



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 3/26/2024

To: Boards of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency and Russian River County Sanitation District
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency and Russian River County Sanitation District
Staff Name and Phone Number: Parastou Hooshialsadat 707-547-1961 and Andrea Rodriguez 707-521-1837
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Fifth

Title:

West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study with Stakeholder Committee

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Russian River County Sanitation District to:
- i. Execute an agreement with West Yost, in a form approved by County Counsel, for engineering services to develop a West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study through June 30, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$670,000. (Fifth District)
 - ii. Amend the agreement with West Yost to extend the term and make modifications to the scope of work provided the amendment does not increase the total cost to Russian River County Sanitation District beyond the not-to-exceed amount of \$670,000. (Fifth District)
- B) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Russian River County Sanitation District to:
- i. Execute an agreement with Sacramento State University, College of Continuing Education, Consensus and Collaboration Program, in a form approved by County Counsel, for stakeholder outreach related to the West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study through December 30, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$180,000. (Fifth District)
 - ii. Amend the agreement with Sacramento State University, College of Continuing Education, Consensus and Collaboration Program to extend the term and make modifications to the scope of work provided the amendment does not increase the total cost to Russian River County Sanitation District beyond the not-to-exceed amount of \$180,000. (Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

In response to unauthorized discharges of wastewater from the collection system during major 2019 flood events, the Russian River County Sanitation District (District), Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water), and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) engaged in settlement negotiations resulting in a Settlement Agreement and Stipulation for Entry of Order (Stipulation) and proposed Order to the Regional Water Board for adoption as an Order pursuant to Government Code section 11415.60 (Order). As a part of the proposed Stipulation and proposed Order, Sonoma Water and District submitted an Enhanced Compliance Action (ECA) Proposal to the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Board for the West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study with Stakeholder Committee (Project). The Project has the following goals and objectives:

1. Investigate the feasibility of creating regional wastewater treatment and reuse systems to provide more reliable and cost-effective services to local rate payers.
2. Study the feasibility of expanding water recycling systems serving West Sonoma County.
3. Survey wastewater connection and consolidation opportunities for on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTSs), especially failing OWTSs in areas subject to Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements, due to their proximity to pathogen and nitrogen impaired waterbodies.
4. Explore the feasibility of increasing climate change resiliency, especially to counter the impacts of extended drought and seasonal flooding.

Consistent with the Order, completion of the Project objectives requires two consulting agreements: one for preparation of a feasibility study and one for stakeholder outreach related to the Project.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

The District owns the Russian River Wastewater Treatment Facility (Treatment Facility) at 18400 Neeley Road in Guerneville and the wastewater collection system located throughout the District's service area, including associated piping and pumping infrastructure that collects and carries wastewater to the Treatment Facility. Sonoma Water operates and manages District under contract with District. The Treatment Facility and the collection system are subject to the requirements of multiple regulatory orders including Regional Water Board Waste Discharge Requirements. Unauthorized discharges of wastewater in 2019 resulted in Water Code violations that led to imposition of an administrative civil liability (ACL) in the amount of \$1,033,546. The Order requires payment of \$147,001 to the State Water Resources Control Board Cleanup and Abatement Account, while the remaining \$886,545 in liability will be suspended upon completion of the Project.

Existing wastewater systems in western Sonoma County (West County) are challenged by small customer bases and unusually high wastewater rates for the economically disadvantaged communities several of them serve. The study area is located in the West County region generally bounded by Occidental, Graton, Monte Rio, and Forestville and is inclusive of those communities as well as other nearby unincorporated urban-type density areas such as Hacienda, Hollydale, Villa Grande, Camp Meeker, and Guerneville. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board estimates that up to 12,000 OWTS owners in this area must comply with Russian River Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load (pathogen TMDL). Additionally, during the recent drought, a recycled water shortage occurred in Sonoma County as demand exceeded supplies for this important water source. Climate change and the planned decommissioning of PG&E's Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project are anticipated to put further stress on the region's water supplies and increase the importance of recycled water supply.

The Project consists of conducting a high-level feasibility study to evaluate potential West County regionalization projects that could improve water quality, water supply reliability, pathogen TMDL compliance for unsewered communities, recycled water supply availability, and climate change resiliency in the Russian River watershed. Connecting some or all of the West County districts will be evaluated in addition to possible construction of new pipelines to convey wastewater to the Santa Rosa Sub-Regional Water System and/or other treatment plants for reliable treatment. The Project will also address ratepayer costs for West County wastewater systems by exploring the cost savings of regionalization.

A feasibility study report will be developed that includes descriptions of the regionalization options considered

and communities served, planning level estimates for construction costs associated with regionalization options, cost benefit analyses, estimated recycled water supply volumes, potential ratepayer costs or savings, and recommendations for preferred regionalization options.

