



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

December 6, 2010

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the implementing environmental review procedures of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act" as guidance, the EPA has performed an environmental review of the following proposed action:

Wastewater Infrastructure Construction Project

Proposed by the City of Bryan

Located in Brazos County, Texas

Estimated EPA Share: \$ 485,000

Estimated Local Share: \$ 19,035,000

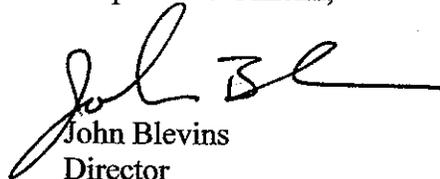
The Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations Act for the EPA included special Congressional funding for water and wastewater construction projects. The City of Bryan (City) was selected to receive funding support through these special appropriations for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant to be known as the Thompsons Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant to replace an existing aging and deteriorated package treatment plant. The City currently operates three activated sludge treatment plants all located within the corporate limits of the City. The old treatment plant to be replaced is known as the Turkey Creek facility, serves the southwest portions of the City, and currently has insufficient treatment capacity to serve the existing population or future wastewater needs of the citizens living in the area. The existing Turkey Creek facility is located in a neighborhood adjacent to residential housing. The new Thompsons Creek plant will be constructed on a 107-acre tract of land already owned by the City. The new location is situated away from residential areas near the Brazos River.

The City is anticipating an increased need for wastewater services on the west side of the City, and has already been permitted to construct the new treatment plant. The proposed facility will include individual treatment units and support structures typically associated with traditional wastewater treatment plants. The new treatment plant will require grading, off-site utilities, and a site access road to serve the facility. The new treatment plant will be designed to treat two million gallons per day of raw wastewater, and will be designed for the removal of ammonia and the reduction of nitrates and phosphorus. The Brazos River will be the receiving stream for the treated effluent being discharged from the facility. Upon completion of the new Thompsons Creek facility, the old Turkey Creek plant will be retired from service. This will be a big improvement to the lifestyle of the citizens living in the neighborhood and residential areas surrounding the old plant. The City will utilize the Congressional funding support in conjunction with local funds to finance the construction of the proposed project.

The environmental review process, which is documented by the enclosed Environmental Assessment, indicates that no potential significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from the proposed action. The project individually, cumulatively over time, or in conjunction with other actions is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment. On that basis, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. My preliminary decision is based upon the enclosed Environmental Assessment, a careful review of the Environmental Information Document prepared for the project, the results of the public participation process, and other supporting data which are on file in the office listed below and available for public review upon request. Therefore, I am issuing this preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact pertaining to the project.

Comments regarding my preliminary decision may be submitted for consideration to the attention of the Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), Environmental Protection Agency, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733. After evaluating any comments received, the EPA will make a final decision. No administrative action will be taken on this preliminary decision for at least 30 calendar days after release of this Finding of No Significant Impact. The preliminary decision and finding will then become final after the 30-day comment period expires if no new significant information is provided to alter this finding.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

Enclosure

cc: Jason Bienski, Mayor
City of Bryan

Kevin Ward, Executive Administrator
Texas Water Development Board

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

**Proposed by the
CITY of BRYAN**

Located in BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

BACKGROUND

The Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations Act for the EPA included special Congressional funding for water and wastewater construction projects. The City of Bryan (City) was selected to receive funding support through these special appropriations for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant to be known as the Thompsons Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant to replace an existing aging and deteriorated package treatment plant. The City currently operates three activated sludge treatment plants all located within the corporate limits of the City. The old treatment plant to be replaced is known locally as the Turkey Creek facility, serves the southwest portions of the City, and currently has insufficient treatment capacity to serve the existing population or future wastewater needs of the citizens living in the area. The existing Turkey Creek facility is located in a neighborhood adjacent to residential housing. The new Thompsons Creek plant will be constructed on a 107 acre tract of land already owned by the City. The new location was purchased by the City in 2005, and is situated away from residential areas adjacent to the Brazos River.

