



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Planning Commission Draft Motion

### CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) FINDINGS

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

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*Case No.:* 2008.0091E  
*Project Name:* San Francisco Westside Recycled Water Plant Project  
*Zoning:* P (Public) Zoning District  
OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 7281/007  
*Project Sponsor:* San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
c/o Scott MacPherson  
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**ADOPTING FINDINGS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, INCLUDING FINDINGS REJECTING ALTERNATIVES AS INFEASIBLE, ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS, AND ADOPTING A MITIGATION, MONITORING, AND REPORTING PROGRAM, RELATING TO THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITY'S PROPOSED PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE ON THE WESTSIDE RECYCLED WATER PLANT PROJECT.**

### PREAMBLE

On January 17, 2008, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission ("SFPUC") submitted an Environmental Evaluation Application to the Planning Department ("Department"), Case No. 2008.0091E, in connection with a project to construct and operate a recycled water facility on the west side of San Francisco. The San Francisco Westside Recycled Water Project ("SFRW Project" or "Project") would consist of a recycled water treatment plant at the SFPUC's Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant ("WPCP") and within a portion of the adjacent California Army National Guard site, underground storage and distribution facilities. The plant would have an operational capacity to serve peak-day demands of up to 5 mgd (or 2 mgd annual average) to meet the current water demand in areas of western San Francisco that have substantial irrigation needs.

On June 5, 2008, and September 8, 2010, the Department issued a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report ("NOP") for the Project, and, in response to comments received, revised the location of certain project elements and published a revised NOP on July 16, 2014.

On March 18, 2015, the Department published the Draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR” or “Draft EIR”) for the Project and provided public notice in a newspaper of general circulation of the availability of the DEIR for public review and comment. The DEIR was available for public comment until May 4, 2015.

The San Francisco Planning Commission (“Planning Commission” or “Commission”) held a public hearing on the DEIR on April 23, 2015, at a regularly scheduled meeting to solicit public comment regarding the DEIR.

The Department prepared responses to comments on environmental issues received at the public hearing and in writing during the public review period for the DEIR, and 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. This material was presented in a Draft Comments and Responses (“C & R”) document, published on August 20, 2015, and distributed to the Planning Commission and all parties who commented on the DEIR, and made available to others upon request at the Department.

A Final Environmental Impact Report (“FEIR”) or “Final EIR”) was prepared by the Department, consisting of the Draft EIR and the C & R document.

Project Environmental Impact Report files have been made available for review by this Commission and the public. These files are available for public review at the Department at 1650 Mission Street, and are part of the record before this Commission.

On September 17, 2015, the Commission reviewed and considered the Final EIR and found that the contents of the report and the procedures through which the Final EIR was prepared, publicized, and reviewed complied with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 *et seq.*) (“CEQA”), 14 California Code of Regulations section 15000 *et seq.* (“CEQA Guidelines”), and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code (“Chapter 31”).

The Planning Commission found the Final EIR was adequate, accurate and objective, reflected the independent analysis and judgment of the Department and the Planning Commission, and that the summary of comments and responses contained no significant revisions to the Draft EIR, and approved the Final EIR for the Project in compliance with CEQA, the CEQA Guidelines and Chapter 31.

The Planning Department, Jonas P. Ionin, is the custodian of records for the Planning Department materials, located in the File for Case No. 2008.0091E, at 1650 Mission Street, Forth Floor, San Francisco, California.

Department staff prepared a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (“MMRP”) for the Project and these materials were made available to the public and this Commission for this Commission’s review, consideration and action.

On September 17, 2015, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting on Case No. 2008.0091E to consider the approval of the Project. The Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written

materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of the SFPUC, the Planning Department staff, and other interested parties.

**MOVED**, that the Planning Commission hereby adopts findings under the California Environmental Quality Act, including rejecting alternatives as infeasible and adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopts the MMRP attached as Exhibit A based on the following findings:

## **FINDINGS**

Having reviewed the materials identified in the Preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

In determining to approve the San Francisco Westside Recycled Water Project ("SFRW Project" or "Project") described in Section I, Project Description, below, the San Francisco Planning Commission ("Planning Commission" or "Commission") makes and adopts the following findings of fact and decisions regarding mitigation measures and alternatives, and adopts the statement of overriding considerations, based on substantial evidence in the whole record of this proceeding and under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., particularly Sections 21081 and 21081.5, the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA ("CEQA Guidelines"), 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq., particularly Sections 15091 through 15093, and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

This document is organized as follows:

