

Committee Report

Environment Committee



Committee Meeting Date: June 28, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: July 13, 2022

Business Item: 2022-185

Saint Paul Inflow and Infiltration Demonstration Project Grant Amendment

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorized staff to negotiate an amendment to the original St. Paul Inflow and infiltration Demonstration Grant agreement (18M123) and authorize the Regional Administrator to approve and execute the amended agreement.

Summary of Environment Committee Discussion/Questions

Committee Member Sterner inquired as to whether the property owner shares in the cost of the repair. Staff responded by stating that the repairs to the private service line will be covered 100% by grant funds. The purpose is to incentive repair of all identified I/I susceptible services by eliminating out of pocket expenses for the homeowner.

Committee Member Fredson asked whether the grant availability and repairs is still being restricted to within the original study area. Staff responded in the affirmative. The amendment to the agreement is for extending the project completion date and increasing the total grant amount. The project scope remains the same as the original scope in which the grant was awarded.

Chair Wulff noted the issues related to aging services and their susceptibility to I/I might be similar to that of West St. Paul is facing and asked if this was an accurate assessment. Staff responded that the housing stock age in the project area is likely older, and given the study area is located below the bluff and next to the river would make it more susceptible to I/I during high river stage.

Motion by Committee Member Fredson, seconded by Committee Member Sterner.

Motion carried.

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| District(s), Member(s): | All |
| Policy/Legal Reference: | Thrive MSP 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan |
| Staff Prepared/Presented: | Kyle Colvin, Manager, Wastewater Planning & Capital Project Delivery, 651-602-1151. |
| Division/Department: | Environmental Services |

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize staff to negotiate an amendment to the original Saint Paul Inflow and Infiltration Demonstration Grant agreement (18M123) and authorize the Regional Administrator to approve and execute the amended agreement.

Background

Clear water from inflow and infiltration (I&I) that enters the sanitary sewer systems has a significant impact on wastewater conveyance and treatment systems. The 2016 I&I Task Force of community officials recommended that Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) complete a demonstration project that provides additional measurement of the impact of I&I mitigation in the local systems. The Metropolitan Council accepted the report and authorized MCES staff to implement the recommendations of the report in Business Item 2016-221. A request for proposals for private property I&I mitigation projects was advertised in 2018. Saint Paul was awarded the grant and the agreement between the City and Council executed in December 2018.

The demonstration project (the "Project") consisted of pre and post construction flow monitoring of a small neighborhood area in the West Side Flats area of Saint Paul to evaluate the benefits of private property I&I mitigation efforts. Construction activities included a public education effort with residents within the study area, interviews with property owners, televised inspections of private service laterals and follow-up repairs to those laterals where needed.

First phase flow monitoring within the study area was conducted in 2019. However, with the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, neither the in-person property owner interviews nor the televised inspection of the private service laterals from within the homes were performed due to COVID-19 social distancing protocols. Now with much of the COVID-19 restrictions being lifted the City has requested that the Project continue. The original grant period expired on January 31, 2022, and the grant award was for \$500,000, for a total project cost of \$1,000,000. The city has estimated that the current total Project cost is now \$1,600,000 and has requested that an additional \$300,000 from the Council be awarded for the project to be completed, and that the grant period be extended to April 31, 2024, assuming an executed amendment can be completed in June 2022. The City has stated that they do not have the additional funds to complete the Project without additional financial assistance.

The original grant funding source came out of the 2018 MCES Operating Budget, sourced from the Council's Regional Administration Levy Fund. Additional funds from the Council's Regional Administration Levy Fund are not available. However, MCES has identified that the additional \$300,000 could be sourced from the Capital Program PAYGO account. Funding private property grants is now allowed under the recent statute change allowing any political subdivision of the state with statutory sewer ownership or operational responsibilities to make grants to property owners for I&I prevention programs.

Rationale

The grant is to support funding of a project that demonstrates a reproducible approach to address inflow and infiltration from private infrastructure and adds to the current knowledge base of technically effective and cost-effective I&I flow reduction strategies. Progress on the Project was delayed due to the unforeseen impacts of COVID-19 and completing the project and evaluating the benefits of private property I&I mitigation will be beneficial to the region and the Council's I&I Program. At least 50 percent of the project cost must be contributed by the community.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This action advances the Thrive outcomes of Sustainability and Stewardship. A sustainable and reliable regional wastewater system can be achieved with investments to local sewer systems to reduce excessive flows from I&I. By investing in this Project via grant funder, the information and knowledge gained can be shared with many communities, making this a strategic investment that supports stewardship.

Funding

Funding for the additional \$300,000 will be sourced from the MCES 2022 Capital Program PAYGO account.

Small Business Inclusion

Not applicable to this business item.

