



STAFF REPORT
8/26/2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Castulo Estrada, Utilities Director

PREPARED BY: Castulo Estrada, Utilities Director

SUBJECT: Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Waterworks Engineers, LLC for Engineering Services for the Design of Hexavalent Chromium Treatment Plants at Seven Well Sites in an amount not to exceed \$4,581,756.00 and Approve Additional Expenditures for a Total Request of \$4,810,843.80.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve and authorize the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Waterworks Engineers, LLC for engineering services for the design of Hexavalent Chromium Treatment Plants at Seven Well Sites in an amount not to exceed \$4,581,756.00

It is also recommended that the council approve the following expenditures.

- Contingency (5%) - \$229,087.80

The total cost of this request is \$4,810,843.80.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Hexavalent Chromium Treatment Plants at Seven Well Sites Project, City Project W-55 is a multi-year project and is estimated at approximately \$55 million, which includes design and construction. Staff anticipated design services would be approximately \$5 million and the Project is included in the 2026-27 Capital Improvement Budget in the amount of \$3 million. The remaining \$2 million was programmed in FY 2027-28 budget per the five-year CIP. Staff is requesting the \$2 million programmed for FY 2027-28 be moved to the 2026-27 Capital Improvement Budget.

BACKGROUND:

On August 1, 2023, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) released a proposed hexavalent chromium (Cr-6) regulation proposing a 10 ug/L maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water. The State Water Board adopted the MCL for CR-6 on April 17, 2024.

The compliance period after the regulation came into effect on October 1, 2024 is two years for water systems with >10,000 service connections and three years for water systems with 1,000 to <10,000 service connections. The City of Coachella through its Water Authority operates a public water system (PWS) that is impacted by the Cr-6 regulation. Under the regulation, our compliance period would be three years, we have approximately 9200 connections.

The Cr-6 regulation identifies three treatment technologies as Best Available Technologies (BATs): ion exchange, reduction/coagulation/filtration (RCF), and reverse osmosis; but it also recognizes that there are conditions in which other means of compliance may be available, including the use of stannous chloride (SnCl_2) to reduce Cr-6 to Cr-3 without filtration. In its Initial Statement of Reasons for the Hexavalent Chromium Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) Regulation, State Water Board acknowledged that there may be conditions under which SnCl_2 could be a viable technology for decreasing Cr-6, and a PWS can use SnCl_2 under the correct conditions. However, State Water Board determined that for SnCl_2 to be considered a BAT, additional information on the capability of the technology to meet the proposed MCL would be necessary, including information on re-oxidation in the distribution system and the ability to meet a potential MCL without exceeding the tin (Sn) NSF 60 maximum use level (MUL) of 0.063 mg/L, as well as the fate of all forms of chromium (Cr) when SnCl_2 is used. The State Water Board intends to request additional evaluation of the distribution system water quality should this technology be proposed for use by a PWS.

Accordingly, the City pursued parallel compliance strategies consisting of: (1) continued evaluation of SnCl_2 as a potential treatment technology for reducing Cr(VI) to Cr(III) without filtration; and (2) evaluation and advancement of conventional treatment alternatives, including RCF, to provide a reliable path toward regulatory compliance.

Based on the City's pilot testing, compliance plan, and evaluation of available treatment technologies, RCF has been identified as the preferred treatment approach for implementation at the City's seven affected well sites. The proposed improvements generally include replacement or modification of well pumps, construction of new RCF treatment facilities, filter backwash residuals management, and associated electrical, instrumentation, and control systems necessary for reliable and effective operation of the treatment facilities.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

On May 28, 2026, the City issued and posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional services associated with the design and implementation of Cr(VI) treatment improvements at the City's seven well sites. The proposal submission deadline was July 14, 2026. While the list of "plan holders", who downloaded a copy of the RFP included 12 firms, contractors, vendors, etc., as seen on Attachment #3. The City received only one proposal from Waterworks Engineers, LLC in response to the RFP. Following the City's procurement process and evaluation of the submitted proposal, Waterworks Engineers, LLC was determined to be the lowest responsible proposer and is recommended for award of a Professional Services Agreement in an amount not to exceed \$4,581,756.00.

City staff believes the Water Works Engineers/Corona Environmental Consulting Team (WWE/Corona Team) is the best suited engineering team for the Project. The WWE/Corona Team has been at the forefront of addressing emerging groundwater quality challenges in California for more than two decades, providing planning, pilot evaluation, and treatment design services for utilities impacted by hexavalent chromium (Cr(VI)). The team has supported agencies and water providers throughout the region, including projects in Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indio, and other groundwater-dependent communities, evaluating and implementing technologies such as reduction/coagulation/filtration (RCF), strong-base anion exchange, and other advanced treatment solutions to meet evolving regulatory requirements. Drawing on extensive experience with groundwater treatment facilities and contaminant removal programs, the WWE/Corona Team brings a deep understanding of Cr(VI) compliance strategies, life-cycle costs, residuals management, and operational considerations, helping Southern California agencies deliver safe, reliable drinking water to their customers.

The WWE/Corona Team completed the preliminary design for Cr(VI) for the seven well sites and will maintain project design momentum to develop well thought-out detailed designs for each well site. Since performing pilot testing and submitting the preliminary design report to CWA, WWE and Corona continue to gain additional knowledge and experience centered around Cr(VI) treatment state-wide and within the Coachella Valley, including Cr(VI) removal technology evaluations, compliance planning, preliminary and final design services, DDW permitting, and DWSRF funding support for over 8 clients (4 of which are in the Coachella Valley) at over 25 well sites in California alone. The WWE/Corona Team will leverage similar design elements from their most recent 2,000-gpm Cr(VI) design project in Dixon, CA (90% design completion on 9/1/26) for the CWA Seven Wells Project, conserving engineering effort, project budget, and time to the benefit of CWA and their customers.

City staff is actively seeking external funding for the Project from federal and state sources. In July of 2023 with the help of Assembly-member Eduardo Garcia and State Senator Steve Padilla the City secured \$500,000 through an appropriation in the 2023-24 state budget.

Recently, the City received \$746,868.00 through a Community Project Funding request made by the office of Congressman Raul Ruiz.

City staff is currently working with the State Water Resources Control Board staff on a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund application for funding support.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposal from Waterworks Engineers, LLC
2. Professional Services Agreement
3. PlanIT Plan Holders