The City is anticipating an increased need for wastewater services on the west side of the City, and has already been permitted to construct the new treatment plant. The proposed facility will include individual treatment units and support structures typically associated with traditional wastewater treatment plants. The new treatment plant will require grading, off-site utilities, and a site access road to serve the facility. The new treatment plant will be designed to treat two million gallons per day of raw wastewater, and will be designed for the removal of ammonia and the reduction of nitrates and phosphorus. The plant will use Ultra Violet (UV) disinfection that will remove bacteria in the effluent without adding chlorinated byproducts to the effluent. This will also eliminate the necessity of storing large quantities of toxic compressed gases on site.

The Brazos River will be the receiving stream for most of the treated effluent being discharged from the facility. The City also plans to use some of the effluent from the new facility to irrigate a local golf course in an effort to conserve water resources in the area. Upon completion of the new Thompsons Creek facility, the old Turkey Creek plant will be retired from service and decommissioned. This will improve the lifestyle of the citizens living in the neighborhood and residential areas surrounding the old plant. The City will utilize the Congressional funding support in conjunction with local funds to finance the construction of the proposed project. The project planning area is shown on the map enclosed as Figure 1.

The proposed project is considered to be a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with the environmental review requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementing regulations found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act" as guidance, the EPA is preparing this Environmental Assessment to assist in determining the environmental impacts of the proposed action, and in evaluating whether an Environmental Impact Statement or a Finding of No Significant Impact will be prepared for the proposed project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City has proposed the construction and installation of the following components for the new wastewater treatment facility:

1. Administration/maintenance building, dewatering facility, headworks, blower building, aeration basin, UV disinfection facility, clarifiers, waste activated sludge holding tank, drain pump station, return activated sludge pump station and splitter box, reuse facility and various ancillary components such as yard piping; outfall piping and electrical conduits and connections;
2. Modifications to the existing Jones Road pump/lift station;
3. Installation of a force main and gravity lines to deliver untreated wastewater to the new plant from the existing Jones Road pump/lift station;
4. Installation of an access road to the new facility from Foster Road.

The proposed improvements will provide a safe and dependable wastewater treatment facility to serve the needs of the citizens living in the area. All construction activities will occur either within the 107 acre site designated for the plant, or within existing rights-of-way (ROW) and utility easements owned or controlled by the funding recipient. The proposed project will not displace any existing citizen, home or business.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The funding recipient evaluated and considered a range of various alternatives to address the infrastructure needs of the area. Important factors influencing the evaluation of the processes and their recommended solutions include environmental acceptability, overall costs, availability of land for the intended uses, maximum reuse of existing facilities when applicable, operation and maintenance costs, system reliability, accommodation of future expansion needs, and public acceptance. A complete description of the alternatives is provided in the Environmental Information Document (EID) provided by the funding recipient for the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The city of Bryan is located in south central Texas approximately midway between the cities of Houston and Waco, and is the county seat. The area is situated within the Gulf Coastal Plains, and on the banks of the Brazos River. The western side of the selected site for the new wastewater treatment plant is lower in elevation than the terraced eastern side, and contains deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. By contrast the eastern side of the selected area contains sandstone, clay and lignite layers. Soils in the area contain important farmlands which could be used for food production, but presently the site is open pastureland. Even though they soils are rated as important farmlands, they are rated at a level that will not need further consideration and can be used for the intended purpose. The area is located in an area known as the Post Oak Savannah, which has historically been dominated by native bunch grasses, and forbs, with scattered post oak trees and some live oak, black hickory and blackjack oak. In recent times, this vegetation has been replaced by other species such as yaupon holly, cedar elm, sugarberry and eastern red cedar. Pasture grasses have been established in the proposed project area for cattle ranching and hay production. There are no wilderness areas, national landmarks or monuments, or wild and scenic rivers within or immediately adjacent to the project area.

