

Infrastructure Needs Overview for the City of Atlanta

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The City of Atlanta is in the process of a major upgrade of its three wastewater treatment plants to provide tertiary treatment for a flow in excess of 220 mgd. These upgrades include phosphorous removal to a level of 0.64 mg/l and ultraviolet disinfection. These are mandated for completion in 2001 and are all currently under construction.

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently negotiating a consent decree with the City of Atlanta which will include the wastewater facilities, combined sewer overflow treatment facilities, sanitary sewer overflows, and the water treatment and distribution system. The City is also in the process of a massive watershed study to determine additional projects which are required to protect stream quality and habitat. Preliminary estimates indicate that there may be a potential for spending in excess of \$2.0 billion dollars over the next 20 to 30 years in addition to the current \$860 million 5-Year Capital improvement Plan which includes the wastewater facility upgrades.

The needs for Atlanta will include stream bank erosion control, stormwater detention, sanitary sewer rehabilitation, private sanitary service replacement and repair, water line replacements and installation of a wastewater reuse distribution system. The key issue in the infrastructure needs equation is financing. There are basically three options: reduce expenses, increase revenues, or redefine the capital needs to yield a lower cost. The City is currently pursuing proposals to develop a public/private partnership to operate the water system. This includes treatment, distribution, and billing operations. There may also be opportunities for design, build and operate. This solicitation is expected to save the City \$30 million per year.

A reengineering effort is also underway to save the City an additional \$10 million per year. The overall goal is to reduce the cost of operations by about 30 percent.

The City Council recently passed a method to enhance revenues by instituting a stormwater/watershed utility. This entity is expected to raise about \$2 million the first year and then has a sliding rate that will eventually generate up to \$15 million per year within four years.

The City will continue to explore methods to cost effectively rehabilitate its infrastructure. The methods include micro tunneling, gunite, cured in place, water line relining and total replacement of parts of the sewer and water systems.

The Long term objective of the City is to develop a plan for long term sustainable growth while going beyond simple compliance on environmental issues. And work to maintain the lowest possible rates for the customers of the City's utility systems.