

## **Location**

Tenino, WA

## **Funding**

\$2,538,000 USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan  
\$1,400,000 USDA Water and Waste Disposal Grant  
\$476,282 City of Tenino Contribution  
\$8,037,900 Washington Public Works Board Trust Fund Loan  
\$4,400,000 State Appropriations Grant  
\$30,000 Tap Fees  
\$150,000 in 20 hook-ups with the USDA Section 504 Home Repair Program  
\$1,000,000 Community Development Block Grant  
\$2,500,000 Capacity Fees

## **Partners**

City of Tenino, Washington  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development  
Washington Public Works Board Trust Fund Loan  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

## **Abstract**

Before 2008, Tenino, Washington's septic system was failing and contaminating the environment. The small community needed to take on the costly effort to upgrade its facilities to protect the local environment and promote future economic growth. With funding from USDA, Tenino received its first wastewater treatment plant and collection facilities. This new infrastructure supports growth in the existing urban growth boundary and enhances Tenino's economic competitiveness to prospective residents and businesses.

## **Project Description**

Located in western Washington, the community of Tenino was established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with increased settlement related to the quarrying, logging, saw mills, and coal mining in the area. Eventually the demand for many of those resources diminished, leading to the decline of Tenino's industrial activity. Today, Tenino has 1,695 residents and is known primarily as a "bedroom community" for the nearby cities of Olympia and Tacoma.

The City of Tenino is strongly committed to investing in a high quality of life for its residents. One major initiative targeted by the City was economically and environmentally responsible growth of the community. Because of Tenino's proximity to major metropolitan areas, the City anticipates major growth over the next few decades. Tenino has developed a comprehensive plan to target growth within existing community boundaries. The purpose of Tenino's urban growth boundary is to develop the city in the most efficient manner –where public facilities and services already exist. Further, Tenino wanted to prevent development on open land that should instead be used for natural resources, fish or wildlife habitat, or recreation.

One major issue confronted Tenino's sustainable growth strategy: the City did not have a wastewater system. Residents' septic systems were outdated and the drain fields were failing. Many of the city's

businesses, residents, and community facilities were using cistern systems, installed between the 1920's and 1940's and no longer able to protect the groundwater from contamination. New businesses and residents were reluctant to move to Tenino because of the inadequate water and sewer facilities. In addition, the Thurston County Environmental Health Division published a report describing the nitrate pollution in Tenino's aquifer raising further concerns about water quality. The community needed to react fast to address the environmental and economic impacts of their outdated septic systems.

In 2008, Tenino secured the financing required to develop the city's first wastewater treatment plant and collection facility. The project was funded by a \$2,538,000 USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan, a \$1,400,000 USDA Water and Waste Disposal Grant, a contribution from the City of Tenino for \$476,282, a \$8,037,900 Washington Public Works Board Trust Fund Loan, a \$4,400,000 State Appropriations Grant, \$2,500,000 in capacity fees, and \$30,000 in tap fees.

Additionally, each home in the area needed to pay to hook-up, install a grinder pump, and upgrade the home's electrical panels to accommodate the new system. USDA's Section 504 Home Repair Program provided \$150,000 in assistance for hook-ups to about 20 very low-income homeowners, and a \$1,000,000 Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development provided additional assistance to any low-income homeowners who did not qualify for USDA's program.

The new wastewater treatment plant in Tenino was complete in 2011. It protects the environment and supports economic growth in the City. Tenino now meets federal and state water quality standards, and capacity of the wastewater treatment facilities can accommodate population growth through 2026. The City of Tenino is confident they will see business and residential growth in their community as the economy improves. Tenino's water system is now economically and environmentally stable and prepared for sustainable growth in the coming decades.

### **Livability Principles Addressed**

Enhance economic competitiveness – Tenino residents had a clear plan for enhancing the attractiveness of their community for investment and wastewater facilities were key to implementing their plan.

Support existing communities – This project, designed to support compact community development in a specific area designated for growth, both supports a diverse, walkable community and protects the working and natural resource lands outside of the designated Urban Growth Area, as envisioned by the state of Washington's Growth Management Act.

### **Lesson Learned**

Public Utilities such as water and wastewater systems are a critical implementation tool for land use plans. In rural areas, historically dependent upon septic systems, redevelopment of historic downtown areas, "main streets," and walkable neighborhoods sometimes depends upon improvement of such basic services. Federal investments can help institutionalize a local growth boundary, while such boundaries provide a critical guide to the planning of a sewer service area.

### **Pictures and Maps**



Description: Context Map.

Source: Esri Basemaps, ArcGIS online database (all layer packages by Esri)



Description: Interior of Tenino's new Wastewater Treatment Plant

Source: Bruce Whittle, Area Specialist, USDA RD



Description: Entrance of Tenino's new Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Source: Bruce Whittle, Area Specialist, USDA RD



Description: Exterior of Tenino's new Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Source: Bruce Whittle, Area Specialist, USDA RD



Description: Exterior of Tenino's new Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Source: Bruce Whittle, Area Specialist, USDA RD

#### **Sources of Information from the Text**

Dwelley, A. (2010, October 11). *History by Dwelley*. Retrieved July 31, 2012, from City of Tenino:  
[http://www.ci.tenino.wa.us/history\\_by\\_dwelley.htm](http://www.ci.tenino.wa.us/history_by_dwelley.htm)

Whittle, B. (2012, July 31). Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development. (A. Murnan, Interviewer)

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