



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

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*Date:* June 24, 2015  
*Case No.:* 2015-004827ENV  
*Project Title:* Alameda Creek Recapture Project  
*Location:* The Sunol Valley in unincorporated Alameda County, west of Calaveras Road and south of Interstate 680. The proposed facilities would be constructed within and adjacent to a quarry pit in the Surface Mining Permit 24 (SMP-24) area and at the existing Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Calaveras Substation site.  
  
*BPA Nos.:* N/A  
*Zoning:* Water Management  
*Block/Lot:* N/A  
*Project Sponsor:* San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
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This Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department in connection with the project listed above. The purpose of the EIR is to provide information about the potential significant physical environmental effects of the proposed project, to identify possible ways to minimize the project's significant adverse effects, and to describe and analyze possible alternatives to the proposed project. The San Francisco Planning Department is issuing this NOP to inform the public and responsible and interested agencies about the proposed project and the intent to prepare an EIR. This NOP is also available online at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/puccases>.

### PROJECT SUMMARY

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is proposing the Alameda Creek Recapture Project (ACRP or proposed project) on SFPUC Alameda watershed<sup>1</sup> lands in unincorporated Alameda County. The proposed project would recapture an annual average of up to 9,820 acre-feet per year (ac-ft/yr) (or 3,200 million gallons per year [mgal/yr]) of water that will be released from Calaveras Reservoir and/or bypassed around the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam during future operation of Calaveras Reservoir. Water would be recaptured from a quarry pit, Pit F2, in the Sunol Valley located approximately 6 miles downstream of Calaveras Reservoir and 0.5-mile south of the Interstate 680/State

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<sup>1</sup> The SFPUC Alameda watershed refers to CCSF-owned lands managed by the SFPUC as part of the SFPUC regional water system. The Alameda watershed lands are located within the much larger hydrologic boundary of the Alameda Creek watershed.

Route 84 interchange. The ACRP would recapture an amount of water equivalent to that which is released and/or bypassed. Proposed project components for recapture of the water from Pit F2 include pumps mounted on barges, pipelines extending from the pumps to shore; a new pipeline connecting to the existing Sunol Pump Station Pipeline; and ancillary facilities such as throttle valves, a flow meter, and electrical facilities. No work would occur in the bed, bank, or channel of Alameda Creek. The project location and components are described in more detail further below.

## OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The ACRP would recapture water that the SFPUC will release from Calaveras Reservoir and/or bypass around the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam as part of the future operations plan for the Calaveras Dam Replacement project. As further described below, the releases and bypasses are required by regulatory permits for the Calaveras Dam Replacement project.

### The SFPUC Water System Improvement Program and the Alameda Creek Recapture Project

The City and County of San Francisco (CCSF), through the SFPUC, owns and operates a regional water supply conveyance, treatment, and distribution system that extends from the Sierra Nevada to San Francisco and serves drinking water to 2.6 million people in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Tuolumne Counties. The proposed ACRP is a component of the SFPUC's Water System Improvement Program (WSIP)<sup>2</sup> (see [www.sfwater.org](http://www.sfwater.org)). The basic goals of the WSIP are to increase the reliability of the regional water system with respect to water quality, seismic response, delivery, and water supply to meet water delivery needs in the service area. A Program EIR (PEIR) for the WSIP was certified by the San Francisco Planning Commission and the WSIP was adopted by the SFPUC on October 30, 2008.<sup>3</sup> The PEIR addresses the potential environmental impacts of the WSIP facility improvement projects at a programmatic level and evaluates the WSIP's water supply strategy at a project level of detail. Implementation of the proposed project would contribute to meeting the WSIP's overall goals and objectives, which are to:

- Maintain high-quality water
- Reduce vulnerability to earthquakes
- Increase delivery reliability
- Meet customer water supply needs
- Enhance sustainability in all system activities
- Achieve a cost-effective, fully operational system

Specifically, the ACRP would assist the SFPUC in achieving the established WSIP level of service goals and objectives related to water supply during both nondrought and drought periods by increasing operational flexibility and avoiding the loss of yield to the regional system from the SFPUC Alameda watershed system that would otherwise result from future operations of Calaveras Reservoir.

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<sup>2</sup> The Alameda Creek Recapture project is listed in the WSIP PEIR under its former title of Alameda Creek Fishery Enhancement project.

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, 2008. *Final Program Environmental Impact Report on the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Water System Improvement Program*. San Francisco Planning Department File No. 2005.0159E, State Clearinghouse No. 2005092026. Certified October 30, 2008.

## Project Relationship to the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project

Calaveras Reservoir, located at the southern end of the SFPUC Alameda watershed and approximately 6 miles upstream of the ACRP project area, collects and stores local runoff, including flows from Alameda, Calaveras, and Arroyo Hondo Creeks. The Alameda Creek Diversion Dam and Tunnel divert flows from Alameda Creek into Calaveras Reservoir.<sup>4</sup> Water stored in Calaveras Reservoir is conveyed to the Sunol Valley Water Treatment Plant (SVWTP) for treatment prior to delivery to customers, or to San Antonio Reservoir for storage prior to being treated at the SVWTP. Local runoff that is collected in Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs accounts for approximately 13 percent of the SFPUC's total water yield. **Figure 1** shows SFPUC facilities in the Alameda watershed.

In 2001, due to safety deficiencies regarding the seismic stability of Calaveras Dam, the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams, placed interim operational restrictions on Calaveras Reservoir that limit the reservoir's water storage volume to approximately 40 percent of its historical storage capacity. The Calaveras Dam Replacement project, another key regional facility improvement project of the WSIP, will restore the storage capacity of Calaveras Reservoir and is designed to help the SFPUC meet the WSIP level of service goals related to seismic reliability and water delivery reliability.<sup>5</sup> The Calaveras Dam Replacement project is currently under construction, with completion anticipated in 2018.

Through the permitting process for the Calaveras Dam Replacement project, the SFPUC, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), agreed to two in-stream flow schedules that satisfy the requirements of the Federal Endangered Species Act and the provisions of the California Fish and Game Code. These in-stream flow schedules will be implemented as part of the future operations plan for Calaveras Reservoir to be protective of Central California Coast (CCC) steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) distinct population segment (DPS), a species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, in Alameda and Calaveras Creeks below the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam and Calaveras Dam, respectively. The in-stream flow schedule at the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam will increase flows in Alameda Creek below the dam, with a corresponding reduction in the amount of water that the SFPUC historically diverted from Alameda Creek into Calaveras Reservoir; the in-stream flow schedule for Calaveras Creek below Calaveras Dam will provide year-round releases from Calaveras Reservoir (see Figure 1).

