



Northwest Hillsborough Pipeline Project– Q&A

Q: What is the Northwest Hillsborough Pipeline Project?

A: The Northwest Hillsborough Pipeline Project is a new 2-mile, 36-inch diameter water pipeline in the Citrus Park area that will connect Tampa Bay Water's regional system to Hillsborough County's Northwest Hillsborough Potable Water Treatment Facility located at Fawn Ridge.

The project also includes yard piping at Hillsborough County's Northwest facility and at the City of St. Petersburg's Cosme Water Treatment Plant, located in Odessa. This will allow for water from those facilities to be delivered into the regional system during emergencies.

Q: Why is this project needed?

A: The Northwest Hillsborough Regional Wellfield is the sole source of drinking water for nearly 100,000 people in northwest Hillsborough County. The wellfield supplies approximately 8 million gallons of water per day to Hillsborough County's Northwest Hillsborough Potable Water Treatment Facility, located at Fawn Ridge west of Sheldon Road. A new pipeline is needed to connect these isolated facilities to the regional system to ensure continued water supply reliability and allow the Northwest Hillsborough Regional Wellfield to be intermittently rested.

Q: Who will benefit from the project?

A: This project will benefit water customers and the environment. Hillsborough County's northwest water customers will have a more reliable water supply, the region will have additional emergency supplies, and aquifer levels in the area will improve as the wellfield is rested.

Q: What is the pipeline route?

A: The selected pipeline route is located largely within existing utility easements and public rights-of-way. The route goes east from Hillsborough County's Northwest Hillsborough Potable Water Treatment Facility, tunnels under Sheldon Road, then continues east under Easy Street to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail. The route then goes north along the Trail, under Citrus Park Drive to Manhattan Drive.

Q: When did construction begin on this project? When will it be completed?

A: Pre-construction work began in April 2010, and active construction work began in May 2010 at Hillsborough County's Northwest Hillsborough Potable Water Treatment Facility. Construction, replanting and repaving are scheduled to be complete by the end of July 2011.

Q: Will there be traffic impacts? Will construction close roads?

A: The project route was selected to minimize community impacts in the busy Citrus Park area and minimize environmental impacts where possible. The pipeline is being installed by tunneling underneath Fawn Ridge Boulevard, Sheldon Road, Easy Street and Citrus Park Drive/Gunn Highway.

Detours, road or lane closures will be clearly marked. Emergency services, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department, HART and nearby Hillsborough County public schools will be notified in advance of detours and lane closures.

Q: Will the construction affect access to homes and businesses along the construction route?

A: Pipeline construction will affect only a few residences and businesses, and we are working closely with those affected to ensure access is maintained. Residents are notified in advance of road closures and detours.

Q. What anticipated noise disturbances are associated with this project?

A: Those living and working near the project site can expect to hear construction noise associated with trucks and heavy equipment. Construction is expected to take place Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Q: What is involved with the tunneling operations?

A: Tunneling requires special equipment and special construction techniques. If a tunnel boring machine is used, pits are excavated on each side of the road to be crossed, and then a tunneling boring machine is placed in one pit and tunnels to the other, installing the pipeline while simultaneously removing any dirt or debris. If a directional drill method is used, pits are excavated and a tunnel drill creates a small tunnel through which the pipe is pulled.

Dewatering systems are installed just prior to tunneling operations and must run 24-hours a day until tunneling is complete. These systems include noise-minimizing diesel pumps and a small-diameter, temporary pipeline to direct water away from the construction area so that tunnel pits and shafts can be safely built.

Nighttime construction follows stringent safety standards, are well lit and restricted from public access with barricades.

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Q: Will the pumping from your dewatering system lower water levels and cause a problem with my domestic or irrigation well?

A: Our dewatering pumps are not expected to affect nearby wells for a number of reasons. First, construction dewatering pumps focus on the shallowest water table. The pipeline is placed 6-8 feet below ground, so that is the depth to which water must be removed. Domestic and irrigation wells generally pump from the deeper, confined aquifer. Second, construction dewatering is focused on a particular location, pumping just enough water away to keep a trench or pit dry. It is unlikely that pumping effects from this limited activity would extend outward significantly from the construction corridor. Third, dewatering is a temporary activity that is only expected to last one to weeks in any one area.

Q: How do you ensure safety at the construction sites?

A: To ensure safety at the sites, construction areas are restricted from public access and are clearly marked with caution tape, safety fences or barricades. Each site is secured during non-working hours. Trenches will be filled-in or covered and secured on a daily basis. Warning signs will instruct people to stay away from construction areas. Residents can help ensure safety by maintaining a safe distance from construction areas and by discouraging children from approaching construction sites.

Q: When was the pipeline route selected?

A: Tampa Bay Water, Hillsborough County and local residents have worked together on the route since 2006. The pipeline project and recommended route was approved by Tampa Bay Water's Board of Directors in February 2007.

Q: Did the public have input into the route?

A: Yes. Public input played an important role in the route selection process. In 2006 and 2007, Tampa Bay Water solicited public input on alternative pipeline routes through both a mail survey and a public meeting. Those comments were then presented to Tampa Bay Water's Board of Directors, with the final route approved in February 2007.

In 2008, Tampa Bay Water and Hillsborough County slightly modified the pipeline route to reduce costs and avoid construction impacts to residents and businesses.

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Q: How are you protecting wildlife in the construction area?

A: A number of measures have been put in place to minimize the environmental impacts of the pipeline project. The project team includes a certified arborist who supervises tree trimming and installs tree barricades to ensure trees are protected during construction. Since the pipeline route crossed wetland areas, special efforts were made to protect trees unique to wetlands. Where cypress trees cannot be avoided, they will be removed from the pipeline route and replanted, so only about one-half acre of wetlands will be permanently impacted.

Special precautions have also been taken to protect wildlife species in the construction area. Gopher tortoises were carefully captured and relocated to authorized and safe habitats away from the construction. Also, contractors follow guidelines to protect the Eastern indigo snake.

Q: Why were Brazilian pepper-trees removed as part of this project?

A: Brazilian pepper-trees were eliminated from the preservation area south of Breland Drive and west of Fawn Ridge Boulevard. Brazilian pepper-tree is an aggressive, invasive plant species that grows and spreads rapidly, pushing out native plants and the animals that depend on them for survival. Brazilian pepper-tree is related to poison ivy and poison sumac, and can cause skin and respiratory irritation to humans.

Brazilian pepper-trees covered about 2 of the preserve's 85 acres. The Brazilian pepper-tree eradication project ran from April 2010 through July 2010. Native red maples and wax myrtles will be planted in the two main areas where Brazilian pepper-trees are eliminated.

Q: How can I get more information on the project?

A: For up-to-date project news, residents can follow the project on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/NWPipeline>). Specific project information is also available at www.tampabaywater.com.

Q: What is the cost of the Northwest Hillsborough Pipeline Project?

A: The project cost for design and construction is approximately \$8.26 million. Tampa Bay Water is funding the Northwest Hillsborough Pipeline Project through water rates and construction bonds. The Southwest Florida Water Management District is co-funding up to 50 percent of the project's eligible design and construction costs.

Q: Who do I call if I have questions or concerns?

A: Residents with questions or concerns can call a dedicated construction hotline at 813-401-0132.

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