

WESTERN WAKE PARTNERS

Report to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC11-02)

Date: August 26, 2010
To: Policy Advisory Committee
From: Technical Advisory Committee
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Subject: Draft Community Relations Plan

Discussion

During development of the Environmental Impact Statement by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Partners developed a draft Community Relations Plan (plan). The plan is intended to be dynamic and will be revised as we continue to receive input from project neighbors and the Partners about how they wish to receive information. This plan was made available at the August 12 neighborhood meeting held as part of the Town of Apex site plan approval process.

Requested Action: This report is for information only. No action is requested.

**Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities
Community Outreach Plan
(August 12, 2010 version)**

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I. WWRF Project Overview

The Towns of Apex, Cary, Holly Springs and Morrisville (the Partners) and Wake County have been working in partnership for years to ensure adequate water and wastewater treatment capacity for the region's future. As a result of planning efforts, the Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities will be located in the western Wake County area – see map on page 3. The Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) will be located in the New Hill area of Apex. This decision is a result of a comprehensive process guided by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and a subsequent environmental review process conducted by the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE).

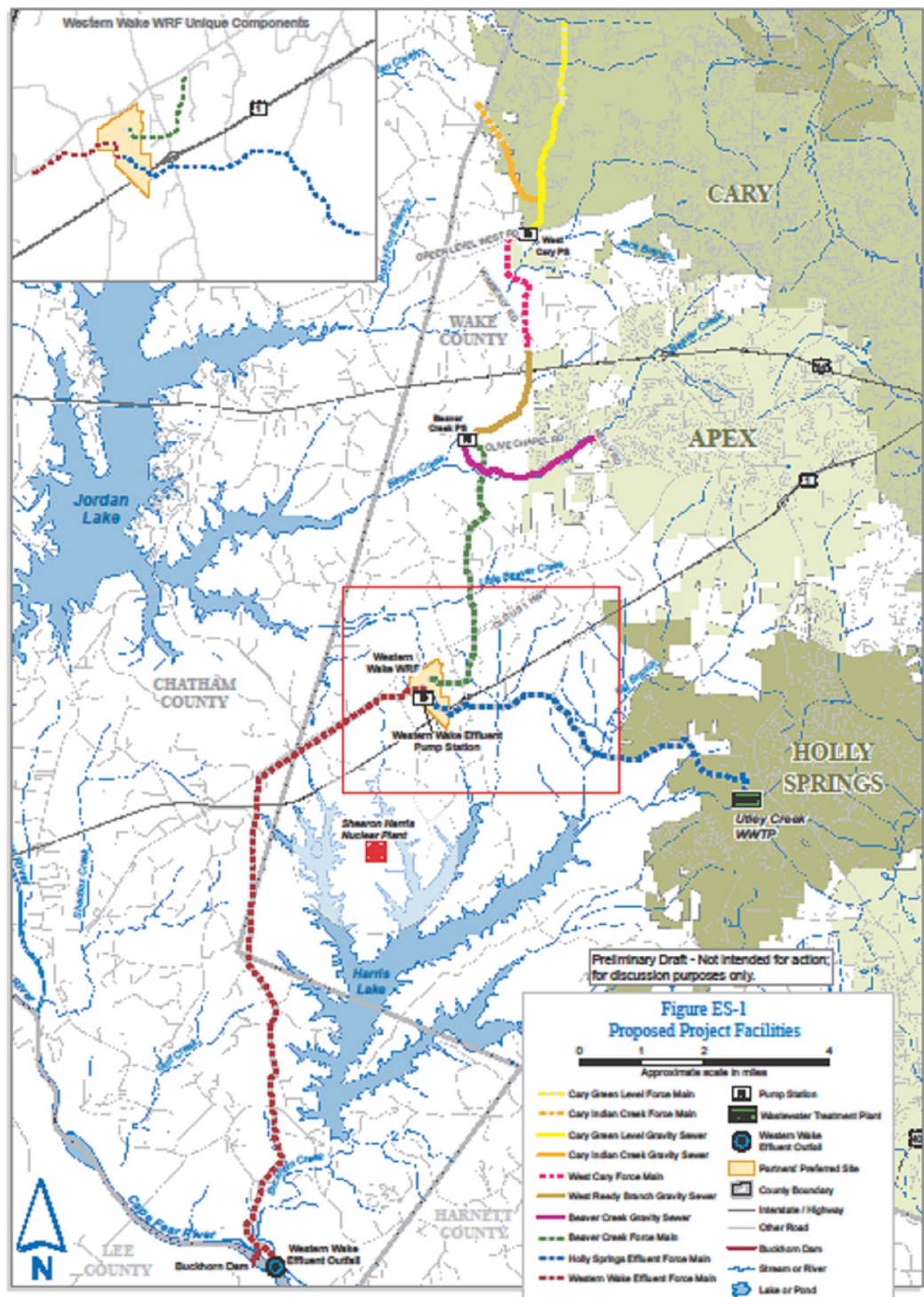
Purpose of Community Outreach Plan

Ongoing communication with the neighboring communities near the WRF, pump stations and pipeline alignments is a high priority of the Partners as the facilities are constructed and operated. Particular attention will be given to the communities immediately adjacent to the WRF, pump stations and pipeline alignments. The purpose of this document is to identify community outreach that will be conducted by the Partners to insure affected residents and property owners are given opportunities to learn about the project and provide input into the various activities associated with construction and operation of the facilities. Objectives of this plan are:

- Confirm the Partners commitment to ongoing communications with neighboring communities, elected officials (local, state and federal) and regulatory agencies.
- Describe the methods of communication that will be used to insure information is shared in a timely and factual manner.
- Describe proposed community outreach at key milestones including pre- and post-construction.
- Identify community benefits that will be offered to area land owners, residents and businesses.

Partners Commitment

The Partners' commitment to community outreach insures that focused attention is given to neighboring communities as facilities are constructed and operated. Ongoing, two-way communication will be paramount. Significant resources will be expended in the New Hill community that will minimize impacts during construction and improve the overall quality of life for its residents. This plan will be regularly evaluated by the Partners and community and may be adjusted to be more effective. Ultimately, ongoing outreach will demonstrate that the Partners understand and value the importance of communication with neighboring communities.



EPA Collaborative Process

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the Collaborative Process in 2004 to assist communities in addressing environmental justice concerns through partnership building. The Partners have embraced elements of the Collaborative Process that will be included in community outreach activities such as:

- Involving residents early in identifying and addressing concerns
- Establishing a common set of ideas and plans to address concerns
