



Staff Report

March 18, 2024 Council Workshop Meeting

Professional Services Agreement with Carollo Engineers for Water System PFAS Evaluation and Well 13 Treatment Design

Presenter: Steve Wall, Public Works Director

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

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BACKGROUND: The Washington State Department of Health has taken a proactive approach for testing and monitoring of PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in public drinking water systems. The State has developed rules and limits for PFAS over the last few years that were more stringent than recommendations set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, EPA is anticipated to adopt limits for some PFAS constituents in 2024 that are proposed to be lower than the current State limits. Presuming that happens, the State will need to determine if they will adopt EPA's regulations or something more stringent.

The City has tested and monitored the water system for PFAS over the last 2 years and consistently found that PFAS are higher in Well 13 than the current State Action Level (SAL) and higher than the limits proposed by EPA in their pending regulation. The Oak Park/Wellfield and East Wellfield well sources have also experienced some positive results for PFAS that fall below the SAL but above the proposed EPA limit. As shown in Figure 1, Well 13 is located on the north side of the Washougal River and most of the City's other wells are located on the south side of the Washougal River.

SUMMARY: The City advertised a Request for Qualifications for firms interested in being considered for a project to complete a Wellfield Risk Assessment and to potentially fast-track design and permitting of PFAS treatment at Well 13. The City received 6 submittals from local and national consulting firms and ultimately selected Carollo Engineers to develop a Scope of Work and cost estimate to complete the project. Carollo will be providing engineering, permitting, and agency coordination for PFAS treatment facilities at Well 13. It will be the primary focus of Carollo to complete the design so a contractor can have PFAS treatment operating at the site by June of 2025, if possible. A study of properties surrounding the area around Well 13 and upgradient of the Well will also be completed to determine if sources of potential groundwater contamination can be determined.

An evaluation of the Oak Park/Wellfield East well fields for risk of PFAS contamination will also be completed. Staff and the consultant team will review current and potential future PFAS contamination of the Well Fields and potential sources of PFAS and determine the relative risk to

the City's existing drinking water supply. In addition to potential risk, the team will also review options for mitigation such as treatment facilities, new sources, and other potential alternatives. This work will all combine to essentially develop a PFAS Response Plan for the City's water system. There is no design of PFAS treatment at the Well Field included in this scope of work.

Carollo will also work closely with the City's Communications Director to produce public messaging for the community on the status of the Well 13 project, risk assessment and PFAS legislation. At least one open house with the community will be held to allow for community input and updates on the project. Carollo will also assist the City in tracking potential grants or other funding that may become available to fund any portion of the project.

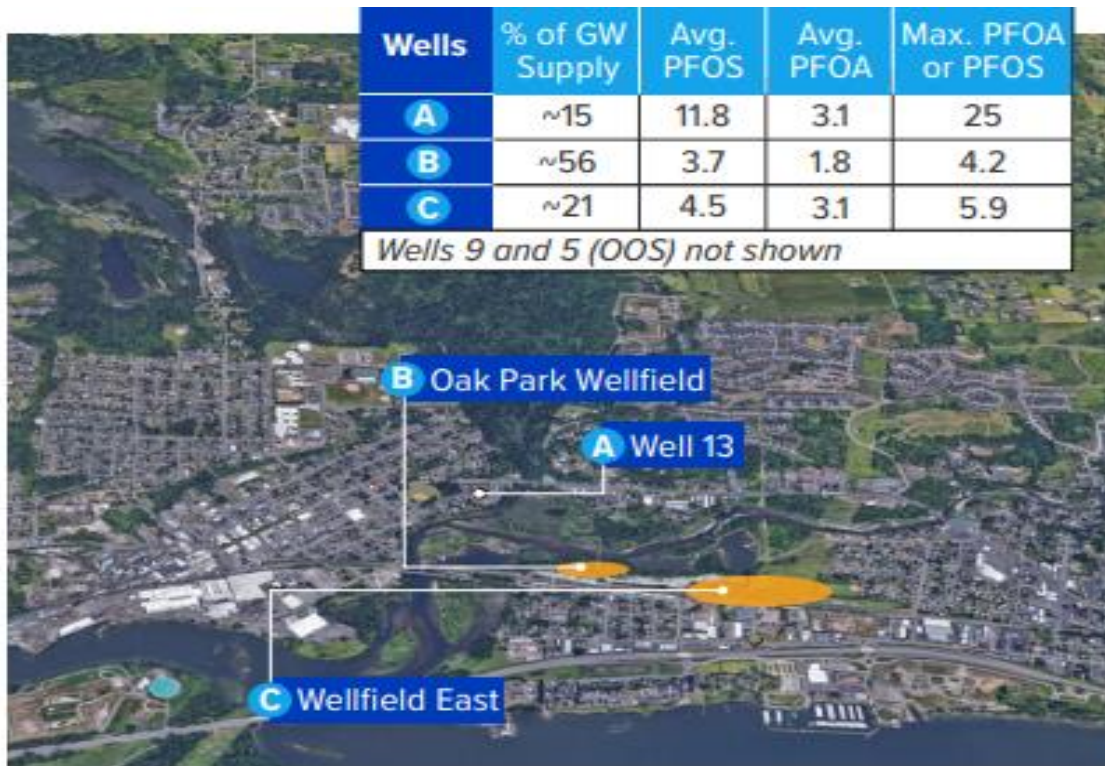


Figure 1: City of Washougal wellfield supply.



Figure 1: Well 13 proposed PFAS treatment facilities

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: Review the potential risk to the City’s water system from PFAS contaminants and develop options for treatment and/or other alternatives that will provide for treated water meeting or exceeding the water quality standards set by Washington State and the EPA.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: Addition of a treatment facility at the Well 13 site will be challenging due to the location of the well building in relation to the Washougal River and the proximity of residential neighbors. Availability of equipment and media may also be an issue due to demand and a limited number of suppliers.

Community expectations are already high regarding the overall topic of PFAS. There are currently no requirements by Washington State for drinking water purveyors to treat for or try and eliminate PFAS in drinking water – current regulations only require monitoring and public notifications. Additionally, there have been recent news stories regarding EPA’s proposed regulations that make it sound like adoption of the regulations may be delayed beyond EPA’s goal of “early 2024”. Additionally, the costs of treating PFAS are significant and the science and information around the topic continues to evolve. The City will need to find the balance of reacting quickly, managing community expectations, and developing options that maximize our ability to fund treatment and source alternatives.

BUDGET IMPACT: The cost of services in the proposed scope of work are estimated to be \$1,614,621. Approximately 75 percent of this amount is related to Treatment for Well 13, and the remaining is associated with public outreach and development of the system-wide PFAS Response Plan. There are sufficient funds within the Water Rates to cover this expense; however, money will need to be added to the 2024 Budget through an Omnibus.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends this item be placed on the April 1, 2024, Regular Meeting Council Consent Agenda for Council’s consideration.