



**CITY OF KIRKLAND  
PUBLIC WORKS**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Julie T. Underwood, Deputy City Manager/Interim Public Works Director  
Carly Joerger, Utility Policy & Community Relations Supervisor, Public Works Department  
Sarah R. Olson, Deputy Director of Public Works - Engineering & Planning  
Veronica K. Hill, Financial Planning Supervisor, Finance & Administration Department

**Date:** September 19, 2025

**Subject:** **Approval of Upper Highlands Water Pressure Options Evaluation Fiscal Note**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council approves the attached fiscal note authorizing use of \$103,000 from the Water/Sewer fund balance for the Water Comprehensive Plan Update to fund an expedited evaluation of capital project options to address the water pressure in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood. By approving the Consent Calendar, Council authorizes this action.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Staff requests Council approval of the attached fiscal note to fund an expedited review of capital project options to address the water pressure in the Upper Highlands neighborhood. This expedited review will occur on a faster timeline than the delivery of the Water Comprehensive Plan Update, anticipated to be complete in Quarter 3 of 2026.
- This fiscal note was requested by City Council at its September 16, 2025 Regular Meeting.
- Additional background on the City's project to change the Upper Highlands Neighborhood pressure gradient will be presented at City Council's October 21, 2025 Study Session.
- Capital Improvement Project options in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood will be presented for potential action to City Council at its November 5, 2025 Regular Meeting during the CIP Update agenda item.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On April 8, 2024, the City converted the 510 pressure gradient to a 450 pressure gradient in the Highlands neighborhood. This change improved fire flow, water system resiliency, redundancy, and water quality by opening nine new connections and eliminating the previous hydraulic island or isolated zone.

The project was originally proposed in a December 30, 2022 Technical Memorandum for the Water System Plan CIP Review and then implemented through the WSDOT I-405/NE 85th Bus Rapid Transit Station Project, which prompted the relocation of the 85th Street water main. The following observed pressure reduction was consistent with the engineering analysis; however, the resulting impact on many residents of the Highlands community was greater than anticipated. As a result, Upper Highlands residents have requested that the City re-evaluate capital project options to restore the water pressure. Preserving some or all of the fire flow, redundancy, and water quality benefits of the original project will also be key parts of the options evaluation.

More detailed background and information will be provided to City Council at its October 21, 2025 Study Session.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

By authorizing the fiscal note, Council is approving additional budget to support expedited review of capital improvement project options to address the water pressure in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood. This work is already underway as part of the City's update to the Water Comprehensive Plan. However, the Water Comprehensive Plan is not anticipated to be complete until Quarter 3 of 2026. Typically, identification and prioritization of capital improvement projects would then follow approval and adoption of an updated Water Comprehensive Plan. By approving the fiscal note, Council is directing staff and the consultant working on the Water Comprehensive Plan, RH2, to analyze specific capital improvement options in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood outside of the Water Comprehensive Plan update timeline.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

If approved, staff will continue working with the City's consultant, RH2, to evaluate capital improvement options to address the water pressure in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood on an expedited timeline. Additional background on the City's project to change the Upper Highlands Neighborhood pressure gradient will be presented at Council's October 21, 2025 Study Session. The analysis of project options in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood will be presented for potential action to City Council at its November 5, 2025 Regular Meeting during the CIP Update item.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – Upper Highlands Water Pressure Fiscal Note

**FISCAL NOTE**

CITY OF KIRKLAND

Source of Request							
Julie Underwood, Interim Director of Public Works							
Description of Request							
Use of \$103,000 of Water Sewer Fund Balance to fund the cost of an expedited evaluation of capital project options to address the water pressure in the Upper Highlands Neighborhood.							
Legality/City Policy Basis							
Fiscal Impact							
Recommended Funding Source(s)							
Reserve	Description	2026 Est End Balance	Prior Auth. 2025-26 Uses	Prior Auth. 2025-26 Additions	This Request	Revised 2026 End Balance	2026 Target
Revenue/Exp Savings							
Other Source	Water Sewer Fund Balance						
Other Information							

Prepared By	Veronica Hill, Financial Planning Supervisor	Date	September 19, 2025
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