

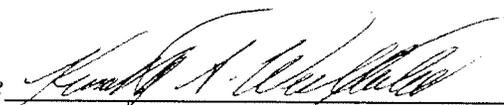


UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Westside Sanitary Sewer Extension Project.

City of Rensselaer, Indiana

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of our National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 responsibilities has independently evaluated the Final Project Summary and supporting documentation for the project. This information forms the basis for the following EA. In preparing the EA, U.S. EPA and the Indiana Finance Authority relied in part on information prepared and submitted by the City of Rensselaer and Nies Engineering. This EA is now submitted for public review.

Signature  Date 2/23/11
Kenneth A. Westlake, Supervisor
NEPA Implementation
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Form last revised: December 2007



United States Environment Protection Agency
Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Westside Sanitary Sewer Extension Project **City of Rensselaer, Indiana**

PROJECT: The City of Rensselaer is located in Jasper County in northwestern Indiana. The project area is located at the intersection of I-65 and SR 114. The project service area is principally commercial with scattered single family residential areas along the proposed route. The project area is currently served by individual septic systems. As reported by the Jasper County Health Department, the septic systems are not designed for commercial usage and will not be able to be replaced or expanded due to lack of set-aside area required to construct a replacement systems. To alleviate future problems in this area, the proposed project will extend approximately 20,499 linear feet of 8-inch and 4-inch force main, approximately 5,554 feet of gravity sewer and three lift stations from the Rensselaer wastewater treatment system to the project area.

Federal Grant: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is proposing to issue a grant to assist in the implementation of the proposed Westside Sanitary Sewer Extension project. Because Federal grant funds will be utilized to assist in meeting the project's anticipated costs, the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which require an analysis of the project's potential to result in significant environmental impacts, are applicable to this project. The provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are also applicable to this project, which require an analysis of the project's potential to have an adverse effect upon cultural resources and/or historic properties.

Analysis of Environmental Impact: The proposed improvements will not have significant direct impacts on environmental resources. Proposed improvements will result in impacts from directional drilling to facilitate one stream crossing and the crossing of the Iroquois River (River). Removal of a minimal amount of trees will occur at the River. Trees removed will be no larger than two inches diameter breast height (dbh) and will be mitigated by planting native tree species. The majority of the sewer line to be installed will be contained within areas previously disturbed by road construction.

Letters of concurrence have been received from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). These affirm that no prime farmland or wetlands will be impacted, no historic or archeological sites are expected to be disturbed, and no threatened or endangered species will be affected.

Summary: The project is expected to result in negligible long-term environmental impacts once construction and mitigation is completed. In addition, all applicable State and Local construction codes and best management practices designed to minimize harm as related to construction activities will be applied to this project and its implementation activities.

Grant Conditions / Required Mitigation:

To limit the projects impacts the following mitigation measures will be conditions of the grant agreement:

- Directional drilling pits must be contained with erosion controls such as silt fence or other appropriate devices such that drilling mud does not leave the immediate area of the pit or enter the stream.
- All bare and disturbed areas will be revegetated with a mixture of native grasses (excluding all varieties of tall fescue), legumes, and native shrub and hardwood tree species as soon as possible upon completion.
- Work will not take place in the waterway from April 1 through June 30 without prior written approval of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

- Construction staging and construction activities will avoid sensitive terrestrial and aquatic areas as much as possible.
- Trees suitable for Indiana bat roosting (greater than 3 inches dbh, living or dead, with loose hanging bark) will not be removed during the period April 1 through September 30.
- If the project involves removal of any woody vegetation from the riparian zone of the stream or the Iroquois River, tree loss will be mitigated by planting native trees suitable for Indiana bat roosting at a 1:1 ratio.
- Appropriately designed measures for controlling erosion and sediment must be implemented to prevent sediment from entering the stream or leaving the construction site. These measures must be maintained until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.
- Excavation or placement of fill will not take place in any wetland or riparian area.
- If any archaeological artifacts, features, or human remains are uncovered during construction, state law (Indiana Code 14-21-1-27 & 29) requires that the discovery must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources within two days.
- The cemetery located adjacent to the project route will be avoided by all staging, stockpiling, temporary land use and ground disturbing activities.

Review/Comment Period: The U.S. EPA is soliciting comments on the Westside Sewer Extension project for a period of **thirty days (30)**, beginning February 28, 2011 on this draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The comment period ends on March 30, 2011 and comments postmarked after this date will not be accepted. Following completion of the 30-day draft FONSI review/comment period, the U.S. EPA will evaluate any and all comments received on the project. If no comments are received that are sufficient to cause this Agency to change its position on the project and its anticipated environmental consequences, the U.S. EPA will proceed with the remaining administrative actions on the grant application.

