

DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT - UPDATE

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME:	2024 Phase II Water Supply Improvements
APPLICANT:	City of Syracuse
COUNTY:	Otoe County
POPULATION:	1,941 (2020 Census)
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER:	D311658
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:	\$11,254,000
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT:	\$2,424,650
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT:	\$8,829,350

The City of Syracuse signed a loan with the NDEE on May 26th, 2021, which was amended on January 17th, 2023. This loan is administered through the DWSRF program to fund several drinking water distribution projects. A financial analysis of the annual debt service and utility rates for the existing loan was completed and included in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) signed August 29th, 2019.

The original project scope included the drilling of two new wells South of Syracuse, a new 16-inch transmission main along the west side of the Nebraska Highway 50 permanent easement, a new chemical feed building south of 1st Street and Nebraska Highway 50, and replacement of existing water distribution mains in Syracuse along Park Street from 1st Street to 5th Street. This work was initially covered under a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) signed on August 29th, 2019. The work covered under the original FNSI is substantially complete at this time.

The City of Syracuse has proposed utilizing the remaining balance of their existing DWSRF Loan (D311658) maintaining the 40-year loan term at an interest rate of 0.0% and an administrative fee of 0.0% on the principal balance for additional work as described below.

The first component of the project involves replacing aging and undersized water mains along Mohawk Street from 7th Street to 15th Avenue with a 6-inch PVC water main. The proposed 6 inch main will primarily run along the East side of Mohawk Street in the same manner as the existing water main. The City's Engineer is proposing directional boring as the construction method for most of the proposed 6-inch water

main along Mohawk Street. There will be a water crossing of an unnamed creek (tributary to Little Nemaha River) between 7th & 8th Street. The proposed construction method here is directional boring and the design plans indicate they will achieve 10 feet of vertical separation between the bottom of the channel to the top of the directionally bored 6 inch main. There would not be disturbance of the waterway with the proposed design. Based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM Panel 0215C and 0220C), a small portion of the construction will be within the 100-year floodplain, at this channel crossing. The project will comply with local floodplain regulations including obtaining necessary permits from the local floodplain coordinator.

The second component of the project involves replacing aging and undersized water mains along Park Street (Nebraska Hwy 50) from 11th Street to Education Drive. The proposed 10-inch PVC water main will run along the West side of Park Street in the same manner as the existing water main. The 10-inch main will be directionally bored in several locations, including under a stormwater conveyance between 12th Street and Education Drive. The remainder of the 10-inch main will be installed with traditional trench excavation and backfill.

The third component of the project involves a new 10-inch PVC transmission main North of Syracuse across Nebraska Highway 2. The 10-inch PVC transmission main will run North across Nebraska Highway 2, and East to Nebraska Highway 50 adjacent to the Syracuse Area Health hospital, tying into existing water mains on both ends. The 10-inch main will be directionally bored in several locations and installed with traditional trench excavation and backfill in the remaining areas. A 185 linear foot section of the main will be installed with restrained joint PVC pipe and 16-inch steel casing via jack and bore for crossing Nebraska Highway 2. The 10-INCH transmission main North of town will provide a redundant loop to the portion of town north of Nebraska State Highway 2, including the Syracuse Area Health hospital.

The proposed project was reviewed by federal and state agencies for environmental impacts. The majority of responses indicated that the proposed Phase II projects would have no effect, was cleared of any significant concerns or issues, or was subject to typical permitting requirements (i.e., Construction Stormwater, etc.). Correspondence from the US Army Corps of Engineers indicated that the project may require coverage under a nationwide permit. The project Engineer confirmed that the work will be covered under a Nationwide Permit 58. A portion of the project will occur in the floodplain, but there is no anticipated impact as this area of the project will be completed with horizontal directional drilling. Correspondence with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission indicated four state-listed threatened and endangered species that may occur within the project area: Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), and Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*). NGPC indicated that the project location did not appear to be suitable habitat for the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. To avoid adverse impacts to both the Northern Long-Eared Bat and Tri-colored Bat, the Engineer indicated that any necessary tree or snag clearing, which may take place as part of the project, would be timed to avoid potential impacts to the species by avoiding clearing activities from April 1 – October 31. To avoid adverse impacts to the Monarch Butterfly, the Engineer indicated that where possible, native wildflower species would be included in the seed mix used to re-seed disturbed areas after construction activities had concluded. A CERT (Conservation and Environmental Review Tool) report was generated for the proposed work (NE-CERT-011765). According to NGPC, if the project proponents agree to implement the conservation conditions outlined in the report, the report may serve as documentation of consultation with NGPC. A copy of the signed report is available upon request.

