



Building a Better World
for All of Us®

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council - City of Silver Lake

FROM: John Rodeberg PE (MN) - City Engineer

DATE: September 19, 2022

RE: Wastewater Treatment Facility and USDA-RD Project Update
SEH No. SILAK 167846 14.00

USDA-RD Project

HOLD Status: All Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and Environmental Review (ER) work has been completed by SEH and the City and submitted to USDA-Rural Development (RD). However, RD will not complete their PER/ER work so the project can move forward until federal and state funding becomes available. RD Staff have confirmed that the Silver Lake Project is high on the priority list for funding in 2023.

Funding: Neither the State or the Federal funding for this year has been appropriated or acted upon. SEH's Community Development/Funding staff continues to work with state and federal officials to move project funding forward, and has coordinated communications with the City's financial representative, Shannon Sweeney of David Drown Associates.

State Legislature: It was hoped that the Legislature might have a Special Session to approve the Bonding Bill that was expected to include up to \$15M in dedicated funding for the project. That did not occur, and likely will not occur until January at the earliest. We recommend continuing to talk with your state elected officials to affirm the importance of the project and the funding.

Federal Funding: RD has noted that they expect to hear about new RD Funding by mid-October, but there is a high likelihood that only a "Continuing Resolution" will be approved that provides operating funds but no additional capital project funding. RD's Minnesota staff affirmed their support for the project and the expectation of the City getting funding after the new Congress is in session in January.

Congressionally Designated Spending (CDS): SEH Community Development/Funding Specialist David Krueger met with Rep. Michelle Fischbach in DC about using this program to designate funds to the project. Rep. Fischbach has not been supportive of this program in the past but indicated that she is open if the project can address housing in her district. David will be meeting with her again on September 26.

MPCA Small Community Resiliency Grant: We are reviewing what portions of the project may be eligible for funding from this \$350,000 planning program. This funding will help communities assess vulnerabilities and plan for the effects of Minnesota's changing climate in three areas:

Engineers | Architects | Planners | Scientists

Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc., 1390 Highway 15 South, Suite 200, P.O. Box 308, Hutchinson, MN 55350-0308

320.587.7341 | 800.838.8666 | 888.908.8166 fax | sehinc.com

SEH is 100% employee-owned | Affirmative Action–Equal Opportunity Employer

- Improving stormwater resilience and reducing localized flood risk
- Improving the resilience of wastewater systems
- Reducing human health effects and adapting community services, ordinances, and public spaces

An additional MPCA wastewater funding program is also expected to become available in the next month or so, and SEH will continue to track other funding resources as well.

WWTF Status/MPCA Correspondence (MNG585164)

The City received a Letter of Warning (LOW) dated August 23, 2022 from the MPCA regarding Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) and facility maintenance.

Facility Maintenance: We understand that city staff has been working on addressing the maintenance items. Maintaining these higher standards will likely require additional effort and expenses going forward. Many of the items noted in the Inspection Report are called out as improvements items in the PER and are proposed to be addressed in the future, and substantially covered by grant and project funding. This maintenance and upgrade work was proposed to be completed as part of Phase 4 of the project, which was projected to be 6 – 8 years from now. Hopefully, this LOW can be used to verify and aid the City's efforts to raise the project priority and accelerate funding.

Infiltration and Inflow (I&I): The City's PER/ER efforts have been primarily focused on addressing this issue. Of the 3 unauthorized releases noted in the report, only one is attributed to I&I (the other 2 related to pump failure and grease blockage). PeopleService did submit an I&I Evaluation Plan to the MPCA noting this effort, but the MPCA is also requiring an additional submittal of one of the following with specified actions and dates (which we have not been required to complete in the past):

- EPA Capacity, Management and Maintenance (CMOM) checklist
- League of Minnesota Cities Sanitary Sewer System Assessment
- Consultant Assessment

We believe that this submittal can be completed for under \$3,000 as PeopleService and SEH have already completed a substantial portion of the work.

The MPCA notes the City's efforts in approving the new Sanitary Sewer Inspection requirement at the point of sale and wants to make sure that the ordinance is enforced. In addition, the proposed project would be proposed to include televising of a significant portion of the private sanitary sewer lines within the City. As the discharge of clean water into the sanitary sewer system through sump pumps, roof drains, and defective plumbing or sewer service laterals is prohibited, the MPCA is also suggesting that the City may want to consider a more aggressive inspection program in the future.

The WWTF is at 97% of design flow based on an average of the last 3 – 4 years, and the MPCA notes that they might not approve development that requires additional flows to the Facility until changes to the Facility are identified and made. Again, this is the primary driver for the USDA-RD project.

jpr