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PUBLIC NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

WATERSHED AND LAND MANAGEMENT

DIVISION OF WATERSHED PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Proposed Amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County Water Quality Management Plan

Public Notice

Take notice that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) is seeking public comment on a proposed amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County Water Quality Management (WQM) Plan in accordance with the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-et seq., and the Water Quality Management Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15. The proposed amendment, identified as “Park Avenue Water Treatment Plant upgrades” (Program Interest No. 435463, Activity No. AMD210005) would expand the Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) sewer service area (SSA) by 0.968 acres to allow for upgrades to an existing drinking water treatment plant on Block 50, Lot 1 (portion), South Plainfield Borough, Middlesex County. The proposed upgrades would enable the plant to treat water for per-and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS) removal. These upgrades to treat for PFAS removal consist of 20 granular activated carbon contactor vessels that use adsorption to remove PFAS from drinking water. The vessels would be washed out one month per year and the projected flow from the backwash from these vessels would be 41,025 gallons per day (gpd). There will

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also be a projected daily flow of 1,025 gpd consisting of wastewater from the restrooms, bag filter flow washdown, analyzer waste, and softener discharge based on flow calculated in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:14A-23.3. The plant is not located within the MCUA sewer service area and is presently served by an individual subsurface sewage disposal system (ISSDS septic system) of under 2,000 gpd. The water treatment plant's existing septic system will be closed to and all wastewater will be conveyed to the MCUA Sewage Treatment Plant [New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) Permit #NJ0020141].

This notice represents the Department's determination that the amendment is compliant with the regulatory criteria at N.J.A.C. 7:15 as described below.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-3.3(b), site specific amendments are limited to proposed alterations to the eligible SSA needed to address a specific project or activity. N.J.A.C. 7:15-3.5(j)2 requires that site specific amendments proposing to add 100 or more acres or generating 20,000 gpd or more of wastewater flow must update the wastewater treatment capacity analysis prepared in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.5(b) to include the proposed project or activity. The proposed project involves less than 100 acres but would generate a total projected wastewater flow of 20,000 gpd or more and is thus subject to a wastewater capacity analysis modification. The purpose of the modification is to demonstrate that MCUA has the available capacity to service the project. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.5(b)1, the existing wastewater flow at the MCUA STP is the highest consecutive 12-month rolling

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average during the five-year period (December 2016 to October 2021), which was calculated to be 122 million gallons per day (mgd) (August 2018-July 2019) based on NJPDES Discharge Monitoring Reports reported in DEP Data Miner (<https://www.13.state.nj.us/DataMiner#>). The MCUA STP is currently permitted to discharge up to 147 mgd under NJPDES Permit No. NJ0020141. As such, the MCUA has capacity to accommodate the additional flow from the proposed project

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(d), the following are not eligible for delineation as SSA, except as otherwise provided at N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(i), (j), (k), and (l): environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) identified pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(e), as any contiguous area of 25 acres or larger consisting of any of the following features, alone or in combination: endangered or threatened wildlife species habitat, Natural Heritage Priority Sites, riparian zones of Category One (C1) waters and their tributaries, or wetlands; coastal planning areas identified at N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(f); and ESAs subject to 201 Facilities Plan grant conditions pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(g). The Department conducted an evaluation of the project site using a GIS shapefile provided by the applicant compared to the Department's GIS data layers available at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/listall.html> and/or other information as noted below, to determine the presence of any such areas in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(e), (f), and (g) and made the following findings:

1. The Department determined that the proposed SSA does not contain any areas mapped as endangered or threatened wildlife species habitat Rank 3, 4 or 5 on the Department's Landscape

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Maps of Habitat for Endangered, Threatened or Other Priority Wildlife based on the “Landscape Project Data” Version 3.3 GIS data layers in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(e)1.

2. The Department determined that the proposed SSA does not contain any areas mapped as Natural Heritage Priority Sites based on the “Natural Heritage Priority Sites” GIS data layer in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(e)2.
3. The Department determined that the proposed SSA does not contain any C1 waters or 300-foot riparian zones along any C1 waters or upstream tributaries within the same HUC-14 watershed of any C1 waters based on the “Surface Water Quality Standards” GIS data layer in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:13-4.1(c)1 and 7:15-4.4(e)3.
4. The Department determined that there are wetlands located on the proposed project site based on the “Wetlands 2012” GIS data layer in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(e)4; however, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(j)3, the applicant has provided a Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation (LOI)/Line Verification File # 1222-20-0005.1 FWW200001 confirming that there are no wetlands within the proposed sewer service area.
5. The Department determined that the proposed sewer service area does not contain any Coastal Fringe Planning Areas, Coastal Rural Planning Areas, or Coastal Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas mapped on the CAFRA Planning Map based on the “CAFRA Layers” GIS layer in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(f).

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6. The Department determined that there are no 201 Facilities Plan grant conditions applicable to the project site based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) list of New Jersey Grantees with ESA Grant Conditions at https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/environmentally-sensitive-area-esa-grant-condition-waiver-program-region-2_in in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(g).

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:15-4.4(h)1 and 2, the Department considered the land uses allowed in adopted zoning ordinances, future land uses shown in adopted municipal or county master plans, and other local land use objectives. On December 2, 2021, the South Plainfield Borough's Director of Zoning and Property Maintenance issued a letter stating that the proposed project is consistent with the South Plainfield Borough zoning ordinances and master plan. The South Plainfield Borough Zoning Board of Adjustment adopted Resolution 2021-04 granting Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval on April 6, 2021. The Middlesex County Department of Planning notified the Department that it will not confirm or deny consistency of a proposed amendment with the county master plan until it updates its plan, which has been in effect since 1969.

This notice is to inform the public that a plan amendment has been proposed for the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WQM Plan. All information related to the WQM Plan and the proposed amendment is located at:

Middlesex County Department of Planning

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75 Bayard Street, 5th Floor

New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

AND

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Division of Watershed Protection and Restoration

Bureau of NJPDES Stormwater Permitting and Water Quality Management

P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 501-02A

501 East State Street

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

The Department's file is available for inspection between 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, upon request. An appointment to inspect the file must be arranged by calling the Bureau of NJPDES Stormwater Permitting and Water Quality Management at (609) 633-7021.

The Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners, as the designated planning agency, requires that a public hearing be held for all WQM plan amendments under its jurisdiction. A public hearing will be held by the County Commissioners on March 30, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. via video conference **only**. The public may call the following number and use the conference I.D. number to be connected into the meeting: Phone:+1 732-515-5844; conference I.D. number 549076079#. For additional information, please see the Middlesex County Water Resources Association web page at:

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<http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/Government/Departments/IM/Pages/Planning/Environmental%20Sustainability/Office-of-Planning---Division%20of%20Environmental%20Sustainability%20--%20Water-Resources-Association.aspx>

Interested persons may submit written comments on the proposed amendment to the Department at the address cited above or at the email: wqmp.publiccomments@dep.nj.gov and to the County at the following address:

Mr. Nicholas Tufaro
Middlesex County Department of Planning
75 Bayard Street – 5th Floor
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Comments should reference Program Interest No. 435463, Activity No. AMD210005 and must be submitted within 15 days after the public hearing.

Interested persons may request in writing that the Department hold a non-adversarial public hearing on the amendment or extend the public comment period specified in this notice. Such requests should reference Program Interest No. 435463, Activity No. AMD210005 and must demonstrate sufficient public interest for the public hearing or extension of the comment period, as defined under

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N.J.AC. 7:1D-5.2(d). The request must be submitted within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Department address cited above. Should the Department decide to hold a public hearing, additional notice will be published in a future issue of the New Jersey Register and the comment period will be extended to 15 days after the Department's public hearing. All comments submitted prior to the close of the comment period shall be considered by the County and the Department before making a final decision on the proposed amendment.

Sewer service is not guaranteed should this amendment be adopted since it represents only one part of the permit process and other issues may need to be addressed. Inclusion in the SSA as a result of the approval of this amendment does not eliminate the need to obtain all necessary permits, approvals or certifications required by any Federal, State, county or municipal review agency with jurisdiction over this project/activity.



1/19/2022

Date

Gabriel Mahon, Bureau Chief
Bureau of NJPDES Stormwater Permitting and Water Quality Management
Division of Watershed Protection and Restoration
NJ Department of Environmental Protection