- Identifying ways to work with community needs
- Identifying, nurturing and promoting win/win scenarios and mutual gains
- Providing training, skills development and business opportunities

Utilizing these elements will foster the conditions that enable both residents and the Partners to realize stronger, more lasting solutions.

Standard Procedures for Communication

Proven communication methods that meet the expectations of neighboring communities and the Partners will be utilized. Based on prior experience, the demographics of the residents immediately adjacent to the WRF facility suggest traditional methods such as door-to-door outreach and direct mailings are effective. The Partners will maintain a database including mailing addresses and telephone numbers as well as a subscriber's e-mail list. The Partners are fully committed to the confidentiality of these lists and are not subject to the State Session Law 2010-83 requiring e-mail subscriber lists be made available to the public. For the WRF, communication will extend to those properties within one half mile from the facility property boundary. For pipeline and pump station projects, outreach will occur with adjacent properties and those affected by traffic interruptions. A project web site will also be used as a primary tool for information sharing and project updates. The various methods will be flexible enough to respond to requests for information and ongoing involvement. For each outreach activity conducted, a framework plan will be prepared that identifies the specific process and communication methods to be used to generate awareness. Communication for the project will be managed by the Town of Cary and for consistency all framework formats will incorporate the Town of Cary's Communication Plan template.

Primary Activities

Door-to-Door Outreach: The primary method to inform and engage neighboring communities, particularly during construction, will be face-to-face communications. This method will build relationships and trust, and guarantee important information is shared and feedback documented. The Partners successfully used door-to-door outreach during the previous DENR and USACE environmental studies.

Direct Mail: Direct mail will be used to communicate important information in writing to elected officials, affected residents, businesses and other interested parties. Direct mail insures pertinent information is received by the intended recipient and provides this information in a written format for clarity. For very important communication, the certified mail process will be used to insure receipt.

Written Materials: Newsletters and visual presentations are essential outreach materials that will provide straightforward information about the project. Newsletters will contain up-to-date project information allowing the reader to follow the steps of the construction process and remain current about activities associated with the facilities both while under construction and into operations. Renderings, simplified diagrams and other visual tools will also be used in newsletters and neighborhood meetings to assist in understanding components of the facilities. Newsletters will be published to coincide with key milestones. Brochures, door hangars and fact sheets may also be prepared as necessary to support outreach and information needs.

Neighborhood Meetings: The Partners will conduct neighborhood meetings beginning early in the permitting phase and continue through construction as appropriate. All meetings will be conducted in an open house format so that attendees can have face-to-face dialogue with the Partners and have all questions and concerns addressed. The purpose of each meeting will be established and will provide

feedback opportunities where appropriate. Displays and handouts will also be used to convey information. Meetings will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other community activities and advertised with a minimum of two weeks advance notice. All meetings will be open to the affected neighborhoods surrounding each project.

