

DRAFT

Public Participation Report

Site 14

Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities Project

PLANNERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to present the findings and recommendations of a public participation program that has been conducted by Planners for Environmental Quality (PEQ) for the Western Wake Partners.

The public participation program was conducted for residents that live within a 1.0 mile radius of Site 14 to determine what, if any, concerns the residents may have for the proposed Project and the associated water reclamation facility. In accordance with PEQ's recommendation, the public participation program was conducted using door-to-door, one-on-one interviews. Two rounds of interviews were conducted for Site 14.

BACKGROUND

The Western Wake Partners (Partners) are the Towns of Apex, Cary, Morrisville, and Holly Springs. The proposed Project has been designated the Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities Project. Given the scope and scale of the Project, the Partners are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to present and discuss the full range of environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project. The EIS process is being executed by the Partners in accordance with the North Carolina State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and the successful conclusion of the EIS process will be documented in the form of a Record of Decision (ROD) issued by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR).

In April 2006 the Partners submitted a preliminary draft EIS to the Construction Grants and Loans Section (CG&L) of the NC DENR Division of Water Quality (DWQ). The purpose of the EIS document is to present a discussion of the expected environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project. On June 15, 2006, NC DENR conducted a public hearing to receive comments on the preliminary draft EIS. The public comment period remained open until June 30, 2006.

HEARING OFFICER'S REPORT

NC DENR's Hearing Officers' Report and Recommendations (Hearing Officers' Report) was issued on July 20, 2006. The Hearing Officers' Report summarizes the oral and written comments received during the public comment period. The Hearing Officers' Report also presents recommendations regarding additional information and data that the Partners should consider for incorporation into the EIS in order for the document to be considered suitable for submission to the State Clearinghouse as a final draft EIS.

NC DENR GUIDANCE LETTERS

Based on the recommendations of the Hearing Officers' Report, and after consultations with the Hearing Officers and other NC DENR staff, NC DENR has prepared two guidance letters for the Partners. The first letter was issued on July 27, 2006 and the second letter was issued on October 2, 2006. The guidance letters outline the specific information and data items that the Partners must provide to NC DENR staff for review and consideration.

In response to the NC DENR guidance letters, the Partners have prepared a technical memorandum to present the findings of a site selection process used to evaluate alternative sites for the construction of a new water reclamation facility (WRF) for the proposed Project. The technical memorandum, which summarizes the findings and recommendations of the WRF site selection process, has been submitted to NCDENR under a separate cover.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATIONS

Based on a separate evaluation process conducted by the Partners of 13 potential WRF sites, the Partners have determined that Site 14 exhibits technical, financial and environmental characteristics that reveal it to be a favorable site for the location of a new water reclamation facility. However, one characteristic of concern for Site 14 is the percentage of minorities that reside within the 0.5 mile and 1.0 mile radii of the site and the level of outreach that has occurred.

For purposes of evaluating environmental justice, NC DENR has established 50% minority population as the threshold for requiring the Partners to take action to address environmental justice. Based on US Census data evaluated by the Partners, the percentage of minority residents within the 0.5 mile radius of Site 14 is 83%. For the 1.0 mile radius, the percentage of minority residents within the 1.0 mile radius of Site 14 is 54%.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

PEQ conducted two rounds of door-to-door, one-on-one interviews for Site 14. The first round was conducted on December 8 and December 9, 2006 for residents that live within 0.5 miles of Site 14. The second round of interviews were conducted on January 6, January 7 and January 8, 2007 for residents that live in the area located between 0.5 miles and 1.0 miles of Site 14.

There are a total of 191 parcels within the 1.0 mile radius around Site 14. All of the parcels were visited and interviews were conducted with 70 individuals representing 82 parcels (~43%). However, many of the parcels within the 1.0 mile radius are either undeveloped or contain vacant structures (see attached Parcel Status Map). All individuals interviewed received information materials (aerial map and project fact sheet) for the proposed project. The aerial map was used to orient residents and illustrate the location of their property in relation to the proposed WRF site. All properties rely on onsite water and sewer systems (individual wells and septic tanks).

0.5 MILE RADIUS

Within the 0.5 mile radius of Site 14, a total of 57 parcels were visited. Interviews were conducted with 31 individuals representing 38 (~67%) of the 57 parcels in the area. No one was found to be home at ten (~18%) of the parcels and nine parcels (~16%) were found to have vacant structures or were undeveloped.

1.0 MILE RADIUS

Between the 0.5 mile and 1.0 mile radius of Site 14, a total of 134 parcels were visited. Interviews were conducted with 39 individuals representing 44 (~33%) of the 134 parcels in the area. Of the 134 parcels, three (~2%) of the parcels were inaccessible, no one was found to be home at 29 (~22%) of the parcels and 58 parcels (~43%) were found to have vacant structures or were undeveloped.

FINDINGS

The objective of the public participation program was to determine what, if any, concerns the residents within 1.0 miles of Site 14 may have for the proposed Project and the associated water reclamation facility. The results of the door-to-door, one-on-one interviews indicate that there are individuals who support the project and individuals who oppose the project. As expected, the number of individuals who oppose the project is greater than the number of individuals who support the project. Overall, residents around Site 14 expressed concern about the decline in the quality of life they currently enjoy. Other concerns expressed included:

- The lack of early public outreach
- No benefit to the community
- Decreased property values
- A history (by other organizations) of negative property impacts and takings through the location of undesirable uses in the surrounding area

Many concerns were expressed during the public participation process; however, two major issues were identified by those engaged.

