

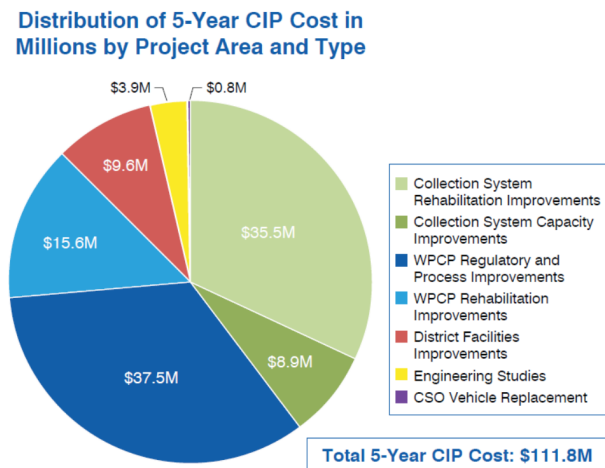
Bundling and Fast-Tracking High Priority Projects in West County Wastewater District, California

The West County Wastewater District obtained a low-interest, 20-year loan agreement in June 2014 with Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for approximately \$18 million dollars at an interest rate of 1.9 percent. The loan will fund the completion of nine projects deemed essential in a district-wide Master Plan. These projects focus on rehabilitating and replacing aging assets to reduce the risk of sanitary sewer overflows and process failures at the water pollution control plant.

The Master Plan

The West County Wastewater District (District) serves a population of 93,000 in Western Contra Costa County in Northern California. The District owns, operates, and maintains 249 miles of gravity sewer pipelines, 17 lift stations, 6 miles of force mains, and a 12.5 million gallon per day (mgd) Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP). The District recently completed a District-Wide Master Plan that assesses future needs for the District's assets. The Master Plan identified a 20-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that totals \$330 million, with \$111.8 million being in the first five years.

For the first five years, a key area of focus in the CIP will be rehabilitating and replacing aging assets. Replacing these assets is very important to reduce the risk of sanitary sewer overflows, or to prevent a process failure at the WPCP. See image for an overview of projects in the first five years.



Five Year CIP Overview. Image Credit: WWCD

Fast Tracking High Priority Projects

To fast-track key projects, the District obtained a low-interest SRF loan for nine high priority projects that are Categorically Exempt with respect to the California Environmental Quality Act. Because the environmental documentation needed for these projects could be completed quickly, this approach allowed the District to bundle several projects into one application and fast-track their implementation. To establish which high priority projects could be included in this first package, a rigorous environmental screening analysis was completed to confirm they are Categorically Exempt. While most of the other projects in the 5-year CIP will also be funded through the SRF program, their implementation will take place after an environmental impact report is completed for the Master Plan. WCWD will generate revenue to pay back the loan through rate increases.

CWSRF: A Flexible Tool for Advancing Clean Water



ECOS

This factsheet was developed by the Environmental Council of the States. It is one of ten factsheets on how states have used flexibility in the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds to pursue innovative projects. To view the other factsheets and information on other state projects visit www.ecos.org.

Published in March 2016

Funding Mechanism

The District has executed a 20-year loan agreement in June 2014 with Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) for approximately \$18 million dollars at an interest rate of 1.9 percent. All of the project costs are being financed through this loan, with the exception of WCWD staff time and involvement.

Reducing Administrative Burdens

One unique aspect of this project is that multiple projects are being funded through one application. This has resulted in significant reduction in administrative effort for preparing application materials. In discussions with SRF staff, they have indicated this approach is being encouraged particularly with other larger agencies to streamline efforts.

Results

The District is in various stages of design and construction of the nine high priority projects (see chart). By utilizing this approach, the District has been able to fast-track high priority projects and implement

Description	Status
6,800 lf of sewer (12" or less)	Design
2,300 lf of sewer (greater than 12")	Design
Lift Station Wet Well Rehabilitation	Design
Hilltop Green Rehabilitation and Replacement	Design
Lift Station Pump and Controls Replacement	Design
WPCP Electrical Improvements	Design
WPCP Seismic Improvements	Construction
Miscellaneous Mechanical Improvements	Design
Primary Clarifier Improvements	Construction

them a few years before they could have been implemented with a traditional approach. This approach saved the ratepayers approximately \$3.5 million compared to using traditional municipal bond financing. The CWSRF loan program will also be utilized by the District for upcoming CIP projects, including a Recycled Water Reliability Upgrade to improve the region's resiliency to the ongoing drought. The District is in the process of obtaining a loan for this project and will be applying for a third loan to fund the majority of the remaining projects in the 5-year CIP.

This approach saved the ratepayers approximately \$3.5 million compared to using traditional municipal bond financing.

More Information

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This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement X5-83395401 to the Environmental Council of the States. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the EPA endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document.