Web Site: The Western Wake web site will continue to serve as a primary communication tool for the project. It will be regularly updated and contain information about:

- general project information;
- outreach activities;
- visuals of the technologies being used at the WRF;
- procurement opportunities;
- construction updates;
- archives from previous studies; and
- a means to communicate with the Partners.

Signage: Another important method of communication that will be utilized for the project is signage. Beginning with the permitting phase and continuing through construction, appropriate signage will be posted for various activities including meeting and event notification, directional, warning and other purposes as needed.

Media Coverage/Advertisements: Press releases, public service announcements, and advertisements will be used to announce major milestones, meetings and events associated with the project. All media will be developed and managed by the Town of Cary's Public Information Office.

Other Public Outreach Efforts: Throughout the course of construction, members of the project team will be available to provide updates to elected officials, conduct speakers bureau activities, set up kiosks, and visit various interested groups such as area churches.

II. Permitting Phase

An important phase of the project involves an extensive permitting process for several agency permits required prior to construction of the facilities. Some of the permits have defined public outreach requirements specified by the respective agency. Consequently, several outreach processes will occur during the permitting phase. Individual framework plans will be prepared outlining the specific outreach activities including links to the permitting agency, public hearing dates and locations and methods to provide feedback. Those permits not requiring public outreach will be posted to the web site with links to the permitting agency.

Advertising will be conducted appropriately for those permits requiring public outreach. The Town of Cary will provide all media placements. Other communication methods will include direct mail, web site and public hearing requirements. Additionally, permit applications and approvals will be posted to the web site.

WRF Site Plan Approval Process

The Town of Apex is responsible for approving site plans for the WRF A neighborhood meeting is required by the Town of Apex as part of the Site Plan approval process for all site development projects. The purpose of the meeting is to inform residents and property owners adjacent to the WRF property of the project. This includes presenting the proposed construction schedule and expected impacts, and the proposed operations schedule after construction is completed. Meeting attendees will also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the Site Plan during the meeting. It will be held immediately following the Record of Decision and a follow up meeting will be held to discuss how neighborhood feedback will be used for the final site plan. A framework plan will be prepared detailing the date and location, communication methods and meeting format. In addition, the Town of Apex will hold a public hearing prior to making an approval decision.

NPDES Permit Process

A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is required for the facility in order to discharge treated water to the Cape Fear River. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality (NCDENR DWQ) is responsible for issuing NPDES permits in North Carolina. As part of the NPDES permitting process, NCDENR DWQ will be advertising in local newspapers that a draft permit is available for public review starting a 30 day public review period. In addition, NCDENR DWQ will conduct a public hearing on the draft permit before issuing the final permit.

III. Bidding Phase

Several construction contracts will be required to complete the WRF and related facilities. The Town of Cary will administer the majority of the contracts however; the Towns of Apex and Holly Springs will also have procurement responsibility for some of the contracts. Competitive bidding practices will be utilized as required by North Carolina General Statutes and Town of Cary Policies and Procedures to ensure that the best value in goods and services is obtained through open competition. All contract opportunities are advertised on the Town of Cary's web site and in local newspapers. To extend opportunities, the advertisements will also be posted to the project web site and to the other Partners' web sites. Based on the type of contract, outreach methods such as direct mail, door-to-door and written materials will be used to insure affected communities are adequately notified.

Contractor and Vendor Information

Interested contractors and vendors may learn of bidding opportunities through the Town of Cary's web site. Additionally, interested bidders may also subscribe for e-mail notifications about bid opportunities through the Town's web site.

SDBE Outreach Commitment and Process

The Partners are committed to the participation of minority and disadvantaged businesses in the contracts awarded for the project. The project will receive State Revolving Fund support, which sets a 10% goal for participation of minority and disadvantaged businesses.

To raise awareness of opportunities for participation of minority and disadvantaged businesses in the project, the Partners will develop and implement a SDBE Participation Plan that defines activities for outreach to SDBE, consistent with current Partner policies. Outreach may include and is not limited to such activities as: a vendor fair introducing the projects and procurement process to provide opportunities for SDBE firms to learn about the project's business opportunities, placing advertising with SDBE trade associations, technical assistance agencies and minority economic development groups.

Contractor Training

Prior to construction, training for contractors and sub-contractors will be conducted to increase awareness of neighboring communities. A written guide will be provided to all contractors containing instructions about the importance of being a good neighbor during construction including preferred traffic routes, days and times of construction activity and other practices established to minimize impacts to the affected communities.

