



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF WATER

Categorical Exclusion
For the City of Atlanta
North Fork Storage Tank & Pump Station Project

Pursuant to 40 CFR §6.204(a)(1)(ii)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is planning to award a loan under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) to the City of Atlanta, Georgia. The EPA intends for this loan to fund the City's North Fork Storage Tank & Pump Station Project.

The EPA's authorization of funding for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§4321-4370(f). According to the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations, 40 CFR § 1508.4, a federal agency may categorically exclude an action from detailed environmental review as long as the action does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. An action undertaken by the EPA can qualify as a categorical exclusion if it falls under any category within 40 CFR § 6.204(a)(1)(i)-(iv), and does not exhibit any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 40 CFR § 6.204(b)(1)-(10).

Project Description

This project involves the construction of a new off-line storage tank for temporary storage of peak wet weather sewage flow from the Peachtree Creek North Fork trunk sewer. During significant wet weather events, peak flows will be diverted from the North Fork trunk sewer to the off-line storage tank; the stored flow will be returned to the trunk sewer immediately following the wet weather event.

The Project includes the following components:

- Construction of a new off-line storage tank – 15 million gallons (MG) rectangular reinforced concrete tank, approximately 315 feet (ft) long by 150 ft wide by 45 ft side-water depth at the shallow end, with top of tank flush with grade.
- Construction of a new on-site pump station – 75 million gallons/day (MGD) capacity (approximately 40 ft by 85 ft) to deliver peak flows from the trunk sewer to storage.
- Construction of a new diversion structure (approximately 23 ft by 23 ft) and new micro-tunnel gravity sewer (60-inch diameter, approximately 1,300 linear feet (lf)) from the existing trunk sewer to the pump station using mostly trenchless construction with some open cut construction.

- Construction of a new dewatering chamber (approximately 20 ft by 20 ft) and micro-tunnel gravity sewer (48-inch diameter, approximately 835 lf) from the storage tank to the existing trunk sewer using mostly trenchless construction with some open-cut construction.
- Construction of a new control building (approximately 40 ft by 85 ft) housing flushing/cleaning equipment, odor control, and emergency power.
- Realignment and replacement of 500 lf of existing 12-inch sanitary sewer segment with 600 lf of new 12-inch sanitary sewer segment. The installation method will be open-cut construction, sequenced with site excavation for the storage tank.
- Replacement/realignment of 600 lf of existing 48-inch stormwater open channel segment with a new 500 linear feet of 48-inch storm sewer, using open-cut construction.

Project Location

Project is located within the City of Atlanta, Georgia corporate limits on a parcel owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) at the coordinates of 33.823997, -84.358662. The project site is in the north east area of the City and is bound by I-85, Buford Highway, Sidney Marcus Boulevard, and GA-400. The site is surrounded by entrance/exit ramps to GA-400 and is thus fully isolated from any neighborhoods. Although the site will be shared with GDOT, the operations will be separate from GDOT operations and both will have separate gated entrances.

Eligibility for Categorical Exclusion

This project is eligible for a categorical exclusion under 40 CFR § 6.204(a)(1)(ii), which requires that projects be:

“Actions relating to existing infrastructure systems (such as sewer systems; drinking water supply systems; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) that involve minor upgrading, or minor expansion of system capacity or rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components (such as the sewer collection network and treatment system; the system to collect, treat, store and distribute drinking water; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) or construction of new minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities.”

The EPA has determined the proposed project is eligible for a categorical exclusion under 40 CFR §6.204 (a)(1)(ii), as the project involves minor upgrading, or minor expansion of system capacity or rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components.

Additionally, in order to qualify as a categorical exclusion, a project cannot fall within any of the exceptions listed under 40 CFR § 6.204(a)(1)(ii). Accordingly, projects cannot be designated categorical exclusions if they:

“involve new or relocated discharges to surface or ground water; will likely result in the substantial increase in the volume or the loading of pollutant to the receiving water; will provide capacity to serve a population 30 percent greater than the existing population; are not supported by the state, or other regional growth plan or strategy; or directly or indirectly involve or relate to upgrading or extending infrastructure systems primarily for the purposes of future development.”

