



April 30, 2021

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

## RE: Paradise Sewer Project

To Interested Agencies and Persons:

The Town of Paradise (Town) as the Lead Agency for the Paradise Sewer Project (Proposed Project) has issued this Notice of Preparation (NOP) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to notify responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to evaluate potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. The Town is soliciting public input regarding the scope and content of environmental information to be included in the EIR.

The NOP provides information about the public review and comment period, project location, project description, and the probable environmental effects of the Proposed Project, and is posted on the Town's website at [www.paradisesewer.com](http://www.paradisesewer.com).

### Agency and Public Review and Comment

The Town is interested in receiving input from agencies, stakeholders, and the public regarding the Proposed Project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Proposed Project, if any is required. Please respond with written comments regarding the proposed scope and the intended content of the EIR as it relates to your agency's area of statutory responsibility or your areas of concern or expertise. We are requesting that all comments be provided in writing to enable us to address the comments as intended in the EIR. Written comments are also requested from organizations and other interested parties regarding the scope and evaluation of potential environmental issues associated with the Proposed Project.

Written responses are due within 30 days of the receipt of this NOP, as provided by state law. As such, a 30-day public review and scoping period is established from May 3 to June 3, 2021. Comments may be submitted by mail or email, or by attending the public scoping meeting (see details below) and submitting a written comment. All comments should indicate a contact person for the agency or organization.

Two virtual public scoping meetings regarding the Proposed Project and EIR will be held. You, members of your agency or organization, and the public are invited to attend to provide written comments on the scope and content of environmental information to be included in the EIR. These meetings will include a brief overview of the Proposed Project and EIR process, and will allow time for questions about the project and process.



The Town will hold these public scoping meetings on May 13 with an approximately 30-minute presentation starting at 6:00 p.m. and on May 25 with an approximately 30-minute presentation starting at 12:00 p.m. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings will be held virtually for remote public participation. The meeting links and call-in number for the presentation are provided below.

| Thursday, May 13, at 6:00 p.m.   | Tuesday, May 25, at 12:00 p.m.   |
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| <b>WebEx Link:</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/Paradise_Sewer_Mtg1">bit.ly/Paradise_Sewer_Mtg1</a><br><b>WebEx Password:</b> Paradise<br><b>Dial In #:</b> 408-418-9388<br><b>Code:</b> 123 202 6837 | <b>WebEx Link:</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/Paradise_Sewer_Mtg2">bit.ly/Paradise_Sewer_Mtg2</a><br><b>WebEx Password:</b> Paradise<br><b>Dial In #:</b> 408-418-9388<br><b>Code:</b> 123 877 2748 |

For additional accessibility preferences, please post a message on the project website at [paradisesewer.com/contact](https://paradisesewer.com/contact) (from subject dropdown menu, select “Submit a comment on Environmental Impact Report”). Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired (TDD) may contact the California Relay Service TTY and/or Voice Line at 1-800-735-2929, or 711.

We value your input and look forward to hearing from you. For your convenience, we have a number of ways for you to provide comments at any time during the 30-day comment period ending at 5:00 p.m. on June 3, 2021. Comments can be submitted the following ways:

- Direct Mail:  
Colette Curtis, Public Information Officer  
Town of Paradise  
5555 Skyway  
Paradise, CA 95969
- Website and Virtual Meeting comment submittal: [paradisesewer.com/contact](https://paradisesewer.com/contact) (from subject dropdown menu, select “Submit a comment on Environmental Impact Report”).
- Telephone: 530-872-6291, ext. 112

If you are an authorized representative of a Responsible Agency or a Trustee Agency, the Town needs 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. Your agency will need to use the EIR when considering whether to permit or otherwise approve the Proposed Project. Comments received from State of California agencies should address (1) whether the agency will be a Responsible Agency or a Trustee Agency for the Proposed Project, and (2) if the agency is a Responsible Agency, the significant environmental issues and reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that the Responsible Agency will need to have explored in the analysis. We will also need the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the contact person for your agency.