Planning and feasibility efforts to support large-scale public works projects that offer multiple benefits require broad public and decision-maker support. Without such support, it will be difficult if not impossible to advance projects identified through the feasibility study. Therefore, a robust and strategic Stakeholder Program will be developed to support the Project and to help and inform the feasibility study. The Stakeholder Program will conduct stakeholder interviews, perform outreach and education, and form and organize a stakeholder committee that will be responsible for reviewing and commenting on technical memoranda and the draft feasibility study. As a final deliverable, the Stakeholder Program will develop a Project Advancement Report that presents a roadmap for the advancement of feasible projects that have obtained necessary support and evaluates funding sources and opportunities to implement feasible projects.

FUNDING SOURCES

On May 16, 2023, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved an allocation of \$450,000 of the County's 2022 discretionary Water Security Fund for the West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Study with Stakeholder Committee. Additional contributions to complete the Project will come from the Russian River County Sanitation District.

SELECTION PROCESS

Feasibility Study Agreement

In July 2022, a list of qualified consultants was developed from a competitive selection process. Attached is a memo that explains this process. In September 2023, proposals for the subject work were informally requested from five consultants on the list.

West Yost was selected for the subject work because of their expertise and considerable experience conducting wastewater feasibility studies and history working in West Sonoma County. Moreover, West Yost provided a clear and thorough proposal organized by tasks which exhibited West Yost's ability to perform the work within the allotted timeframe and budget.

Stakeholder Outreach Agreement

In May 2022, a list of qualified consultants was developed from a competitive selection process. Attached is a memo that explains this process. In September 2023, proposals for the subject work were informally requested from three consultants on the list.

Sacramento State University, College of Continuing Education, Consensus and Collaboration Program (Sac State Program) was selected for many reasons directly related to their experience, qualifications, and criteria identified in their proposal.

The Sac State Program has a resume of relevant professional experience to support the Project including:

- 1) Extensive background with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- 2) Exceptionally large portfolio of local, regional and statewide water policy cases
- 3) Extensive experience managing the public engagement and community discussion aspects of TMDLs and Third Party TMDLs

Sac State presented a cost-effective approach that demonstrated their commitment to maximizing our community engagement efforts.

Sonoma Water may seek to amend or enter into subsequent agreement(s) with Board approval if required, relying upon these competitive selection processes, after the preliminary or initial work is completed.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

The agreements include authorization for the General Manager to make changes to lengthen time schedules or make minor modifications to the scopes of work, which do not increase the amounts paid under the agreements, in a form approved by County Counsel.

Under the agreements, the General Manager shall have the ability to extend the term of each agreement for two additional years by providing written notice to the other party thirty days in advance of the expiration date of the applicable agreement. The extension will be formalized in an amended agreement or amendment signed by District and the other party.

Feasibility Study Agreement

Under this agreement, West Yost will conduct assessments and evaluate options related to West County wastewater regionalization, identify opportunities for pathogen TMDL compliance by connecting unsewered communities to regional facilities, increase recycled water supply, and increase climate change resiliency. Several technical memoranda will be prepared to present the findings of the assessments and a feasibility study report will be developed to present the findings and those findings will be provided to the Stakeholder Program.

The cost of services will not exceed \$670,000; the term end date is June 30, 2027.

Stakeholder Outreach Agreement

Under this agreement, Sacramento State University, College of Continuing Education, Consensus and Collaboration Program will conduct stakeholder interviews, perform outreach and education based on the results of the interviews, form and organize a stakeholder committee, and prepare a Project Advancement Report that presents a roadmap for the advancement of feasible projects.

The cost of services will not exceed \$180,000; the term end date is December 30, 2027.

County Strategic Plan:

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:

Climate Change Goal 5: Assess the risk and uncertainty of climate change and develop and take actions that improve resilience and sustainability.

Strategy 5.1: Develop and implement practices to understand and minimize vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Action 5.1.4: Develop inclusive practices for Sonoma Water’s climate mitigation and adaptation efforts considering the needs of under-resourced and under-represented communities.

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Community Engagement Goal 6: Engage with the community to build understanding, trust, and support for projects and programs.

Strategy 6.1: Focus public outreach and engagement to increase understanding of Sonoma Water’s needs and challenges for infrastructure investments.

Action Item 6.1.1: Assess existing outreach strategies and activities to refine and implement a plan that better tells the infrastructure, natural hazard, and climate risk story.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

05/16/2023: Approve and allocate County of Sonoma Water Security Funds for the West County Wastewater Management and Regional Solutions Feasibility Study (\$450,000), and other actions.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$850,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$850,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$850,000		
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$850,000		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Budgeted amount of \$850,000 is available from FY 2023/2024 appropriations for the Russian River County Sanitation District Operation Fund. Offsetting revenue in the amount of \$450,000 will come from Sonoma County’s Discretionary Water Security Fund. No additional appropriation is required. □

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

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N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Competitive Selection Process Memo for Feasibility Study Agreement

Attachment 2: Competitive Selection Process Memo for Stakeholder Outreach Agreement

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Order and Settlement Agreement