

4.1 Impacts Not Found to be Significant

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. Such a statement may be contained in an attached copy of an initial study. This section describes impacts not determined to be significant related to implementation of the proposed Newell Creek Pipeline (NCP) Improvement Project (Proposed Project). For this EIR, issues related to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems were found not to be significant for the Proposed Project as discussed below. See Chapter 3, Project Description, for a detailed description of the Proposed Project.

4.1.1 Aesthetics

With regard to potential aesthetic impacts, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Santa Cruz CEQA Guidelines consider whether a project would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; substantially damage scenic resources; substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and surroundings; create a new source of substantial light or glare; or have a substantial, demonstrable, negative aesthetic effect. This section includes an evaluation of potential aesthetic impacts associated with the Proposed Project. With regard to potential visual impacts, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines considers whether a project would have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, damage scenic resources, degrade existing visual character or quality, or create a new source of light or glare.

Scenic Views/Vistas and Visual Character

No designated scenic vistas are located near the project site. The project site is surrounded by mountainous terrain and dense forested vegetation which obscure public views of the site. The Proposed Project involves the installation of a primarily underground pipeline, with small segments of pipeline at creek crossings and minor appurtenances located above-grade. Project construction would occur within existing road pavement and road rights-of-way (ROW). Upon completion of construction, project components would not be visible, aside from above-grade creek crossings and minor appurtenances which would not differ substantially from the existing visual character of the project area. The Proposed Project, as a primarily below-grade pipeline, would not block, alter, or obstruct scenic views. Therefore, the project would have no impact on scenic vistas.

Scenic Resources

The Project is located in proximity to two scenic roads. State Route 9 (locally referred to as Highway 9), which is located west of the Proposed Project northern segment, is designated by Caltrans as an eligible State Scenic Highway (Caltrans 2021). Additionally, a segment of Graham Hill Road from Highway 9 to Lockwood Lane is designated as a scenic road in the Santa Cruz County General Plan (County of Santa Cruz 1994). This segment of Graham Hill Road is part of the NCP proposed realignment. The Proposed Project is not located adjacent to Highway 9. Although construction would occur adjacent to and within Graham Hill Road, the Project would not be visible because the NCP components would be entirely underground, except for minor appurtenances, such as air valves that generally extend approximately 24 inches above ground and would not be highly visible.. Further, the Project does not involve the removal of trees or structures along these roads. Minor tree trimming

may occur along Graham Hill Road for equipment access but this would occur in accordance with County encroachment permit requirements and would not substantially detract from the scenic nature of the roadway. Therefore, the Project would not visually alter designated scenic roads, and no impact to scenic resources would occur.

Visual Character

The Proposed Project consists of installation of a new, predominantly underground pipe. The Project does not involve the construction of substantial above-ground components, except for low-to-the-ground air vents and small pipeline segments at creek crossings. The Proposed Project does not involve the removal of visually prominent trees or structures. Therefore, the Project would not substantially alter the visual character of the Project area and no impact would occur.

Light and Glare

The Proposed Project would continue existing operations and would not create light or glare because Project components would be underground. Thus, no impact related to light and glare would occur.

4.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

4.1.2.1 Agriculture

With regard to potential impacts to agriculture, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines asks whether a project would directly or indirectly result in the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural use, or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or with a Williamson Act contract. No farmland or grazing land is located on or near the Proposed Project pipe alignment. The project site is not zoned for agricultural use. The Proposed Project sites are mapped as Other Land or Urban and Built-Up Land by the California Department of Conservation (California Department of Conservation 2018). Therefore, the Project would not have any impact on agricultural resources.

4.1.2.2 Forest Resources

Forested lands and timberland occupy a substantial portion of Santa Cruz County, with large areas of timber production in the Santa Cruz Mountains and North Coast. The Proposed Project is located within an area containing redwood, oak and other forest associations (see Section 4.3, Biological Resources).