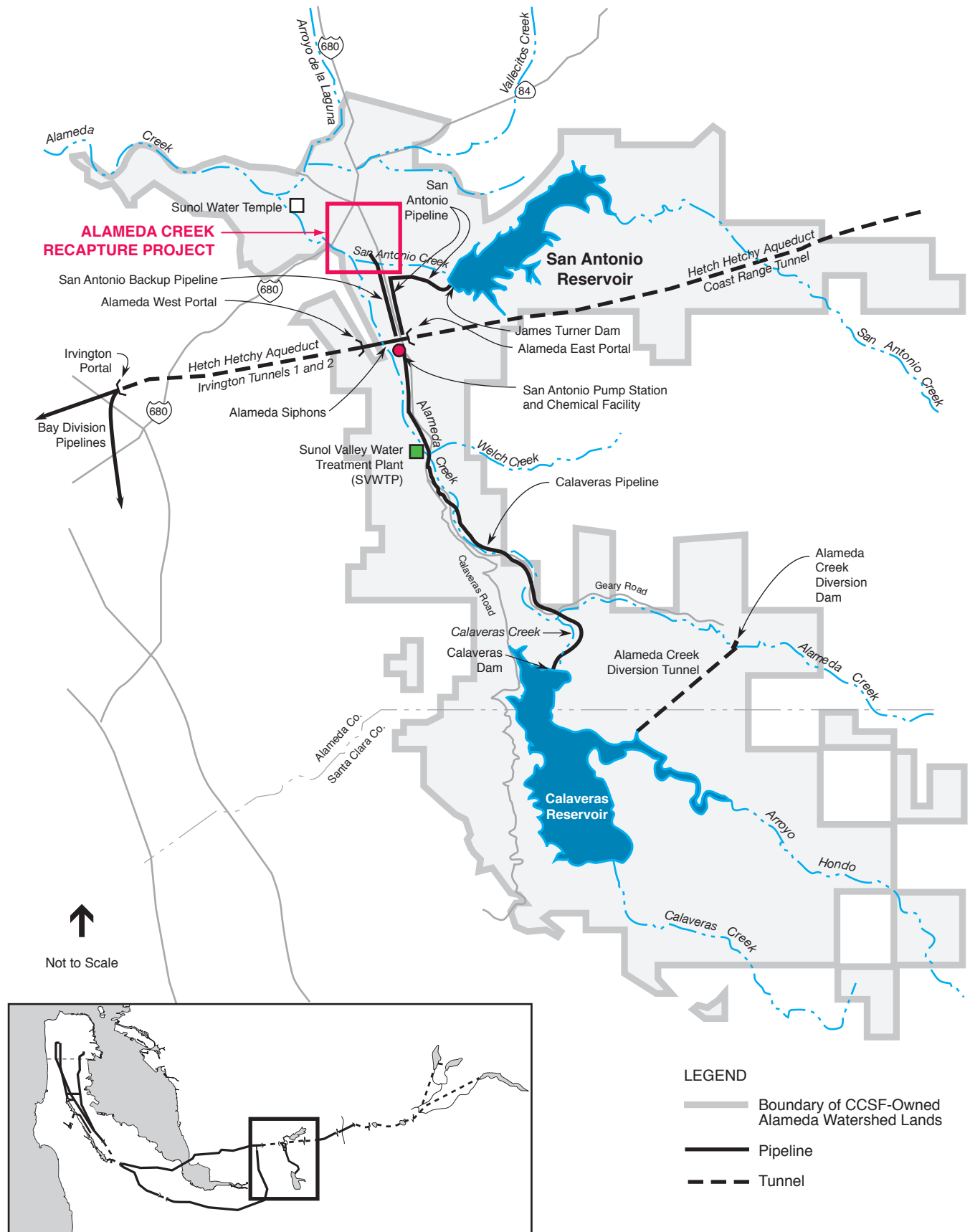
The SFPUC used the Alameda System Daily Hydrologic Model (ASDHM)<sup>6</sup> to estimate the water supply loss from the SFPUC Alameda watershed if the water that is bypassed and/or released during future operations of Calaveras Reservoir is not recaptured. Using historic hydrology data for the period of October 1995 through September 2009, the model was used to compare the water loss to the regional system under

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<sup>4</sup> The SFPUC operates the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam and Calaveras Reservoir under pre-1914 appropriative water rights that were originally established by the Spring Valley Water Company.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, 2011. *Final Environmental Impact Report for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Calaveras Dam Replacement Project*. San Francisco Planning Department File No. 2005.0161E, State Clearinghouse No. 2005102102. Certified January 27, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> ASDHM was first developed during the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project permitting process and has been continuously modified and improved. For more information on the model and the assumptions incorporated into the model, please refer to "Dhakal, A. S., E. Buckland, S. McBain, 2012. Overview of Methods, Models, and Results to Develop Unimpaired, Impaired, and Future Flow and Temperature Estimates along Lower Alameda Creek for Hydrologic Years 1996-2009. 81 pp".



