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TOWN OF
WESTLAKE

ICMA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD
APPLICATION –JOINT ELEVATED WATER STORAGE
TANK

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Introduction

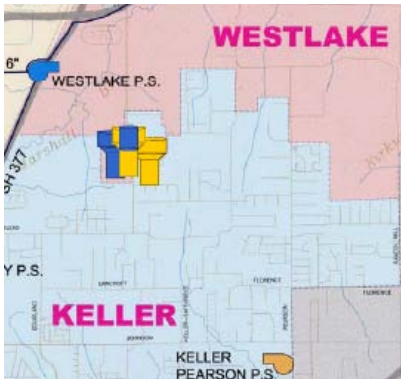
We are very grateful for this opportunity to shine a spotlight on a successful community partnership project; we hope it will inspire similarly challenged communities to seek out collaboration and forge their own successes. Located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, the Town of Westlake is approximately 6.7 square miles and home to 992 residents with an annual operating budget of \$12.5M. The Town has operated under the Council-Manager form of government since it was adopted in May of 1999.

The project that will be discussed within the following pages began over 12 years ago in late 1998. Two communities, Keller, Texas and Westlake, Texas faced significant water resource challenges which led them to explore a collaborative solution. The culmination of the project was the design and construction of the nation's first and (we believe) still the only, dual tank elevated water storage facility. This project carried with it many obstacles, requiring true dedication and ingenuity from the elected officials and staff of both communities. Shortly after completion, the project was recognized by several trade publications and professional associations for its innovation in engineering and design. It is our hope in submitting this application that other communities facing similar challenges will be able to duplicate and perhaps even improve on our success.

Problem Assessment – The need that prompted the joint venture

In late 1998, the Town of Westlake began implementing a comprehensive strategic plan to place the Town's future on a firmer foundation. A major component of the plan dealt with water services. Historically, the Town's residents received their water and wastewater services from one of the surrounding municipalities or the local

Municipal Utility District. The Town's Council and residents desired greater control over their water services and consequently, began exploring the purchase of infrastructure, acquisition of licenses, and so forth, necessary to make this desire a reality. Part of this



process involved a facilities study which resulted in a recommendation for increased water storage on the Town's southern boundary. At the same time, independent of this study, the City of Keller conducted its own planning and analysis which also recognized a water storage need in its northern area bordering Westlake.

At the time the study was conducted, the Town of Westlake consisted of approximately 200 residents with very limited resources (the General Fund budget in 1998 was less than \$1.5M). Westlake's Town Council sought ways to minimize the fiscal impact and on-going obligations while still achieving the desired outcome of a complete water distribution system including partnership with the City of Keller.

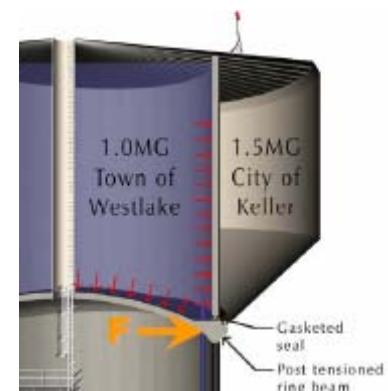
Program Implementation & Costs

Shortly after receiving notification of the need for an elevated tank, Westlake's Town Manager approached the City Manager in Keller to begin exploring ways in which the two municipalities might work together to meet their respective needs. The first step in the collaborative process consisted of hiring an engineering firm to analyze the feasibility of various alternatives for infrastructure development; it was out of this process that a 'joint-use' tank idea was born. The 'tank within a tank' concept was completely new and carried with it many engineering and design challenges. Due to the 'untried' nature of the project and additional work that had to be done to support both

tanks, the cost of the project was slightly higher than a typical 2.5M gallon tank. The total cost of the project was approximately \$3.1M. However, despite a higher installation cost, both municipalities spent significantly less on their portion of the combined project than was estimated for their stand-alone water storage tanks realizing total cost savings of more than \$1M each. The project faced political and logistical challenges as well: location of the tank, ownership, responsibility for on-going maintenance, land acquisition, water supply coordination, exterior décor, franchise rights (telecom lease space) etc. Each of these issues required hours of negotiation and planning by both the staff and elected officials, efforts that are evidenced in the lengthy interlocal agreement established by both parties.

Tangible Results

The implementation of the tank within a tank concept allows both municipalities access and control via independent SCADA systems and transmission lines. Additionally, the physical design of the structure creates two separate tanks that for regulatory purposes, are considered separate facilities which creates independent accountability with regard to meeting State rules and regulations. Both communities receive the service they need with added capacity for future growth. Westlake's initial goal of reducing the Town's fiscal obligations was also accomplished through an interlocal agreement with the City of Keller which establishes shared facility maintenance costs. One of the major priorities for the project was to minimize the environmental impact of the storage tower;



this goal was also accomplished by utilizing the smallest footprint possible for the structure which preserved many of the established trees in the area.

Other benefits realized by this collaborative approach include: land-use maximization, mitigation of social and political issues, minimum overall cost savings of more than \$2.2M, future regional water needs met and interconnectivity for emergency use.

Intangible Benefits – One of the main benefits to this approach is one that is not readily apparent. By choosing to work together and create one facility, the visual landscape of the area is forever enhanced. Despite many efforts to improve the look of water storage towers, there is little that can be done to change their imposing size. Thanks to the combined efforts of those involved, there is one less round monolith to dominate local skies.

Lessons learned during planning, implementation, and analysis of the program

One of the most important elements to the success of this project was the inclusion of all stake holders from the beginning i.e. wholesale water suppliers, engineers, designers, architects, staff, elected officials and residents. This involvement allowed potential issues to be recognized and addressed early on in the process rather than become stumbling blocks later.

Another key element of success was the determination and single-mindedness of the elected officials of both communities to see the project through to completion. There were many opportunities for those involved to become bogged down in claim-

staking; however, a willingness to work together and continual emphasis on the common goal helped everyone stay on course.

In this case, involving third-party engineers and contractors was also a significant factor of our success. There were many instances where there was more than one right answer i.e. landscaping and exterior design elements. Having a third party provide completed drafts based on parameters that were developed cooperatively allowed the project to progress in an expedient manner.

Conclusion

We believe that this project is deserving of your recognition because it epitomizes the type of collaboration and partnership ICMA endorses. This innovative solution was the result of the vision of two cities recognizing that they are not islands but interacting entities and that the challenges of both can be better overcome through cooperation. Not only has this project provided one solution to the differing needs of two municipalities, but it also helped unite the two communities by focusing on a common goal.

There are many cities and towns both large and small that are facing significant infrastructure challenges on what amount to shoe-string budgets. We hope that the success of this project will act as a catalyst to help other municipalities struggling with similar challenges to explore collaborative solutions.