## Project Location

Paradise is in eastern Butte County, in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The topography of Paradise is characterized by intervening ridges and valleys sloping to the southwest, with elevations ranging from 1,080 to 2,320 feet. Paradise is bordered on the east by the west branch of the Feather River and on the west by Little Butte Creek. Paradise is approximately 12 miles east of the City of Chico, California; 20 miles northwest of the City of Oroville, California; and 90 miles north of the City of Sacramento California. The primary entrances to Paradise are Skyway and Highway 191 (Clark Road). Paradise is connected to Chico via Skyway and to Oroville via Highway 191, which is known as Clark Road upon entering Paradise.

Chico, also in Butte County, sits on the Sacramento Valley floor close to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range to the east. Chico's terrain is generally flat, with increasingly hilly terrain beginning at the eastern city limits. The city is traversed by two creeks, Big Chico Creek and Little Chico Creek, and the Lindo channel, all of which feed into the Sacramento River. Highways 32 and 99 comprise Chico's regional transportation network. Highway 32 connects Chico residents to Glenn and Plumas Counties to the west and east, respectively. Highway 99 connects residents to Tehama and Sutter Counties to the north and south, respectively (see Figure 1, map inset).

## Project Background

Since its incorporation in 1979, the Town has sought a formal wastewater treatment solution for the community, with service for commercial and densely populated residential areas being a priority. Failed and failing septic systems create the potential for public health and environmental concerns and have limited economic growth. Prior to the Camp Fire, which almost completely destroyed the town in 2018, Paradise was the largest unsewered community in California.

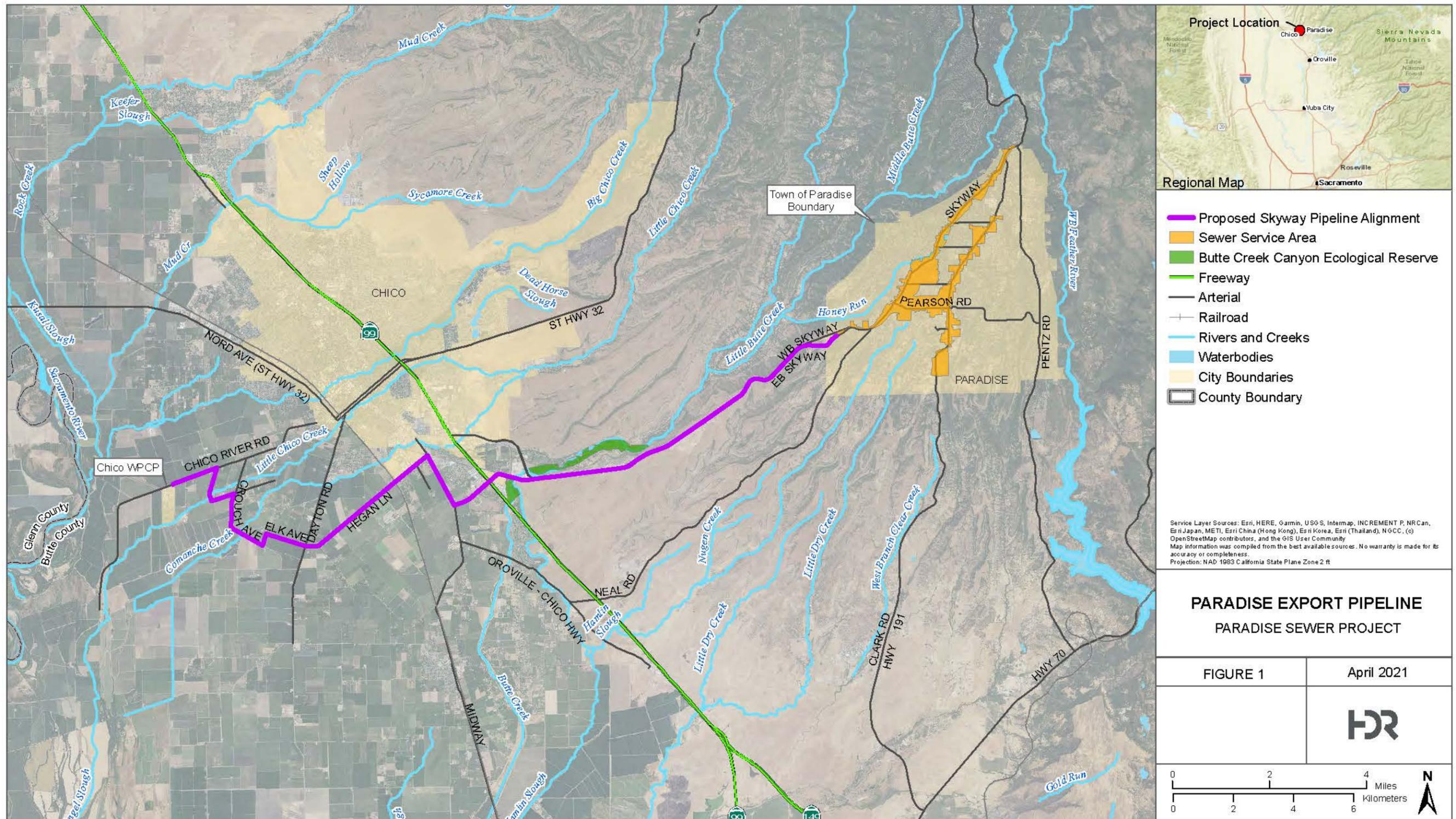
The Town has supported numerous studies to address its need for a centralized wastewater treatment solution, and in its most recent study,<sup>1</sup> the Town identified a proposed sewer service area. The proposed sewer service area includes the Town's commercial corridors, and as described in the 2017 study, it represented the area that had the most septic systems that had failed or were projected to fail by 2022.