The area is underlain by a significant amount of useable groundwater that is pumped by the City for public water supply, as well as for irrigation. The City operates nine active drinking water wells, and uses approximately 23 million gallons of water per day. The proposed site drains naturally toward the local Thompson Creek, and ultimately into the Brazos River. The area receives approximately 40 inches of rainfall annually, with most of the rainfall occurring between the months of April and October. The crop growing season lasts approximately 260 days annually. Precipitation intensity combined with limited soil recharge commonly produces flash flood events. Snowfall in the area is rare, and accounts for an insignificant amount of the annual precipitation. Clear to partly cloudy skies predominate, and prevailing winds usually are in the southerly and northwesterly directions. The area is located in the Waco Air Quality Control Region (AQCR), and is classified as being in attainment with all applicable air quality standards. The closest nonattainment AQCR is the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria metropolitan area 100 miles to the southeast. Calm winds prevail, but gusty winds can occur any time of the year. Daytime summer temperatures are high, and often reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit, but summer nights are usually comfortable. A more detailed description of the local environment is provided in the EID developed for the project.

IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project was analyzed to identify potential short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts on the environment. There are no anticipated significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action that cannot be reduced to acceptable levels as identified and discussed below.

1. **Biological Resources Including Threatened and Endangered Species:** Based upon initial coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife (TDPW), construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to biological resources. The funding applicant performed an onsite survey to determine the presence or absence of any protected plant or animal species, with particular emphasis on the Navasota Ladies'-Tresses, a type of protected orchid. The survey determined that the project area does not contain such protected species. However, the USFWS has recommended that additional surveys be conducted over several years during the flowering season to positively confirm that the plant does not occur within the proposed project site. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the USFWS and the TDPW to insure protection of any protected animal and plant species that may be discovered during actual construction, including their protected habitat. The funding recipient is responsible for compliance with any recommendations made by either the USFWS or the TDPW. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

2. **Cultural/Historic Resources:** Based upon coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to archaeological, historical, architectural, or cultural resources since these protected resources are not known to occur in the project area. An archaeological survey was conducted on the proposed site, and no protected sites were identified. However, if cultural materials are encountered during construction, work will stop immediately in the general area of the discovery, and the funding recipient will immediately notify the SHPO of the discovery. Any such resources discovered will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR Part 800, and appropriate mitigation measures developed and implemented, as needed, in consultation with the SHPO before construction in the area is allowed to continue. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

3. **Floodplain:** Based upon coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the City is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program and has implemented the appropriate Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Therefore, the funding recipient was required to coordinate with the local Floodplain Administrator (FA) for review, and must complete any permit requirements prior to construction of the proposed project. The required initial coordination with the FA has been completed, and that office stated they do not have specific comments about the project. Compliance with any requirements imposed by the FA prior to construction activities should insure that there will be no significant impacts to the floodplain from the proposed project. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the FA during actual construction activities. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

4. **Wetlands:** Based upon coordination with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (COE), construction of the proposed project appears not likely to require the issuance of a project-specific construction permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to protect any wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the United States that may be present. The construction activities may be permitted under Nationwide Permit 12 for utility line activities, and Nationwide Permit 14 for linear transportation crossings. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the COE, and must complete any subsequent permitting process prior to

the initiation of actual construction activities. Compliance with the permit should insure that construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to designated wetlands within the project construction area. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

In order to further protect the natural beneficial functions of the floodplain and wetlands, and to minimize the potential flood hazards to life and property, the construction funding is conditioned to read:

a. The recipient agrees not to collect or treat wastewater generated by new development in the floodplain or wetlands by the project facilities for a period of 50 years from the date of the environmental assessment related to this project. This restriction does not apply to development in the floodplain or wetlands which existed prior to that date;

b. The recipient agrees to adopt and enforce suitable ordinances and implementing procedures for effective local administration of this floodplain and wetlands service area restriction. On application of the recipient's governing body and after considering all relevant information on a proposed development's effects on the natural functions and values of the affected floodplain and wetlands, the EPA Regional Administrator may waive the service area restriction in individual cases; and

c. EPA and the recipient intend that this floodplain and wetlands service area restriction shall benefit any person, organization, or entity possessing an interest in preservation of the natural environment in the 100-year floodplain and wetlands subject to this restriction. Any such beneficiary may seek enforcement of the restriction against the recipient or its successor in a court of competent jurisdiction, if notice of the intent to seek enforcement is first given to the recipient and the EPA Region 6, and neither entity initiates corrective action within 90 days of receiving such notice.

5. Surface Water Resources: Based upon initial coordination with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the National Park Service, construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to protected surface water resources. There will be no discharge into any waters which have been designated as a wild and scenic river. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the TCEQ, and must complete any subsequent permitting process prior to the initiation of actual construction activities. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

6. Ground Water Resources: Based upon initial coordination with the TCEQ, construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to protected ground water resources since the project area is not located over a designated sole source aquifer. The Brazos Valley Groundwater Conservation District reviewed the project, and stated that they do not have specific comments on the project. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the TCEQ, and must complete any subsequent permitting process prior to the initiation of actual construction activities. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

7. Prime and Unique Farmlands: Based upon coordination with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to prime or unique farmlands. The NRCS has stated that important farmland soils are known to occur in the project area, but are rated at a level that will not need further consideration. The NRCS has recommended the use of accepted erosion control methods during actual construction activities, and to replace topsoil as the surface layer when backfilling trenches. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the NRCS, and must comply with NRCS recommendations during construction activities. The funding is contingent upon compliance with these requirements.

8. Air Quality: Based upon coordination with the TCEQ, construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to air quality since the project is located in an area which is in compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for all criteria air pollutants. Therefore, general conformity rules under the air State Implementation Plan do not apply. To further insure compliance with NAAQS standards, all vehicles and motorized equipment used in construction must comply with regulations regarding the control of air pollution from mobile sources. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with the TCEQ, and must complete any subsequent permitting process prior to the initiation of actual construction activities.

9. Environmental Justice: The project was reviewed to ensure that construction will be conducted in an appropriate manner so that all persons and populations are served equally by the infrastructure improvements. Based upon the results of an evaluation to rank the potential environmental impacts to local communities using a computer-assisted mathematical formula, including Geographical Information System maps and census demographic data, no persons or populations will be discriminated against or denied the benefits of the proposed project. Since all persons and populations will be served equally by the project, there will be no adverse impacts that are considered disproportionate to any particular portion of the population.

10. Coastal and Barrier Resources: Construction of the proposed project should not have significant adverse impacts to coastal and barrier resources since the construction project area is not adjacent to the Texas coastal zone.

11. Cumulative Impacts: Potential cumulative impacts would be those impacts to the local environment that would result from the proposed project in combination with other ongoing actions, and those reasonably foreseeable future actions. No other major construction activity is being conducted presently or planned for the immediate future. The proposed project will not individually nor cumulatively over time have a negative impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. To the contrary, improved infrastructure will have a positive environmental effect by enhancing public health and protecting the natural environment from continued contamination and degradation.

DOCUMENTATION, COORDINATION, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A public hearing for the proposed project was held on June 17, 2010, at the Bryan Fire Station Number 5 located at 2052 West Villa Maria Road. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of the proposed project, to identify any concerns, and to request public participation in the development of the project. There were no adverse public comments received during the hearing.