A public hearing was held on August 14, 2019, by the City Council on the project noted in the Well Field Plan and Environmental Report, with 32 days advanced posted notice. There were no comments received from City residents in attendance and no other input was received from the public. No additional public hearing was held for the Phase II work covered in this FNSI update.

The City has a permit to operate a public water system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179. The proposed project is determined by NDEE to help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey in May of 2021, wherein two (2) deficiencies were found and corrected by September of 2021. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) program policy. Syracuse then completed a Community Public Water System Capacity Survey in March of 2023, where all applicable questions were answered in the affirmative.

The proposed project is determined by the NDEE to help the City maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (e.g., NDEE, etc.). Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this finding of no significant impact determination are encouraged to submit such comments to the NDEE State Revolving Fund Program at ndee.srf@nebraska.gov, or at 402-471-4200.

Signed this 13 day of May, 2024.

Sincerely,



Sarah Starostka
Planning and Aid Division Administrator

Attachments: Distribution List
 Maps

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DISTRIBUTION LIST
CITY OF SYRACUSE

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY
Amanda Woita, Office of Public Affairs
P.O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Elijah Kaufman
P.O. Box 94676
Lincoln, NE 68509-4676

NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION
Melissa Marinovich
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Jill Dolberg
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68508-2554

STATE OFFICE OF POLICY RESEARCH
Cicely Wardyn
Rm 1319, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94601
Lincoln, NE 68509-4601

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Tom Stephensen
245 Fallbrook Blvd, Ste. 002
Lincoln, NE 68509

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
JaNae Johnson
9325 South Alda Road
Wood River, NE 68883

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Christine Gabriel
Environmental Coordinator
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Ryan Brandt, P.E.
Room 308, Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Chris Simmons and Carter Tharp
11201 Renner Blvd
Mail Code: WWPDWIMB
Lenexa, KS 66219

STATE CONSERVATIONIST
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Robert Lawson
Federal Building, Room 152
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508-3866

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Jeremy Grauf
State Program Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers
Nebraska State Office, Suite 1
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

APPLICANT:
Kelly Farmer, City Clerk
City of Syracuse
495 Midland Street, PO Box F
Syracuse, NE 68446-0137

CONSULTING ENGINEER:
Timothy J. Adams, P.E.
JEO Consulting Group, Inc.
2000 Q Street, Ste 500
Lincoln, NE 68503-3609

LOCAL NEWSPAPER:
(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)
Syracuse Journal Democrat
109 S. 9th Street
Nebraska City, NE 68410

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT:
Nemaha Natural Resources District
62161 Highway 136
Tecumseh, NE 68450-8043