## Existing Facilities

Wastewater treatment facilities in Paradise consist of individual, privately owned septic tanks and soil absorption disposal systems known as leach fields, together with several engineered subsurface disposal systems serving commercial and institutional facilities. Businesses and residences near the future sewer system continue to rely on septic tanks and leach field systems for wastewater treatment and disposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Bennett Engineering, 2017, Town of Paradise Sewer Project Alternatives Analysis and Feasibility Report: Determining a Preferred Option for Implementation, June 21.



**Project Location**

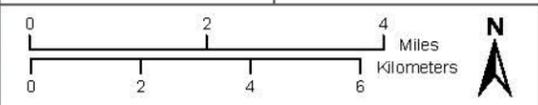
**Regional Map**

- Proposed Skyway Pipeline Alignment
- Sewer Service Area
- Butte Creek Canyon Ecological Reserve
- Freeway
- Arterial
- + Railroad
- Rivers and Creeks
- Waterbodies
- City Boundaries
- County Boundary

Service Layer Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community  
 Map information was compiled from the best available sources. No warranty is made for its accuracy or completeness.  
 Projection: NAD 1983 California State Plane Zone 2 ft

**PARADISE EXPORT PIPELINE**  
**PARADISE SEWER PROJECT**

FIGURE 1      April 2021





The Chico Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) is approximately 5 miles southwest of Chico on 120 acres of land owned by the City of Chico. The City of Chico owns and operates the Chico WPCP, which provides wastewater treatment and disposal for the greater Chico area. The Chico WPCP service area comprises the incorporated area of Chico and small parcels of unincorporated Butte County.

The Chico WPCP treatment system consists of screening for removal of large solids, grit removal, primary clarification, activated sludge treatment with secondary clarification, and chlorination/dechlorination. Sludge is treated by anaerobic digestion followed by mechanical dewatering. Biosolids are hauled directly from the centrifuge building for land application in unincorporated Sacramento County, California. The treated wastewater from the Chico WPCP is discharged to the Sacramento River through a submerged outfall diffuser and is regulated in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0079081 (Order No. R5-2016-0023). This order permits an average dry weather flow effluent flow of 12 million gallons per day (gpd).

