



# State Revolving Fund Loan Programs

## Drinking Water, Clean Water, Nonpoint Source

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### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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#### TOWN OF NEW PALESTINE WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS SRF PROJECT WW 23 04 30 02

**DATE: September 12, 2024**

**TARGET PROJECT APPROVAL DATE: October 14, 2024**

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The above entity has applied to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program for a loan to finance all or part of the Clean Water project described in the accompanying Environmental Assessment (EA). As part of facilities planning requirements, an environmental review has been completed which addresses the project's impacts on the natural and human environment. This review is summarized in the attached EA, which can also be viewed in color at <http://www.in.gov/ifa/srf/>.

#### II. PRELIMINARY FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

The SRF Wastewater Program has evaluated all pertinent environmental information regarding the proposed project and determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. Subject to responses received during the 30-day public comment period, and pursuant to Indiana Code 5-1.2-3, it is our preliminary finding that the construction and operation of the proposed facilities will result in no significant adverse environmental impact. In the absence of significant comments, the attached EA shall serve as the final environmental document.

#### III. COMMENTS

All interested parties may comment upon the EA/FNSI. Comments must be received at the address below by the target approval date above. Significant comments may prompt a reevaluation of the preliminary FNSI; if appropriate, a new FNSI will be issued for another 30-day public comment period. A final decision to proceed, or not to proceed, with the proposed project shall be effected by finalizing, or not finalizing, the FNSI as appropriate. Comments regarding this document should be sent within 30 days to:

**April Douglas**  
**Environmental Review Coordinator**  
**State Revolving Fund**  
**100 N. Senate Ave. IGCN 1275**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**  
**317-234-7294**  
**adouglas@ifa.in.gov**

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# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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## I. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Name and Address: Wastewater Improvement Projects  
Town of New Palestine  
42 E. Main St.  
New Palestine, IN 46163

SRF Project Number: **WW 23 04 30 02**

Authorized Representative: Bill Niemier, Council President

## II. PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located in Hancock County, civil township, Acton USGS Quadrangle, Township 15 North, Range 6 East and Sections 17, 19, 20, 29 and 30; and Township 15 North, Range 5 East and Section 25. See **Figure 1**.

## III. PROJECT NEED AND PURPOSE

Despite a recent (2018) WWTP Improvements Project intended to increase the WWTP's capacity, and provide necessary treatment capacity for existing customers, the facility remains undersized. Existing shortfalls in conveyance (pumping) capabilities manifest during extreme weather events. Based on the projected growth, the needs for additional wastewater treatment and conveyance capabilities are further reinforced and expanded.

## IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

New Palestine must provide adequate wastewater treatment capabilities for its customers. To this end, the existing wastewater system has been evaluated for both existing needs as well as ability to accommodate future growth projections. Both the ability to service existing needs as well as future growth projections have been identified as deficient. As a first phase in a multiphase plan, the following Phase I project involves the expansion of, and improvements to, the existing wastewater treatment plant, which includes:

- Abandonment of the existing headwork structure and demolition of the existing aeration tanks, clarifiers, oxidation ditches, return activated sludge (RAS)/waste activated sludge (WAS) pump station, and ultraviolet light disinfection/post-aeration structure;
- Construction of a new influent pump station structure consisting of two identical wet wells and a single pipe gallery, as well as the installation of four (4) submersible pumps with variable frequency drive controls;
- Installation of a new influent flow meter (outside structure);
- Construction of a new headworks structure, which will include an influent auto sampler, mechanical fine screen, manually cleaned coarse bar screen bypass channel, and vortex grit removal unit;
- Construction of a new sequential batch reactor structure consisting of two basins and a single pipe gallery, as well as the installation of retrievable diffusers, floating mixers, decanters, dissolved oxygen probes, level sensing pressure transducers, three (3) blowers, two (2) WAS pumps, and WAS flow meters;

- Construction of a new chemical building with outdoor quick-connections and the installation of a new chemical storage tank, two (2) chemical metering pumps, chemical feed tubing and combination safety shower/eyewash unit;
- Installation of a new effluent flow meter/manhole;
- Construction of a new post-treatment structure, which will include an effluent auto sampler, ultraviolet disinfection system, low-profile cascade aerator;
- Construction of a new outfall and approximately 680 feet of effluent piping;
- Conversion of the existing aerobic digesters into sludge storage tanks and replacement of the two (2) existing sludge transfer pumps;
- Conversion of an existing sludge drying bed into a new concrete sludge dewatering bag pad with trench drainage and installation of a new sludge riser and roll-off dumpster;
- Construction of a new non-potable water (NPW) structure and installation of two (2) NPW vertical turbine pumps;
- Installation of a new diesel generator;
- Construction of a new electrical building; and
- Installation of a solar field (Mandatory Bid Alternate).

