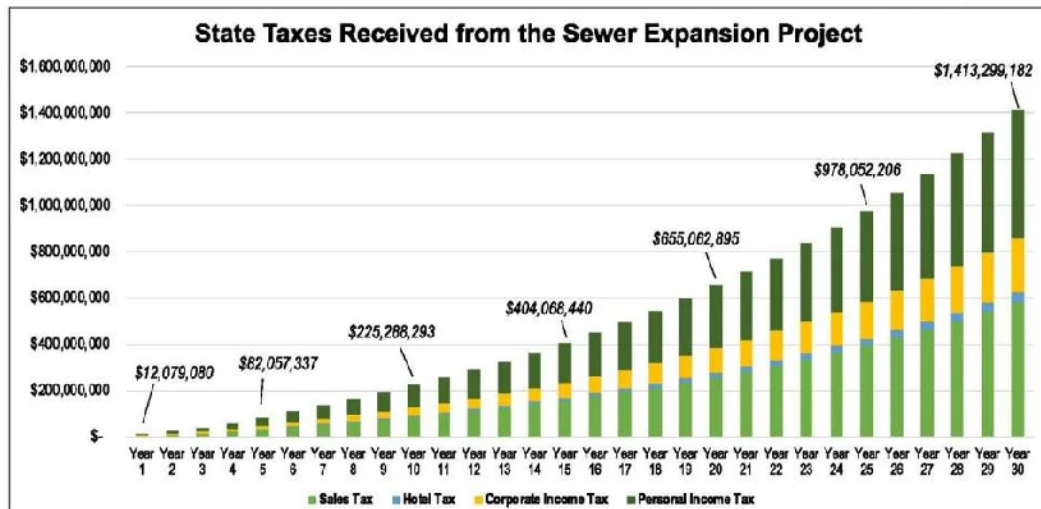


## Study finds southern sewer project vital to county growth

Adam Branting Dec 15, 2022

### State of Nebraska Impact

The following chart shows the overall impact the State of Nebraska receives each year if the sewer is fully expanded over the 30-Year time frame. State sales tax and personal income tax produce the greatest impact for the state, totaling more than \$225 million in Year 10 and more than \$1.4 billion by Year 30 with full build out. The sewer expansion produces significant impact not only for the local area but for the State of Nebraska as a whole. However, yearly impacts are dependent on the proposed timeline for implementation and would differ if phases were delayed.



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An economic impact study forecasts continued prosperity for Sarpy County as the new Unified Southern Sarpy Wastewater System progresses, opening up the southern half of the county to development.

However, the study sees economic decline in coming years without proper funding for the agency.

Written by Chicago-based development consultant Hunden Strategic Partners and distributed earlier this month by the Sarpy County and Cities Wastewater Agency, the comprehensive 156-page report lays out the benefits of the 30-plus year construction project.

“Sarpy County has significant opportunities to continue to grow with adequate infrastructure in place,” the report reads. “The industrial market has boomed in the area in the last five years and has the opportunity to become a hot spot for large developments alike.

“Sarpy County is positioned to be the main benefactor of Omaha’s growth given its accessibility and land.”

The study foresees an impact over a 30-year period, “with more than \$37 billion in net new spending, \$24 billion in net new earnings and approximately 4,740 new full-time equivalent jobs.”

“Capturable fiscal impact for the State of Nebraska is expected to total approximately \$15.8 billion from sales, hotel, corporate income and personal income tax. Local taxes are expected to generate roughly \$9.7 billion from city sales tax and property tax,” the study says.

HSP also finds that “if the sewer expansion did not happen, it is expected that additional residential, commercial and industrial developments would not have the ability to be developed economically.

“It can be expected that developers would go elsewhere especially for the industrial market.”

Don Kelly, chair of the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners, said the report’s deep dive on the development’s economic benefits is critical for both planning purposes and pursuing future funding.

The sewer system does not plan to use property tax dollars, so financing from private developers and public funds — particularly from the State of Nebraska — is essential to continue the project in the future.

“By showing them the economic impact this sewer system that we are building, without tax dollars I might add, brings to the state — hopefully, they can see the obvious return on investment if they invest in Sarpy County,” Kelly said.

User rates and connection fees will help fund the first phase of construction, including a sewer line along Springfield Creek. The agency received a nearly \$69 million no-interest loan from the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy to begin work in April.

The system is expected to cost \$250 million, and will be built in phases as funding becomes available.

““We just want to bring high paying, good jobs to our people. Infrastructure is the key,” Kelly said. “We have a vision, and we want to implement that vision. It takes resources.”