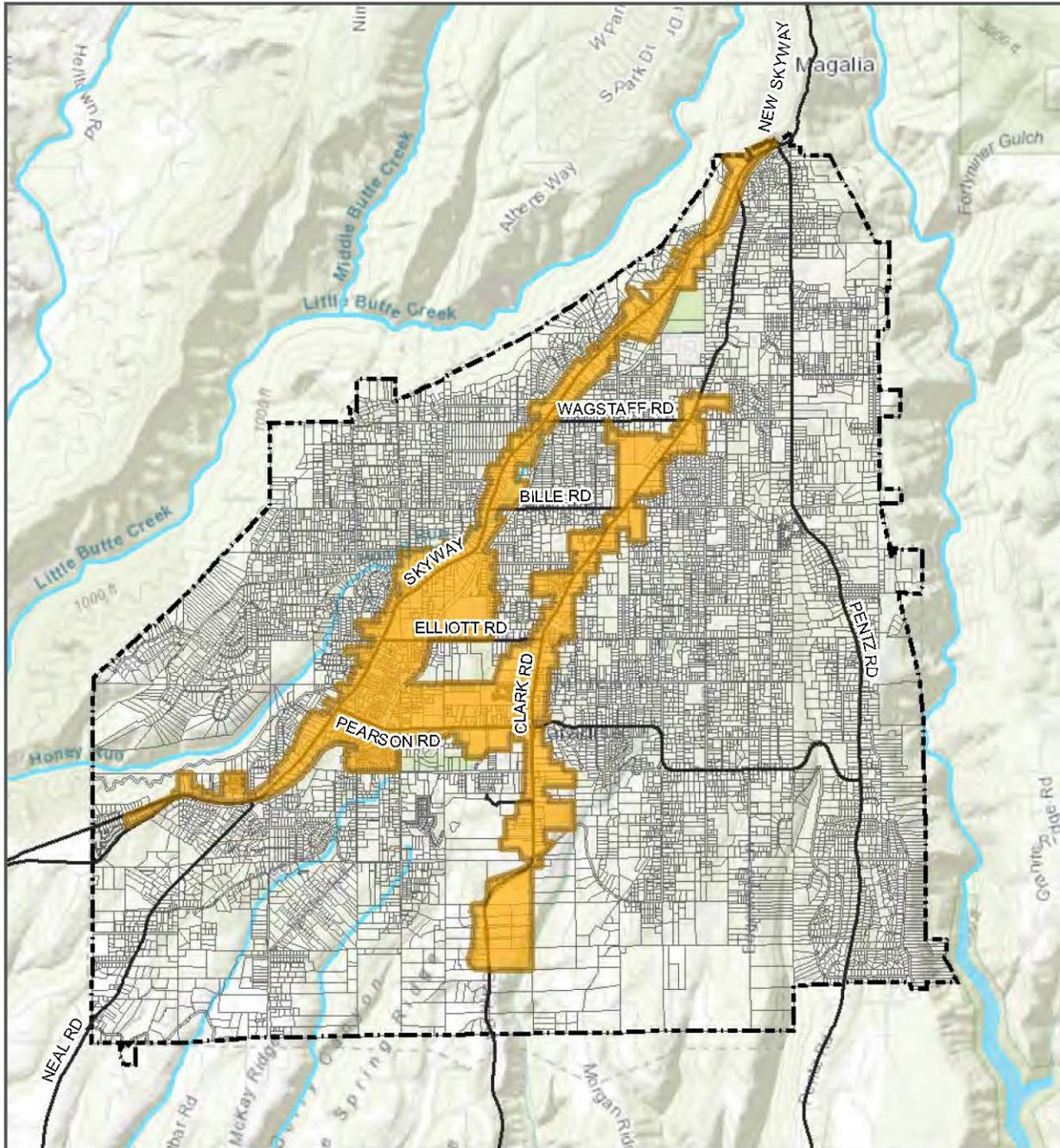
### **Project Description**

The Proposed Project consists of three constructed components—a wastewater collection system in Paradise, an 18-mile export pipeline to convey wastewater to the Chico WPCP, and connection to the WPCP—and operation of the new sewer system. The export pipeline would begin at the southwest edge of Paradise and run for approximately 8 miles along Skyway until reaching south Chico, at which point the pipeline would leave Skyway and continue west, crossing Butte Creek, Highway 99, and the Union Pacific Railroad, and terminating at the Chico WPCP in Chico. The Proposed Project would not change the service area of the Chico WPCP other than the addition of the Paradise connection and treatment. Moreover, there would be no additional fees for Chico residents and rate payers as a result of the Proposed Project.