IV. Construction Phase

Community outreach will increase during the construction of the Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities with several activities designed to inform, protect and educate neighboring communities. As previously indicated, a framework plan will be prepared for each construction project however the primary goal for outreach during construction is to minimize impacts on residents and provide opportunities for two-way communication. Construction project managers will be introduced to neighboring residents and communications procedures established to insure issues and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. The Partners will also monitor the progress of each construction process and work with contractors to insure impacts are minimized. A telephone hotline will be established that will provide neighboring residents the opportunity to address immediate issues during construction.

Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Construction Activities

Door-to-door visits and neighborhood discussions about the construction process will occur at key milestones. Additionally, signage will be prominently posted at all times during construction. Security around the construction sites will also be provided.

Other activities involving WRF neighboring communities will also be held during the construction phase including:

- a groundbreaking ceremony;
- tours of the WRF at key construction milestones;
- educational outreach to local schools and;
- public displays.

Prior to operation, the WRF will undergo performance testing and demonstration of completed strategies to address community issues such as odor, noise, light, visual aesthetics, buffer maintenance and other concerns.

Pipelines Construction Activities

In addition to the WRF, the wastewater management facilities include several other facilities that will be constructed to convey wastewater to the WRF and treated water to the Cape Fear River. These Facilities include:

- Cary Green Level Force Main and Gravity Sewer
- Cary Indian Creek Force Main and Gravity Sewer
- West Cary Pump Station Upgrade
- West Cary Force Main
- West Reedy Branch Gravity Sewer
- Apex Beaver Creek Gravity Sewer
- Beaver Creek Pump Station
- Beaver Creek Force Main
- Western Wake Effluent Force Main and Outfall
- Holly Springs Effluent Force Main

Outreach will be conducted with neighbors immediately adjacent to pipeline construction projects and with those who may be affected by traffic interruptions going to and from residential areas and/or businesses. Neighborhood meetings, door-to-door outreach, door hangars and direct mail will be used to communicate construction information. The construction hotline will also be available to neighbors adjacent to the pipeline projects to ask questions and report concerns.

V. Water and Sewer Policy Implementation

The Western Wake Partners Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) approved the Site 14 Water and Sewer Extension Policy in July 2009 that will make available water and sewer service to properties located within census block 534.03-1053. The Partners are committing significant resources to this process that will improve the quality of life for residents located in the eligible properties. To successfully implement the Water and

Sewer Policy within the designated service area, a series of steps will be undertaken to communicate with eligible property owners. Coordination with eligible property owners will begin following the site plan approval by the Town of Apex. Potential participating property owners would have an opportunity to learn about the water and sewer extension policy at public meetings relating to the project. A Water and Sewer Implementation plan will be developed by the Partners and shared with eligible property owners. The implement plan will include outreach activities to make sure eligible property owners are informed and can get any questions answered through out the implementation process.

VI. Post-Construction/Ongoing Operations Phase

The Partners are committed to operating a safe, efficient and neighborly facility and will continue a robust community outreach process after the WRF is fully operational. A communications plan for post-construction and on-going operations activities will be prepared and include long-term commitments to work closely with neighboring communities. Outreach activities may include and not be limited to the following:

Area Resident Job Opportunities/Training

The Partners will identify opportunities and provide training for area residents to have job access for facility operations and maintenance. Operation of the WRF will require between 25 and 35 people. Employment opportunities will be managed by the Town of Cary and jobs will be posted to the Town's web site. Job interest cards may also be completed in advance of WRF job postings for candidates to indicate qualifications and overall interest. Job postings may also be placed in the New Hill community to insure neighbors are aware of opportunities.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be scheduled to invite neighbors and other officials to view the completed facilities and learn more about how they operate.

Non-normal Events Communications

During period when events result in non-normal operations, the partners will provide neighbors with information about the event, changes that they may see to visual aesthetics, noise, odor, light, and traffic, and the timeframe estimated for normal operations to be restored. The partners will define communication methods for neighbors to contact the partners if they notice non-normal conditions.

In the event a wastewater spill occurs, the Partners will respond in accordance with established standard procedures. Spill notifications will be provided in accordance with North Carolina Law.

Emergency Communications

The WRF and associated facilities will safely operate 24 hours a day. In the unlikely event that an emergency occurs that presents immediate danger to life, health or property, the Partners will contact neighbors using "reverse 911" telephone contact, Regional Media to interrupt local programming, and local law enforcement and fire for door-to-door communication.