

# Burbank schools to connect to municipal sewer system

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The Columbia School District in Burbank should be connected to a municipal sewer system before the beginning of the next school year.

The Port of Walla Walla last week unanimously approved seeking bids for a project to connect the recently finished school district sewer system to the sewer line that will run under the Snake River.

Apex Directional Drilling of Portland is building that sewer line under the river so that the Port of Walla Walla's Burbank Business Park and the district's three schools can connect to Pasco's sewer system.

Port officials have been working to extend sewer to the 120-acre business park, which has commercial and light industrial zoning and easy access to Highway 12, with the goal of spurring economic development in Burbank. The community of Burbank and the school district rely on septic systems to handle waste.

The overall project is expected to cost about \$6.9 million, with \$3 million provided by the state, said Paul Wemhoener, the port's project manager.

The phase of the project going out to bid includes building two sewer lift stations, installing about 8,400 linear feet of sewer lines and 3,300 feet of water lines and decommissioning the school district's septic tanks, according to port documents.

Businesses who buy property in the Burbank Business Park then will be able to connect to the water and sewer lines, Wemhoener said.

The goal is to have construction begin in January, he said.

Decommissioning the septic tanks would occur in summer 2015 so the project would not interrupt school, Wemhoener said. Decommissioning involves pumping out the tanks and filling them with soil .

The port will still have more of the project to bid after the current phase. That will include the connection between the Franklin County side of the Snake River sewer line to a project being built by Columbia East, Wemhoener said. The port will then be connected into Pasco's sewage treatment system.

Officials plan to finish that portion of the project after the pipe under the Snake River is completed, he said.

Commissioners reached an agreement with the city of Pasco in 2012 to buy 100,000 gallons of daily sewer capacity for \$900,000 paid over three years. The port will buy additional capacity in the next 15 years and also pay the city other sewer fees.

The school district will pay the port a per-student fee once the sewer system is up and running. The port will pay Pasco monthly for sewer services with fees collected from the users of the new system.

The school district already uses the port's potable water system.