



## DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below.

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Replacement Well for G-087749 (Well 37-1)  
Platte Center, NE  
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311655  
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$420,000  
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT: \$63,000  
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$147,000

The Village of Platte Center has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health (DHHS) and the NDEE. One of Platte Center's Public Water System (PWS) wells has been experiencing steadily increasing nitrate concentrations over time. In 2019, the nitrate concentration in the well was at or above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water standard for three of the four monitoring periods. In 2020, the nitrate concentration in the well has been above the standard for two of the three monitoring periods, thus far. Therefore, a new well is proposed in the general vicinity of Platte Center's primary well that has been a reliable drinking water source, below all primary drinking water standards, since its construction in 2011. The proposed well will replace the existing well with elevated nitrate concentrations, which will be decommissioned. An emergency well, also high in nitrates, will also be decommissioned. According to the Priority Ranking System in the 2021 Intended Use Plan (IUP), this project is considered to be high priority, and it is included on the Project Priority Funding List. Based on documentation on file, the project was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan with a corresponding principal forgiveness rate of 30%.

The Village of Platte Center is located in the central part of eastern Nebraska, off of Highway 81. It is about 12 miles northwest of Columbus, NE. The community has experienced a fairly stable population over the past decade with a current estimated population of 336. Platte Center's Public Water System currently consists of two municipal supply wells, an additional emergency supply well, an elevated 50,000-gallon water storage tower, and a distribution system.

The proposed project was reviewed by Federal and State agencies for environmental impacts. The majority of the agencies responding indicated there would be no adverse impact, have no effect, or posed no concern. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office, from preliminary information, identified that the project may have the potential to affect historic properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. They requested that an archaeological survey be completed. The survey was completed in July 2020. As a result of this survey, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office concluded that no historic properties would be affected by the project.

The total estimated project cost is \$420,000, but the Village has received a Water Sustainability Grant of \$210,000. Therefore, \$210,000 is eligible for funding by DWSRF. The Village is eligible for a 30-year loan at an interest rate of 1.5 percent. In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 0.5 percent of the principal balance will be assessed each year. The revenues from Platte Center's water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. The projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) for the project is \$7,516. For a typical residential connection, the current monthly rate is \$32.25 with a water use charge of \$2.65 per 1,000 gallons, resulting in an average monthly water bill of \$45.50 for a typical 5,000-gallon monthly household water use. Based on 173 active service connections, monthly household rates may need be raised \$3.62 to pay for the new debt service.

A Public Hearing was held August 11, 2020, during which the Engineer discussed details of the project and the expected project cost. No public comments were made. The hearing was advertised 44 days in advance.

The Village has a permit to operate a public water system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179. The proposed project is determined by DHHS to help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DHHS in September 2019, wherein several deficiencies were noted. These deficiencies have since been addressed. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The Village will still be required to undergo an Initial, and if necessary, a Final TFM Assessment by the DHHS, to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Also, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

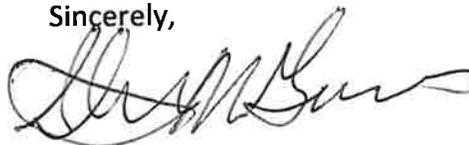
No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction or discharges will be obtained from the

appropriate agencies (e.g., DNR, NRD, NDEE, DHHS, etc.). Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of a careful review of the engineering report and other supporting data that are on file with NDEE. All are available for public review upon request. The NDEE will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date shown below. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit directly to Hillary Stoll at (402) 471-4252 or email [hillary.stoll@nebraska.gov](mailto:hillary.stoll@nebraska.gov) of the Technical Assistance Section of NDEE, or Dr. Burton Pflueger at (402) 471-1883 or email [burton.pflueger@nebraska.gov](mailto:burton.pflueger@nebraska.gov) of the Water Financial Assistance Section of NDEE.

Signed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2020.

Sincerely,



Steve M. Goans  
Deputy Director

Attachments: Environmental Assessment  
Distribution List  
Map

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

### A. Project Identification:

**Applicant:** Village of Platte Center  
**Project No.:** D311655  
**City:** Platte Center **County:** Platte **State:** NE  
**Estimated Project Cost:** \$420,000  
**Proposed Amount of Loan Forgiveness:** \$63,000

### B. Community Description:

**Location:** The Village of Platte Center is located in the central part of eastern Nebraska, off of Highway 81. It is about 10 miles northwest of Columbus, NE.

**Population:** The community has experienced a fairly stable population over the past decade with a current estimated population of 336.

**Current Water System Facilities:** Platte Center's PWS consists of two municipal supply wells, an additional emergency supply well, an elevated 50,000-gallon water storage tower, and a distribution system with metered service connections. The wells pump directly into the distribution system with no chemical addition.

