

NOVATO SANITARY DISTRICT

Progress on Wastewater Upgrade Plan: Why Is It Necessary?



Tighter Standards For Clean Bay and Health Protection

Over the years, scientists and engineers have found ways to detect and treat ever smaller concentrations of contaminants in wastewater. They have found that even very low concentrations of contaminants may harm the environment. Tests and treatment processes once considered adequate no longer meet modern standards.

Trend: Stronger Regulations and Stiffer Penalties

Novato Sanitary District's aging facilities can no longer meet increasingly strict water quality requirements. Our treatment plants must be updated within the next several years. At the same time, our testing and laboratory requirements have intensified, requiring the District to test over 100 substances, many in the range of parts per billion.

The improvements described in this newsletter are essential to meet increasing regulations, and to update aging facilities that have served their useful lives.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- Replace aging and obsolete equipment
- Add backup equipment for emergencies and to increase reliability
- Eliminate crowded, dangerous work areas
- Improve efficiency and decrease electrical power use
- Add small amount of capacity for septic and infill development based on city/county general plans

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Do you have questions about the needed wastewater treatment, pipeline and pump station upgrades?

Please join us at one of two community forums described here.

Community Forum on Wastewater Upgrades

Have Your Questions Answered, and Provide Your Input

Please Attend a Community Forum

Where: Novato Sanitary District
500 Davidson Street, Novato

When: Thurs, Dec. 16,
12:00 to 2:00 p.m. or 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call: 415-892-1694

E-mail: manager@novatosan.com



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Commonly Asked Questions About the Proposed Treatment Plant and Pipeline Upgrades

Q: What Is the District Doing to Make the Upgraded Plant Energy Efficient?

- A:** The upgraded plant will be designed to minimize pumping and blower power requirements, which are the two largest energy users at treatment plants.
- The upgraded plant will extract twice as much methane gas from the wastewater, providing twice the energy to burn in the onsite electrical generators.

Q: What Potential Environmental Improvements Have You Analyzed?

- A:** Between the District's Strategic Plan, Wastewater Master Plan, and participation in Regional Wastewater Planning we have investigated the following:
- Constructed wetlands for treatment
 - Recycling 100% of the wastewater
 - Decentralized treatment plants with local recycling
 - Alternate treatment plant sites
 - Regional recycled water projects

Q: Is the District Striving to Keep Rates Low?

- A:** Rate increases have been lower than inflation for the past 20 years. The District has cut costs, including saving about \$170,000 a year through new technology and reduced energy use.

Q: How do the District's Rates Compare to Other Service Providers in the Area?

- A:** The current sewer service charge rates for Novato are at the average for Marin County and below the average for the Bay Area. Rates are increasing throughout the Bay Area as agencies adjust to the loss of property tax revenue and make needed improvements.

Q: What Rates Will the Typical Customer See?

- A:** Currently, most residential customers pay \$22 per month or \$262 each year. Final costs will not be known until the scope and schedule of the projects are defined early next year. The District is seeking low-interest state loans and considering various forms of financing. These and other factors will not be clarified until early next year and, therefore, specific rate information cannot be provided yet. But the District expects that rates for the typical customer will need to rise to as much as \$36/month or \$440 per year within the next ten years. Rates for businesses will be proportional, based on the strength and flow of their wastewater.

Q: I Am on a Fixed Income, Is There Any Kind of Relief for a Person Like Me?

- A:** The District already offers relief in the form of a lower-use rate that is 40% below the regular rate. We are exploring other options, to make sure our rates are fair and as easy to pay as possible. Among the options being looked at are: bi-monthly bills, ultra-low use rates, and lifeline rates.



For more information about the proposed treatment plant and pipeline upgrades or other wastewater issues please call 415-892-1694.

APPARENT BEST ALTERNATIVE UPGRADE PLAN TAKING SHAPE

Refined Results From Public Input and Additional Engineering Review

In the past few months, the District's environmental experts and engineers have continued refining their analysis of the upgrade options. The District has also held several meetings with local governmental officials, business, not-for-profit and environmental leaders, as well as the press. The refined, apparent best alternative upgrade plan that results from the new engineering and public input to-date is described below.

BENEFITS OF UPGRADING TREATMENT FACILITIES

- ✓ Increased reliability
- ✓ Better protection for the environment
- ✓ Cost effective and more energy efficient
- ✓ Comply with tough current and future regulations

Wastewater Recycling Key Part of Plan



Novato Sanitary District and North Marin Water District are currently developing a joint project to provide 500,000 gallons per day of recycled wastewater to Stonetree Golf Course.

New Plant Optimized For Additional Water Recycling

Novato Sanitary District and North Marin Water District have created a joint Recycled Water Master Plan that identifies the

In Summer, all treated wastewater is recycled for use in wildlife ponds and to irrigate pasture land.

Pond and pasture recycling is low cost, and environmentally beneficial.

Soon, a portion of the treated wastewater will be recycled to irrigate a golf course.

In Winter, flow can be 10 times greater than during dry periods due to inflow of rainfall runoff.

Future Goal, recycle all discharge on land, with no discharge to the Bay.

most promising opportunities to use recycled wastewater in our area.

The goal is to obtain state or federal funding to expand wastewater recycling. In the meantime, the upgrade at our Novato treatment plant site will be designed to accommodate the new facilities so that they can be constructed and connected without any other alterations or wasted investment.

