitary Sewer Line repairs

Attachment 7 – Resolution - Emergency Repairs Dornan Tunnel Sanitary Sewer Line