



CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) 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 encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements
 APPLICANT: Seward, Nebraska
 COUNTY: Seward
 POPULATION: 7,643 (2020 census)
 CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: C318082
 ESTIMATED CWSRF PROJECT AMOUNT: \$ 37,286,000
 ESTIMATED CWSRF LOAN FUNDS: \$ 37,286,000

The City of Seward, Nebraska is planning to install a three tank system for wastewater treatment of Intermittent Cycle Extended Aeration System (ICEAS) sequencing batch reactors (SBR). Installation of the SBR system will increase the level of wastewater treatment as well as the quantity of wastewater able to be treated. The SBR upgrade will necessitate the installation of four new dry pit suction lift pumps for raw sewage to accommodate the additional flow. Additionally, the ICEAS system requires finer solids screening at the headworks, which will necessitate a new fine screen at the SBR Building. Finally, new grit removal equipment and structures, including a vortex grit tank, grit pumps, and grit classifiers are to be installed, as the existing grit removal system is in poor condition and not adequately sized for the additional flows.

This clearance is being issued based on the design information in the planning documents. Any changes based on loading for future industry will need to be approved separately, up to and including pre-treatment at either the Seward wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) or at any future industrial locations. The Department's ensuing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be based on that future information, should it arise. The planning design criteria for Seward is summarized in the following chart, which will be refined in the design stage:

	Present Conditions	Design 20 Year Conditions
Population	7,797	9,802
Average Wastewater Flow	0.79 million gallons per day (mgd)	1.48 mgd
Peak Wastewater Flow	5.00 mgd	7.11 mgd
CBOD, carbonaceous biological oxygen demand	1,695 lbs/day - 214 mg/L	2,578 lbs/day - 209 mg/L
TSS, total suspended solids	3,322 lbs/day - 420 mg/L	4,711 lbs/day - 383 mg/L
Ammonia	277 lbs/day - 35 mg/L	438 lbs/day - 36 mg/L

The WWTF at Seward discharges treated effluent to the Big Blue River under the NPDES permit NE0023876. Effluent discharges to surface waters are required to meet secondary discharge limitations which are as follows for their current NPDES permit expiring June 30, 2029.

Parameter	Units	Discharge Limits	
		Monthly Average	7-Day Average
Carbonaceous Biological Oxygen Demand (cBOD)	mg/L	25.0	40.0
	kg/day	95.6	152.9
Total Suspended Solids (TSS)	mg/L	30.0	45.0
	kg/day	114.7	172.0
pH	S.U.	6.5 daily minimum	9.0 daily maximum
Spring Ammonia (March 1 – May 31)	mg/L	31.19	61.10
	kg/day	91.25	178.76
Summer Ammonia (June 1 – Oct 31)	mg/L	7.87	15.78
	kg/day	21.14	42.41
Winter Ammonia (Nov 1 – Feb 28)	mg/L	15.91	39.82
	kg/day	44.57	111.53
Acute Toxicity (Ceriodaphnia sp)	TUa	1.0 discharge limit	
Acute Toxicity (Pimephales promelas)	TUa	1.0 discharge limit	
E. Coli	#/100 mL	126 monthly geo mean	290 daily maximum
Total Nitrogen	mg/L	Report	Report
Total Phosphorus	mg/L	Report	Report

The project was listed on the Project Planning List in the State Fiscal Year 2025 Intended Use Plan (IUP). Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEE, this project was determined to be eligible for a 30-year loan with an annual interest rate of 0.7 percent and an annual administrative fee of 0.7 percent. The City is not eligible for CWSRF loan forgiveness, per criteria listed in the IUP.

Sewer use fees would be pledged to repay the CWSRF loan. For a typical residential connection, the current monthly sewer rate is \$31.40 per month, with an added charge of \$0.04232 per cubic foot. This results in an average monthly sewer bill of \$59.69 for a typical 5,000-gallon monthly household sewer use when averaged over a year. The long-term average CWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage, and interest plus administrative payments) would be \$1,803,055 per year. The City has proactively increased rates by 15% annually for the past several years. Based on 2,897 active service connections, sewer rates may need to be raised by an additional \$28.52 per month to address the new debt service.

Categorical Exclusion Justification for Clean Water Projects

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally or state listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as wetlands, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;

- Based on review there are no new/relocated surface or groundwater discharges; the project is not being developed to provide capacity to service a population greater than 30% of that existing for the community; and it is supported by a State growth strategy. In addition, there will not be a substantial increase in volume/loading of pollutants to receiving streams; and
- Based on a review of the available mapping, a portion of the project is located within a 100-year flood plain. The local floodplain administrator will be contacted and may require a permit issuance for the project, and all floodplain elements of the Department's Title 123 regulations will be complied with; and
- The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy.

