



DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies, and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) 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 this project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part 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:	Water System Improvements
APPLICANT:	City of Neligh
COUNTY:	Antelope
POPULATION:	1,599 (2010 Census)
CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER:	D311673
TOTAL LOAN AMOUNT:	\$1,280,000
FORGIVENESS AMOUNT:	\$320,000

The City of Neligh is in northeast Nebraska in central Antelope County at the intersection of United States Highway 275 and Nebraska Highway 14. Neligh serves as the County Seat and has a regional hospital, making the City a local hub for governmental and medical services. The community also has a strong presence with its retail and service businesses, and many agricultural and manufacturing businesses. The City of Neligh's growth is limited due to the Elkhorn River to the south and the rapid change of elevation to the northwest of the community.

Antelope County residents enjoy an abundance of groundwater supply from the Ogallala Aquifer. The aquifer supplies drinking and agricultural water and is an important natural resource to the City and County. The population trends for the City of Neligh from 1970 to the present show a population decline. The population from 1970 to 2010 lost 165 people. However, because of strong labor demand, good amenities, and good schools, the City population has increased by 119 people between 2015 and 2019. The City of Neligh is anticipated to have a 0.25% growth rate from 2020 to 2050.

The water system for the City of Neligh consists of 4 municipal wells, a 250,000 - gallon concrete water storage tank, approximately 76,500 feet of PVC, ductile iron, cast iron and concrete water mains, a booster pump to supply adequate water pressure to the elevated portions of town, and 958 metered water services. To support the schools, industry, and local economy, the City is

working to provide an adequate supply of well-maintained, available, and safe housing. Therefore, in this project, a total of 4 'sub-projects' have been proposed, named Project #A, #B, #C, and #D, all located within existing developed areas of the City.

Proposed distribution project #A is the construction of an 8-inch diameter water line from the intersection of 2nd and G Street, east to the intersection of 2nd and H Street, then south on the H Street Right-of-Way to Highway 275, then southeasterly approximately 700 feet to tie into an existing 8-inch water line along Highway 275. This extension needs to be constructed because the existing 8-inch extension along Highway 275 is only fed by a 6-inch main on D Street and a 4-inch main in Riverside Park. This extension will be DR18 PVC pipe and will be constructed on City and NDOT Right-of-Way and will include fittings, valves, and fire hydrants along with directional bore under Belmar Creek, which will require monitoring manholes on each side.

Proposed Distribution Project #B is the construction of a 10-inch diameter PVC DR18 water main from the intersection of 11th Street and L Street south to the intersection of 8th Street and L Street. This project will help provide the southeast portion of town with a more direct large diameter connection to the water storage reservoir. Construction would be completed on City or NDOT Right-of-Way and the work will require a permit from NDOT to Occupy Right-of-Way. The land use in the area is sparsely developed so other than the street crossing, which would be bored, this project should cause very little disruption.

Proposed Distribution Project #C is the construction of an 8-inch diameter PVC DR18 water main on S Street from 10th Street to 7th Street, and on 8th Street from S Street to O Street. This project would provide an additional loop of larger diameter mains in the southwest portion of town, eliminating several fire hydrants that are on 4-inch mains and making it so that fire hydrants that are on 4-inch mains are no more than 2 blocks from a larger arterial main. Because this work would be in existing residential areas, there would be minor disruption to lawns, driveways, and traffic patterns.

Proposed Distribution Project #D consists of an 8-inch PVC DR18 water main from the intersection of 9th Street and N Street north to the intersection of 11th Street and N Street, the construction of a 10-inch PVC DR18 water main on 11th Street from N Street to O Street and on O Street from 11th Street north approximately 450 feet to tie into an existing 10-inch water main, and the construction of an 8-inch water main on 10th Street from N Street to O Street. The construction of this project will complete a large diameter water main loop from the water tower to 11th Street and will complete an 8-inch water main loop around Antelope Memorial Hospital. Because this work would be in existing residential areas and adjacent to the Hospital parking areas, there would be minor disruption to parking lots, residential lawns, driveways, and traffic patterns. The work will have to be carefully coordinated with the Antelope County Hospital so that their service is not interrupted. Work will also be configured so that service disruptions to residents are kept to a minimum.

The above-referenced project was included on the Project Priority Funding List in the State Fiscal Year 2022 Intended Use Plan (IUP). This project was determined to be eligible for a 30-year loan at an interest rate of 0.5% and an administrative fee of 0.5% on the principal balance. The current residential water rate has a base rate of \$10.00, with an added consumption charge of \$2.60 for every 1,000 gallons of water used. The residential water rate may need to be raised by \$7.75 per month to address the new debt service.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference, and NDEE has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. The project, as proposed, is solely the replacement of existing infrastructure. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively, over time.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed, threatened, or endangered species or their critical habitat.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas such as wetlands, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat.
- Based on a review of the available mapping, no portion of the project lies within the 100-year flood plain; and,
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans.