**Section I** provides a description of the Project proposed for adoption, the environmental review process for the Project (San Francisco Westside Recycled Water Project Environmental Impact Report, Planning Department Case No., 2008.0091E, State Clearinghouse No. 2008052133) (the "Final EIR" or "EIR"), the approval actions to be taken and the location of records;

**Section II** identifies the impacts found not to be significant that do not require mitigation;

**Section III** identifies potentially significant impacts that can be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels through mitigation and describes the disposition of the mitigation measures;

**Section IV** identifies significant impacts that cannot be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels and describes any applicable mitigation measures as well as the disposition of the mitigation measures;

**Section V** evaluates the different Project alternatives and the economic, legal, social, technological and other considerations that support approval of the Project and the rejection of alternatives, or elements thereof, analyzed; and

**Section VI** presents a statement of overriding considerations setting forth specific reasons in support of the Commission's actions and rejection of the alternatives not incorporated into the Project.

The **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program ("MMRP")** for the mitigation measures that have been proposed for adoption is attached with these findings as **Exhibit A** to this Motion No. \_\_\_\_\_. The MMRP is required by CEQA Section 21081.6 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15091. **Exhibit A** provides a table setting forth each mitigation measure listed in the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Project ("Final EIR") that is required to reduce or avoid a significant adverse impact. **Exhibit A** also specifies the agency responsible for implementation of each measure and establishes monitoring actions and a monitoring schedule. The full text of the mitigation measures is set forth in **Exhibit A**.

These findings are based upon substantial evidence in the entire record before the Commission. The references set forth in these findings to certain pages or sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("Draft EIR" or "DEIR") or the Comments and Responses document ("C&R") in the Final EIR are for ease of reference and are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of the evidence relied upon for these findings.

## **I. APPROVAL OF PROJECT**

### **A. Project Description**

By this action, the Planning Commission adopts and implements the SFRW Project identified in the Final EIR. Specifically, the Project adopted by the Planning Commission includes the following:

- Construction of a recycled water treatment plant at the SFPUC's Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) and within a portion of the adjacent California Army National Guard site. Recycled water produced at this facility would be used in Golden Gate Park for irrigation and as fill water for Golden Gate Park lakes; and for irrigation in the Panhandle portion of the park; Lincoln Park Golf Course, and various areas of the Presidio. The treatment plant would have an annual average production capacity of up to 2 million gallons per day (mgd) and sized to meet peak-day demands of up to 5 mgd.
- Construction of a transmission pipeline primarily along 36th Avenue that would run between the proposed recycled water treatment plant at the Oceanside WPCP and the existing Central Reservoir in Golden Gate Park. The pipeline would deliver the recycled water from the Oceanside WPCP to the areas of use.
- Construction of transmission pipelines between the Central Reservoir and Lincoln Park and the Presidio and the adjacent Golden Gate Park Panhandle.
- Construction of an expanded underground reservoir to provide additional storage capacity and a new pump station to provide increased pumping capacity at the Central Reservoir site.

### **B. Project Objectives**

The three main objectives of the SFRW Project are:

- Diversify the SFPUC's water supply by developing recycled water.
- Develop a new water supply in San Francisco that is both reliable and drought resistant.
- Reduce the use of potable water and groundwater for irrigation and other nonpotable uses by supplying those demands with recycled water.

In addition, the Project is part of the SFPUC's adopted Water System Improvement Program ("WSIP") adopted by the SFPUC on October 30, 2008 (see Section C.1). 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 areas. 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 level-of-service goals and system performance objectives. These goals include providing a total of 10 mgd annual average of water supply from recycled water, groundwater, and conservation projects to meet retail demand in San Francisco. Of this amount, the WSIP project description indicated that approximately 4 mgd annual average would be derived from recycled water projects in San Francisco. This Project would provide up to 2 mgd of recycled water; currently identified customers are estimated to use 1.6 mgd. This Project would also enable implementation of the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, approved by the SFPUC in December, 2013. The SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project calls for installation of new groundwater wells to recover 2.5 to 3.0 mgd of groundwater in the first phase and conversion of existing irrigation wells in Golden Gate Park to potable use, providing 1.0 to 1.5 mgd of groundwater in the second phase. The second phase cannot occur until recycled water is available for Golden Gate Park landscaping or until another landscaping water source is identified. Thus the Project would also help meet the WSIP goal of providing approximately 4 mgd annual average of water supply from groundwater.

## **C. Environmental Review**

### *1. Water System Improvement Program Environmental Impact Report*

On October 30, 2008, the SFPUC approved the Water System Improvement Program (also known as the “Phased WSIP”) with the objective of repairing, replacing, and seismically upgrading the system’s aging pipelines, tunnels, reservoirs, pump stations, and storage tanks (SFPUC, 2008; SFPUC Resolution No. 08-0200). The WSIP improvements span seven counties—Tuolumne, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco (see SFPUC Resolution No. 08-0200).

