

Upgrade Options

The Challenge

Nampa's wastewater treatment plant currently treats 10 million gallons of wastewater a day, which totals to about 3.65 billion gallons of wastewater a year. The City must treat its wastewater because discharging raw sewage is neither legal nor appealing.

Nampa currently discharges its treated wastewater into Indian Creek. Disposing treated wastewater into United States waterways such as Indian Creek is regulated by the federal Clean Water Act and requires the City of Nampa to have a permit. This permit is called a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A new NPDES permit should be issued to the City by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) every five years.

Nampa expects to receive its next NPDES permit in 2013. Based on new permits for other wastewater treatment plants in the Treasure Valley, Nampa can anticipate its new permit will include stricter regulations for treating wastewater and discharging into Indian Creek. In order to meet these new regulations, Nampa anticipates it will need to make as much as \$200 million of upgrades to its wastewater treatment and disposal system.

In response to anticipated stricter regulations, the City is evaluating the best way for Nampa to dispose of its wastewater. For this evaluation the City is analyzing current processes and considering several new ways to treat and dispose of its wastewater.

Treating and Discharging Nampa's Wastewater

The City of Nampa is working with an engineering management team to evaluate all options for treating and disposing wastewater.

All of the options described below are being thoroughly analyzed and it has been determined that each option has benefits and drawbacks. There is not a preferred option and no decisions have been made about which option will be implemented. The options being evaluated are:

- **Option #1 and #2: Infiltration** - Treated wastewater would be applied to an area of land rather than discharged into Indian Creek. Highly treated water from the City's wastewater treatment plant would be pumped offsite and released into a system of basins and/or ponds, then slowly infiltrated back into the aquifer south of Lake Lowell. Two methods of infiltration are being considered:
 - **Option #1: Direct infiltration** would increase the level of treatment to a very high level at the plant. The treated water would be pumped away from the plant and applied to constructed ponds where it would infiltrate back into the groundwater.

- **Option #2: Rapid infiltration** would increase the level of treatment to a high level at the plant. The treated water would be pumped away from the plant and applied to a series of basins. The basins would be designed to further cleanse the water by using the soil ecosystem to absorb pollutants and organic compounds. After being thoroughly cleansed through the soil, the treated water would infiltrate back into the groundwater.
 - **Option #3: Treat and offset** –Upgrades would be made at the plant to treat wastewater to certain levels and water would continue to be discharged into Indian Creek. To meet stricter regulations, Nampa would remove pollutants from Indian Creek at an alternate enhanced wetlands location.
 - **Option #4: Upgrade the treatment plant** –Substantial upgrades would be made at the plant and water would continue to be discharged into Indian Creek. To meet stricter regulations, upgrades to the plant would include adding chemical and biological processes to remove pollutants that are harmful to waterways.
 - **Option #5: Do nothing more** – Continue current processes for treating and disposing Nampa’s wastewater. This option would violate the federal Clean Water Act and have severe, negative implications for the City of Nampa.
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Note: Detailed fact sheets about each option will be available at www.cityofnampa.us/wastewater/

Improving the way that Nampa treats its wastewater will be a complex and expensive process. Funding the improvements could require a bond election and/or a substantial increase in wastewater bills. Designing, funding and building the upgrades to Nampa’s wastewater treatment and disposal system will take many years, which is why the City is taking the initiative of planning the upgrade process now.

A professional management team, a citizens advisory group and an industry advisory group are working with the City to help determine which option is best for Nampa.

For more information

To give comments or learn more about upgrading Nampa’s wastewater treatment and disposal system:

- Visit www.cityofnampa.us/wastewater
 - Contact Karla Nelson at the Nampa Public Works Department, (208) 468-5523, nelsonk@cityofnampa.us
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