## V. ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS, AFFORDABILITY AND FUNDING

### A. Selected Plan Estimated Cost Summary

#### Construction Costs

|                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>WWTP Alternative 2: SBR</b>      | <b>\$18,682,300</b> |
| <b>Total Construction</b>           | <b>\$18,682,300</b> |
| <b>Non-Construction Costs</b>       | <b>\$3,639,702</b>  |
| <b>Total Estimated Project Cost</b> | <b>\$22,322,002</b> |

- B. Total cost of this project is estimated to be approximately \$22,322,002. The Town of New Palestine will finance the project with a loan from the Clean Water SRF Loan Program for a term and annual fixed interest rate to be determined at loan closing. Monthly user rates and charges may need to be analyzed to determine if adjustments are required for loan repayment.

## VI. DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATED ALTERNATIVES

**Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects:** Four alternatives were considered for improvements at the WWTP. Alternative #1, primary filters and aeration tanks, uses the existing primary treatment process of aeration tanks and clarifiers in addition to adding new primary filters. Additionally, four new aeration tanks would be added. Alternative #2 also proposes using the existing aeration tanks and clarifiers. This alternative would add seven new aeration tanks. Alternative #3 includes a sequencing batch reactor based system. Alternative #4 is a no action alternative. Alternatives #1 and #2 were dismissed from further consideration due to excess nutrients and cost. The no action alternative was dismissed as it would not meet requirements for treatment.

**Alternative #3, sequencing batch reactor, is the selected alternative** as it will increase the plant's average design flow to the 5-year projected flows with an average daily flow of 1.5 MGD, and a peak hourly flow of 6.0 MGD. Implementing this alternative will also treat the wastewater according to more stringent effluent limitations including phosphorus and total nitrogen limitations.

## VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES

### A. Direct Impacts of Construction and Operation

**Disturbed/Undisturbed Land:** All areas have been previously disturbed by previous construction activity.

**Structural Resources:** Construction and operation of the project will not alter, demolish or remove historic properties. If any visual or audible impacts to historic properties occur, they will be temporary and will not alter the characteristics that qualify such properties for inclusion in or eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The SRF's finding pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is: "*no historic properties affected.*"

**Wetlands (Figure 2):** Mitigation measures to lessen and compensate for wetland impacts cited in comment letters about the project from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented.

**Surface Waters:** The project will not adversely affect outstanding state resource waters listed in 327 IAC 2-1.3-3(d), exceptional use streams listed in 327 IAC 2-1-11(b), Natural, Scenic and Recreational Rivers and Streams listed in 312 IAC 7-(2), or Salmonid Streams listed in (327 IAC 2-1.5-5(a)(3) or streams on the Outstanding River List for Indiana.

**Floodplain (Figure 3):** Portions of the both the existing WWTP and the proposed improvements to the WWTP are located within the floodplain. New lift stations #6 and #7 are also located within the floodplain. Design of the project will comply with FFRMS (Federal Flood Risk Management Standards) requirements, as necessary.

**Groundwater:** The project will not impact a drinking water supply or sole source aquifer.

**Plants and Animals:** The proposed project items will be implemented to minimize impact to non-endangered species and their habitat. Mitigation measures cited in comment letters from the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be implemented.

**Prime Farmland:** The project will not convert prime farmland.

**Air Quality:** Construction activities may generate some noise, fumes and dust, but should not significantly affect air quality.

**Open Space and Recreational Opportunities:** The project will neither create nor destroy open space or recreational opportunities.

**Lake Michigan Coastal Program:** The project will not affect the Lake Michigan Coastal Zone.

**National Natural Landmarks:** Construction and operation of the proposed project will not affect National Natural Landmarks.