Map

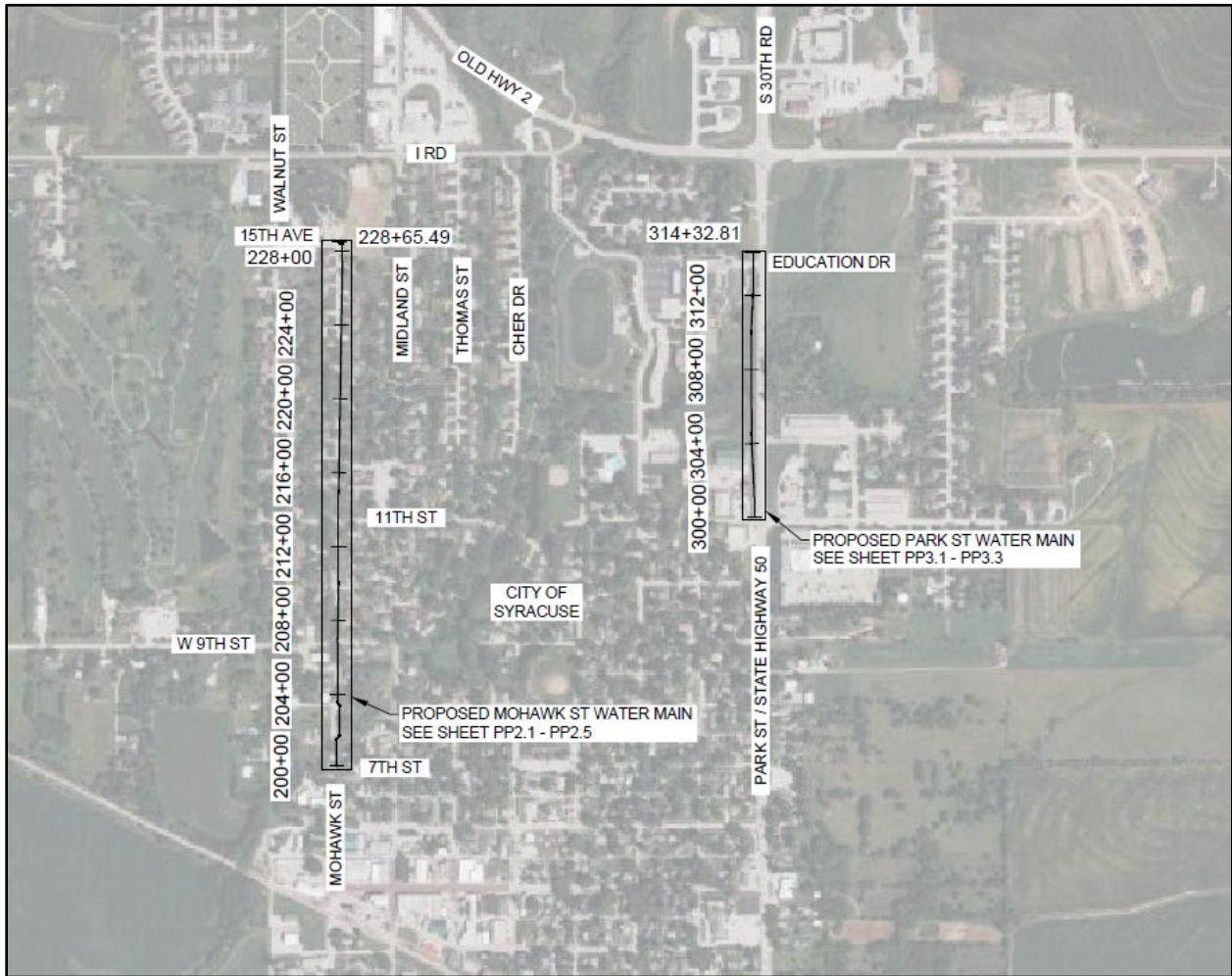


Figure 1. Approximate Locations of City of Syracuse's Distribution Improvements Projects – In-town replacements.