The California Timberland Productivity Act (Government Code Section 51100 et seq.) establishes the statewide basis for timberland production zoning. A county may zone lands for timberland production and thereby qualify the landowner for the preferential taxation provided for under the Forest Taxation Reform Act. Land within a Timber Protection Zone (TPZ) is restricted to growing and harvesting timber and other compatible uses approved by the county. The use of this land must be “enforceably restricted” to growing and harvesting timber in order to qualify for preferential taxation. Commercial harvesting of timber on non-federal lands in California, whether or not the property is under timberland contract, is regulated under the state’s Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act (Public Resources Code Section 4511 et seq.) and the related Forest Practice Rules (Title 14, California Code of Regulations Chapters 4, 4.5, and 10). Through this legislation, the state has established a comprehensive and specialized program for reviewing and regulating the harvesting of timber. Harvest is

strictly regulated through the review and approval of plans (e.g., Timber Harvesting Plan) by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The Proposed Project crosses four parcels that are zoned Timber Production in the Santa Cruz County Code (County of Santa Cruz 2021a) in the San Lorenzo Way, Brackney South and Newell Creek Road pipe sections.

The Proposed Project would not result in timber harvest or the removal of trees that represent timber value. The Project does involve the removal of approximately 4-8 riparian trees along Zayante Creek, which do not represent timber value or a forest resource. Impacts associated with tree removal are addressed in Section 4.3, Biological Resources. Therefore, the Project would have no impact to forest resources.

4.1.3 Land Use and Planning

With regard to potential land use and planning impacts, the CEQA Appendix G Guidelines focus on whether a proposed project would physically divide an established community; or conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The Proposed Project consists of replacement of an existing raw water pipeline in a semi-rural mountain area. The Project does not include any elements that would result in physical division of an established community.

The Proposed Project is located within unincorporated Santa Cruz County, except for the southern portion of the Proposed Project that is located at the City's Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant (GHWTP) that is located within the City of Santa Cruz. The City is exempt from County zoning ordinance and building code requirements pursuant to California Government Code Section 53091(d) and (e), which provides that facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water supplies are exempt from local zoning and building ordinances. Thus, the Project would not conflict with County regulations set forth in the zoning ordinance or building code related to avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. Furthermore, the Project would not result in a change or expansion of the existing NCP use or capacity.

Implementation of the Project would support the City's continued ability to deliver drinking water to its customers from the existing Loch Lomond Reservoir. There are no policies in the City's General Plan applicable to the Project. Therefore, the Project would not result in conflicts with existing policies or regulations.

4.1.4 Mineral Resources

The CEQA Appendix G Guidelines state that a project would have potential impacts on mineral resources if it would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site. The California Geological Survey is responsible for classifying land into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. The Proposed Project pipe alignment is located primarily on lands with a mineral lands classification of MRZ-4 (for aggregate resources). Areas classified MRZ4 are areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ category (California Department of Conservation 1987). The MRZ4 classification does not imply that there is little likelihood for the presence of mineral resources, but rather there is a lack of knowledge regarding mineral occurrence (California Department of Conservation 1999).

Mineral resources in Santa Cruz County include four closed and four active quarries. Existing quarries in the general Project vicinity include the Quail Hollow and Hanson Quarries and the former Olympia Quarry, all of which are located east of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project is located within and along existing roads and easements. There are no known available mineral resources or locally important mineral resource recovery sites delineated in the Project area. Thus, the Project would have no impact on known or locally important mineral resources.

4.1.5 Population and Housing

The CEQA Appendix G Guidelines state that a project would have a population and housing impact if it either directly or indirectly induces substantial population growth, or displaces substantial numbers of existing housing or people. The Proposed Project consists of installation of new pipe to replace the existing NCP. No residential land uses are located on the Proposed Project sites, and the Proposed Project would not include any new residential or business land uses or displace existing housing or people, necessitating construction of replacement housing. The Project would not generate new permanent residential population or employment as operations to maintain the pipeline would not change. The Project would not extend roads or procure additional water supplies which could result in indirect population growth. As such, the Project would have no impact on population and housing.

