

Norton gets grant for Josephine sewer

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Norton has been tentatively approved for a \$1 million community development block grant that will help fund extension of sewer service to the Josephine community.

The money, which is provided through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, is expected to provide city sewer connections to 102 homes, according to City Manager E.W. Ward.

The grant is contingent on the city meeting targets set by DHCD, Ward said.

Ward said the city will not know what targets need to be met until a meeting with DHCD officials later this month.

The funding is in addition to \$1 million the project has already been awarded through the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program.

During an earlier meeting on the

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project, Ward told council that connecting Josephine could provide two crucial results — providing much-needed sewer service to the community and securing funding to upgrade the Benges Branch interceptor line.

According to the grant application, about 17 percent of the households in the community discharge untreated sewage directly into nearby waterways, while others suffer from “very old and failing” septic systems.

Ward said the Benges Branch line needs replacement to provide the capacity to take on the additional customers.

The project will replace around 3,925 linear feet of 8- to 10-inch sewer line.

The upgrade is needed, Ward said, due to the “age and condition of the line.”

“Flow monitoring indicates inflow problems during rain events,” he told

council.

“Future development of the Josephine community, combined with the capacity issues at the Josephine pump station, makes this project needed,” Ward added.

Earlier this year, Ward noted that a comprehensive study of the city’s sewer system identified 540 defects.

Around 25 of those defects were discovered in the Benges Branch line, which would supply the additional Josephine customers.

Ward said at the time that in the late 1980s and early ‘90s, the city looked into providing public sewer service to more than 100 households in Josephine.

The city applied for block grant funding from DHCD three years in a row, but the project was never funded, largely due to existing defects in the system. The city stopped trying in 1994, Ward said.

Construction on the project is expected to get underway once the permitting process is completed, according to Ward. ▲