



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 24-2283, **Version:** 1

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**Department:** Public Health Services

**Department Head:** Barbie Robinson

**Regular or Supplemental RCA:** Regular RCA

**Type of Request:** Investment Memo

**Investment Memo Type:** Final Investment Memo

**Project Name:** PHS Wastewater Sampler Procurement

**Project ID** (if applicable):

**Vendor Legal Name** (if applicable): N/A

**MWDBE Contracted Goal** (if applicable): N/A

**MWDBE Current Achievement** (if applicable): N/A

**Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal:** N/A - Goal not applicable to request

**Managing Entity:** Public Health

**Incremental Authorization Requested:** \$1,550,000

**Total Estimated Project Cost:** \$1,763,000

### Request Summary:

Request for approval of the final Investment Memo for the PHS Wastewater Sampler Procurement project for an initial amount of \$1,763,000 and request for approval of initial commercial paper funding in the amount of \$1,550,000.

### Project Description:

This is a pilot program that has been in operation since October 2023, and currently there are only 4 samplers for the 465 wastewater treatment plants in Harris County. The goal is to increase coverage to 150 plants which will provide HCPH the ability to conduct wastewater surveillance in a more adequate representation of the County.

### Project Scope:

Developing a wastewater program in Harris County is especially challenging in comparison to other jurisdictions due to the large number of wastewater treatment plants, municipal utility districts (MUDs), and operating companies that serve their communities across Harris County; most programs have a single wastewater treatment system (such as in the City of Houston or Tempe, Arizona). In lieu of a single system, Harris County has over 465 active wastewater treatment plants, each requiring its own sampling agreement and equipment. HCPH has selected sites that consider several variables, including geographic location, population size, demographics, social vulnerability index, historical data (such as disease burden), and stakeholder engagement, striving for equitable representation of sampling across the county.

Aligning with CDC guidance, samples are collected from each site twice per week and tested by two laboratories, Houston Health Department Lab and Baylor College of Medicine Lab, monitoring for communicable and emerging diseases, testing for bacteria, viruses (i.e., poliomyelitis), fungal infections (i.e., *C. auris*). Current surveillance includes human adenovirus B, parainfluenza, norovirus, rotavirus, SARS-CoV-2, hepatitis A, influenza A, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), mpox, and enterovirus D68. For sample testing and result interpretation and communication, HCPH has been coordinating with TEPHI to design a wastewater surveillance dashboard and report. As seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, the public, elected officials, and public health leaders rely on accurate and clearly communicated data to make actionable decisions, whether for themselves, their loved ones, or the public they serve.

HCPH is committed to building the wastewater surveillance program in an equitable way, aiming to improve the health and wellbeing of residents across all of Harris County. As the wastewater surveillance program team expands partnerships across the county, MUDs are prioritized due to their geographic location, population size, demographics, social vulnerability index, and history of health inequities and disease burden. By expanding wastewater surveillance into communities facing health barriers, HCPH is able to target specific interventions to address historical inequities and improve the overall health of Harris County.

#### **Justification:**

The CDC Embrace HOPE grant has funded the initial build-out of this program, but the remaining funds on this grant are not sufficient to expand the program as needed. Additional samplers will allow for more wastewater treatment plants across the county to be included in the surveillance program, improving HCPH's ability to rapidly detect and monitor infectious diseases and, eventually, other public health concerns, including chemicals, medications, and novel pathogens. Fewer samplers would mean less coverage and reduce the ability to monitor and detect equitably across the county. Priority outcomes include reducing chronic disease burden, increasing life expectancy, and reducing the spread of COVID-19.

#### **Alternatives and Engagement:**

HCPH has been working closely with the Houston Health Department, UT Health Houston - School of Public Health, Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute (TEPHI), CDC National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS) Centers of Excellence, and other programs across the country, including New York, Arizona, Minnesota, Colorado, Wisconsin, and California. CDC NWSS has developed guidance for program development and implementation, much of which HCPH has incorporated into the program development to ensure best practices and consistency as surveillance findings are compared with other sites.

#### **Anticipated Project Expenditures and Timeline:**

The project includes total 150 wastewater samplers - AS850All Weather Sampler Bundle with 1 - 5.5 Gallon Bottle, 150 Vinyl Tubing, Intake, 3/8-inch, 500 ft, 50 dessicants, and 100 strainers along with freight and warranty costs. Samplers are approximately \$10,273 each. Tubing, dessicants and strainers total \$92k and warranty and freight is \$121k. Costs were estimated based on an Independent Cost Estimate in conjunction with the Purchasing Office.

Scope of Work	Estimated Cost	Estimated Completion
<b>Purchase of 150 wastewater samplers @ \$10,273 each.</b>	1,550,000	9/2024
<b>Vinyl Tubing, Intake, 3/8-inch, 500 ft. \$74,850</b> Material \$2,417 Strainers \$14,500 Estimated Freight \$8,360 WarrantyPlus Service Agreement \$112,350	\$213,000-	9/2024-
<b>Total</b>	1,763,000	9/2024

**Alignment with Goal(s):**

- ☐ Justice and Safety  
☐ Economic Opportunity  
☐ Housing  
☒ Public Health  
☐ Transportation  
☐ Flooding  
☐ Environment  
☐ Governance and Customer Service

**Previous Court Action:**

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken

**Address:**

Precinct(s): Countywide

**Fiscal and Personnel Summary**

Service Name				
	<b>Current Fiscal Year Cost</b>			<b>Annual Fiscal Cost</b>
	<b>Labor</b>	<b>Non-Labor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Recurring Expenses</b>

**Funding Sources****Existing Budget**

Grant	\$	\$213,000	\$213,000	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$	\$	\$	\$

**Additional Budget Request**

Other	\$	\$1,550,000	\$1,550,000	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Request	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total Funding Request</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$1,763,000</b>	<b>\$1,763,000</b>	<b>\$</b>

Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)				
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-	-
Additional Positions Request	-	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-	-

**Anticipated Court Date:** 4/23/2024

**Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date):**

**Legal funding compliance confirmed by:** Paige Abernathy, Assistant County Attorney, 4/10/24

**Department Approval by:** Robert Brannon, HCPH CFO 4/15/2024

**OMB CIP Team Approval by:** Wanwei Tang, 4/15/2024

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**Commercial Paper Request** *(For OMB use only):*

**Receiving Department:** Public Health Services

**Project PeopleSoft ID:** TBD

**CP Series Description:** : CP Series Description: Commercial Paper Series D-2 can be used for (1) construction of public works, (2) the purchase of automobiles, equipment and machinery, including computers, materials and supplies for the operation of the County's precincts and departments (3) Professional services, including services provided by engineers, architects, attorneys, auditors, financial advisors, and fiscal agents, in connection with the contractual obligations described in (1) and (2).

Commercial Paper is being requested for the PHS Wastewater Sampler Procurement **project** and is expected to be repaid within the next three fiscal years either through bonds, budgetary means or pay-as-you-go sources.

**OMB Financial Management contact:** Amy Perez, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Management and Budget