SOURCE: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008

SFPUC Alameda Creek Recapture Project  
**Figure 1**  
 Overview of Alameda Watershed Facilities

two scenarios: (a) Calaveras Reservoir is restored to its historical storage capacity and the in-stream flow schedules are implemented, against (b) Calaveras Reservoir is restored to its historical storage capacity and the in-stream flow schedules are not implemented. The difference in the volume of water diverted to Calaveras Reservoir at the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam and released from Calaveras Dam under these two scenarios represents the total water supply loss associated with the in-stream flow schedules. The model estimated an average annual loss of 9,820 ac-ft/yr<sup>7</sup> (or 3,200 mgal/yr), which is equal to the average annual volume of water that SFPUC proposes to recapture with the ACRP.<sup>8</sup>

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project Location

The project area<sup>9</sup> is in unincorporated Alameda County, south of the Interstate 680/State Route 84 interchange and west of Calaveras Road. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the project. The proposed facilities would be in the Sunol Valley on the east side of Alameda Creek, approximately 6 miles north of Calaveras Reservoir and 1 mile west of San Antonio Reservoir. The ACRP would be located within the SFPUC Alameda watershed.

### Project Objectives

As stated previously, implementation of the proposed project would assist the SFPUC in achieving established WSIP level of service goals and objectives related to ensuring the SFPUC has an adequate supply of water to deliver to customers during both non-drought and drought periods. The primary purpose of the ACRP is the downstream recapture of an annual average of up to 9,820 ac ft/yr (or 3,200 mgal/yr) of water that is released from Calaveras Reservoir and/or bypassed around the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam, pursuant to the Calaveras Dam Replacement project's in-stream flow schedules to be implemented during future operations of Calaveras Reservoir. The ACRP would recapture an amount of water equivalent to that which is released and/or bypassed. By recapturing the water, the SFPUC would be able to maintain historic water diversions from the SFPUC Alameda watershed system and avoid the loss of yield to the regional water system.

### Project Components

The ACRP would recapture the water by collecting Alameda Creek water that naturally infiltrates into quarry Pit F2, operated under Surface Mining Permit-24 (SMP-24) by Hanson Aggregates, and pumping the water directly to SVWTP or San Antonio Reservoir. The quarry pit is located adjacent to Alameda Creek in the Sunol Valley, approximately six miles downstream of Calaveras Reservoir. The project area and vicinity are shown on **Figure 2** and the preliminary project site plan is shown on **Figure 3**. The proposed project components include:

- Four pumps mounted on barges that would be floated in quarry Pit F2 (including a mooring system)
- Four flexible discharge pipelines extending from each pump to a new pipe manifold located on shore

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<sup>7</sup> The total volume of water released from Calaveras Reservoir and/or bypassed at the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam will vary year to year depending on precipitation over the watershed and the future operations plan for Calaveras Reservoir.

<sup>8</sup> San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), 2014. *Final Conceptual Engineering Report for Alameda Creek Recapture Project*. Prepared by SFPUC Engineering Management Bureau. November 21, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> "Project area" refers to the area within which all construction-related disturbance would occur.

- 100-foot-long, 36-inch-diameter pipeline connection between the new pipe manifold and the existing Sunol Pump Station Pipeline
- Throttling valves and a flow meter
- Electrical control building
- Electrical transformer, ten new power poles, and approximately 1,600 feet of overhead power lines extending from the HHWP Calaveras Electrical Substation to the new electrical control building.<sup>10</sup>

SFPUC assumes that the water quality in Pit F2 would be adequate and that pretreatment would not be required prior to conveying the water to the SVWTP or San Antonio Reservoir. This assumption will be confirmed through water quality monitoring and testing at Pit F2.<sup>11</sup>

## Construction

Construction is expected to begin in 2017 and to be completed within 1.5 years (by 2018), resulting in an overall construction period of approximately 18 months. Construction activities would include staging/laydown, site clearing, demolition, drilling, earth work, structural placement and backfilling, concrete and paving work, dewatering, excavation, and trenching in the project area. Calaveras Road would be the primary construction access route to the project area. Two existing quarry access roads that run east-to-west along either side of San Antonio Creek would provide secondary access to the ACRP site. No construction work would be required within the Alameda Creek bed, bank or channel.