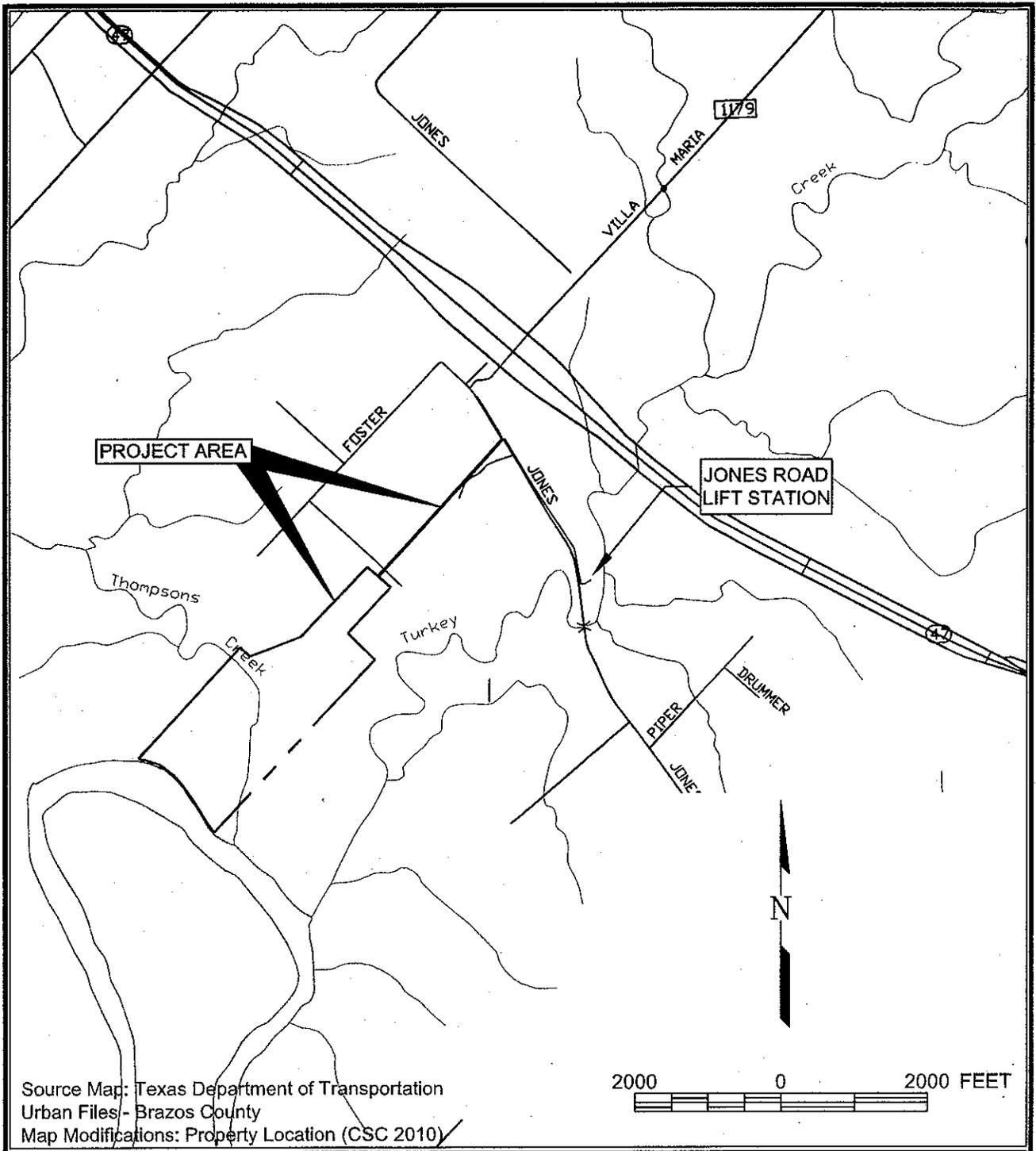
During the process of conducting the environmental review and preparing this Environmental Assessment for the project, coordination has been conducted with all required resource protection agencies and offices to solicit and incorporate their initial review and comments. Copies of this Environmental Assessment will be provided to those agencies and offices for their final review and comments. Other interested parties may request a copy of the Environmental Assessment in writing from the EPA, Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733.

