CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT OF: Cast Iron Watermain Replacement Program Grand Forks (Grand Forks County), North Dakota

DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND PROJECT NUMBER: 1800410-10

The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) has reviewed the proposed Cast Iron Watermain Replacement Program for the City of Grand Forks in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR Part 6). The NDDEQ determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion and does not require further substantive environmental review.

Because the proposed project meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion, a full Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment will not be required. The following is a description of the proposed project and a brief statement of how the project meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion.

The proposed project involves the replacement of approximately 5.5 miles of aging cast iron watermain as well as the already planned lead service line replacements along the same corridor. The watermain replacement will reduce water loss due to watermain failures. Lead service lines have the potential of releasing lead into drinking water causing a potential health risk, particularly to children. Replacement of lead service lines is a priority throughout the United States because of the potential health risks from lead exposure in drinking water. This project will replace identified lead service lines with lead-free materials from the water main into the residence structure. By completing this replacement, the risk of lead exposure will be significantly reduced.

The City of Grand Forks plans to apply for a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan of $5,346,000 to finance the project. The city has the legal authority and the financial and administrative capability to construct the proposed improvements.

The North Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurs with the determination of “No Adverse Effect” provided replacement pipes for existing lines do not move the existing building penetrations more than two feet. SHPO shall be consulted if any penetrations need to move more than two feet or if there are any new service lines. They also require cultural resource monitoring by a permitted cultural resource company in the vicinity of 32GF21 (Trolley Tracks), 32GF165 (Granitoid Pavement), 32GFX234, and 32GFX235. There is also the potential for sandstone curbing to be in the vicinity of or associated with the Granitoid Pavement areas. The cultural resource monitor must contact the State Historical Society of North Dakota/SHPO for recordation requirements and monitoring details prior to monitoring activities.

A monitoring report is required within 60 days after monitoring completion (ND SHPO Ref.: 26-0315). It has been determined that exempting the proposed project from further review under the NEPA will not result in adverse impacts to the population or area of Grand Forks and Grand Forks County. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has reviewed this project (ID No. NWO-2022-01281-BIS) and determined that a Section 404 permit would be required if dredge or fill material is discharged into waters of the United States and a Section 10 permit would be required for work impacting navigable waters.

The documentation to support this decision will be on file and available for public review at the Division of Municipal Facilities.

The 2027 construction year of the Grand Forks Cast Iron Watermain Replacement Program project is considered cleared under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) provided the replacement piping does not move the building penetration more than 2 feet from the existing penetrations. Section 106 is separate from the NEPA categorical exclusion, and this categorical exclusion does not exclude future phases of this project from Section 106 review. The Section 106 concurrence is valid only for the listed phase/year. Each additional year of the project will require cultural resources review to meet the requirements under Section 106 of the NHPA. The City of Grand Forks must contact the Review and Compliance team at the State Historical Society of North Dakota annually for additional reviews as project phases develop.

Comments concerning this decision may be addressed to Aaron Wellman, Environmental Engineer, Division of Municipal Facilities, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality, 4201 Normandy St., Bismarck, ND, 58503-1324.

Dated Nov. 23, 2026.

David J. Bruschwein, P.E.
Director
Division of Municipal Facilities