## Proposed Operations

Operation of the ACRP is dependent on the in-stream flow schedules that will be implemented as part of future operations of Calaveras Reservoir; that is, ACRP operations would not commence until the in-stream flow schedules are implemented. The maintenance of the in-stream flows will be measured at two compliance points: (1) the compliance point for the releases from Calaveras Dam is the existing United States Geological Service (USGS) gage located on Calaveras Creek immediately below Calaveras Dam, and (2) the compliance point for the water that is bypassed around the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam is a new stream flow gage that will be installed as part of the Calaveras Dam Replacement project below the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam.

SFPUC modeling and monitoring of current conditions at Pit F2 in Sunol Valley, approximately six miles downstream of the compliance points, shows that natural infiltration occurs from Alameda Creek into Pit F2. SFPUC facility operators would use the proposed pumps in Pit F2 and existing facilities and infrastructure in the Sunol Valley and surrounding areas of the Alameda watershed system to recapture an amount of water equivalent to that which is released and/or bypassed by collecting water that naturally infiltrates into Pit F2. SFPUC would convey the recaptured water from the quarry pit directly to either the SVWTP or San Antonio Reservoir.<sup>12</sup> The SFPUC would document the amounts of water recaptured from pumping at Pit F2, and operate the project in a manner that would assure the amounts recaptured correlate with amounts released and/or bypassed.

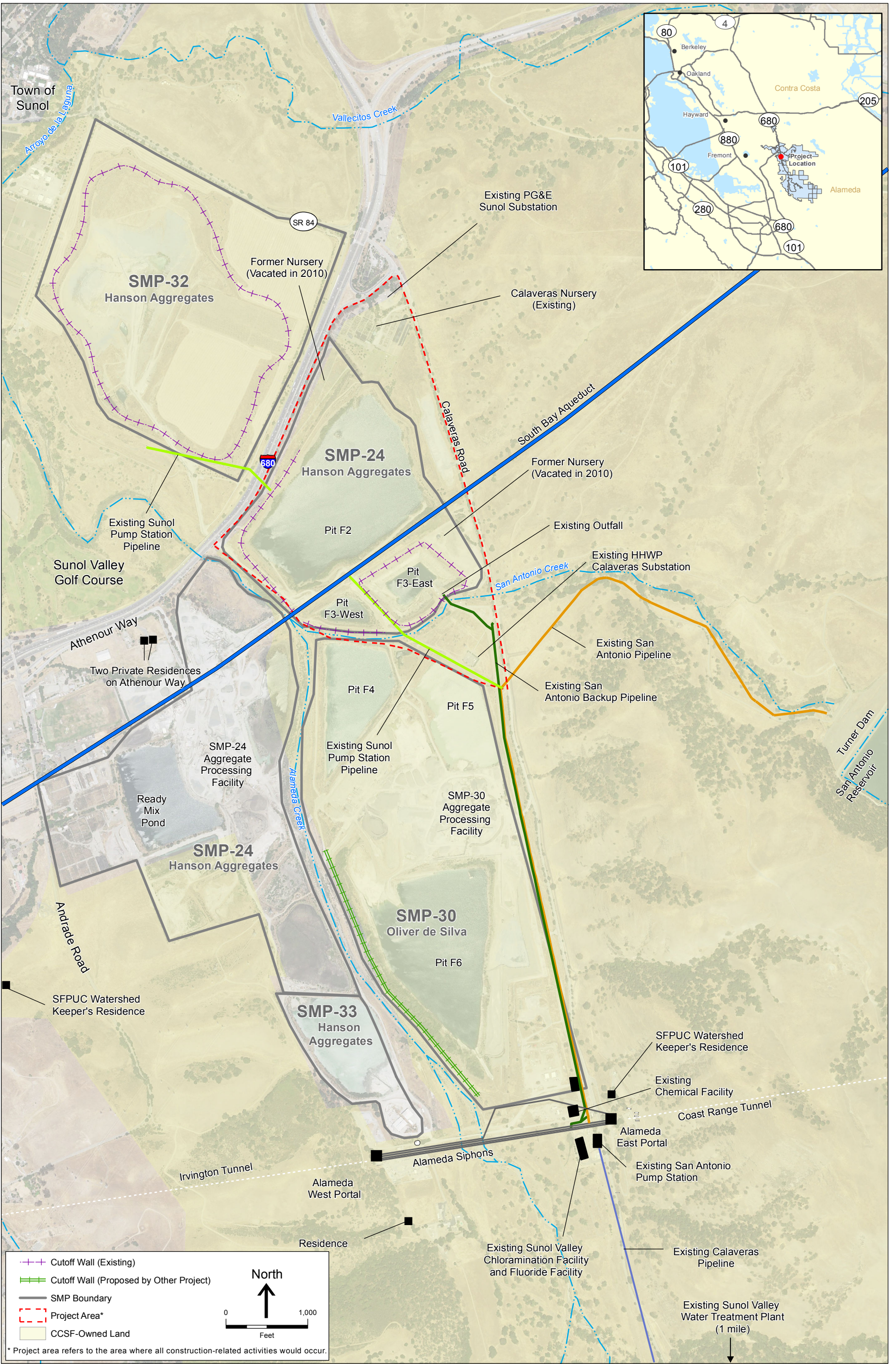
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<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, if the HHWP Calaveras Electrical Substation cannot meet the power needs of the ACRP, power would come from the PG&E Sunol Electrical Substation.