ODORS, GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION AND TRAFFIC

The most commonly reported issues of concern, based on all interviews conducted within 1.0 miles of Site 14, are odors, groundwater contamination, and traffic. These issues were identified by 14 of the 70 individuals that were interviewed (20% of total respondents) December 2006 and January 2007. Five individuals reported this issue of concern during the December 2006 interviews and nine individuals reported this issue of concern during the January 2007 interviews.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE

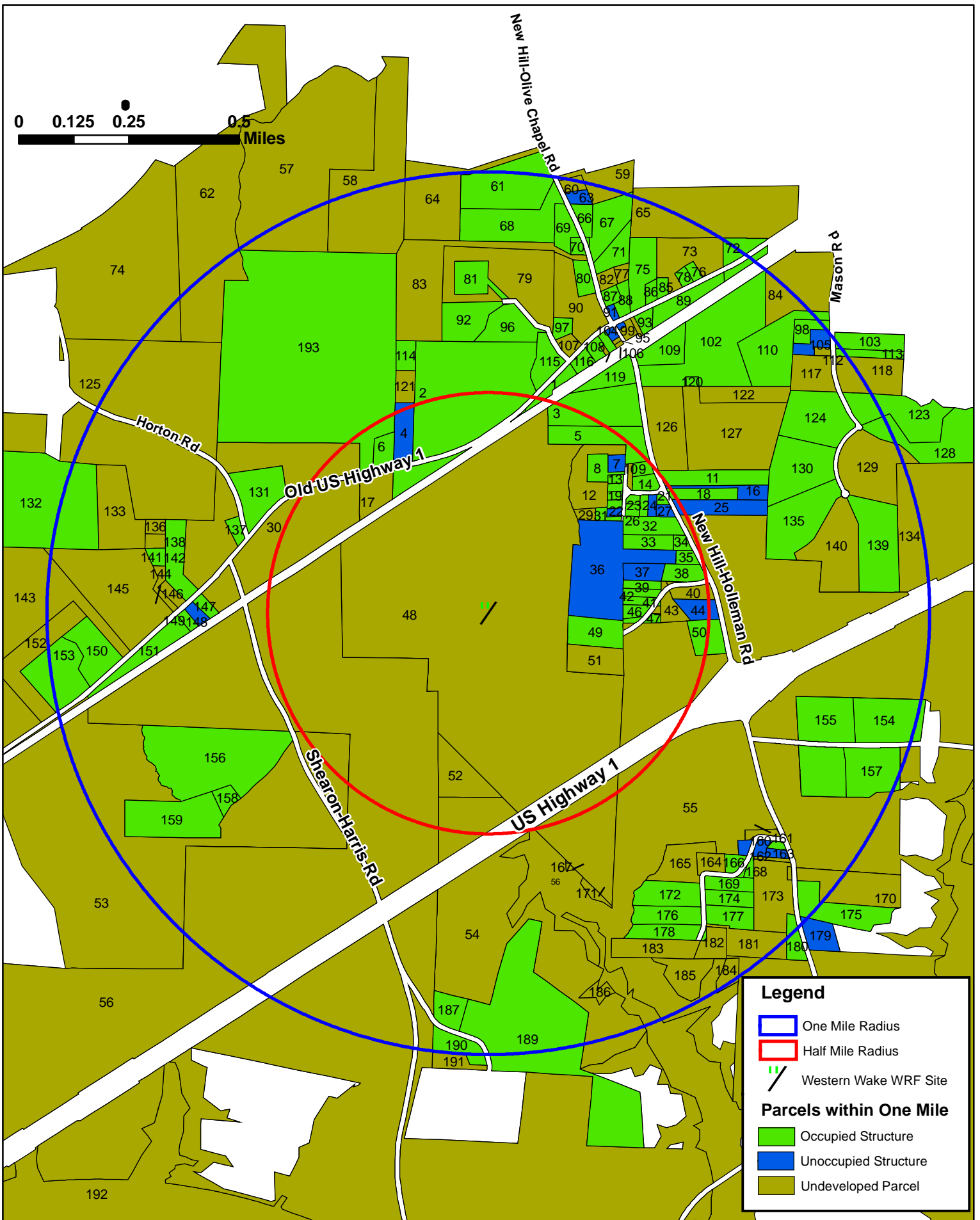
Within the 0.5 mile radius of Site 14, seven of the 31 individuals interviewed in December 2006 indicated that they would desire to receive water and sewer service for their properties at no cost for connection. This was found to be the most commonly reported issue of concern for residents that live within the 0.5 mile radius (those living closest to the facility) of Site 14. Between the 0.5

mile and 1.0 mile radius of Site 14, the lack of water and sewer service was expressed as a reason the New Hill area has not been able to develop.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the public participation program, if the Partners desire to pursue Site 14 as the preferred site for a new water reclamation facility, then it is recommended that the Partners:

- 1) Develop mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts associated with odor and traffic
- 2) Present information in the environmental impact statement discussing how groundwater resources will be protected, or will not be impacted by the proposed Project.
- 3) Develop mitigation plan to provide water and sewer service for properties located within 0.5 miles of Site 14.
- 4) Provide a public participation opportunity for residents around Site 14 to review and discuss the proposed mitigation plan for the provision of water and sewer service, and
- 5) Provide an opportunity for citizens around Site 14 to tour an existing water reclamation facility.



Site 14 Parcels
Western Wake Regional Wastewater Management Facilities