

**REDWOOD CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 6, 2002

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

FILE NO. Environmental Assessment – EA 2002-02
Redwood City Recycled Water Project

PROJECT PLANNER: Valerie Young, Contract Planner

APPLICANT: City of Redwood City, Public Works Services Department

LOCATION: The Redwood Shores, Greater Bayfront, and Central Redwood City areas of Redwood City.

ZONING DISTRICT: Varies. The project will be located in three general areas of the City, each with various zoning district designations.

PUBLIC HEARING: Yes

NO. OF NOTICES: 49

LEGAL AD PUBLISHED: June 25, 2002

APPLICATION REQUEST: To adopt a Negative Declaration with mitigation measures, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the Redwood City Recycled Water Project.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION AND CONFORMANCE: The project will be located in three general areas of the City, each with various General Plan designations. The project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Redwood City General Plan. In addition, the City's 2000 Urban Water Management Plan (as amended) identifies recycled water from the South Bayside System Authority (SBSA) as a source of supply in the City's overall water supply and management plan (see Attachment #1). The project is consistent with that Plan.

SITE DESCRIPTION: The project facilities will be located in a variety of locations and sites. See Attachment #2 (Initial Study) for additional detail on facility locations.

ADJACENT LAND USES: The project facilities will be located adjacent to a variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, office, industrial, school, and park.

SPECIAL STUDY AREA: No.

FLOOD HAZARD AREA: Because the project is located within multiple areas of the City, recycled water facilities will be located in the various flood zones that are designated within the City. However, no structures are proposed within a 100-year

flood hazard areas such that they would impeded or redirect flood flows, and the project contains no elements that would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding.

DEPARTMENTS COMMENTING ON THE INITIAL STUDY: None

PROJECT ANALYSIS:

BACKGROUND

The Redwood City Recycled Water Project consists of infrastructure facilities (pipelines, pump stations, storage reservoirs) to deliver recycled water from the SBSA wastewater treatment plant to customers in the Redwood Shores, greater Bayfront, and central Redwood City areas within Redwood City. The project will be implemented in multiple phases over several years, beginning with recycled water delivery to the Redwood Shores peninsula for the 2004 landscape irrigation season.

The project is a continuation of the "First Step Recycled Water Project," a pilot recycled water program initiated in Spring 2000 by the City and SBSA. The First Step Project currently delivers recycled water to landscape irrigation customers at the eastern end of the Redwood Shores peninsula. SBSA's recycled water meets stringent Title 22 environmental health requirements established by the California Department of Health Services. The First Step project, including interim treatment facilities at SBSA, received CEQA clearance in 1999.

In January 2002, the City Council accepted the Redwood Shores Water Recycling Feasibility Study Final Report, and directed City staff to continue the planning process for a City-wide recycled water system. The Feasibility Study identified that improved water management practices, combined with development of the recycled water system, would reduce the City's water demand on the Hetch Hetchy system by about 1,150 acre feet per year. This reduction would bring the City into compliance with the Hetch Hetchy supply assurance limit, and is one of the primary objectives in developing a recycled water system. The City is planning to enter into an interagency agreement with SBSA to ensure the recycled water program can be successfully implemented. SBSA will construct permanent on-site recycled water treatment facilities, including a disinfection system, pump station, and storage reservoir. These facilities received CEQA clearance in 2002.

The recycled water distribution system will first be constructed to serve an extended area of Redwood Shores, and will then be extended to the Greater Bayfront and Central Redwood City areas of the City. As described previously, construction of pipelines would occur primarily within existing roadway and public easement rights-of-way. The specific location for off-site recycled water storage reservoirs and pump stations has not been determined. However, for proper hydraulic functioning of the recycled water system, and to deliver water to customers at higher elevations in the City, it is anticipated that one set of these facilities would be located within the western portion of the greater Bayfront area, and the other set of facilities located within the central Redwood City area.

