



WILLMAR



CITY ADMINISTRATOR

March 31, 2009

City Office Building
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Willmar, Minnesota 56201
320-235-4913
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The Honorable Collin Peterson
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Peterson:

First and foremost, we want to thank you for your efforts in helping the City secure a new \$300,000 FY 2009 Interior Appropriations, EPA STAG grant. We understand that this grant was signed into law on March 11, 2009. Be assured that we will work with EPA to secure the release of this grant as soon as possible and that these funds will be applied directly to reducing sewer rates for all users. Second, please consider this a request for the City to be included again in the FY 2010 Interior Appropriations process for another EPA STAG grant in the amount of \$2,000,000.

The City of Willmar must build a new Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to meet current requirements, replace aging equipment and in addition must address changing water quality standard. The overall cost of the Program is \$86,218,712. This Program has been phased and separated into 10 individual construction contracts to provide three benefits. The first benefit is better and more competitive bids on the individual contracts. The second benefit is that smaller contracts are more manageable for City administration. The third benefit is that individual constructs can increase the City's ability to secure different funding sources.

To date, we have awarded 7 of 10 construction contracts. The City has secured a Minnesota Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund low interest loan. The last three phases of the Program include two wastewater-pumping stations, forcemain to be constructed with the City's road project, and decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Each of these phases will be bid as stand-alone construction contracts. The two wastewater-pumping stations bidding is set for later this spring, the forcemain will be bid with the city's road project this summer, and decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment plant will not be bid until 2011 because treatment infrastructure will not be available until that time. The overall Program does have a priority ranking of 8 out of 250 other state wastewater projects.



Representative Peterson
Page Two
March 31, 2009

This Program supports national EPA goals to improve water quality in the Mississippi River by reducing levels of ammonia and phosphorus within the watershed. This Program replaces aging and failed treatment technology. Most notably, the Clean Water Act of 1987 states that, "the U.S. EPA Administrator is authorized to make a grant to fund all of the costs of the modification or replacement of biodisc equipment (rotating biological contactors) in any publicly owned treatment works" provided a number of conditions are met. Unfortunately, the U.S. Congress did not provide a separate pool of funding for these grants and the conditions require that modification or replacement occur early in the facility life.

The existing WWTP is the second highest point source contributor of phosphorus (14%) to the Minnesota River. The existing WWTP does not have the technology to remove or treat for phosphorus. The new WWTP will contain the technology needed to reduce the levels of phosphorus discharged by 90%, thereby improving water quality to the lower Minnesota River watershed at Shakopee. This will also help improve the water quality as the Minnesota River drains to the Mississippi River and will help reduce the overall phosphorus loading to Lake Pepin.

If we can be of any further assistance, please contact our WWTP Program Manager, Rhonda Rae at (320) 235-5400 or email: r-rae@donohue-associates.com. We would also like to thank Robin Goracke for helping us navigate this process and look forward to working with her again this year.

Sincerely,

CITY OF WILLMAR



Michael C. Schmit
City Administrator

cc: Rhonda Rae, Donohue and Associates
Robin Goracke



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Environmental Infrastructure Assistance Program: Section 219 - Central Lakes, Goodview, Grand Rapids, and Willmar, Minnesota



A sanitary lift station, part of a wastewater collection system. Typical of the type of project components constructed under the Section 219 Program.

Contact

Roland Hamborg, Project Manager
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roland.o.hamborg@usace.army.mil

Location/Description

Newly authorized Section 219 environmental infrastructure projects are located at Goodview, Grand Rapids, Willmar, and the Central Lake Region Sanitary District near Alexandria, Minnesota.

Background

The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized a number of new Section 219 projects within the State of Minnesota. At this time Congress has not appropriated funds for any of these projects. Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of the Army to provide assistance to non-Federal interests for carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects including wastewater treatment and related facilities and water supply, storage, treatment, and distribution facilities.

Status

The Corps met with the communities of Goodview and Grand Rapids and the Central Lake Region Sanitary District board to inform them of the auspices of the Section 219 program. Information has been exchanged with Willmar’s Architectural and Engineering firm, Donohue and Associates.

No funds have been appropriated to date. It has been communicated to these communities that, under the program, the Corps cannot pay for design or construction work that begins before a Project Partnership Agreement is signed.

Authority

Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, as amended.

Fiscal

Central Lake Region Authorization - \$2 M
(Wastewater project)

Goodview Authorization - \$3 M
(Water supply project)

Grand Rapids Authorization - \$5 M
(Wastewater project)

Willmar Authorization - \$15 M
(Wastewater project)

Infrastructure assistance is provided on a 75-percent Federal/25-percent sponsor basis. The non-Federal share will be cash and /or credit for lands, easements, rights of way, etc. (LERRDs). No work-in-kind credit provision is authorized for the non-Federal share.