



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC NOTICE Availability of Notice of Preparation of a Recirculated Portion of an Environmental Impact Report

Date: October 18, 2017
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 an existing quarry pit on lands owned by the City and County of San Francisco.
Zoning: Water Management
Block/Lot: N/A
Project Sponsor: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Antonia Sivyver – (415) 554-2474
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The San Francisco Planning Department has prepared a notice of preparation (NOP) of a recirculated portion of the environmental impact report (EIR) on the project listed above. The NOP is available for public review and comment on the Planning Department's SFPUC Negative Declarations and EIRs web page (<http://sf-planning.org/sfpuc-negative-declarations-eirs>). CDs and paper copies are also available at the Planning Information Center (PIC) counter on the first floor of 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco. Referenced materials are available for review by appointment at the Planning Department's office on the fourth floor of 1650 Mission Street. [Call (415) 575-9031]

BACKGROUND

The Planning Department published a Final EIR (or June 2017 EIR) on the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) Alameda Creek Recapture Project (ACRP or proposed project) on June 7, 2017. Two weeks later, on June 22, 2017, the San Francisco Planning Commission found the Final EIR to be adequate, accurate, and objective and certified the Final EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), CEQA Guidelines, and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code. Subsequent to that certification, the Alameda County Water District (ACWD) filed an appeal to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (Board) requesting that the Board overturn the certification of the Final EIR. On July 27, 2017, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) filed a letter in support of the appeal that contained comments the Planning Department considers to be "significant new information" under CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5. This new information from NMFS affects the CEQA evaluation of operational impacts of the project on Central California Coast (CCC) steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) distinct population segment (DPS), a species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

On September 19, 2017, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted findings reversing the Final EIR certification and directed the Planning Department to provide additional information and analysis

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regarding whether the proposed project would result in operational impacts on steelhead fish in the lower watershed as a result of project-induced effects on streamflow in Alameda Creek.¹ The Board also directed that in conducting such additional environmental analysis, the Planning Department enlist an independent third party to review the EIR groundwater/surface water analysis to determine if the analysis adequately and accurately supports the fisheries impact analysis as required by CEQA. The Board determined that with respect to all other issues, the Final EIR is adequate, accurate, and objective, and no further analysis is required. Therefore, consistent with this direction from the Board, the Planning Department will recirculate a limited portion of the June 2017 EIR that will provide additional information and analysis on operational impacts on steelhead fish in the lower watershed as a result of project-induced effects on streamflow in Alameda Creek.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SFPUC is proposing the ACRP as part of improvements to its regional water system as one component of the SFPUC's Water System Improvement Program (WSIP). The ACRP is a water supply project located in the Sunol Valley in Alameda County on lands within the SFPUC's Alameda Watershed. The project would be implemented following completion of the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project, which is currently under construction, and in conjunction with future operation of the restored Calaveras Reservoir. To comply with federal and state permit requirements for the future operations of Calaveras Dam and Reservoir, the SFPUC is required to make releases from Calaveras Dam and to bypass creek flow around the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam in accordance with instream flow schedules set forth by the NMFS in a March 5, 2011 biological opinion for the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project. The releases and bypasses are designed to improve conditions for native aquatic species including threatened CCC steelhead in Upper Alameda Creek downstream of Calaveras Dam and the Alameda Creek Diversion Dam. The SFPUC proposes the ACRP to "recapture" some of the water that it is required to release and bypass in order to also use this water in its regional water system.

Under the project, the SFPUC would construct facilities to withdraw water from Pit F2, an existing quarry pit formerly used by quarry operators located adjacent to Alameda Creek about six miles downstream of Calaveras Reservoir. The SFPUC would convey the recovered water to existing SFPUC facilities for treatment and distribution to its water supply customers in the Bay Area. Pit F2 passively collects water originating upstream from Alameda Creek through natural subsurface percolation and seepage, so the SFPUC would not construct any facilities within the Alameda Creek stream channel or actively divert water from the creek. By withdrawing water from Pit F2, SFPUC would recover only water that passively percolates or seeps into the pit. In addition, under the ACRP, the amount of water the SFPUC would pump or "recapture" from Pit F2 would be limited to the portion of the bypassed and released water that the SFPUC otherwise would have stored in Calaveras Reservoir but for implementation of the instream flow schedules established for the Calaveras Dam Replacement Project. The SFPUC has estimated that the amount of water to be released and bypassed to Alameda Creek as part of the future Calaveras Reservoir operations on average will be about 14,695 acre-feet per year. Under the ACRP, the SFPUC estimates that

¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, File No. 171000, Motion No. M17-148, September 19, 2017

on average, the amount of water that would be recaptured and conveyed to the regional water system would be about 7,178 acre-feet per year.² By recapturing water out of Pit F2, the SFPUC would maintain its historical withdrawal of water from the Alameda Watershed to the SFPUC regional water system, in accordance with the City and County of San Francisco's existing water rights.

FINDING

The Planning Department has determined that a portion of the EIR prepared for the proposed project must be revised and recirculated prior to any final decision regarding whether to approve the project. The purpose of the recirculated portion of the EIR is to address significant new information identified subsequent to the publication of the June 2017 EIR on this project. The recirculated portion of the EIR will augment the June 2017 EIR for use as an informational document by governmental agencies and the public to aid in the planning and decision-making process. Together, the recirculated portion of the EIR and the June 2017 EIR will disclose any physical environmental effects of the project and identify possible ways of reducing or avoiding its potentially significant impacts. Preparation of an NOP or EIR does not indicate a decision by the City to approve or to disapprove the project. However, prior to making any such decision, the decision makers must review and consider the information contained in the EIR, including the recirculated portion of the EIR.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15082, the NOP on the recirculated portion of the EIR provides sufficient information describing the proposed project with respect to its potential environmental effects on CCC steelhead from project operations to enable responsible and trustee agencies to make a meaningful response on the limited portion of the EIR to be recirculated. The San Francisco Planning Department will accept written comments from agencies and the public for a 30-day period commencing from the date of this Notice. Written comments will be accepted **until 5:00 p.m. on November 17, 2017**. Written comments should be sent to Chris Kern, San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103; by fax to 415-558-6409 (Attn: Chris Kern); or by email to Chris.Kern@sfgov.org.

If you work for an agency that is a Responsible or a Trustee Agency, we need to know the views of your agency regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project and the limited portion of the EIR to be recirculated. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering a permit or other approval for this project. We will also need the name of the contact person for your agency. If you have questions concerning environmental review of the proposed project, please contact **Chris Kern at (415) 575-9037**.

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.

² An acre-foot of water is the volume of water that would cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot, which is equivalent to about 325,850 gallons. The average recapture volume of 7,178 acre-feet per year is enough water to serve approximately 128,000 residents in San Francisco for one year.