



Elizabeth Kosa
Director

Memorandum

To: The Honorable Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive and
The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

Through: Elizabeth Kosa, Director

From: Douglas W. Ranney II, P.E., County Engineer [DWR](#)

Date: July 10, 2023

Re: **Ordinance Establishing a Temporary Closure of West Smith Road**

Requested Action

Public Works respectfully requests that the County Council adopt the proposed ordinance to temporarily close West Smith Road, from Northwest Drive to the Ferndale City Limits.

Background and Purpose

The City of Ferndale has requested the closure of a portion of West Smith Road, from Northwest Drive to the Ferndale City Limits in order to complete their Pump Station 15 Decommissioning Project. The City of Ferndale provided the following information about the project and why a full closure of the roadway is necessary:

The project will decommission City of Ferndale's failing Pump Station 15 and install approximately 600 linear feet of new 8" PVC gravity main from a new manhole at the intersection of Bellaire Drive and Smith Road west to an existing manhole at the intersection of Saratoga Place and Smith Road. Approximately 500 feet of sewer is located in unincorporated Whatcom County, and 100 feet of sewer is within Ferndale City limits.

Existing subsurface ground conditions are poor. Groundwater has been found to be 3' below existing grade. Sanitary sewer excavation depths will be up to 14' below existing grade, so groundwater management during construction will be challenging. It will be necessary to install wellpoints that can be used to dewater the trench to an elevation below the proposed excavation depth so the sanitary sewer pipe and manholes can be installed safely and to City standards. These wellpoints must operate continuously for 24 hours per day and seven days a week to ensure the groundwater is drawn down below the excavation limits. Given the depth of excavation, soil type, existing utilities, and other site conditions, we estimate that the project will require 40 working days to complete the work.

Because the site conditions are poor and require these work methods during construction, significant safety concerns exist if we were to also attempt to accommodate traffic through the work zone. There is not sufficient space to provide a safe work zone, needed wellpoints and traffic. There is a high likelihood that public vehicle traffic in close proximity to the trench

and wellpoints may cause the construction excavation to slough and cave in, risking damage to the County's stormwater utility and/or cause vehicles to enter the trench.

The City of Ferndale is therefore requesting a full road closure to safeguard the travelling public, workers on site and public facilities within the work zone.

Link to City of Ferndale Project Page:

<https://www.cityofferndale.org/public-works-department/capital-projects/pump-station-15-decommissioning/>

Information

This ordinance will allow for the installation of road closed signs and is necessary to comply with RCW 36.32.120 to close certain County roads.

Please contact Douglas Ranney II, P.E., County Engineer at extension 6255 with any questions regarding this ordinance.