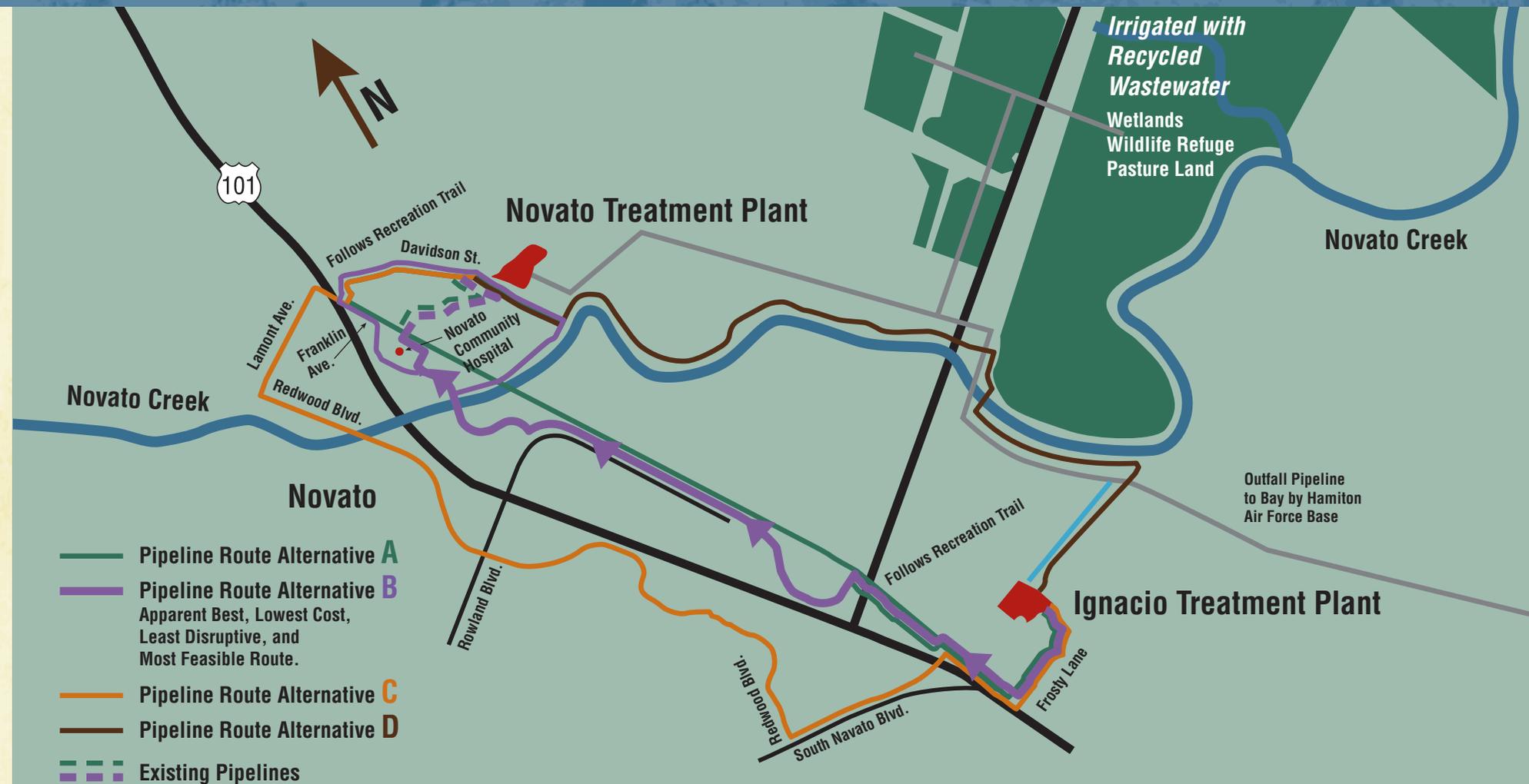
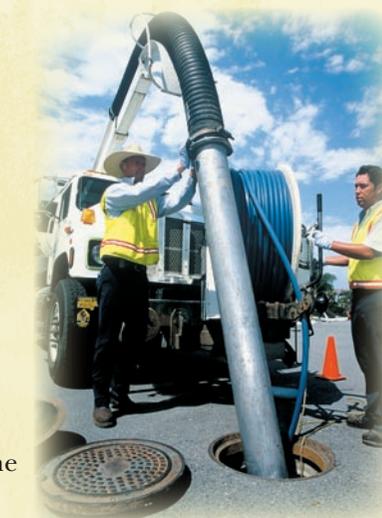
To facilitate future expansion of recycled water use, it is hoped to place a recycled water pipeline in the same route as the pipeline conveying flows from the Ignacio to the Novato treatment plant.

Pipelines, Recycling Facilities and Pumps Also Need Upgrades

Novato Sanitary District maintains 200 miles of sewer pipelines and 40 pump stations with a total replacement cost of over \$100 million. Like the treatment plant, these pipelines, recycling systems and other facilities are aging, making them more susceptible to leaks and breaks and increased maintenance costs.

Also, state and federal regulations are tightening to the point that mandatory fines are levied for virtually any spill or leak. Our aging system must be upgraded to meet the new requirements.

To properly upgrade and maintain the pipelines and pumps will require an ongoing investment of about \$2 million per year. These costs are being included in the new



Apparent Best Alternative

1) Consolidate Treatment and Upgrade at Novato Plant

Novato is the District's larger plant and it is in relatively better condition than the Ignacio plant. This alternative would consolidate all treatment at Novato and convert Ignacio plant into a pump station.

2) Apparent Best Pipeline Route

Flows entering Ignacio would be pumped through a new 24-inch pressurized pipeline to the Novato plant along alignment Alternative B. The sewer flows from Ignacio are smaller, and therefore a smaller diameter, less costly pipeline is required to transfer the flow to the Novato Plant compared to transferring flow from Novato to Ignacio.