References

1. Environmental Information Document, Final, Thompsons Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, June 2010.

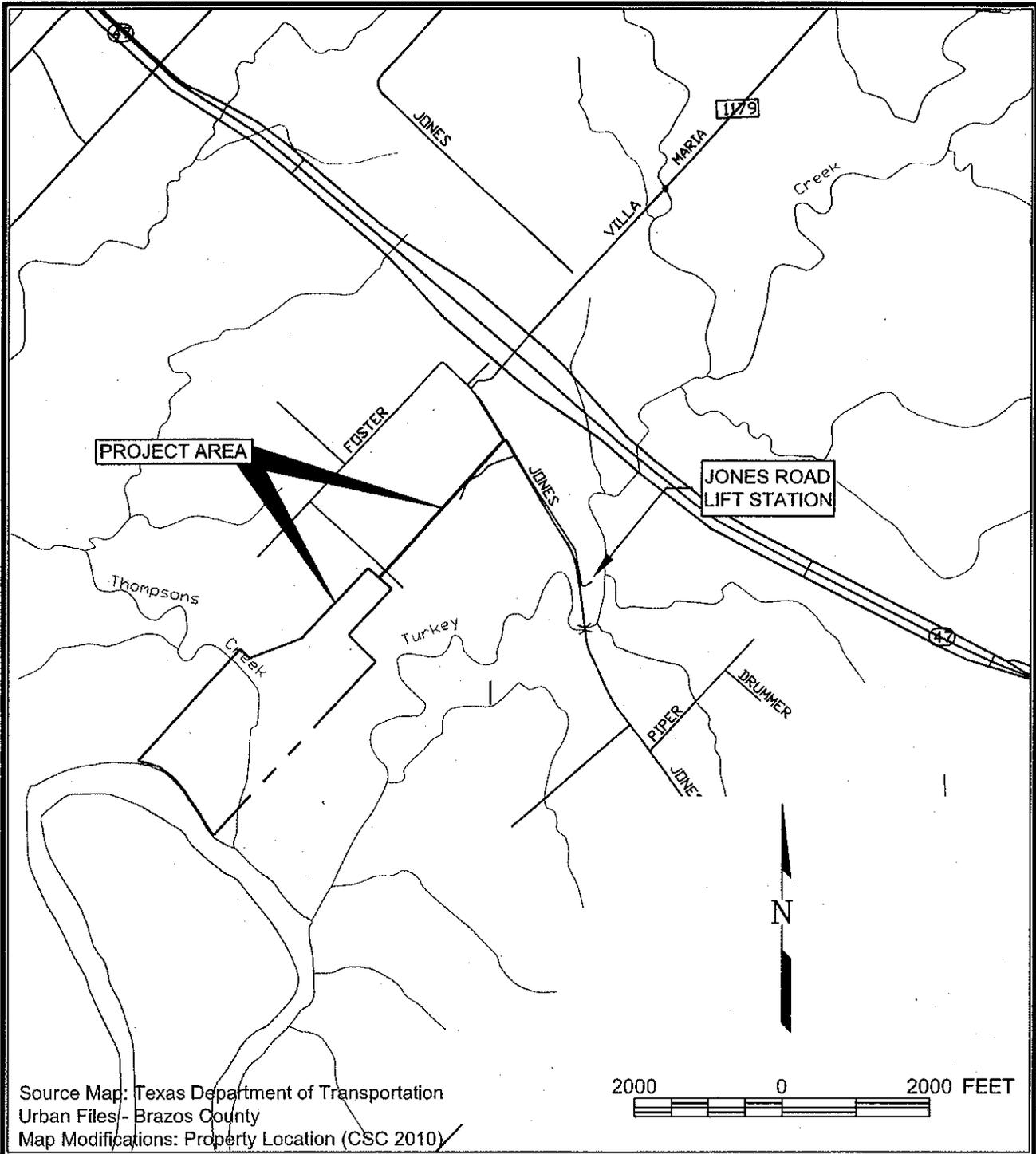
RECOMMENDATION

Based upon completion of this Environmental Assessment, and a detailed review of the Environmental Information Document for the project, it has been determined that construction activities are considered to be environmentally sound. Therefore, it is recommended that a Finding of No Significant Impact be issued.



**PROJECT VICINITY MAP FOR
 THOMPSON'S CREEK WWTP PROJECT**

PROJECT NO: 8118-320	
LOCATION: BRYAN, TEXAS	
APPR: WRC	REV. DATE: --
DRAWN BY: AEA	SCALE: AS SHOWN
DATE: 03/11/10	FIGURE NO.: 1



**PROJECT VICINITY MAP FOR
 THOMPSON'S CREEK WWTP PROJECT**

PROJECT NO: 8118-320	
LOCATION: BRYAN, TEXAS	
APPR: WRC	REV. DATE: --
DRAWN BY: AEA	SCALE: AS SHOWN
DATE: 03/11/10	FIGURE NO.: 1