

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF INTENT TO COMMENCE NORTH RIVER VALLEY WELL FIELD & PIPELINE PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

The Ames Water Treatment Plant relies on a network of 22 potable supply wells as the source of drinking water for our community. As old wells fail and need to be replaced and as demand for treated water increases, additional wells must be drilled.

The location for a new well field has been chosen using a detailed ground water hydraulic model. The new wells are proposed to be constructed on land north of East 13th Street and east of the Skunk River. Development of the proposed well field will consist of an interconnecting pipeline and three new wells, each with a capacity of 1,000 gallons per minute. The planned new well field will add an estimated 2.6 million gallons per day (mgd) of raw water that will be delivered to the City's Water Treatment Plant. The 2015-16 Capital Improvements Plan budget includes \$518,000 for design/engineering and purchase of easements for the project, and the total budget for the project is \$5,561,000.

In May 2015, HDR Engineering was retained as the engineering consultant to assist with the route study associated with the pipeline from the new well field to the new water treatment plant. The study involved evaluating three alternative alignments for construction of a pipeline to transmit raw water to the water treatment plant. A map showing the proposed new well field and alternative pipeline routes is attached. The main disadvantage of the yellow alignment is the limited space on the north side of 13th Street and the main disadvantage of the blue alignment is the limited space along Stagecoach Road.

Based on their evaluation, HDR has recommended that the City pursue the red alignment for construction of the pipeline to connect the new wells to the water treatment plant. This alignment best utilizes City property for constructing the water main. Overall, the red alignment will limit impacts to the public during construction and will offer accessibility for operation and maintenance after construction. There is space available on the south side of 13th Street that can be utilized to make the connection to the new raw water main.

The entire pipeline can be constructed on City property. As for the wells, two of the proposed locations are located on City property and one well will require land to be acquired. In addition to the land acquisition for one well, construction easements may be needed for construction of the pipeline and the electrical power that will be brought to the site.

Staff invited all potentially affected property owners to an open house on March 1, 2016. The primary purpose of the open house was to assist property owners in understanding the need for the project. It also allowed those potentially affected to ask questions and give feedback to the staff. In addition, staff has met individually with each of the property owners where permanent easements are needed. Staff has also contacted residents in areas where permanent easements will not be required but where there will be construction related disruptions.

Although staff is hopeful the purchase of property/properties and easements required can be negotiated without condemnation, it is conceivable that an agreement for a voluntary sale or easement may not be reached, and condemnation might become necessary sometime in the future. Provisions from Section 6B.2A of the Iowa Administrative Code requires written notification to each potentially affected property owner at least 30 days prior to the time the City Council adopts a measure to declare its “intent to proceed with a public improvement and acquisition, by condemnation if necessary, of the property.” **Therefore, the City is required by law to formally notify all potential property owners before actually moving ahead with any part of this project.**

At this time it is appropriate for Council to declare the City’s intent to commence the North River Valley Well Field and Pipeline Project, setting April 26, 2016, as the date of the public hearing. Staff will then formally notify the property owners and initiate appraisals on the parcels identified for purchase of land and/or easements for the project.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the notice of intent to commence the North River Valley Well Field and Pipeline Project, set April 26, 2016, as the date of public hearing, and authorize staff to send notification to all affected property owners.
2. Do not initiate any activity on this project at this time.

MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In order to increase source water capacity as existing wells continue to age and become less effective, new wells need to be constructed. The route study for the pipeline to transmit the water to the new water plant has been completed along with an open house meeting for the project.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

ROUTE STUDY ALIGNMENT MAP