<sup>11</sup> San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), 2014. *Final Conceptual Engineering Report for Alameda Creek Recapture Project*. Prepared by SFPUC Engineering Management Bureau. November 21, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), 2014. *Final Conceptual Engineering Report for Alameda Creek Recapture Project*. Prepared by SFPUC Engineering Management Bureau. November 21, 2014.

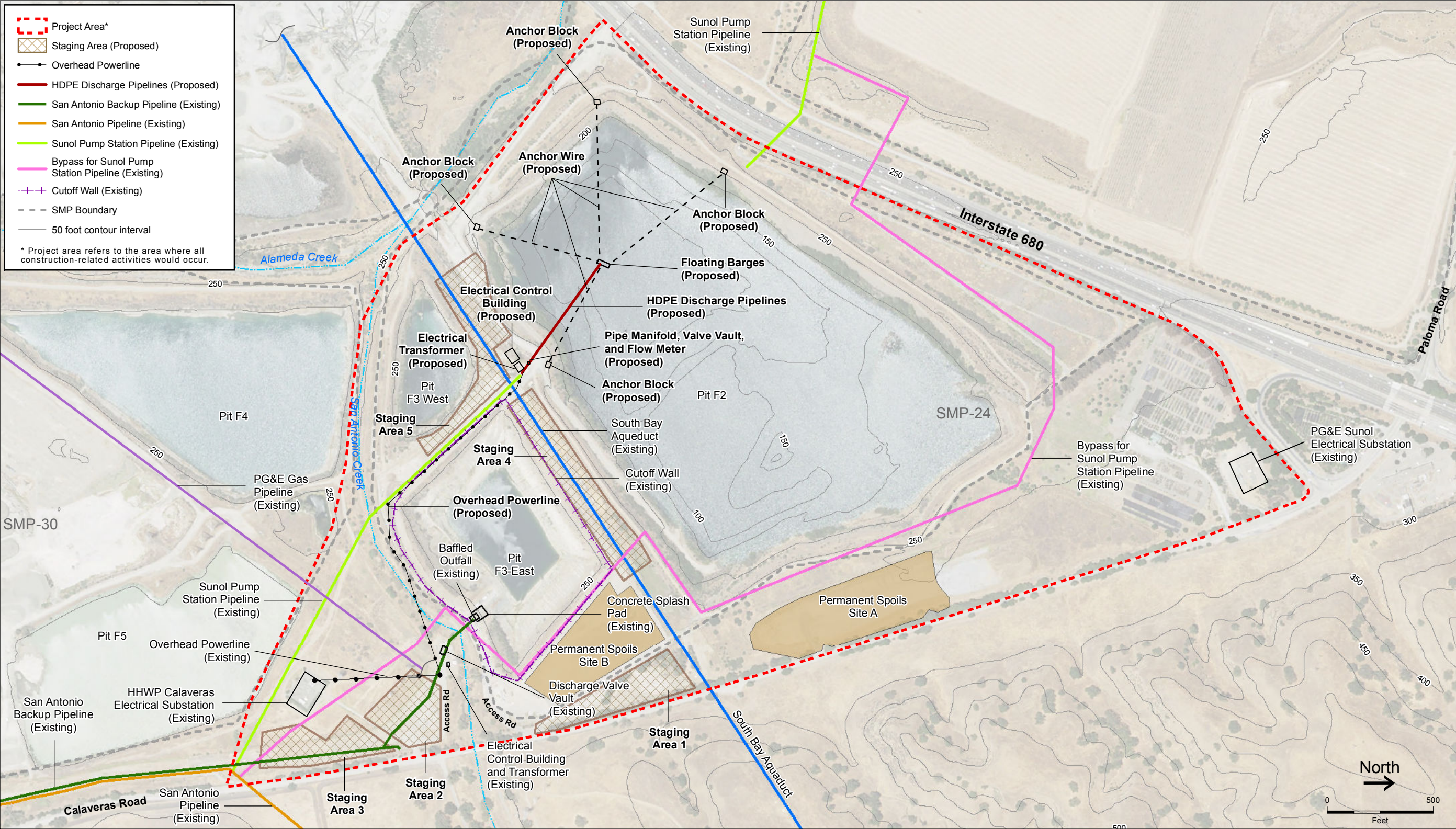




SOURCE: ESA, 2015; Date of aerial photo is 2014.

SFPUC Alameda Creek Recapture Project  
**Figure 2**  
Project Vicinity Map





SOURCE: SFPUC, 2014a

SFPUC Alameda Creek Recapture Project

**Figure 3**  
Preliminary Site Plan



## PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The SFPUC could be required to obtain the following permits and approvals for project construction and operations.

### Federal

No federal permits are anticipated at this time.

### State/Regional

- California Department of Water Resources – Temporary encroachment permit for construction access within the South Bay Aqueduct right-of-way and permanent encroachment permit for overhead power line crossing.
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Division of Drinking Water – Amendment to SF Regional Water System domestic water supply permit to utilize Pit F2 as a new source of water supply.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region – Construction General Permit coverage and preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – California Endangered Species Act Section 2081 incidental take permit.
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District – Authority to construct permit.
- State Water Resources Control Board – Issuance of a new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for discharges of water pumped from quarry Pit F2 to San Antonio Reservoir.

### Local

- San Francisco Planning Commission – Certification of the Final EIR.
- SFPUC – Project approval and adoption of CEQA findings and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors – Consideration of any appeals of the Planning Commission's certification of the Final EIR and appropriation of project funding.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The San Francisco Planning Department is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project on the environment. The EIR will be prepared in compliance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 *et seq.*), the *CEQA Guidelines*, and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, and will address project-specific construction and operational impacts. The EIR is an informational document for use by governmental agencies and the public to aid in the planning and decision-making process. The EIR will disclose any physical environmental effects of the project and identify possible ways of reducing or avoiding its potentially significant impacts.

