



Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the NCSD Wood Energy System Project

Proposed Project

The Northstar Community Services District (NCSD) proposes to develop an approximately 6,000 square foot Wood Energy Utility Facility that would combust woody biomass to heat water which would be conveyed through a thermal energy distribution pipeline to approximately 14 buildings within the Northstar California community, including residential and commercial space heating, domestic hot water, swimming pools/spas, and potentially snow melt in the Village at Northstar plaza. The system would be thermally-led (meaning that it would produce energy in proportion to the heating demand required by the connected facilities) and operated year-round to serve a wide range of heating loads currently served by natural gas-fired boilers in the connected facilities. The facility is expected to consume 3,800 bone dry tons of woody biomass per year and generate approximately 50,000 million British thermal units of energy.

The proposed project would enhance NCSD's forest fuels management and defensible space programs, which have been implemented in the community since 2008 to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The woody biomass material removed from the community under NCSD's existing forest fuels management and defensible space programs would be transported to the Tahoe Truckee Sanitation District's Eastern Regional Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility. This material along with material generated by other forest fuels management and defensible space programs in the region would be sorted and the material that meets the fuel specifications for the proposed Wood Energy Utility Facility would be delivered to the facility. The ash byproduct generated from combustion would be conveyed to a hopper bin and stored until there is sufficient volume to be removed and off-hauled by trailer. It is estimated that the Wood Energy System would generate between 140 and 260 tons of ash per year. Ash would be off-hauled and delivered to farms in Sierra Valley for use as soil amendments or disposed of off-site at a transfer station or landfill.

Environmental Analysis

An Initial Study for the proposed NCSD Wood Energy System project was prepared in accordance with CEQA (Section 21000 et seq., California Public Resources Code) and the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15000 et seq. Title 14, California Code of Regulations). The analysis in the Initial Study determined that the project would have less than significant impacts to the following resource categories: Air Quality, Energy, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, Utilities and Service Systems, Wildfire, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Initial Study also found that the project would have potentially significant impacts in the resource categories of Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Tribal Cultural Resources. The Initial Study identifies the following mitigation measures to address these potential impacts:

Mitigation Measure BIO-1 - Aquatic Resources and Special-Status Plant Protection

Mitigation Measure BIO-2 - Nesting Bird and Raptor Avoidance

Mitigation Measure BIO-3 – Tree Protection

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 - Improvement Plans

Mitigation Measure GEO-2 - Grading, Drainage, and Erosion Control

Mitigation Measure GEO-3 Final Geotechnical Investigation Report

Mitigation Measure GEO-4 Unanticipated Paleontological Resources

Mitigation Measure HYD-1 Stormwater Quality Management Plan

Mitigation Measure HYD-2 Stormwater Quality Treatment Measures

Mitigation Measure HYD-3 Stormwater Discharge

Mitigation Measure TCR-1 Unanticipated Tribal Cultural Resources

Determination

As demonstrated in the Initial Study, NCSD finds that, with implementation of the identified mitigation measures, there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project would have a potentially significant effect on the environment. Therefore, NCSD has prepared this Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the NCSD Wood Energy System project for adoption following public review of the attached Initial Study and supporting documentation.



April 20, 2023

Eric Martin, NCSD Director of Public Works