### **Sewer Service Area**

The sewer service area (SSA) would serve approximately 1,500 parcels (out of the 11,000 total parcels in Paradise) along the Skyway, Clark Road, and Pearson Road corridors (see Figure 2). The SSA also would serve most businesses in Paradise and would enable future construction of affordable multi-family housing, which is limited because of multiple septic system constraints such as high groundwater, poor soils, and limited parcel sizes.

At the time of initial operation, an estimated 360 occupied parcels within the SSA would be generating an average wastewater flow of 109,000 gpd. It is estimated that it could take 30 years for the entire SSA to be occupied, at which time the average wastewater flow would be 448,000 gpd. The Town is considering this level of development and wastewater flow in planning its wastewater treatment solutions.



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Sewer Service Area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Paradise_Parcels</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 2px dashed black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> City Boundaries</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid green; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Freeway</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Arterial</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid gray; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Railroad</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 2px solid lightblue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Rivers and Creeks</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: lightblue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Waterbodies</li> </ul> |  |
|  | <p><b>TOWN OF PARADISE<br/>PROPOSED SEWER SERVICE AREA</b></p> <p>PARADISE SEWER PROJECT</p> <p>FIGURE 2      APRIL 2021</p>   |  |



## Collection System

The collection system would serve all parcels within the SSA, and would consist of a system of gravity sewers, small pump stations, and force mains. This collection system would enable properties within the SSA to have existing septic tanks and leach line systems abandoned altogether and would remove future onsite wastewater treatment and dispersal requirements. Because of the varied topography within the SSA, a number of pump stations and pressurized force mains would be required to pump flows out of valleys and swales, and back up to an adjacent gravity sewer. The collection system would consist of approximately 157,000 feet of 2- to 4-inch-diameter force mains, 29,000 feet of 8-inch-diameter gravity trunk lines, and 28 pump stations, all within public right-of-way. The gravity sewers would come together at the southwest edge of town, on Skyway, where they would transition to the export pipeline to the Chico WPCP.

## Export Pipeline

The proposed export pipeline would start along Skyway at the south end of the Paradise collection system and would continue southwest along Skyway. Near Chico, at the bend where Skyway turns north, the pipeline would continue west, heading cross-country with crossings of Butte Creek and Highway 99 until reaching Midway, and would proceed into Chico and end at the Chico WPCP. The connection to the Chico WPCP is not associated with other ongoing facility upgrades. Figure 1 shows the proposed export pipeline route and connection to the Chico WPCP.

## Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities would occur with the facilities that comprise the Proposed Project. This would include various inspections, servicing, and replacement of pertinent Proposed Project facility elements at designated intervals.

## Probable Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project

After completing a preliminary review of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 15060(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the Town has determined that an EIR should be prepared to assess the potentially significant environmental impacts of the Proposed Project.

The EIR will address environmental impacts of the Proposed Project's construction and operation activities and will propose mitigation measures to address significant impacts that are identified. The following describes the anticipated environmental issues that may be addressed in the EIR:

- **Aesthetics.** Potential impacts on aesthetics during construction and operation of the Proposed Project will be considered. Although temporary impacts may occur during construction, no permanent change in the visual landscape or viewshed is expected.
- **Agriculture and Forestry Resources.** Given the rural conditions, impacts on agriculture and forestry resources will be considered. However, it is anticipated that the Proposed Project would not result in impacts on prime agriculture and forestry resources that cannot be avoided.



- **Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Criteria air pollutants generated during construction and operation of the Proposed Project would be estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). Potential impacts on air quality will be assessed by comparing the Proposed Project's criteria air pollutant emissions with the thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants in the Butte County Air Quality Management District's (BCAQMD) *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*.

Construction would be the main source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHG emissions during construction of the Proposed Project would be estimated using CalEEMod. Impacts associated with GHG emissions would be determined by comparing project GHG emissions during construction to BCAQMD's recommended thresholds for GHG emissions contained in the *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*.

