



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270-2102

November 26, 2019

**Categorical Exclusion
For First-Time Water Service
for Hillcrest Estates and Hillcrest Center, El Paso County, Texas**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 has determined that First-Time Water Service for Hillcrest Estates and Hillcrest Center is eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and is exempt from further environmental review. Funding for this project is being provided by the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) administered by the North American Development Bank.

EPA's determination of eligibility for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §4321 – 4370(f). In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulation, 40 CFR §1508.4, a federal agency may categorically exclude certain actions from detailed environmental review that do not individually, or cumulatively, have a significant effect on the quality of the environment. To qualify for a categorical exclusion, a project must conform to one of the categories listed in 40 CFR §6.204(a) and it must not involve any of the extraordinary circumstances identified in 40 CFR §6.102(b).

Project Description

El Paso County, Texas is proposing to extend potable water distribution service to the Hillcrest Estates & Hillcrest Center neighborhood located in eastern areas of El Paso outside the city limits. Currently, the Hillcrest Estates neighborhood contains 147 households and does not contain any existing public water or wastewater facilities. Residents use private water delivery and dispose of wastewater via functioning individual septic tanks. Public water is available immediately adjacent to the project area from the El Paso Water Utilities. The proposed water distribution system will provide residents with a safe and reliable potable water by connecting Hillcrest into an existing potable water distribution system which provides service to the surrounding areas.

Project components include:

- Approximately 58,180 linear feet of 8-inch potable water line.
- Approximately 13,130 linear feet of 12-inch potable water line.
- Approximately 11,240 linear feet of 16-inch potable water line.
- Approximately 147 potable water service line/household connections (3/4 inch).
- Approximately 98 fire hydrants.
- Approximately 32,500 square yards of pavement cut and replacement.
- Thirteen (13) 16-inch gate valves.
- Twenty (20) 12-inch gate valves.
- Fifty-seven (57) 8-inch gate valves.

Eligibility for Categorical Exclusion

In accordance with the EPA's regulations for implementing the NEPA, 42 USC §4321-4370f, EPA Region 6 has determined this project to be eligible for a categorical exclusion under 40 CFR §602.4(a)(1)(ii), which allows projects to be categorically excluded when the projects involve:

"Actions relating to existing infrastructure systems (such as sewer systems; drinking water supply systems; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) that involve minor upgrading, or minor expansion of system capacity or rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components (such as the sewer collection network and treatment system; the system to collect, treat, store and distribute drinking water; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) or construction of new minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities."

The proposed project qualifies for the categorical exclusion set forth under 40 CFR §602.4(a)(1)(ii) as it involves minor upgrading and expansion of existing infrastructure systems and system components. In addition, the project does not involve new or relocated discharges to surface or ground water; will not result in the substantial increase in the volume or the loading of pollutant to the receiving water; will not provide capacity to serve a population of 30% greater than the existing population; and will not directly or indirectly involve upgrading or extending infrastructure systems for the purpose of future development.

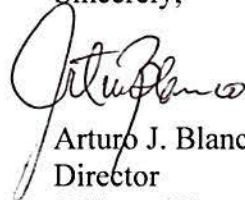
Extraordinary Circumstances (40 CFR §6.204(b)(1) through (b)(10))

EPA has reviewed the proposed project and determined that it does not involve any extraordinary circumstances listed in 40 CFR §6.204(b)(1) through (b)(10). The proposed construction activity will take place in previously disturbed area and no new land disturbance would be required.

Finding

EPA finds the proposed action conforms to the category of actions eligible for exclusion from detailed environmental review under CFR 40 CFR §6.204(a)(1)(ii) and will not involve any extraordinary circumstances. Accordingly, EPA will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed action. EPA may revoke this categorical exclusion if changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion or if new evidence emerges which indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist or federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

Sincerely,



Arturo J. Blanco
Director

Office of Communities, Tribes and
Environmental Assessment