

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

A. Need

The Town of Chesterfield's water and sewer systems are outdated forcing the Town to rely on outside entities to meet their water and sewer needs. As costs continue to rise, a comprehensive study is needed in order for the Town to determine what specific improvements are needed to address local water and sewer infrastructure and determine if it is feasible or in the best interests of all municipalities in Chesterfield County to create a County water/sewer authority. The plan will help identify possible options that can lead to regional solutions for not only the Town of Chesterfield but all the municipalities in Chesterfield County.

The Chesterfield County Mayor's Association has met several times to discuss water and sewer issues, and all have agreed there needs to be a comprehensive study undertaken that can lay out all the options for future water and sewer services for the citizens of Chesterfield County. All municipalities in Chesterfield County purchase water from the Chesterfield County Rural Water Company except for the Towns of Cheraw and McBee. Cheraw's facilities are more than 50 years old and need to be replaced. Despite operating their own facilities Cheraw's officials recognize that it is becoming more difficult to employ and retain water and sewer operators and more expensive to maintain an aging water and sewer system. The Town of Cheraw has the only surface water treatment plant in Chesterfield County and has plans to build a new water treatment plant within the next 5 years. A comprehensive study could also identify feasible alternatives that could enable the expansion of the proposed water treatment facility to assist with regional solutions, so that all municipalities could provide adequate water and sewer service at reasonable rates for its citizens.

The comprehensive study may show that there are no feasible options available but at least a study would identify potential options. Chesterfield County is primarily a rural county that is struggling to retain population and industry with the exception of the Pageland area, which is receiving overflow growth from the Charlotte area.

B. Project Description

It is the intent of this study to explore regional partnership opportunities and/or future cooperation between the Town of Chesterfield and surrounding Towns in Chesterfield County. The Pee Dee Council of Governments is undertaking a County wide Comprehensive Plan for Chesterfield County with all the Towns in the County participating in the Plan. Pageland has completed an Impact Fee Study and Jefferson has received a draft study to assess its water and sewer viable alternatives. These studies will provide valuable information to assess regional alternatives for the municipalities and citizens of Chesterfield County.

This project will involve the undertaking of a comprehensive study of all the water and sewer systems operating in Chesterfield County. The primary goal of the study is to provide a better understanding of the supply and demand of water and sewer resources in Chesterfield County. Fortunately, in Chesterfield County the Mayor's Association has resulted in a great working relationship between the Towns. As pointed out earlier, Cheraw has major water and sewer projects in the planning stage. Chesterfield County also provide significant matching funds for the SCIP Grants for Chesterfield County Rural Water Company and Alligator Water Company.

Therefore, this is the ideal time for the Towns in Chesterfield County to explore regional alternatives to meet the needs of its water and sewer customers. This project when completed will provide a data driven foundation for collaborative decision making on shared water and sewer needs, challenges, and opportunities for regional cooperation. This would include the following:

1. Inventory and build upon current knowledge:
 - a. Identify data gaps.
 - b. Inventory water and sewer resources of Chesterfield County.
 - c. Upgrade monitoring networks to address data gaps.
2. Collaborate Across Many Partners:
 - a. Consult with utilities to better understand current and future needs.
 - b. Establish productive partnerships among water and sewer resource agencies.
3. Evaluate Future Water and Sewer Demand.
 - a. Quantify current water and sewer use and forecast future demand.
 - b. Include water and sewer conservation population and economic growth and historical droughts.
4. Understand Available Supply:
 - a. Examine regional water and sewer availability.
 - b. Investigate surface and groundwater interaction.
 - c. Build a regional water and sewer resources model based on water and sewer budgets and geology.
 - d. Utilize the model to investigate potential regional water and sewer supply limitations and/or surpluses.
5. Develop Actions:
 - a. Consider all ideas to address future events.
 - b. Identify key topics surrounding water and sewer supply and demand issues.
 - c. Investigate needed changes to water and sewer utility infrastructure.
 - d. Develop targeted regional public education messages and materials.
 - e. There will be consideration of multiple organizational models for the participating Towns regarding regionalization.

C. Feasibility:

Each municipality in Chesterfield County has been impacted by aging infrastructure systems and rising costs-both internal to the maintenance of aging systems but also external by other entities raising water and sewer rates. When rates are raised on municipalities by external entities, there is no input by municipalities and no avenue for discussion, which has led to frustration among local residents and elected leaders. It is imperative that a comprehensive study be undertaken so that future needs can be met or begin plans to address them. The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments will oversee the implementation of the study and will be supported by personnel from municipalities experienced in not only water and sewer utility systems but also by personnel and grant administration experience to ensure the study is completed by the deadline. The consultant hired will be made aware of not only the deadline but also a negotiated budget that will include no cost overruns. The contract will include penalties for not meeting specific deadlines in order to ensure the study is a priority and completed in a timely manner. The consultant will obtain legal counsel (likely a subcontractor) to assist budget items 8 and 9 to advise concerning various organizational models and the corresponding formation methods/steps.

D. Benefits/Impact:

The consultant shall determine the future capacity needs of the water and sewer supply and distributions systems and the wastewater collection and treatment systems as well as compiling proposed prioritization options and any impacts/implications of implementing each. This study shall at least enable the municipalities of Chesterfield County to be aware of the various options available to either develop a county wide water/sewer authority or develop alternatives that will still enable all municipalities to provided water and sewer services at reasonable costs to its citizens.