

The City of Dripping Springs Wastewater System Study



Fact Sheet

City:	Dripping Springs
Project:	South Regional Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal Facility Expansion/ Discharge Permit
Locations:	Current wastewater facility is located at 23127 FM 150
Schedule:	Initial study initiated in Feb. 2013; Council adoption of findings and to proceed with necessary discharge permit in fall 2013; study of direct potable reuse initiated in Feb. 2015; filed discharge permit application with TCEQ in Oct. 2015
Issues:	Current and future wastewater infrastructure needs.

Project Description

In an effort to address current demand and prepare for anticipated future growth, the City of Dripping Springs is moving forward with plans to expand its existing wastewater treatment facility to provide the necessary additional capacity. The current South Regional Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal Facility utilizes subsurface drip irrigation for effluent disposal. The facility serves the greater Dripping Springs area and provides service to more than 270 customers.

Over the last few years, the City has received numerous sewer service requests. In response to these requests, the City filed an amendment with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to increase permitted capacity from 162,500 GPD to 348,500 GPD. This permit amendment includes construction of a treated effluent line to the Caliterra subdivision and permits additional land-application area within that development. All of the capacity is already allocated for future residential developments and commercial customers, and the City continues to receive additional requests.

The City Council believes the long-term solution to its wastewater issue is direct potable reuse (DPR). This approach would treat and reuse wastewater to supplement drinking water supply, while reducing the need for disposal of treated wastewater. The City also plans to move forward with as much beneficial reuse as possible. With that in mind, the City has an executed contract with Caliterra, and is in active negotiations with others, to accept treated effluent for reuse at their respective developments.

As the next step in delivering on a long-term solution, the City filed for a discharge permit, allowing for the expansion of its current wastewater treatment system to a permitted capacity of 995,000 GPD. This will include a treated effluent pump station to deliver recycled water to "Chapter 210" reuse customers or to the discharge point at Walnut Springs within the Caliterra subdivision.

Project Need

Hays County has experienced tremendous growth over the last 10 years with its population increasing by more than 60 percent. The Dripping Springs area has seen significant growth as well, with no signs of slowing down. Substantial development is already underway in the area with more approved and others contemplated. To address this growth, there must be sufficient infrastructure in place.

A significant concern exists about the lack of wastewater capacity and how it will negatively impact Dripping Springs for years to come in the City's ability to meet the needs of residents and businesses. In fact, based on current volumes, it is likely the City will run out of capacity very soon.

Recognizing this critical need, the City Council took the proactive approach in meeting the needs of the community and initiated a comprehensive study in 2013 to evaluate current and future wastewater infrastructure needs. This action was supported by the Dripping Springs Economic Development Committee, which is comprised of respected business and community leaders.

Milestones

The following timeline is intended to serve as a chronology of action taken by City to determine the appropriate path forward in addressing its growing wastewater needs.

Feb. 2013 – Dripping Springs City Council authorized CMA Engineering to conduct a comprehensive study evaluating its wastewater capacity and potential infrastructure needs. The study examined two critical issues: 1) Meeting the wastewater needs of existing residents and businesses; and 2) Managing the commercial and residential development planned for the area. CMA's analysis looked at the issue from a variety of angles – financial, environmental, sustainability and community impact. It also looked at a number of potential disposal scenarios, including spray irrigation, drip irrigation (the City's current disposal method), discharge and beneficial reuse.

Aug. 2013 – The City identified an interim solution to its current wastewater need through a partnership with the developer of Caliterra.

Jan. 2014 – The City executed a contract with Caliterra in which the developer agreed to receive treated wastewater from the City to use as beneficial reuse. The City is actively working to secure additional beneficial reuse agreements with other interested buyers in the area.

Feb. 2015 – June 2015 – After receiving interest in direct potable reuse (DPR) from local landowner Gary Keller, the City of Dripping Springs, in partnership with Mr. Keller, commissioned a study aimed at evaluating the option. Carollo Engineers was tasked with the feasibility study. The idea behind DPR would be to treat and reuse wastewater to supplement the City's drinking water supply, while reducing its need for disposal of treated wastewater. The City Council expressed its support of DPR as a long-term solution to both its water and wastewater issues. As a direct result of this study, the City and the Dripping Springs Water Supply Corporation are in active discussions regarding the feasibility of a DPR project.

Oct. 2015 – The City of Dripping Springs filed an application for a discharge permit with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Ongoing – The City has met with a wide variety of stakeholders over the last several years – landowners in the immediate and surrounding areas, developers, municipalities, including the City of Austin and county representatives, and a variety of other agencies, such as the TCEQ and LCRA. These meetings are ongoing today. Additionally, the wastewater issue has been discussed at numerous Dripping Springs City Council meetings, all of which were open the public.