- **Biological Resources.** The Town is completing field surveys to catalogue protected species and habitat conditions including wetlands and vernal pools. The EIR will consider impacts of proposed trenching and trenchless construction methods on biological resources.
- **Cultural Resources.** Potential impacts on cultural resources that could occur during ground-disturbing construction activities will be evaluated. An initial historic records search was completed, and intensive pedestrian surveys are being completed as part of this planning process. The findings from these studies will be used to analyze the potential physical impacts on historic, pre-historic, archaeological, and cultural resources that could result from proposed construction activities.
- **Energy.** A temporary increase in the consumption of energy would be required during construction, and a long-term increase in the use of energy would be required for operation of the Proposed Project. The impact analysis will assess if the Proposed Project would result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation, or would conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.
- **Geology and Soils.** Construction of the Proposed Project could result in site-specific impacts on or from local geology and soils conditions. Potential impacts related to geologic, seismic, and soils constraints will be assessed. Potential impacts on paleontological resources and mineral resources will also be considered.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** Potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials will be evaluated, including the potential hazardous materials associated with transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction and potential hazardous emissions or hazardous materials used during construction and operation of the Proposed Project.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** Potential impacts on hydrology and water quality will be described based on qualitative assessment of Project construction activities. No permanent changes to hydrology are expected to result from the Proposed Project.



- **Land Use and Planning.** Although the Proposed Project is not expected to change existing land use, the EIR will evaluate zoning within the sewer service area in relation to current and future development.
- **Noise.** Potential construction-period noise and vibration impacts on sensitive receptors (residences) near the Proposed Project will be assessed. Operational noise will also be analyzed in the EIR.
- **Population and Housing.** While the Proposed Project is not a response to the recovery effort from population and housing loss associated with the 2018 Camp Fire, the Proposed Project could lead to new opportunities for population and housing in the sewer service area. It is not anticipated that siting of the Proposed Project would lead to housing displacement. The balance of current and planned housing in the sewer service area would be considered against the Chico WPCP capacity.
- **Public Services.** Impacts on fire protection services, law enforcement services, schools, and other public services will be evaluated based on available information.
- **Recreation.** Potential impacts on existing recreational resources will be evaluated. It is not anticipated that the Proposed Project would affect existing recreational facilities or activities.
- **Transportation.** Because much of the proposed collection and export pipeline would be constructed in or adjacent to existing roadways, impacts on transportation are expected. Construction-related vehicle trips will be estimated, and temporary construction-related traffic will be evaluated to identify any hazardous conditions on roadways or inadequacies in emergency access that may result during construction of the Proposed Project.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** The Town is coordinating with interested tribes in accordance with Assembly Bill 52. Impacts on tribal cultural resources will be evaluated based on discussions with tribes regarding the relationship of the Proposed Project to the ongoing practice of traditional life ways.
- **Utilities and Service Systems.** The Proposed Project would introduce a new utility and service system, which will be analyzed. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would raise demands on water supply and power utilities.
- **Wildfire.** The Proposed Project is in a state responsibility area, traversing moderate and high fire hazard severity zones. Therefore, this evaluation will focus on the potential for construction activities to impair an emergency response or evacuation plan, exacerbate wildfire risks, and expose people to risks due to post-fire effects, consistent with standards in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. The focus will be on elements of construction that could exacerbate fire hazard risks; however, once construction is completed, the underground pipeline would not create conditions that would affect wildland fire risks.
- **Other Sections.** The EIR will include additional topics as required by the CEQA Guidelines, including significant irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement, cumulative



impacts, and alternatives. The EIR will describe and evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Project that would feasibly attain most or all of the Proposed Project's basic objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the Proposed Project. These alternatives may include alternative pipeline routes. For each alternative, the EIR will assess the degree to which it might reduce one or more identified significant project impacts, whether it could result in other new or increased impacts, its feasibility, and the degree to which it is consistent with the Proposed Project objectives. The "No Project" alternative will also be evaluated as required by CEQA.

### Further Information

For environmental review information or questions about the Proposed Project, please contact us at through our project website at [paradisewer.com/contact](http://paradisewer.com/contact) (from subject dropdown menu, select "Submit a comment on Environmental Impact Report") or by calling us at 530-872-6291, ext. 112

Sincerely,

 4/23/2021

Marc Mattox

Town of Paradise Director of Public Works