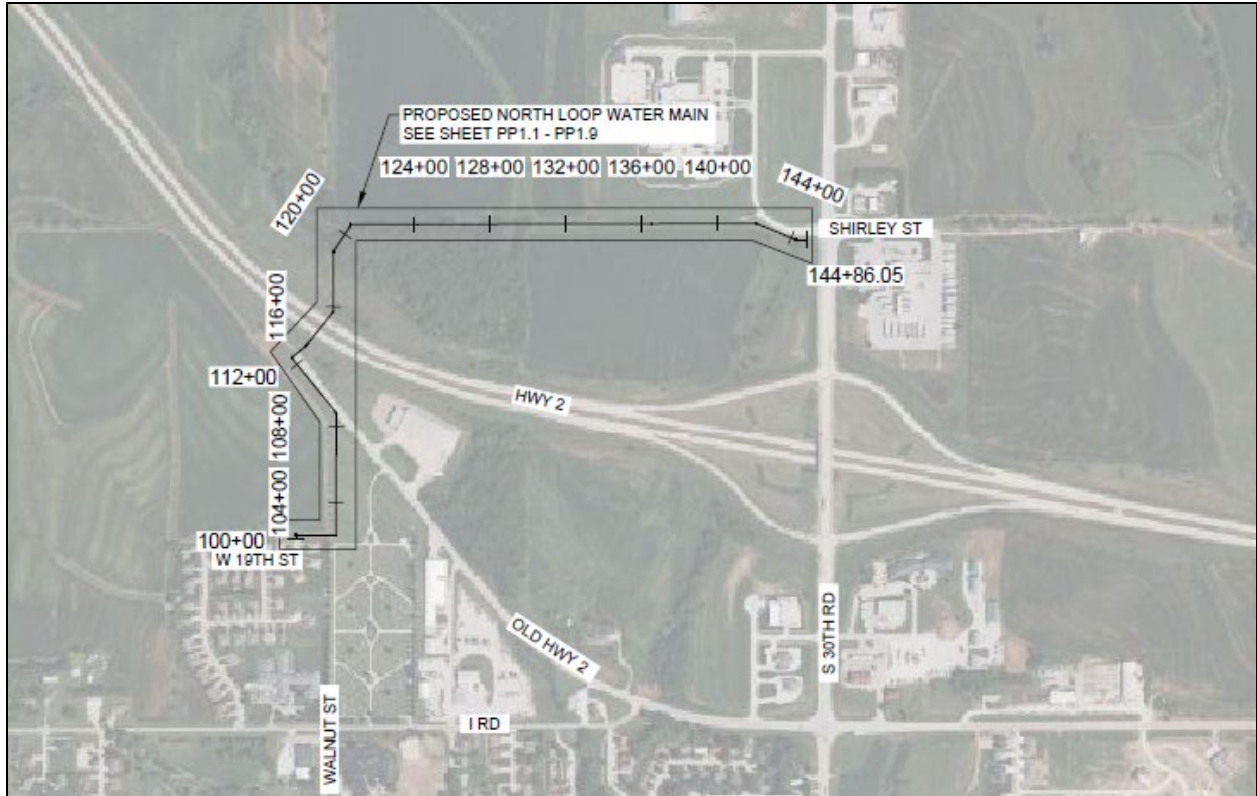


Figure 2. Approximate Locations of City of Syracuse’s Distribution Improvements Project – 10-INCH Transmission Main

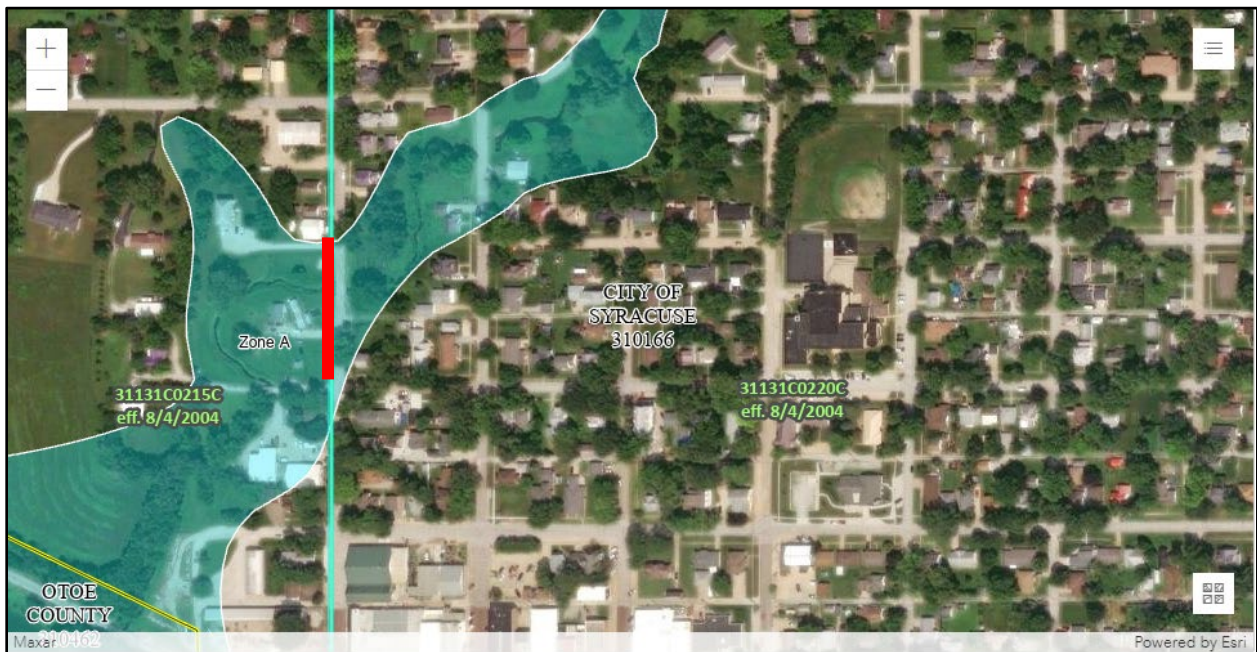


Figure 3. Approximate location of 100-year floodplain. Red line indicates where work on Mohawk Street intersects.