The EPA has determined that these factors do not apply for this project.

Extraordinary Circumstances

The EPA has determined that none of the following extraordinary circumstances outlined in 40 CFR § 6.204(b)(1)-(10) apply to the proposed project:

1. *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.* These projects are being developed to reduce environmental impacts by repairing and replacing aging infrastructure in the service area.¹
2. *The proposed action is not known or expected to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on any community, including minority communities, low-income communities, or federally-recognized Indian tribal communities.* Georgia has a minority population of 46 percent and a low-income population of 37 percent. Fulton County has a minority population of 60 percent and a low-income population of 32 percent. The project area surrounding the site has a minority population of 56 percent and a low-income population of 33 percent. Low-income populations surrounding site are not meaningfully greater than county or state populations. The block group containing the project site has minority populations greater than 50 percent and therefore, contain environmental justice populations. No tribal areas were identified at the project location.

Potential short term, minor impacts to communities include noise, traffic, dust and emissions generated during project construction, which would be minimized with construction best management practices. As the site is bounded by existing roadways which buffer the project from nearby populations, construction impacts to surrounding populations are expected to be limited. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts on environmental justice communities.

3. *The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.* The EPA generated a list of threatened and endangered species from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s

¹ WIFIA Application

Environmental Conservation Online System Information for Planning and Consultation (ECOS-IPaC) on November 4, 2019. No threatened, endangered, or candidate species were identified. Additionally, no critical habitats were identified. Therefore, the EPA has determined that the project will have “no effect” on federally listed threatened or endangered species.

4. *The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric, archaeological, or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.* The EPA identified the area of potential effect (APE) and determined that the project will have no adverse effects on historic resources. Under the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the EPA submitted a review request to the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on December 4, 2019. On January 16, 2020, the EPA received a concurrence from the SHPO that the proposed project will have no adverse effect to historic properties within the APE.²
5. *The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas such as wetlands, floodplains, significant agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, coastal zones, barrier islands, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat.* The project area contains waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and is expected to qualify for a nationwide permit due to minimal impacts. The project includes the replacement and realignment of 600 lf of existing 48-inch stormwater open channel segment with a new 500 linear feet of 48-inch storm sewer, which has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to waters. The project will not significantly affect wetlands or waterbodies. This project is not located within a floodplain, a sole source aquifer, a coastal zone, or barrier island. The project will not impact farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or significant fish or wildlife habitat.
6. *The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant adverse air quality effects.* The project site occurs in an area of nonattainment for ozone and particulate matter 2.5; the project is located in a designated attainment area for all other criteria pollutants. Construction-related activities would generate temporary, short-term emissions, which would be minimized with construction best management practices, including the preparation of a dust control plan. Project construction and operations are not expected to exceed de minimis thresholds.
7. *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*

² SHPO Letter of Concurrence, January 16, 2020

residential areas, and is not expected to be inconsistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans. Land uses and land use patterns will not be modified by the proposed action. Therefore, no land use changes are anticipated from the project.

8. *The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy about a potential environmental impact of the proposed action. The project will have minimal environmental impacts and is not expected to cause significant public controversy.*
9. *The proposed action is not known or expected to be associated with providing financial assistance to a federal agency through an interagency agreement for a project that is known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts. The proposed action is to provide financial assistance to the City of Atlanta and is not expected to have any significant impacts on any other federal agencies.*
10. *The proposed action is not known or expected to conflict with federal, state, local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe environmental, resource-protection, or land-use laws or regulations. The project would comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations.*

Finding

The EPA finds that the proposed action is eligible for exclusion from detailed environmental review under 40 CFR § 6.204(a)(1)(ii), and will not involve any of the extraordinary circumstances delineated under 40 CFR § 6.204(b)(1) -(10). Consequently, the EPA will not prepare an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment for the proposed project. The EPA may revoke this categorical exclusion if changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion or if new evidence emerges which indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist or federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

Andrew D. Sawyers, Director
Office of Wastewater Management

Date