



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Planning Commission Motion No. 19211

GENERAL PLAN REFERRAL

HEARING DATE AUGUST 7, 2014

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*Date:* July 31, 2014  
*Case No.* Case No. 2008.1396R  
*Project Name* For SFPUC Regional Groundwater Storage and Recovery Project  
*Zoning:* N/A; Various locations, San Francisco Peninsula  
*Block/Lot No.:* N/A; Various locations; San Francisco Peninsula. See attachment for individual locations.  
*Project Sponsor:* San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
Greg Bartow  
525 Golden Gate Ave., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
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### ADOPTING FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND WITH THE PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 FOR THE PROPOSED SFPUC REGIONAL GROUNDWATER STORAGE AND RECOVERY PROJECT AND FINDINGS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

WHEREAS, Section 4.105 of the City Charter and Section 2A.53 of the Administrative Code require General Plan referrals to the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") for certain matters, including determination as to whether the lease or sale of public property, the vacation, sale or change in the use of any public way, transportation route, ground, open space, building, or structure owned by the City and County, would be in conformity with the General Plan prior to consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

On April 23, 2013, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission ("Project Sponsor" or "SFPUC") submitted an application to the Planning Department requesting a determination of consistency with the General Plan for the proposed acquisition of various property and easements in conjunction with the implementation of the SFPUC's Regional Groundwater Storage and Recovery Project ("GSR Project"), a part of the Water System Improvement Program ("WSIP").

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SFPUC is proposing the GSR Project as part of the WSIP, which the SFPUC approved in 2008 to provide a long-term plan for management of its regional water supply system. The primary goal of the Project is to provide additional dry-year water supply. The specific objectives of the Project are:

- Conjunctively manage the South Westside Groundwater Basin through the coordinated use of SFPUC surface water and groundwater pumped by its Partner Agencies.
- Provide supplemental SFPUC surface water to the Partner Agencies in normal and wet years, with a corresponding reduction of groundwater pumping by these agencies, which then allows for in-lieu recharge of the South Westside Groundwater Basin.
- Increase the dry-year and emergency pumping capacity of the South Westside Groundwater Basin by an average annual 7.2 million gallons per day (“mgd”).
- Provide a new dry-year groundwater supply for the SFPUC’s customers and increase water supply reliability during the 8.5-year design drought cycle.

The Project is a groundwater storage and recovery project located in northern San Mateo County that the SFPUC proposes to operate in conjunction with Daly City, San Bruno and CalWater (referred to as the “Partner Agencies”). The SFPUC supplies surface water to the Partner Agencies from its Regional Water System. The Partner Agencies currently supply potable water to their retail customers through a combination of groundwater from the southern portion of the Westside Groundwater Basin (referred to as the “South Westside Groundwater Basin”) and purchased SFPUC surface water. Under the Project, SFPUC would provide supplemental SFPUC surface water to the Partner Agencies during normal and wet years and in turn the Partner Agencies would reduce their groundwater pumping for the purpose of allowing the amount of groundwater in the South Westside Groundwater Basin to recharge. Then, during dry years, the Partner Agencies and the SFPUC would pump the increased stored groundwater using 16 new well facilities. The dry-year groundwater supply would be blended with water from the SFPUC’s regional water system and would as a result increase the available water supply to all regional water system customers during dry years.

The project consists of operation of up to 16 new groundwater well facilities within the South Westside Groundwater Basin to withdraw up to 7.2 mgd of stored groundwater during dry years and emergencies. Each groundwater well facility site would contain a well pump station, underground distribution piping, and above or underground utility connections. Most well facilities would have disinfection units as required.

The SFPUC proposes to install the 16 new groundwater wells along the SFPUC Regional Water System, at various locations throughout the San Francisco Peninsula in San Mateo County. The sites would have permanent wells installed and would require temporary construction easements and staging areas, temporary and permanent access roads, permanent pipeline easements and permanent utility easements.

The GSR Project is designed to further the use of the South Westside Groundwater Basin as an underground storage reservoir by storing water in the basin during wet periods for subsequent recapture during the dry period. This new dry-year water supply would be made available to the SFPUC’s regional water system to benefit all of the SFPUC wholesale and retail water customers.