### B. Indirect Impacts

The town's Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) states: *The Town of New Palestine, through the authority of its council, planning commission or other means, will ensure that future development, as well as future wastewater infrastructure projects connecting to SRF-funded facilities will not adversely affect wetlands, wooded areas, steep slopes, archaeological /historical/ structural resources or other sensitive environmental projects. The Town will require*

*new development and infrastructure to be constructed within the guidelines of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IDNR, IDEM, and other environmental review authorities.*

### **C. Comments from Environmental Review Authorities**

In correspondence dated August 15, 2023, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology stated:

*Pursuant to Indiana Code 5-1.2-10, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. § 306108), and 36 C.F.R. Part 800, the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer (“Indiana SHPO”) is conducting an analysis of the materials dated and received by the Indiana SHPO on July 21, 2023 for the above indicated project in New Palestine, Hancock County, Indiana.*

*Based on our analysis, it has been determined that no historic properties will be altered, demolished, or removed by the proposed project.*

*If any prehistoric or historic archaeological artifacts or human remains are uncovered during construction, demolition, or earthmoving activities, state law (Indiana Code 14-21-1-27 and 29) requires that the discovery must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources within two (2) business days. In that event, please call (317) 232-1646. Be advised that adherence to Indiana Code 14-21-1-27 and 29 does not obviate the need to adhere to applicable federal statutes and regulations, including but not limited to 36 C.F.R. 800.*

In correspondence dated February 22, 2024, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service stated:

The USFWS concluded a “No effect” for the Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). No critical habit was noted in the project area for the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), proposed endangered Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), or the snuffbox mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*). Additionally, USFWS concluded a finding of “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” for the Indiana bat and the snuffbox mussel. USFWS did not provide any conservation measures.

In correspondence dated July 19, 2024, the Department of Natural Resources Environmental Unit stated:

*The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.*

*If our agency has regulatory jurisdiction over the project, the recommendations contained in this letter may become requirements of any permit issued. If we do not have permitting authority, all recommendations are voluntary.*

*Regulatory Assessment:*

*This proposal will require the formal approval for construction in a floodway under the Flood Control Act, IC 14-28-1. Please submit a copy of this letter with the permit application.*

*Natural Heritage Database:*

*The Natural Heritage Program's data have been checked. The State endangered Clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) and Snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), and the State special concern Kidneyshell (*Ptychobranchus fasciolaris*), Little Spectaclecase (*Villosa lienosa*), Purple Lilliput (*Toxolasma lividum*), Slippershell Mussel (*Alasmidonta viridis*), and Wavyrayed*

*Lampmussel (Lampsilis fasciola) have been documented within .5 mile of the project area. The Division of Fish and Wildlife does not anticipate any significant impacts to these species due to this project.*

*Fish and Wildlife Comments:*

*Avoid and minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and botanical resources to the greatest extent possible, and compensate for impacts. The following are recommendations that address potential impacts identified in the proposed project area:*

- 1. Revegetate all bare and disturbed areas that are not currently mowed and maintained with a mixture of grasses (excluding all varieties of tall fescue) and legumes as soon as possible upon completion; turf-type grasses (including low-endophyte, friendly endophyte, and endophyte free tall fescue but excluding all other varieties of tall fescue) may be used in currently mowed areas only.*
- 2. Minimize and contain within the project limits all tree and brush clearing.*
- 3. Appropriately designed measures for controlling erosion and sediment must be implemented to prevent sediment from entering the waterbody or leaving the construction site; maintain these measures until construction is complete and all disturbed areas are stabilized.*
- 4. If erosion control blankets are used, they shall be heavy-duty, biodegradable, and net free or use loosewoven/Leno-woven netting to minimize the entrapment and snaring of small-bodied wildlife such as snakes and turtles (follow manufacturer's recommendations for selection and installation); seed and apply mulch on all other disturbed areas.*

In correspondence dated July 23, 2024, the Natural Resources Conservation Service stated:

*The proposed wastewater utility improvements project in the Town of New Palestine, in Hancock County, Indiana as referred to in your letter received July 19, 2024, will cause a conversion of prime farmland.*

## **VIII. MITIGATION MEASURES**

New Palestine's PER states:

*The majority of the environmental impacts will occur during construction of the proposed improvements. These issues will be temporary in nature, since no significant impacts to environmental, historical, or other regulated resources are involved. These temporary construction impacts include the potential for noise, dust, and construction site erosion. Provisions will be included in the construction specifications to limit such problems and to provide erosion control in accordance with current state standards. The work is expected to be completed during normal working hours, restricting any work-related nuisances to those hours. All construction equipment will be required to have mufflers to reduce noise pollution.*

*Additionally, reasonable and proper construction techniques and clean up practices will be required by the contractor to reduce dust emissions. Proper surface wetting practices will be required.*

## **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A properly noticed public hearing was held on July 20, 2022 at 7 pm at the Town Hall, located at 42 E. Main St, New Palestine, IN 46163. There were no questions on this project during the hearing. No written comments were received in the 5-day period following the hearing for this project.