**C. Project Description:** A new, 300-gallon per minute well will be drilled in the northeast corner of the Village, approximately 500 feet northeast of the Village's elevated storage tank and about 3,000 feet west of Well 2011-1. The proposed installation will also include connection to the existing system, SCADA upgrades, and the disconnection/abandonment of Well 78-1, which is currently an emergency-use only well, and the disconnection/abandonment of Well 37-1 (high nitrate well). The proposed well, in addition to the existing well (Well 2011-1), will supply water to the Village. The use of both wells will be necessary to provide adequate capacity during periods of high-water usage.

### D. Alternatives Considered:

Alternatives considered were:

1. No project, or
2. Build a water treatment plant, or
3. Construct a new well

**Evaluation and Selection of the Alternative:** In 2019, the nitrate concentration in the well was at or above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water standard for three of the four monitoring periods. In 2020, the nitrate concentration in

the well has been above the standard for two of the three monitoring periods, thus far. The most recent sample collected on July 13, 2020, detected a nitrate concentration of 10.1 mg/L. A test well drilled near the proposed well location was sampled on June 22, 2020, and the nitrate concentration was 0.566 mg/L, which is significantly below the MCL. Moreover, all of the other water quality data for this proposed well are in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Building a water treatment plant to remove nitrates from the groundwater is another potential solution to the high nitrate concentrations in the 1937 well. However, this would be more expensive than drilling a new well. Therefore, this alternative would only be selected if a new water source low in nitrates with good water quality was not found.

If no project were constructed, the Village would be left with only one active well that has nitrate levels reliably below the drinking water standard. Per State regulations, Platte Center must provide to its residents a supply of safe drinking water on a continuous basis. While the 2011 well is still operating within its expected design life, typically systems operate with more than one well to both alternate operation and for a backup in case of emergencies (e.g., pump failure, etc.). Moreover, the 2011 well would likely not provide sufficient capacity on its own during periods of high-water usage. It is commendable that the Village is now replacing the high nitrate 1937 well with a new, permanent well expected to meet all drinking water standards.

#### **E. Environmental Impact Summary:**

##### **Primary:**

**Construction:** Temporary impacts caused by construction include noise and dust, a limited potential for soil erosion, and fuel/oil spills. The Village will make an application to the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District for a well construction permit. The new well will be registered with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR). A construction permit has already been obtained from the Engineering Services Program of DHHS.

**Environmental:** The construction contracts will require that the contractors return the area to its original or better condition. The land was recently acquired by the Village, and the area required for the wellhouse will be minimal, and will have little, if any, effect on area species.

The proposed project was reviewed by numerous Federal and State agencies for environmental impacts. The Department of Transportation – Division of Aeronautics identified the nearest airport as the Columbus Municipal Airport, located approximately 8.97 miles southeast of the project. They noted that the project is unlikely to impact Columbus Municipal Airport's airspace. Both the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service had no

concerns related to threatened and endangered species. The Nebraska State Fire Marshal Agency did not have any concerns. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) requested an archaeological survey be completed due to their determination that the project activities have the potential to affect historic properties, if present. The archaeological survey, completed in July 2020, determined that the proposed project should not impact the historic properties.

**Financial:** An application for DWSRF loan assistance has been received for the project to fund the new water well. The total estimated project cost is \$420,000, but the Village has received a Water Sustainability Grant of \$210,000. Therefore, \$210,000 is eligible for funding by DWSRF. The Village is eligible for a 1.5 percent, 30-year loan and a corresponding amount of principal forgiveness set at 30% of eligible project costs. If executed, the community will have an annual DWSRF debt service of \$7,516, which includes a ten percent coverage that is required on all loans. Included in that amount is an administrative fee of 0.5 percent on the principal balance that will be assessed each year. The revenues from Platte Center's water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. For a typical residential connection, the current monthly rate is \$32.25 with a water use charge of \$2.65 per 1,000 gallons, resulting in an average monthly water bill of \$45.50 for a typical 5,000-gallon monthly household water use. Based on 173 active service connections, monthly household rates may need be raised \$3.62 to pay for the new debt service. An assessment of costs and revenues will be conducted after completion of the project.

### **Secondary:**

**Population Impacts:** The new well is not primarily needed for future growth, but to shift the Village's reliance on a well with nitrate exceedances to a quality supply well, ensuring that compliance with the nitrate drinking water standard is maintained. The improvements will be reasonably sized to accommodate predicted population trends.

**Land Use and Trends:** The location of the proposed well is in the northeast corner of Platte Center, approximately 500 feet northeast of the Village's elevated storage tank and about 3000 feet west of existing Well 2011-1. The wellhouse will be on land that was previously disturbed through agriculture. The well site has been approved by DHHS, and new well test kit data show water quality will be acceptable in the supply well. All water mains will be placed below ground at a depth where they will not interrupt any planned practices. After the archaeological survey was completed in July 2020, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office review noted that the referenced project does not contain recorded historic resources.