The NDEE shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, after the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local, or tribal laws are being violated.

The City 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 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 of 2020, wherein no deficiencies were noted. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The City will still be required to undergo a TFM Assessment to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Also, their current Enforcement Targeting Tool score is 0, well below the allowable 11 according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

This action is taken based on careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Jian Li, Professional Engineer, NDEE at 402-471-3556 or email jian.li@nebraska.gov, or Sarah Frey, Environmental Specialist II, NDEE at 402-471-4266 or email sarah.frey@nebraska.gov.

Signed this 15th day of September 2021.

Sincerely,



Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Distribution List
 Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST
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APPLICANT

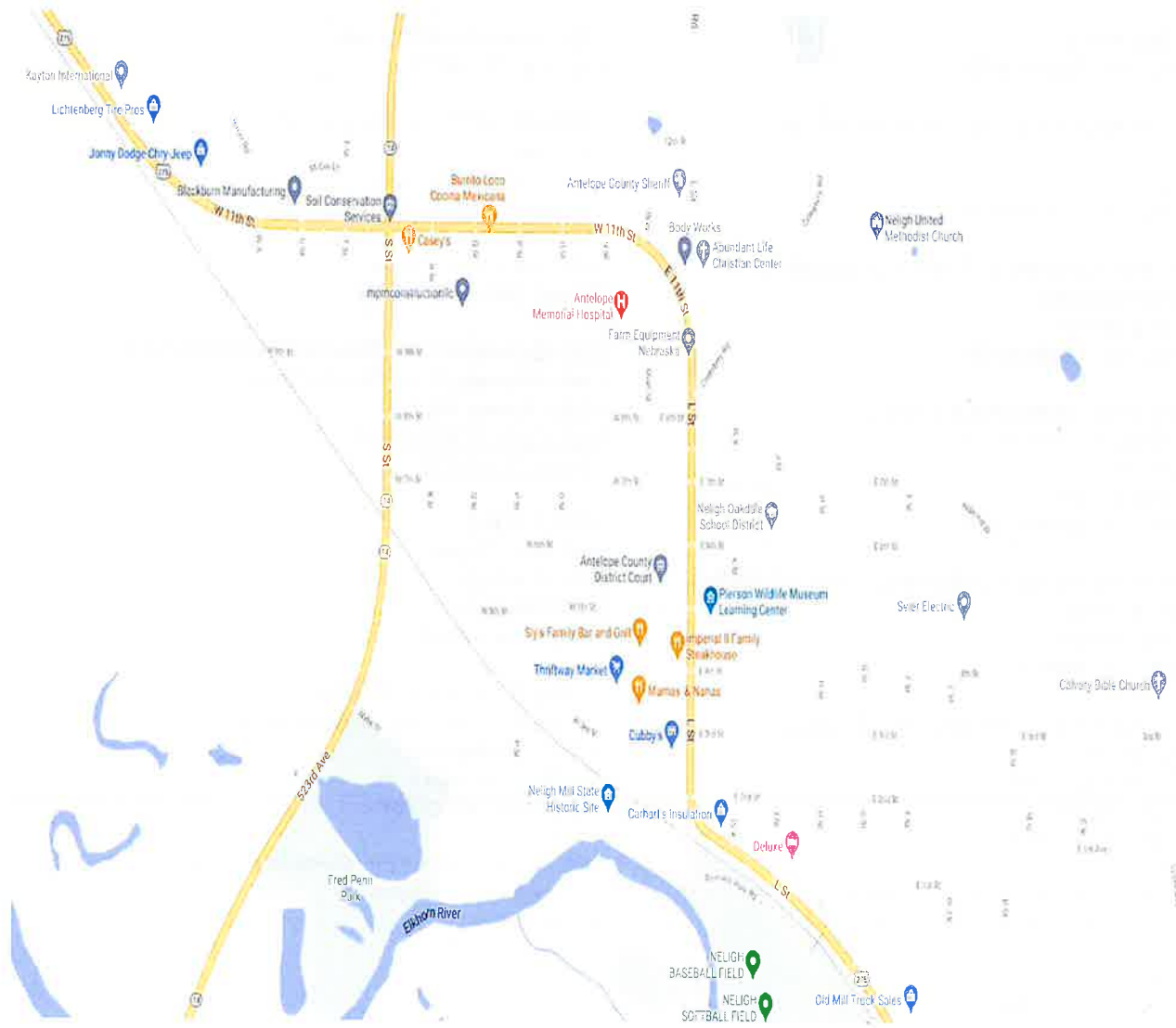
Joe Hartz, Mayor
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LOCAL NEWSPAPER (Public Information Only)

Antelope County News
314 M Street
Neligh, NE 68756



Map of City of Neligh