



# STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 9f

MEETING DATE: April 20, 2026

**To: Honorable Mayor and City Council**

**Date: April 20, 2026**

**From: Christopher Lamm, Director of Public Works – (650) 558-7230  
Kevin Okada, Assistant Public Works Director**

**Subject: Adoption of a Resolution Ratifying the Submittal of an Application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the City of Burlingame’s Wastewater Nutrient Removal Project, and if Awarded, Authorizing the City Manager to Accept Grant Funds and Execute all Necessary Documents**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution ratifying the submittal of an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the City of Burlingame’s Wastewater Nutrient Removal Project, City Project No. 87190, and if awarded, authorizing the City Manager to accept grant funds and execute all necessary documents.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2024, the Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the San Francisco Bay Nutrient Watershed Permit (Order R2-2024-0013), establishing nutrient reduction requirements for all Bay Area wastewater treatment facilities. The City must reduce total inorganic nitrogen discharge to meet final effluent limits during the compliance months of May through September.

The City is currently conducting a Recycled Water and Wastewater Discharge Reduction Project (City Project No. 87050), funded in part by a \$1 million appropriation from the FY 2023-24 State Budget through Senator Josh Becker. This project is evaluating alternatives for nutrient removal and recycled water development.

The Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), a regional coalition of clean water agencies created by a Joint Powers Agreement in 1984, submitted a proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on March 2, 2026, for regional nutrient management projects. The proposal, titled “Clean Water Together - A Coalition Proposal for Regional Nutrient Solutions,” requests \$19,561,577 in EPA funding for multiple Bay Area projects totaling \$26,099,429. The proposal includes funding for the City of Burlingame to design a nutrient removal treatment system.

Due to the March 2, 2026, submission deadline, City staff did not have sufficient time to bring the grant application to the City Council prior to BACWA's submission. This report provides Council with information about the grant application.

## **DISCUSSION**

The BACWA EPA grant proposal includes the City of Burlingame project as Subtask 1.4: Design of Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) to reduce nutrients and improve effluent quality for water recycling at the City of Burlingame Wastewater Treatment Facility. The total project cost in the grant application is \$3,541,100, with \$2,511,100 requested from the EPA and \$1,030,000 in matching funds from the City's Sewer Enterprise Fund.

### **Treatment Technology Selection**

The grant application specified Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) technology as the design basis. However, the City is currently conducting an alternatives evaluation that includes several treatment technologies, such as MBR, conventional activated sludge, membrane aerated biofilm reactor, and densification. The City retains the flexibility to select the most cost-effective and feasible treatment technology based on the results of this evaluation.

If the grant is awarded and the City selects a different treatment technology, the grant provides flexibility to amend the scope to reflect the chosen technology. Staff would work with BACWA to modify the grant agreement accordingly.

### **Project Scope and Dual Benefits**

The proposed design project addresses dual regional priorities: water quality protection and water supply resiliency. The treatment system will reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loading to San Francisco Bay to achieve compliance with Regional Water Quality Control Board nutrient reduction mandates under the Nutrient Watershed Permit. Simultaneously, the system will produce high-quality filtered effluent suitable for water recycling in a compact footprint. The City aims to develop a local recycled water supply to reduce reliance on imported potable water, enhance drought resiliency, and decrease discharge to the San Francisco Bay.

The project deliverables in the grant application include:

- Process design including biological nutrient removal configuration, technology selection and sizing, and integration with existing plant infrastructure
- Civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical design
- Development of construction-ready plans and specifications
- Environmental review and regulatory permitting coordination
- Project management and grant administration

Grant Structure

BACWA is serving as the lead applicant and will administer the grant on behalf of participating agencies. If EPA awards the grant to BACWA, the City of Burlingame would enter into a subaward agreement with BACWA to receive the grant funding. The City's matching funds from the Sewer Enterprise Fund would represent approximately 29% of the total project cost. The grant project period is June 2026 through June 2029, with design anticipated to take 36 months (October 2026 to June 2029) to complete construction-ready bid documents.

Next Steps

EPA will review the grant application and make award decisions. If the grant is awarded to BACWA, staff will return to the City Council with a request to accept the grant funds, appropriate the matching funds, authorize the City Manager to execute the subaward agreement with BACWA, and authorize staff to proceed with procurement of design services through a competitive Request for Proposals process.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

Potential Project Budget (For Information Only)

If the grant is awarded, the total project cost identified in the grant application is \$3,541,100, consisting of:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>	<b>City Match</b>
Design	\$1,857,000	\$745,800
Environmental Review and Permitting	\$397,900	\$170,500
Project Management and Administration	\$256,200	\$113,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,511,100</b>	<b>\$1,030,000</b>

The Sewer Enterprise Fund will provide the required matching funds of \$1,030,000 if the grant is awarded.

Funding Availability

There are adequate funds available in the Sewer Enterprise Fund to complete the project.

Exhibits:

- Resolution
- BACWA Proposal – “Clean Water Together – A Coalition Proposal for Regional Nutrients Reduction”