WATER QUALITY

Recycled water use is strictly regulated to avoid public health risks. Water reclamation criteria are established by the California Department of Health Services to specify requirements for recycled water by category of use. Title 22 of the California Administrative Code contains standards for water quality, monitoring, reporting, and treatment reliability. These criteria are enforced by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to ensure that recycled water projects are safe, reliable, and protective of public health. Title 22 also includes rigorous facilities design criteria such that no cross-connections with the potable water system can occur. Operation of the recycled water distribution system is similar to operation of the existing potable water distribution system, with the addition of required safeguards for use of recycled water.

Recycled water produced by the SBSA treatment plant is treated to meet the “unrestricted use” standards as defined by Title 22. Throughout the wastewater treatment process, samples are taken and tested in an onsite laboratory to ensure high quality water is produced. The level of treatment at SBSA enables the water to be used for many purposes, including irrigation of park and playgrounds, median strips, commercial landscaping, residential landscaping, golf courses, roadway landscaping, ornamental nursery stock, and sod farms. Other permitted uses include toilet and urinal flushing, recreational impoundments, firefighting, industrial processes, construction dust control, cooling towers, and decorative fountains.

According to the 2000 and 2001 annual reports for the First Step Project, recycled water has been delivered to users without any interruptions of supply. In addition, no equipment breakdowns were experienced, and there were no violations of the recycled water quality requirements. Routine inspections of the water reuse sites revealed no user violations. Landscape species receiving recycled water appear to be thriving, with no reported problems with the vegetation at each irrigation site. Similarly, no complaints about the project have been received from the public, and there were no odor problems during recycled water use. As with the First Step Project, the City will continue to provide information and assistance to eligible recycled water customers as the system expands.

As part of implementation of the recycled water project, it is anticipated that the City will adopt two ordinances to ensure maximum utilization of recycled water throughout the City. These ordinances include a mandatory use ordinance and a dual plumbing ordinance. The dual plumbing ordinance is required by State law (SB 2095), when recycled water is made available to local governments.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City has prepared an environmental assessment to determine what environmental impacts, if any, would be generated by the proposed project. The City has conducted an Initial Study (Attachment #2) to assess the environmental impacts. The City has concluded that the project would not have a significant impact on the environment, with implementation of certain mitigation measures. The City, therefore, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (Attachment #3).

In accordance with City procedures, the Planning Commission is the reviewing and approving entity for environmental documents. No land use entitlements are required for the Recycled Water Project; therefore, the Planning Commission's action on this project is to review and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The Initial Study/Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was circulated for public review, both locally and through the State Clearinghouse process, for a period of 30 days (June 20 to July 20, 2002). The City received comment documents (letters, e-mail, telephone conversation) from the following entities on the Initial Study:

- Caltrain
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- Seaport Industrial Association (Clem Moloney)
- State Clearinghouse
- California Department of Health Services
- California Department of Transportation

Most of the comments from agencies merely set forth their respective permitting requirements related to the project. None of the comments raise significant environmental issues and, in accordance with CEQA, responses to the comments are not required for a Negative Declaration. CEQA requires that the lead agency "consider" the Initial Study and any comments received before it takes action on the project.

The Planning Commission is responsible for adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration before the City Council can take action on the Recycled Water Project, which is scheduled for the Council meeting of October 7, 2002. Following Council action on the project, a Notice of Determination will be filed with the San Mateo County Clerk in accordance with CEQA.

The Planning Commission must make the following findings under CEQA in its adoption action:

- The Mitigated Negative Declaration has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- Based on the record (including the Initial Study and comments received), there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment;
- A Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the project's mitigation measures is also adopted (see Attachment #5); and
- The Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis.

CEQA also requires the lead agency to specify the location and custodian of the documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which its decision is based. The custodian and location of these documents for the Redwood City Recycled Water Project is:

Peter Ingram, Director
Public Works Services Department
1400 Broadway
Redwood City, CA 94063
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RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan, making the findings required by CEQA.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Recycled water policy sections from the Redwood City 2002 Urban Water Management Plan.
2. Initial Study/Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration.
3. Mitigated Negative Declaration.
4. Comment documents received on the Initial Study.
5. Draft Mitigation Monitoring Plan.