**Environmental:** Minimal solid waste generated by the project will be disposed of in a licensed landfill. No safety, vibration, noise or aesthetic considerations were identified other than the normal noise and disruptions associated with water main and well construction.

**Environmental Justice:** The proposed project will not produce any environmental justice concerns. All structures will be placed in areas previously disturbed through agriculture, and the services provided by the new well will be available to everyone in the Village, equally. No segments of Platte Center's population are impacted disproportionately from related effects.

**Mitigation measures necessary to eliminate adverse environmental effect:** Proper construction techniques will be utilized to minimize soil erosion and other potential impacts of construction. An NPDES permit for stormwater runoff associated with construction activity and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be required by NDEE, if more than one acre of land will be disturbed. The community can designate the General Contractor as the authorized representative on the stormwater permit notice of intent submitted to the NDEE. Authorization of stormwater runoff from the construction activities must be in place prior to commencing construction.

**Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources:** The resources committed to the project include the equipment, materials, and energy used in construction.

**F. Measures Taken to Ensure Environmental Soundness:**

**Public Involvement:** A Public Hearing was held August 11, 2020, during which the Engineer discussed details of the project and the expected project cost. No public comments were made. The hearing was advertised 44 days in advance.

**Public Opposition or Opinions:** No comments were made.

**Coordination and Documentation with Other Agencies and Special Interest Groups:**

**Facility Planning:** Water Study, Gilmore & Associates, Inc., June 2006

**Environmental Report:** An Archaeological Survey of Proposed Platte Center Well Replacement Project, Nancy F. Carlson, July 2020

**Federal:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, July 2, 2020, email

**State:** NE Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division, July 7, 2020, email  
NE Game and Parks Commission, July 6, 2020, letter  
NE State Fire Marshal Agency, June 17, 2020, email

NE State Historic Preservation Office, July 7, 2020, letter; August 6, 2020, letter (following requested survey)

**Consulting Engineers:** Miller & Associates, Consulting Engineers, P.C., Kearney, NE

**Contract Archaeologist:** Nancy F. Carlson, Genoa, NE

**Public Groups:** Village of Platte Center Residents

- G. Positive Effects to be Realized from the Proposed Project:** The proposed well will allow Platte Center to maintain compliance with the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and ensure future water availability. New well test kit data show water quality will meet NDHHS-DPH Title 179 standards, Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems. The project is reasonable, not contrary to conservation or the public welfare, and is a beneficial use of groundwater by the Village of Platte Center.
  
- H. Reasons for Concluding there will be no Significant Impacts:** Review of the engineering report and supporting information indicates that the proposed project will result in no significant impact on the environment. Federal and State agencies reported no impact will result for threatened or endangered species or historical resources. All necessary permits for construction have been or will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (i.e. NRD, DHHS, NDEE, etc.), if necessary.



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Reviewing Engineer

9/29/2020  
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DISTRIBUTION LIST  
PLATTE CENTER, NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY  
Office of Public Affairs  
P.O. Box 98922  
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES – DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
Steve McNulty  
P.O. Box 95026  
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
Curt Inbody  
P.O. Box 94676  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4676

NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION  
Shannon Sjolie  
P.O. Box 30370  
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA STATE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Trevor Jones  
P.O. Box 82554  
Lincoln, NE 68508-2554

STATE OFFICE OF POLICY RESEARCH  
Policy Advisor  
Rm 1319, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 94601  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4601

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
Aaron Boucher  
P.O. Box 94666  
Lincoln, NE 68509

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Eliza Hines  
9325 South Alda Road  
Wood River, NE 68883

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Christine Gabriel  
Environmental Coordinator  
Midwest Regional Office  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
Troy Pomajzl  
Room 308, Federal Building  
100 Centennial Mall North  
Lincoln, NE 68508

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Chris Simmons and Kelly Beard-Tittone  
11201 Renner Blvd  
Mail Code: WWPDWIMB  
Lenexa, KS 66219

STATE CONSERVATIONIST  
Wayne Vanek  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Federal Building, Room 152  
100 Centennial Mall North  
Lincoln, NE 68508-3866

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
John Moeschen  
State Program Manager  
US Army corps of Engineers  
Nebraska State Office, Suite 1  
8901 South 154<sup>th</sup> Street  
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

APPLICANT:  
Nicolette Coble  
Village of Platte Center  
315 4<sup>th</sup> Street, PO Box 125  
Platte Center, NE 69155

CONSULTING ENGINEER:  
Chris Miller, P.E.  
Miller & Associates, Consulting Engineers, P.C.  
1111 Central Avenue  
Kearney, NE 68847

LOCAL NEWSPAPER:  
Columbus Telegram  
1254 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Columbus, NE 68601

(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT:  
Lower Platte North Natural Resources District  
511 Commercial Park Road  
Wahoo, NE 68066

\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this FNSI has been distributed to this list electronically via email instead of physically via a mailed document.

MAP