The EIR will address all environmental issue topics required under CEQA. The EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts of the ACRP resulting from construction and operation activities, and will propose

mitigation measures for impacts determined to be significant. The EIR will address all environmental topics in the San Francisco Planning Department's CEQA environmental checklist. Key environmental issues that will be addressed in the EIR are described below.

### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

The EIR will address the potential for the ACRP to adversely affect surface water and groundwater resources, and the designated beneficial uses of these resources. Construction activities could result in soil erosion and sedimentation that impairs water quality. Water recapture could affect surface water quality or flow, and groundwater resources. Potential secondary impacts on fisheries and other aquatic resources resulting from project-related effects on hydrology and water quality will also be evaluated, as described below.

### **Aquatic and Terrestrial Biological Resources**

The EIR will address the potential for construction and operation of the proposed project to adversely affect aquatic and terrestrial habitats, as well as special-status plants and wildlife including California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, Alameda whipsnake, and Central California Coast steelhead. These biological resources could be directly affected during construction (e.g., species mortality) or indirectly affected by construction-related noise, vibration, dust, soil erosion, or water quality effects. Potential operational impacts include entrainment or impingement of aquatic species at the intake locations within Pit F2. In addition, operation of the ACRP could result in adverse impacts on fisheries and other aquatic resources if surface water flow or surface water quality were altered in a way that adversely affected habitat conditions or impaired migration corridors.

### **Other Environmental Issues**

Other topics to be addressed in the EIR include, but are not limited to, the potential for impacts related to:

- Other land use activities in the Alameda watershed, including nearby residences, nursery and quarry operations, and recreational activities;
- Temporary visual effects resulting from construction activities;
- Handling, storage, and use of common hazardous materials (such as fuels) during construction and operations; and
- Increases in criteria air quality pollutants and noise levels during construction and operational activities.

The EIR will also evaluate the potential for cumulative impacts resulting from implementation of the ACRP in combination with other projects in the vicinity.

### **Alternatives**

CEQA requires that an EIR evaluate a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to the project or the project location that would attain most of the project objectives, but avoid or substantially lessen any of the project's significant effects. The significant impacts identified by the EIR preparers will guide the development of an appropriate range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR that would avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts, while still meeting the project objectives. Alternatives suggested



during the public scoping period will be considered. The EIR will also discuss impacts associated with the No Project Alternative.

## FINDING

**This project may have a significant effect on the environment and an Environmental Impact Report is required.** This determination is based upon the criteria of the State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15063 (Initial Study), 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), and 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and for the reasons documented in the attached project description and description of potential environmental effects. (Documents are also available online at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/puccases>).

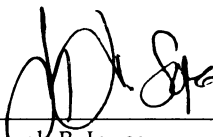
## PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15206, a public scoping meeting will be held to receive oral comments concerning the scope of the EIR. The meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 9, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at Sunol Glen School located at 11601 Main Street, Sunol**. The SFPUC will provide an informational open house from **5:30 to 6:30 p.m.** prior to the formal scoping meeting. To request a language interpreter or to accommodate persons with disabilities at the scoping meeting, please contact the staff contact listed above at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Written comments will also be accepted at this meeting and until 5:00 p.m. on **July 27, 2015**. Written comments should be sent to Sarah B. Jones, San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103; by fax to 415-558-6409 (Attn: Sarah Jones); or by email to [Sarah.B.Jones@sfgov.org](mailto:Sarah.B.Jones@sfgov.org).

If you work for a responsible State agency, we need to know the views of your agency regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering a permit or other approval for this project. Please include the name of a contact person in your agency.

Members of the public are not required to provide personal identifying information when they communicate with the Commission or the Department. All written or oral communications, including submitted personal contact information, may be made available to the public for inspection and copying upon request and may appear on the Department's website or in other public documents.

6/24/15  
Date

 FOR  
Sarah B. Jones  
Environmental Review Officer