

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

2/24/2025

Item #5: Resolution Adopting an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Primary Influent Pump Station Parallel Force Main Project (C66502032)

- **Question:** I am very concerned for the impacts and construction risks of work in wetlands and unstable soils such as this project traverses. I see that the route veers from the existing alignment at Casa Grande and Technology Way. Has it been similarly evaluated to veer from the existing route in the Schollenberger segment, Cader Lane to the Ellis Creek Entrance? Is there a value engineering assessment of this routing alternative?
 - **Response:** In 2014, the City hired Nute Engineering to develop an Alternative Route Study. The study evaluated seven different routes and recommended using the parallel alignment, as it utilized existing easements and was the most cost-effective option. Most of the new parallel force main alignment runs through parking lots on private properties, so while it is adjacent to Alman Marsh and Schollenberger Park, it does not run through them, except for a stretch at the end where the force main enters Ellis Creek.

The new parallel force main deviates from the existing force main alignment on Casa Grande Road and Technology Way to avoid constructing the force main across the Azure Apartment Homes. The existing easement on this property is located along a narrow parking lot surrounded by multi-story apartment buildings that abut the edge of the easement. Additionally, a large storm drain and sewer pipeline were constructed within this easement. To minimize significant disruption to the residential community and eliminate concerns with constructing the new force main near the existing pipelines, the parallel force main bypasses this property by staying in City right-of-way along Casa Grande Road and Technology Lane.

The parallel force main will not be constructed within wetlands between Cader Lane and the ECWRF site. Construction will occur along the south side of the commercial properties adjacent to Schollenberger. Furthermore, the parallel force main design considers the unique soil conditions found in this project area with assistance from qualified geotechnical engineers. Proper trench excavation, shoring, and backfill materials and methods will be utilized to construct the pipeline according to best practices.

Additionally, where the parallel force main enters the ECWRF parcel and moves towards the headworks connection, the alignment has been adjusted to avoid construction through the wetlands, and the design drawings set work limits to protect the wetlands.
- **Question:** Would it be quicker, less costly, and lower risk to construct in a street (noting that McDowell/Cypress in that area needs repaving, so there is a potential dual benefit)?

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

2/24/2025

- Response: The 2014 Route Study analyzed this specific route and concluded it would be more expensive primarily due to a longer pipeline. The study assessed construction costs, traffic impacts, environmental impacts, and other criteria as part of this evaluation. This alternative was the third most cost-effective route, while the second most cost-effective option had more significant environmental impacts, leading to a recommendation to follow the existing force main alignment.
- **Question: Our recent experience with PG&E and their contractors in Schollenberger do not give confidence in construction commitments.**
 - Response: The difference between PG&E at Schollenberger, is that here the City is the one that is managing the project and construction, not an outside organization like PG&E, that does not have the City as their main interest. Furthermore, the parallel force main will remain north of Schollenberger park and stay within the private properties between Cader Lane and ECWRF. Additionally, the pathway will also be constructed on private property just north of Alman Marsh Open Space.
- **Question: Does approval of this ISMND preclude the suggested alternate route or its investigation? Would the alternative route be Categorically Exempt?**
 - Response: Approval of the IS/MND does not preclude future changes in the route, but any revised alignment would need to be evaluated under CEQA. If a revised route didn't result in any new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of impacts, it could likely be covered in an Addendum to the IS/MND. An alternative route may not be presumed to be categorically exempt, it would need to be evaluated as part of the overall project and considered in its entirety. The City would not issue a Notice of Exemption for just a small portion of a larger project.
- **Question: What is the plan to ensure that our only entry/exit along Caulfield / Hopper will never be blocked? Will a secondary access/exit be created? How will any emergency evacuation be handled if necessary, during the construction period?**
 - Response: To ensure that the only entry/exit along Caulfield/Hopper is never completely blocked, the contractor will be required to submit a traffic control plan, prepared by a licensed engineer, covering all work areas of the project. This plan will be reviewed and approved by City staff, including Emergency Medical Services, before any work begins. Additionally, City staff will conduct on-site inspections to ensure that the contractor adheres to the approved traffic control measures.

The project specifications mandate that disruptions to the public be minimized and that safe pedestrian access is maintained at all times. We intend to leave at least one lane open for traffic during construction and will make every effort to minimize delays. At the end of each workday, the contractor will ensure that the

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

2/24/2025

roadway is accessible in both directions, typically by using steel plates in combination with temporary paving to cover open trenches.

The approved traffic control plan will account for safe and efficient access for emergency vehicles. Staff will also make sure that the project specifications outline this requirement for the traffic control plan.

- **Question: When are these projects expected to start and end? How will the neighborhood be notified of any impact? How can we ensure that some construction rules are put in place given that there are residences within a few hundred feet?**

- **Response:** Construction is expected to begin in the Spring of 2026 and be completed by early 2028. While the contractor will have input into the sequencing of construction, City staff have already outlined specific sequencing in the project specifications. The area in question is scheduled to be constructed early in the project timeline.

The full public outreach plan is still under development and will continue to evolve through the summer. The outreach plan will include mailers, social media updates, and website postings. Notifications will be sent to properties within 1,000 feet of the project at least two weeks before construction begins.

Additionally, signage will be posted two weeks prior to construction, informing the public of anticipated construction timing in the area. The signage will also provide contact information for City Staff if questions arise.

To ensure minimal disruption to nearby residences, construction rules will be carefully enforced. City staff will oversee contractor activities, including limiting noisy or disruptive work to specific hours, maintaining proper fencing and safety barriers, and ensuring that access to residences is not blocked. We will also remain responsive to any concerns from residents during the construction period.