4.1.6 Public Services and Recreation

Fire, Police, Schools, and Other Public Facilities

With regard to potential public services impacts, the CEQA Appendix G Guidelines focus on whether a proposed project would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities, including fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public facilities, in order to meet acceptable performance objectives. The Project would not include any new land uses that would generate new demand for public services. As described above in Section 4.1.5, no new residences or businesses are proposed and the Project would not lead to new population or employment. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in an increase in population or employees and would have no impact on public services.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

With regard to potential park or recreation impacts, the CEQA Appendix G Guidelines focus on whether a project would include new or expanded recreational facilities that may have a significant effect on the environment, or whether a project would increase the use of existing recreational facilities such that deterioration of the facilities would be accelerated. The Proposed Project would not involve the construction of parks or recreational facilities and would not create a need for the expansion or addition of recreational facilities. The Project would not result in any new residences, businesses, or additional employment, and there would be no increase in population that could potentially generate increased demand for or use of parks and recreational facilities in the Project area. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on parks and recreational facilities.

4.1.7 Utilities and Service Systems

The CEQA Appendix G Guidelines consider potential impacts to utilities to be significant if a project would exceed wastewater treatment requirements; require or result in construction of new water, wastewater, or stormwater facilities or expansion of existing facilities; have insufficient water supplies or wastewater treatment capacity to serve the project; have insufficient landfill capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs; or violate regulations related to solid waste. The Proposed Project consists of installation of a new raw water pipeline to replace the existing NCP. The Project would not result in construction of new residences, businesses, or additional employment that could potentially generate increased demand for utilities and service systems. The Project itself is the replacement of an existing water supply facility, the impacts of which are discussed throughout this EIR. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not impact utilities and service systems, including wastewater treatment or stormwater facilities.

Construction activities would generate solid waste. Excavation during project construction would generate excess soils that would be hauled to a permanent disposal landfill or reused at other sites determined by the contractor. In general, construction would not result in generation of a substantial amount of waste materials requiring off-site disposal. Earthen spoils that could not be reused at other sites (e.g., for sites that would use new/engineered backfill material rather than native material) could either be used as fill for other construction projects in the area or could be hauled to a landfill to be used as intermediate cover. It is expected that the disposal of construction materials would generally be limited, and the majority of construction waste would be recycled and reused due to the cost of disposing of such materials.

Off-site disposal would be at the City's Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), which has an expected closure date of January 2058, or the County's Buena Vista Landfill, which has an expected closure date of July 2031. The City's facility and the Buena Vista Landfill have remaining capacities of 46% and 29%, respectively, or a total of 7,013,018 cy of solid waste. Given this, the City's RRF and County's Buena Vista Landfill would have adequate capacity to accommodate solid waste generated by the Proposed Project and the impact would be less than significant.

4.1.8 References

California Department of Conservation. 1987. *Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area*. Special Report 146, Part IV.

California Department of Conservation. 1999. *Guidelines for Classification and Designation of Mineral Lands*.

California Department of Conservation. 2018. California Important Farmland Finder. Web Map Application. Accessed September 17, 2021 at <https://mapsectiolumbs.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>.

CalRecycle. 2019. *2019 Landfill Summary Tonnage Report*. Accessed September 24, 2021 at <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/LandfillTipFees/>.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2021. “List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways.” Accessed on September 17, 2021 at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.

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County of Santa Cruz. 2021a. Planning Department GIS Web. Accessed October 18, 2021 at <https://gis.santacruzcounty.us/gisweb/>

County of Santa Cruz. 2021b. “Santa Cruz County Quarries.” Accessed September 17, 2021 at <http://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/Environmental/Quarries.aspx>.