In addition, the Project is part of the SFPUC’s WSIP adopted by the SFPUC on October 30, 2008. The WSIP consists of over 70 local and regional facility improvement projects that would increase the ability of the SFPUC’s water supply system to withstand major seismic events and prolonged droughts and to

meet estimated water-purchase requests in the service area. With the exception of the water supply goal, the overall WSIP goals and objectives are based on a planning horizon through 2030. The water supply goal to meet delivery needs in the SFPUC service area is based on a planning horizon through 2018. The overall goals of the WSIP for the regional water system are to:

- Maintain high-quality water.
- Reduce vulnerability to earthquakes.
- Increase water delivery reliability.
- Meet customer water supply needs.
- Enhance sustainability.
- Achieve a cost-effective, fully operational system.

The Project would help meet WSIP goals by increasing dry year water supply and helping to meet customer water supply needs. In addition, the Project would provide potable groundwater for emergency supply in the event that an earthquake or other major catastrophe interrupts the delivery of water from the regional water system.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On April 10, 2013, the Department published the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") and provided public notice in a newspaper of general circulation of the availability of the DEIR for public review and comment for a 45-day period (the public review period was extended for two weeks, concluding on June 11, 2013, resulting in a 62-day public review period), and of the date and time of the Planning Commission public hearing on the DEIR; this notice was mailed to the Department's list of persons requesting such notice and other interested parties, posted near the Project site, and made available at the main public library in San Francisco and at public libraries in San Mateo County. Additional notices of availability were distributed and published on May 29, 2013, to announce the extended public review period.

On April 10, 2013, copies of the DEIR were mailed or otherwise delivered to a list of persons requesting it, to those noted on the distribution list in the DEIR, to adjacent property owners, and to government agencies, the latter both directly and through the State Clearinghouse. The DEIR was posted on the Department's website. A Notice of Completion was filed with the State Secretary of Resources via the State Clearinghouse on April 10, 2013.

The Planning Commission held a duly-advertised public hearing on the DEIR to accept written or oral comments on May 16, 2013. The Planning Department also held a local public hearing in the project vicinity in San Mateo County on May 14, 2013. The public hearing transcripts are in the Project record. The extended period for acceptance of written comments ended on June 11, 2013.

The Department prepared responses to comments on environmental issues received at the public hearing and in writing during the extended 62 day public review period for the DEIR, prepared revisions to the text of the DEIR in response to comments received or based on additional information that became available during the public review period. The Department provided additional, updated information

and clarification on issues raised by commenters, as well as SFPUC and the Planning Department, to address Project updates since publication of the DEIR. This material was presented in a Responses to Comments document ("RTC"), published on July 9, 2014, distributed to the Commission on July 10, 2014, and all parties who commented on the DEIR, and made available to others upon request at the Department and on the Department's website.

On August 7, 2014, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a public hearing on the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project, consisting of the Draft Environmental Impact Report, the RTC, and any additional consultations, comments and information received during the review process. The Commission reviewed and considered the Final EIR and found the contents of said report and the procedures through which the EIR was prepared, publicized and reviewed complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000 *et seq.*) ("CEQA"), the CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Reg. section 15000 *et seq.*), and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

On August 7, 2014, the Commission certified the Final EIR by Motion No. XXXXX. Additionally, the Commission adopted approval findings, including findings rejecting alternatives, amending a mitigation measure, and making a statement of overriding considerations, and adopted a mitigation monitoring and reporting program ("MMRP") pursuant to CEQA by Motion No. XXXXX, which findings and MMRP are incorporated by this reference as though fully set forth herein.

#### GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 as described in the body of this letter and is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan. Comments are provided in *italic* text.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ELEMENT

##### OBJECTIVE 2

##### IMPLEMENT BROAD AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

##### POLICY 2.1

##### **Coordinate regional and local management of natural resources.**

*Comment: The SFPUC is entering into the GSR project with its Partner Agencies, Daly City, San Bruno and CalWater to make efficient use of the South Westside Groundwater Basin. Under the Project, the SFPUC would provide surface water to its Partner Agencies in wet and normal years, allowing for in-lieu storage of groundwater. In dry years, the SFPUC and Partner Agencies would be able to pump increased groundwater supply. The GSR project, located outside of the City and County of San Francisco in San Mateo County, would make the dry-year water supply it creates available to the cities in which the wells would be located - Daly City, San Bruno and South San Francisco – as well as to SFPUC wholesale water customers.*

**OBJECTIVE 5**

**ASSURE A PERMANENT AND ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FRESH WATER TO MEET THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF SAN FRANCISCO.**

Hetch Hetchy and the Water Department should continue their excellent planning program to assure that the water supply will adequately meet foreseeable consumption demands. To this end, the City should be prepared to undertake the necessary improvements and add to the Hetch Hetchy/Water Department system in order to guarantee the permanent supply. Furthermore, San Francisco should continually renew its commitments for the sale of water to suburban areas in planning how to meet future demand.