Community Public Water System Capacity Survey

System Name: City of Syracuse PWS ID: NE 3113104
 System Mailing Address: P.O. Box F Syracuse NE 68446
 System Phone Number: 402-269-5078 System Email Address: publicworks@syracuse.net
 Board Chair/Owner: Deb Dettmer Designated Operator: Jeff Vogt
 Clerk/Treasurer: Kelly Farmer Population: 1932 Service Connections: 1006

Instructions: This survey is a self-assessment, which is a valuable tool to understand areas of strength and areas for improvement. This survey provides insight into elements that bolster a water system's ability to be sustainable, maintain compliance with drinking water regulations, and provide quality drinking water on a continuous basis. Complete this survey by providing 'Y' (yes), 'N' (no), or 'N/A' (not applicable) in the second column to indicate answers to each question. If a question isn't applicable, notate the question number at the bottom of the form in the Notes section with an explanation why the specified goal doesn't apply. In the signature area, please include the signature of a governing body member/owner and the designated operator with date completed. Email (preferred), mail, or fax the completed survey using the information at the top of the form.

Water Supply Management		
1	Y	Are all service connections metered?
2	Y	Does the community have an active approved Wellhead Protection or Drinking Water Protection Management Plan?
3	N	Has a water loss accounting program been established and maintained?
4	N	Do you have a plan for an alternate water source, if needed? (i.e. emergency connection, regionalization, purchasing, etc.)
Personnel Management		
5	Y	Does the designated operator hold the required operator license for the system?
6	Y	Do you have written personnel policies & procedures?
7	Y	Do all personnel receive the required, on-going training for their position?
Policies and Procedures		
8	Y	Does the system have an active cross-connection control and backflow prevention program?
9	Y	Do you have written policies for customer rights and responsibilities?
10	Y	Do you have an enforceable drought policy?
11	Y	Do you have procedures for mitigation and response to online/digital security breach or hazards?
Operation and Maintenance		
12 -	Y	Does the system have a current operation and maintenance manual?
13	Y	Do you have a system for scheduling routine preventive maintenance?
14	Y	Are outside services and support available to the system, if needed?
15	Y	Are all system records easily accessible and maintained per regulatory requirements?
Financial		
16	Y	Do you have an annually reviewed and approved water budget?
17	Y	Are water rates reviewed annually and adjusted, if needed?
18	Y	Has the system developed both a short and long-term capital improvement plan?
19	Y	Do established rates and fees cover the entire cost of operating the water system, including debt and improvements?

Governing Body/Owner Accountability		
20	Y	Do members of the governing body/owner tour the water facilities and understand PWS regulations?
21	N	Have members of the governing body/owner received board training?
22	Y	Does the governing body/owner require and review monthly system reports which include capacity, usage, complaints, regulatory compliance, test results, concerns, and system status?
23	Y	Have you planned, or considered planning, for governing body/owner succession to ensure management of system isn't interrupted?
24	Y	Does the governing body hold regularly scheduled meetings that are open to the public?
25	Y	Are public records maintained and made available to the public?
Asset Management		
26	Y	Does the system have a documented full inventory of assets, including computer & automated systems, with condition, location, and age for each asset listed?
27	Y	Does the system understand its required sustained level of service?
28	Y	Has the system identified all assets that are critical to its required sustained performance?
29	Y	Does the system have a capital improvement plan and operation and maintenance strategies to maintain a minimum life-cycle cost of the water utility?
30	Y	Does the system have a long-term financial strategy?
Purchased Water		
31	N	Do you have a contract to purchase water as your main supply?
32	N	Are policies in place to address loss of supply of purchased water?

Deb Dittmer 3-15-23

Governing Body Member/Owner Signature and Date:

Jeff W. [Signature]

3.15.23

Designated Operator Signature and Date

Notes: