Community Treatment Wetland and Climate Resiliency Project - Questions & Answers

11/29/23

1. Is the District willing to push the proposal deadline to Monday, December 11th?

   Due to schedules, we need to stick to the original proposal deadline of December 4th.

2. The submittal requirements have 4 numbered components including:
   4c - Specific Approach: Set forth a work plan, including an explanation of the methodology to be followed, to perform the services required in Section III, SCOPE OF WORK, of this RFP. The approach may include additional optional tasks recommended by the Consultant.

   And later, 3 non-number components, one of which is- Draft Scope of Work: Provide a draft of a detailed scope of work that would become the basis of scope negotiation should the proposing firm be selected. Include all assumptions and planned deliverables.

   Do you envision these as completely separate narratives, or can one workplan that outlines assumptions and deliverables suit? If not, can you elaborate on the difference between what you're looking for in each of these sections?

   One narrative that outlines the assumptions and deliverables will work.

3. FSSD indicated that the available budget for this phase of the project for consultant services is $300,000. Please confirm that the additional $300,000 matching funds will not be applied to consulting services under the RFP.

   Confirmed.

4. Under RFP Scope of Work Task 4. Data Collection, the text states three efforts but only two listed: wetland delineation and topographic survey. Does the District anticipate a third data collection task?

   No. The Task 4 text should state 'two efforts'.

5. On p. 9 of the RFP (PDF p. 11), there are two references to optional tasks. Are there any optional tasks suggested by FSSD or are these entirely as proposed by the consultant?

   Entirely as proposed by the consultant.

6. The District has emphasized the importance of visual storytelling in effective communication. Should teams include renderings of potential program elements as an optional task or as part of Task 2. Alternative Concept Designs?

   The District has used Amy West (https://www.amy-west.com/) for illustrations on other projects and once a preferred alternative is selected, we anticipate working with Amy to illustrate the proposed project in a contract separate from the selected consultant.

Any renderings proposed by the consultant could be part of Task 2 or an optional task.

7. For the occasional in-person meetings under Task 6, does the District have a preference on how frequently these occur (e.g., at deliverable milestones) or a fixed number of these in-person meetings in mind? The project kick-off meeting, community meetings and site visits to supplement technical tasks are all understood to be separate and additional.

   No preference. We are happy to optimize the mix of virtual, in-person, and hybrid for everyone's efficiency.

8. Is any hazards and hazardous materials assessments information available for the Project area? Is a Phase I ESA required for the proposal?

   No hazards and hazardous materials assessment information is known to exist for the Project Area. If the consultant thinks a Phase I ESA is required at this phase of the project, it is recommended to include as an Optional Task. Alternatively, during the course of the project, it could be identified and included in the Task 4 deliverable in the 'field investigation plan to address data requirements for future project phases'.

9. Traffic laws are mentioned in RFP Task 1 in relation to gathering data that analyzes environmental conditions. Is this for the wetland restoration permitting and construction such as traffic control? Please elaborate/clarify.

   It could be related to traffic control during construction but could also be related to any constraints or requirements to add car and other multi-modal points of access, and/or a parking lot, off of Cordelia Road.

10. Are there liners installed in the effluent holding reservoirs in the NW corner of the WWTP (proposed location of pilot wetlands)?

    Yes.

11. Is the location of the FEMA levee fixed?

    No, and the need for a FEMA levee can be evaluated as part of identifying and selecting the preferred concept design.

12. Is the design of the FEMA levee included in the scope of the project?

    If a FEMA approved flood protection feature is identified as part of the preferred project alternative, then, yes, it would be within the scope of the 30% design phase. It is possible that a FEMA approved flood protection feature is included as part of the long-term adaptation pathway for the site, and not part of this design phase.

13. How is treated effluent conveyed to the Boynton Slough outfall?

    Treated effluent is conveyed to the Boynton Slough via a buried 48-inch diameter outfall flowing southeast from the treatment plant.

14. Should the TIN load be reduced by 70% from the TIN target value of 1200 kg/d during the dry season?

    No target removal percentage or load has been established. It is our current assumption that the removal efficiency will be optimized alongside the other project goals during design.

15. Are there any plans for proposed treatment plant modifications that may affect effluent quality, such as the upgrades to the aeration basin?

    Yes. There are numerous plant treatment plant improvements that could influence the treatment wetland influent water quality.

16. Is there water temperature data available for the WWTP effluent?

    Yes, we have daily effluent temperature readings and can provide downloaded data as needed for specific dates and timeframes. Temperature data from 10/1/21 - 9/30/22 are available for download at https://www.fairfieldsuisunsewer.ca.gov/bid-opportunities/

17. Where is land application proposed to occur in the future, and can the existing alfalfa field be converted entirely into wetlands? Are there any areas that should be held for future land application?

    All biosolids are managed by Lystek (https://lystek.com/), with land application of the fertilizer biproduct applied offsite. There is no foreseeable conflict between biosolids handling, the existing alfalfa fields in the project area, and future uses. The existing alfalfa field can be entirely converted to wetlands. Areas adjacent to, and outside of, the project area have been set aside to accommodate future growth and expansion of the treatment plant.

11/13/23

1. What federal requirements will apply to this project and the consultant? Does FSSD have Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) policies or quotas?

   In accordance with the US EPA Assistance Grant Program General Terms and Conditions, all federal requirements shall apply to this procurement and implementation of the Community Treatment Wetland and Climate Resiliency project (specifically the requirements in Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200 and Part 1500; and Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 33). The Consultant is required to follow all pertinent local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

   FSSD does not have a DBE policy or quota. FSSD, and by extension the selected consultant, is required to follow the terms of our agreement with ABAG, including 'Utilization of

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, General Compliance, 40 CFR, Part 33'. The FSSD-ABAG Funding Agreement is in Appendix B of the RFP.

2. Do you have an estimated project cost we should be considering? The payment schedule in the RFP (Attachment B) reflects a $600K budget. Is that just for this phase (up to 30% Design) of the project?

   The available budget for this phase of the project for consultant services is $300,000, which is the WQIF grant subaward amount from ABAG/SFEP. The required grant match amount is $300,000 which FSSD will be providing via in-kind match and nature-based solution project investments at other locations at the wastewater treatment plant.

3. Is the District willing to push the proposal deadline to Friday, December 8th?

   Due to schedules, we need to stick to the original proposal deadline of December 4th.

4. Are the three freshwater wetlands mentioned as the pilot project at the site visit existing? If so, will we be provided with the technical data for those when considering the design for this project?

   They do not exist and therefore no technical data is available at this time. The proposed pilot is discussed in Attachment D of the RFP. FSSD and SFEI applied to the 2023 WQIF, requesting grant funds to further evaluate, design, and build the pilot project.

5. What is the expectation for the consultant's role in terms of outreach?

   FSSD will be looking for consultant support to present and summarize technical material at in-person and virtual workshops and stakeholder meetings in a way that is approachable and understandable to the public. FSSD will take the leadership role in identifying, engaging, inviting, and collecting feedback with the community and our partners. FSSD will take the lead drafting outreach materials about the project, and will welcome consultant review and comment of materials, surveys, agendas, etc.

6. Will there be a need to translate materials to other languages and will the District be taking care of the translations internally?

   FSSD will lead and be responsible for translation of materials and any in-person/live translation.

7. Will mosquitoes pose an issue to the project?

   Mosquitoes are common throughout the wastewater treatment plant and we expect the project's proposed approach to managing mosquitoes will be part of the project development process.

8. How would public access work at a functional level? Is the intent to have areas available for recreation and education? Does FSSD have partnerships with the city to provide better access? Is there interest from the community to use this area recreationally?

   The current vision, which could change through the initial design process we are embarking upon, is to have public access available only from the northern edge of the site from Cordelia Avenue. A design priority will be preventing un-chaperoned public access from the wetland to the treatment plant.

One of the primary goals of the project is to integrate recreational and educational opportunities into the space, including considering an education building and/or soccer fields, the latter of which is an interest we recently learned about from the City of Fairfield. At this phase, we don't have any formal partnerships specific to the project site and look forward to considering a diverse range of recreational and education opportunities with the selected consultant, project partners, and the community.

9. What are ideas to connect FSSD and the project site to community areas like downtown areas?

   The wastewater treatment plant is not currently directly accessible via public transportation. There are various projects in development, including FSSD's replacement of an approximately 3-mile-long pipeline from Suisun City (the Suisun Force Main Reliability Project), west to the wastewater treatment plant, that are potential opportunities to integrate multi-modal transportation options on Cordelia Avenue (e.g., bike and pathways) and could connect the Community Treatment Wetland to neighboring communities.

10. Are Nitrogen levels within the FSSD discharge within permit limits? Is the Community Treatment Wetland project going to be used to lower nitrogen levels and/or to achieve nutrient removal targets? If so, what are the goals?

    FSSD discharges are below required TIN (total inorganic nitrogen) limits and multiple green and gray infrastructure projects, including the proposed Community Treatment Wetland, are being considered and designed with the goal of reducing nitrogen loads to the Suisun Marsh and San Francisco Bay from FSSD' treated wastewater discharge.

    Table 1 in Appendix C of the RFP summarizes the initial TIN reduction estimates from the Community Treatment Wetland. The Nutrient Watershed Permit 3.0 is expected in 2024 and will more clearly define both interim and final nutrient reduction targets for FSSD and the San Francisco Bay. FSSD will look to optimize investments in green and gray infrastructure to meet nutrient reduction goals and maximize long-term climate resiliency and community benefits.

    Over the next two years, FSSD is also embarking on a research project with John Durand at UC Davis to investigate the fate of nutrients in FSSD's treated water discharge within the Suisun Marsh. One of the goals of that research is to better understand how efforts to reduce nutrient inputs could affect the marsh ecosystem. Recent treated water TIN data is available for download at https://www.fairfieldsuisunsewer.ca.gov/bid-opportunities/

11. Is the 15 million gallons a day a minimum or maximum potential input to the proposed wetland?

    The current Ledgewood Creek outfall, that runs along the northern edge of the site, and is currently envisioned to be the source of treated wastewater entering the wetland, has a maximum capacity of 15 MGD.

12. Are there existing Geotech reports for the site? Do we have an idea what the soil is like?
    No Geotech information is available from within the proposed project site. We anticipate that this phase of the project will identify required additional studies (e.g., geotechnical investigations) for future phases of the project (i.e., post-30% design). We have a compiled geotech reports within the region which are available for download at https://www.fairfieldsuisunsewer.ca.gov/bid-opportunities/

13. What type of environmental education are we currently doing for the public and what are future plans? Does FSSD feel like they have the right spaces and facilities to host educational programs?
    FSSD currently works closely with the Solano Resource Conservation District (RCD) to provide environmental education opportunities in the community (e.g., the Suisun Marsh Explorers and the School Water Education Program). FSSD is also working with the Solano RCD to develop an FSSD Education Program for 7th graders that will include a wastewater treatment plant tour and youth engagement activity. Our current max capacity is 100 people for educational programming at the wastewater treatment plant, and we look forward to considering complementary engagement opportunities and spaces within the project area as part of this project.

14. Do we already have relationships with indigenous community representatives in the area and are they interested with being involved with the stewardship of this land?
    We had one introductory conversation with representatives from the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and look forward to engaging with them during this project to identify potential collaboration opportunities.

15. How often is the wet weather equalization pond activated?
    The Equalization Basins are generally used when inflow to the wastewater treatment plant exceeds 25 MGD, typically during large storm events. The number of times this occurs in any given year varies depending on if it is a dry or wet year and storm intensities.

16. Do we need to have 100-year flood protection for the area? How important is it to consider an adaptation pathway for this project?

    100-year (or greater) flood protection is a priority for the wastewater treatment plant and associated gray infrastructure, but depending on the wetland design, adaptation pathways, and transition zones to the surrounding landscapes (i.e., transitional marsh habitat), the flood protection goals may be less for some or all of the treatment wetland. FSSD expects the design will include consideration for an adaptation pathway to address future conditions (i.e., to 2100).

17. Does the District have any foreseeable mitigation needs?
    There could be mitigation requirements associated with upcoming projects, including portions of the upcoming Suisun Force Main Replacement Project. One concept the team can evaluate during the alternative evaluation process is the potential for a portion of the project site to be used for mitigation.

18. Has any work been done in terms of the effect of sea level rise in this area before? Is there existing data?

    There is no existing comprehensive evaluation of the compound impacts from sea level rise, shallow groundwater rise, and freshwater flooding in our region. It is currently not an objective for this project to create such a model. The sea level rise predictions from BCDC are the most readily available existing data set for the area. A map identifying the wastewater treatment plant in relation to BCDC predicted total water elevations is available for download at https://www.fairfieldsuisunsewer.ca.gov/bid-opportunities/

19. Is there a project or another facility that sets a good precedent/model for what the District wants to do at the site? How committed is FSSD to the concept included in the Resilient and Green Master Plan (e.g., horizontal levee)?

    Oro Loma is an inspiration for our project, in terms of developing a solution that simultaneously provides wastewater treatment and climate adaptation benefits. We are excited to learn from Oro Loma and innovate a multi-benefit approach appropriate for our setting, and with the potential to scale regionally. It is possible that through the process of evaluating alternatives for our site, a horizontal levee is not the best fit to address our goals. One consideration that is leading us to explore the peat building pilot project in our final effluent holding ponds (see question 4) is the high cost of imported fill required for levee building. We look forward to exploring opportunities to reduce costs and balance cut and fill quantities within the project site.

20. What is the deadline for questions? Will they be answered all at once or as they come?

    Please provide all questions to FSSD by November 28th. We will respond to questions as quickly as possible and answer them in groups as they come.

21. Are there any protected species in the area? Like the western pond turtle?

    None are known at this time. Local and regional databases will need to be consulted to identify potential protected species in the area. Partners have suggested that the proposed wetland site could provide habitat to the endangered Sacramento Perch.

22. Is FSSD flexible in considering the type and extent of the Topographic Survey?

    Yes, we recognize there may be existing LIDAR data and some amount of field surveying that could be sufficient to develop the 30% design plans. We welcome consultant teams to suggest alternative cost-effective survey solutions for consideration.

23. Do you think there is an existing consultant team that has a competitive advantage for this work? (e.g., HDR who worked with SFEI on the BACWA NbS memo in Appendix D) Will FSSD be evaluating consultant teams based on their ability to deliver on future project phases (e.g., permitting)?

    No consultant or consultant team has an advantage for this work and FSSD will make the selection based on the best fit for this first phase only.

24. How would you describe the role that FSSD will have in the project?

    FSSD staff across our engineering, operations, and maintenance departments look forward to engaging and providing input to this project. The FSSD team will provide timely and detailed reviews of draft and final submittals. We are looking for a consultant team to complement and bring (unique to us) expertise and innovative ideas.

25. Are you considering any integration with stormwater management and treatment?

    Yes, we would like to evaluate the potential for the project to receive and treat stormwater before discharging to the Suisun Marsh.

26. Is FSSD interested in exploring Workforce Development opportunities associated with the project?

    Yes, Workforce Development is important to us, and a priority within our Community Engagement Strategy. We are the host site for our regional California Conservation Corps and in the summer of 2023 hosted a Student Conservation Association youth team to contribute to various nature-based solution initiatives around the treatment plant. The FSSD Community Engagement Strategy, as presented to our Board of Directors in October 2023 is available for download at https://www.fairfieldsuisunsewer.ca.gov/bid-opportunities/

27. Do you recommend a Landscape Architect be part of the consultant team?

    During this first phase of the project our focus is on identifying design alternatives that optimize multiple benefits within the proposed project area and effectively conveying and collecting input on potential uses for the space with our community. We defer to each team to identify the best mix of expertise and skills to achieve the project goals. We have learned from previous experiences that part of effective communication is visual storytelling and the ability to convey what different project alternatives will look like.

28. Are there any potential conflicts with existing and future agricultural leases on the land?

    No; it is expected that with the lead time for this project, and the frequent crop rotation on the areas within and adjacent to the project area, that potential conflicts can be minimized and/or avoided.