*Comment: The GSR project is a key component of the SFPUC's WSIP plan for dry year supply. The GSR project would improve the SFPUC's ability to provide an adequate, reliable supply of water in both wet and dry years, by creating the capacity to collect and store groundwater. Water collected during wet periods would be used to supplement existing sources during dry years.*

**POLICY 5.3**

**Ensure water purity.**

San Francisco's drinking water must meet State and Federal water quality standards. Ensuring water quality means continuing the present water purification process and monitoring storage facilities and transmission lines for threats to the water supply.

*Comment: New well facilities constructed as part of the GSR project would have disinfection units as required. The Final EIR determines that the Project would have no significant impact on water quality and would not degrade drinking water.*

**OBJECTIVE 6**

**CONSERVE AND PROTECT THE FRESH WATER RESOURCE.**

The fresh water resource, like all natural resources, is finite and measurable. While San Francisco's water supply seems vast in relation to current demands, it should not be wasted. Supplementary sources should also be investigated.

*Comment: The GSR project would provide new supplementary sources of fresh water, collecting and storing groundwater during wet periods for use during dry years.*

PROPOSITION M FINDINGS – PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

**Eight Priority Policies Findings**

The subject project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced.

*The Project would have no adverse effect on neighborhood serving retail uses or opportunities for employment in or ownership of such businesses.*

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhood.

*The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's housing stock or on neighborhood character. The existing housing and neighborhood character will be not be negatively affected*

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.

*The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.*

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

*The Project would not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI's transit service, overburdening the streets or altering current neighborhood parking.*

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

*The Project would not affect the existing economic base in this area.*

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

*The Project would not adversely affect achieving the greatest possible preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.*

7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

*The project does not involve alteration of any historic buildings.*

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

*The Project would have no long-term adverse effect on parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vista. The Final EIR determines that short-term impacts to the recreational experience during project construction would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures.*

### DECISION

That based upon the Record, the submissions of the SFPUC, the Department and SFPUC staff, and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **APPROVES** the General Plan Referral, finding the project, on balance, consistent with the General Plan.

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission **ADOPTED** the foregoing Motion on August 7, 2014.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Antonini, Borden, Fong, Hillis, Moore, Sugaya and Wu.

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: August 07, 2014

*Attachments: Map of proposed well sites and list of right-of-way requirements*

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**List of right-of-way requirements**

In compliance with Government Code Section 7260 et seq., undertake the process for possible acquisition, for an estimated combined purchase price not to exceed \$1,000,000, of interests (temporary or permanent) in real property located in San Mateo County, as follows:

- (1) Assessor's Parcel # 002-410-050 in Daly City, owned by Lake Merced Golf and Country Club
- (2) Assessor's Parcel's # 002-072-240, -250 and 002-201-650 in Daly City, owned by John Daly Boulevard Associates/West Lake Associates
- (3) Assessor's Parcel #'s 006-111-540 and 006-111-460 in Daly City, owned by Jefferson Elementary School District
- (4) Assessor's Parcel # 008-421-120 in Colma, owned by TSE Serramonte L.P. and leased by Kohl's Department Stores
- (5) Assessor's Parcel's (unknown) for property owned by BART/SAMTRANS in South San Francisco
- (6) Assessor's Parcel # 010-212-100 in South San Francisco, owned by Costco Wholesale Corporation
- (7) Assessor's Parcel # 093-331-080 in South San Francisco, owned by the City of South San Francisco
- (8) Assessor's Parcel # 010-292-210 in South San Francisco, owned by Kaiser Foundation Hospitals
- (9) Assessor's Parcel # 093-220-010 in Millbrae, owned by the SFPUC and leased by OSH/Lowes Corporation
- (10) Assessor's Parcel # 014-320-010 in San Bruno, owned by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

