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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: September 10, 2013

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Regional Optimization Master Plan Update – Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility and Tres Ríos Water Reclamation Facility**

The Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP) is a master plan to allow the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department to meet current environmental regulatory requirements as mandated by the Clean Water Act. The ROMP program has been an ambitious undertaking that will dramatically improve the quality of the community's reclaimed water for recharge and reuse.

This memorandum is an update on two linchpins of the project that are nearing completion.

### Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility

The Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility will replace the existing 1950s-era Roger Road facility, which utilizes old technology that could not meet modern day environmental standards. The Agua Nueva facility will meet standards required for effluent discharges into the Santa Cruz River. In fact, the new process is aligned with A-plus classification standards for reclaimed water, which offer the highest potential quality and will not require the posting of signage cautioning against human exposure.

The new facility also resolves the treatment plant odors that have plagued the west side of Tucson for many years, since the facility will have state-of-the-art odor control technology.

Construction of the facility is ahead of schedule and significantly below budget. The facility is likely to begin treating wastewater in February 2014 – nearly six months ahead of its original schedule. In addition, while the project was originally budgeted at \$275 million, it appears the facility will be completed for roughly \$180 million.

The capacity of the new facility is 32 million gallons per day. Solids will not be treated at the Agua Nueva facility. Instead, solids will be conveyed to and treated at the upgraded and expanded Tres Ríos Water Reclamation Facility, formerly the Ina Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility.

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The name Agua Nueva was selected for several reasons. Easily translated, it means “New Water,” which reflects the fact that this facility allows the recapture and reuse of a critical natural resource. While the Spanish origin of the name is a nod to the cultural diversity that has shaped this region, it is also an acknowledgment of one of the most advanced water reclamation efforts in the world. Singapore, which has faced persistent water shortages, has gained international recognition for its program to treat wastewater to potable standards in its NEWater campaign. This is not the direction being pursued in our region; however, the name recognizes a model effort in advanced water resource management.

The formal name of the facility refers to “water reclamation” instead of “wastewater reclamation.” This deliberate shift reflects what our facilities really do: they reclaim a vital resource and ensure we will have enough water to satisfy public service demands while decreasing the diversion of water from sensitive habitats and even providing wetlands benefits.

Tres Ríos Water Reclamation Facility

Tres Ríos, formerly the Ina Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility, will have a capacity of 50 million gallons per day that will meet strict environmental standards for effluent discharges. The project is entering its final phase and should be operational by the fall.

The construction of the upgrade and expansion of the plant to date has met timeline requirements and has not exceeded the original budget.

The name was selected, in part, as a geographic locator, given it is near the confluence of the Santa Cruz River, the Rillito River and the Cañada del Oro Wash. Similarly easily translated, the name is recognizable as a water theme. It also builds upon the larger El Corazón de los Tres Ríos del Norte project in the same vicinity that will recover riparian habitat that has been lost along the Santa Cruz River as a result of groundwater pumping.

Other major components of the ROMP project include a now operational, state-of-the-art water quality laboratory and a five-mile long sewer interceptor that allows flexibility of flow management between the Ina Road and Roger Road facilities. Effluent discharges will continue to provide a riparian habitat and birding opportunities.

Reclaimed water is an important piece of our community’s water portfolio, and we look forward to continuing to address this crucial regional issue.

CHH/mjk

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Jackson Jenkins, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation