

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

A. Project Identification:

Applicant: Sarpy County Sanitary Improvement District No. 29 – Westridge Farms
Project No.: D311606
County: Sarpy **State:** NE
DWSRF Loan: \$639,394

B. Community Description:

Location and Population: The Sanitary Improvement District (SID) is located in eastern Nebraska, situated to the south of the City of Gretna. The SID serves 33 connections, with an estimated population of 81 people.

Current Water System Facilities: The public water system consists of two municipal wells, five 120-gallon pressure storage tanks, and an undersized distribution system. One of their wells has failed. Water quality from historical monitoring show all parameters being measured below primary drinking water standards.

C. Project Description:

In June 2015, a Preliminary Engineering Report was completed by the SID's Engineer. The project will replace the SID's distribution system with water mains meeting Gretna's standards, and abandoned the existing wells and distribution system per State requirements. Within those areas, service lines up to and including the curb stops will also be replaced, and if needed during the course of the project, water meters and meter pits can also be replaced.

D. Alternatives Considered:

Three alternatives studied were:

1. No project;
2. Replace Backup Well; or
3. Interconnect with the City of Gretna.

Evaluation and Selection of the Alternative: As noted, one of the SID's wells has failed, and upon searching for a replacement well site it was determined that established State regulatory setback criteria could not be met. The district would have to buy land and lay transmission mains to re-establish a backup well, and would also remain responsible for operating and maintaining their system. No project would result in the SID remaining a one well water system, which would mean at times of needed well maintenance, they would not be able to ensure that the residents are provided with a supply of safe drinking water on a continuous basis. As the remaining well is nearly 50 years in age, and the average life of a supply well in Nebraska ranges from 35 to 40

years, it is probable that the remaining active well will also need to be replaced in the near future. Therefore, rather than permanently operate as a one supply well PWS, the SID commendably opted to interconnect to the City of Gretna, which will ensure sustainability of their public water system.

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. A construction permit has been obtained from the Engineering Services Program at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Environmental: The construction contracts will require that the contractors return the area to its original or better condition. All of the land area to be disturbed during construction will be SID owned, within street right of ways, and was previously disturbed. No portion lies within the 100-year flood plain.

The proposed project was reviewed by numerous Federal and State agencies for environmental impacts. The majority of the responses were positive in that they indicated that the project would likely have no affect or was not subject to their jurisdiction. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) raised a concern that since the proposed project is in the Platte River basin, and any project resulting in a water depletion in the basin would further or continue the deterioration of stressed habitat conditions. However, documentation shows that it is more likely that the SID's water use will decrease as a result of the project. Based on the additional information provided, the USFWS provided correspondence that the project is not subject to further review.

Financial: An application for a DWSRF loan has been received for \$639,394 to fund the system improvements. The SID is eligible for a 20-year loan with an interest rate of 2% plus an administrative fee of 1% on the outstanding principal balance assessed annually. Therefore, the projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) is estimated at \$49,802. The revenues from SID's water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. SID's future water rate for a typical residential connection is \$19.45 per month for the first 2,000 gallons of water consumed, with a \$3.60 use charge for every 1,000 gallons of water furnished thereafter. That equates to a water bill of \$41.05 per month, based on a household water use of 8,000 gallons. Based on 33 active service connections, monthly household rates may need to be raised \$125.76 to address the new debt service, to approximately \$167 per month. As that would be an significant monthly water bill, the DWSRF would only be able to make a loan under a general obligation pledge.

Secondary:

Population Impacts: The entire distribution system will be replaced, as such all of the SID's residents will be positively impacted.

Land Use and Trends: All new water mains will be placed below ground at depths that will not interrupt any planned practices. The Nebraska State Historical Society noted that the project will have no effect for archeological, architectural, or historic properties.

Environmental: The proposed project will have no effect on the availability of water quantity in the area. The minimal amount of solid waste generated by the project will be disposed in a licensed landfill. No safety, vibration, noise or aesthetic considerations were identified other than the normal noise and disruptions associated with water main construction.

Environmental Justice: The proposed project will not produce any environmental justice concerns. All water mains will be placed in areas previously disturbed or on SID owned property, and the services provided by the proposed project will be available to everyone in SID, equally. No segment of the district's population is 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. Traffic flow may be affected by construction when water main construction is being done along the SID road right-of-ways; however, safety control measures (i.e., signs, etc.) will be implemented. An NPDES Construction Stormwater permit for runoff associated with construction activity and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be required by NDEQ for this project if more than one acre of land is disturbed. The Community can designate the General Contractor as the authorized representative on the stormwater permit notice of intent submitted to the NDEQ. Authorization of stormwater runoff from the construction activity 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 Insure Environmental Soundness:

Public Involvement: A Public Hearing was held July 8, 2015, with 35 days advanced posted notice. A presentation of the proposed project was made by the Engineer, including potential impacts to user rates.

Public Opposition or Opinions: One resident inquired upon the DWSRF loan rate, which was quoted as 3% with a 1% setup fee. It was noted that the available general obligation bonds were at 4% and the special assessment bond were at 7%. A positive discussion was made upon comparing the available rates.

Coordination and Documentation with Other Agencies and Special Interest Groups:

Facility Planning: Preliminary Engineering Report, Sarpy County Sanitary Improvement District No. 29 (Westridge Farms), Olmsted & Perry Consulting Engineers Inc., June 5, 2015

Federal: Corps of Engineers, June 23, 2015, letter
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, June 30, 2015, letter and August 24, 2015, email

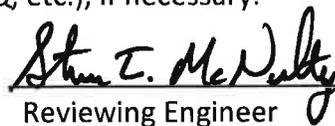
State: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, August 28 and October 9, 2014, letters
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, June 18, 2015, letter
Nebraska State Historical Society, June 10, 2015, letter

Consulting Engineers: Olmsted & Perry Consulting Engineers, Inc., Omaha, NE

Public Groups: SID Residents

G. Positive Effects to be Realized from the Proposed Project: The project will allow SID to maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and ensure future water availability. The replacement of water mains achieves the goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water Infrastructure Sustainability Policy for the upgrade and/or replacement of existing infrastructure. As such, the project is considered reasonable, not contrary to conservation or the public welfare and is a beneficial use of resources by the SID.

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 to threatened and endangered species, floodplain, historical, farming or groundwater resources. All necessary permits for construction will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (e.g., NDEQ, etc.), if necessary.



Reviewing Engineer

9/1/15

Date

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