Second verse, same as the first
Now that the first floor has hardened, we’re up on the second story doing the same thing - pouring concrete floors and putting in the support beams and reinforcement for the second and third floor walls and stairs. The flooring and walls will have space for pipes, vents and conduits to save drilling holes later as we make electrical and other connections between the existing Water Treatment Plant and the new pretreatment facility.

What else is happening now?
The new, temporary hypochlorite tanks are in place and filled, ready to begin use this month as a replacement for chlorine gas. We are testing the temporary hypochlorite system; once it performs flawlessly for two weeks, we will permanently transition to hypochlorite – and leave behind chlorine gas forever.

We’re starting to receive large sections of pipe, which will go into the pump and pipe gallery (in the front on the bottom floor of the new building.) These are the pipes that will deliver raw water into the pretreatment plant from the existing 66-inch line, which brings water from Lake Whatcom.

And we’re now removing the fencing and the concrete slab that provided outdoor storage for the chlorine gas cylinders, to make room for the hypochlorite building.

Why the switch from chlorine gas to hypochlorite create on-site?
Our goal for this new facility is ensure that it will maximize the efficiency of our current water treatment plant in the safest way possible. That’s why we are eliminating the need to transport or store chlorine gas which we currently use to clean water, by switching to hypochlorite which is safer and will be produced right at the plant. So, related to that, we have set up temporary tanks to be able to phase-in the hypochlorite as it replaces chlorine gas as a disinfectant. We got the connections in place now and are working with the electrical subcontractor to set up the electronic controls.
And then what?
Next month, once the new building’s floors are completed, we’ll be waterproofing and insulating the exterior walls, then drainage at the perimeter of the pretreatment building will be completed.

Also good to know:
As always, weather conditions could influence activity at the construction site. Flaggers are posted at the corner of Arbor Court and Silver Beach Road, and near the intersection of Silver Beach Road and Lakeway Drive, entering Whatcom Falls Park as needed. The crew is still on a scheduled 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday work week. However, there could be occasional Friday work.

If you’ve missed any of these monthly updates, they’re archived on the City’s website. From the home page, “search” Capital Projects, then DAF. You’ll find the updates going back to November 2016.

And we are doing this - why?
This is to make sure the City’s drinking water - drawn from Lake Whatcom - is as clean and safe as it can be. We’re building a Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) pre-treatment plant to remove as many as particulates as possible from the water, in order to maximize the City’s Water Treatment Plant efficiency. For more project information, click here.

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