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

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 categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to the State Revolving Fund Section of the NDEE at ndee.srf@nebraska.gov.

Signed this 27th day of May, 2025.

Sincerely,



Sarah Starostka
Division Administrator
Planning & Aid Division

SS/AK

Attachments: Distribution List
 Site Maps

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST
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(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)

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Figure 1: Location of Seward Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) (from Google Earth)



Figure 2: Current Plant Layout (from Google Earth)

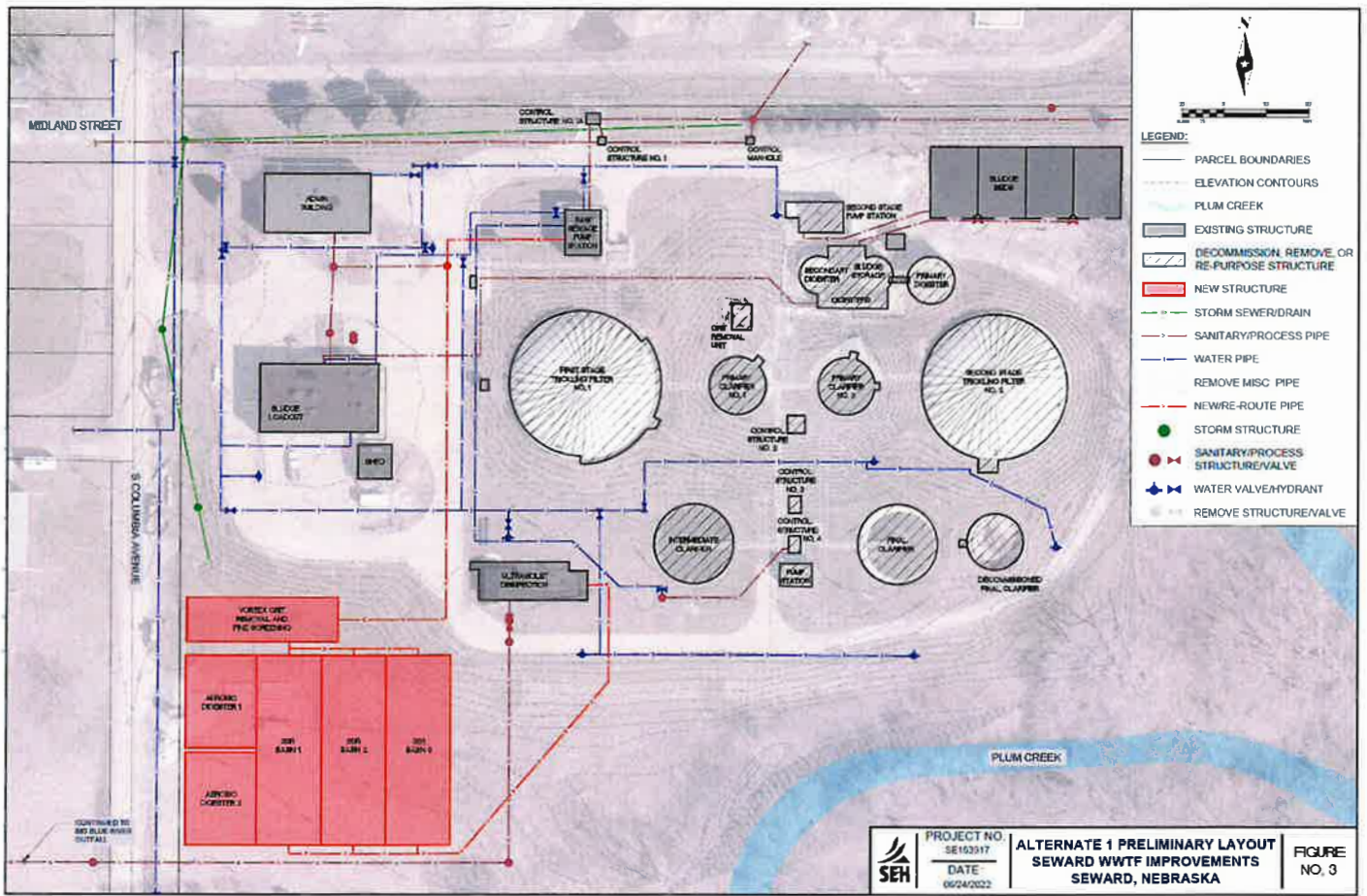


Figure 3: Projected Plant Layout