To address the potential environmental effects of the WSIP, the San Francisco Planning Department (“Planning Department”) prepared a Program EIR (“PEIR”), which was certified by the Planning Commission on October 30, 2008 (Motion No. 17734). At a project-level of detail, the PEIR evaluated the environmental impacts of the WSIP’s water supply strategy and, at a program level of detail; it evaluated the environmental impacts of the WSIP’s facility improvement projects. The PEIR contemplated that additional project-level environmental review would be conducted for the facility improvement projects, including the San Francisco Recycled Water Project.

## *2. San Francisco Recycled Water Project Environmental Impact Report*

In accordance with Sections 15063 and 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Environmental Planning (“EP”) staff of the Planning Department, as lead agency, sent a first and then a revised Notice of Preparation (“NOP”) to interested entities and individuals to begin the formal CEQA scoping process for the Project on June 5, 2008, and September 8, 2010, respectively. Following the 2010 NOP scoping period, the SFPUC in response to public feedback evaluated alternative possible sites, resulting in a revised Project proposal for which the Planning Department issued a revised NOP/Initial Study (IS) on July 16, 2014 with the scoping period ending on August 15, 2014. The NOP was distributed to interested parties that had received the initial NOPs, public agencies, additional interested parties and landowners/occupants located in the vicinity of the Project facilities, and was posted on the Planning Department’s website and placed in the legal classified section of the San Francisco Chronicle.

The Planning Department received nine comments on the scope of the EIR either at the scoping meeting or in writing following the 2014 scoping meeting. The comment inventories for all three NOPs are included in the Scoping Report in Appendix A of the EIR along with the IS.

EP then prepared the Draft EIR, which described the Project and the environmental setting, identified potential impacts, presented mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant or potentially significant, and evaluated Project alternatives. The Draft EIR analyzed the impacts associated with each of the key components of the Project, and identified mitigation measures applicable to reduce impacts found to be significant or potentially significant for each key component. It also included an analysis of three alternatives to the Project. In assessing construction and operational impacts of the Project, the EIR considered the impacts of the Project as well as the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project in combination with other past, present, and future actions that could affect the same resources.

Each environmental issue presented in the Draft EIR was analyzed with respect to significance criteria that are based on EP guidance regarding the environmental effects to be considered significant. EP guidance is, in turn, based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, with some modifications.

The Draft EIR was circulated for public comment from March 18, 2015 through May 4, 2015. The Planning Commission held a public hearing at San Francisco City Hall on April 23, 2015 to hear oral comments and accept written comments on the Draft EIR. During the public review period, EP received written comments sent through the mail, fax, or email. A court reporter was present at the public hearing, transcribed the public hearing verbatim, and prepared a written transcript.

EP then prepared the C&R document, which provided written responses to each comment received on the Draft EIR. The C&R document was published on August 20, 2015 and included copies of all of the comments received on the Draft EIR and individual responses to those comments. The C&R provided additional, updated information and clarification on issues raised by commenters, as well as SFPUC and Planning Department staff-initiated text changes to address Project updates. The Planning Commission reviewed and considered the Final EIR, which includes the Draft EIR and the C&R document, and all of the supporting information. The Final EIR provided augmented and updated information presented in the Draft EIR, on the following topics: Project description, cultural resources, transportation and circulation, air quality, hydrology and water quality, biological resources, and Project alternatives. This augmentation and update of information in the Draft EIR did not constitute new information or significance that altered any of the conclusions of the EIR.

In certifying the Final EIR by Motion No. \_\_\_\_\_, the Planning Commission determined that none of the factors are present that would necessitate recirculation of the Final EIR under CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5. The Final EIR contains no information revealing (1) any new significant environmental impact that would result from the Project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented, (2) any substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified environmental impact, (3) any feasible Project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed that would clearly lessen the environmental impacts of the Project, but that was rejected by the Project's proponents, or (4) that the Draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.

The Commission finds that the Project is within the scope of the Project analyzed in the Final EIR and the Final EIR fully analyzed the Project proposed for approval. No new impacts have been identified that were not analyzed in the Final EIR.

#### **D. Approval Actions**

##### *1. San Francisco Planning Commission Actions*

On August 13, 2015, the Planning Commission certified the Final EIR.

The Planning Commission is adopting these CEQA Findings in support of making General Plan consistency findings, and issuing a Coastal Development Permit.

##### *2. San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Actions*

The SFPUC will take the following actions and approvals to implement the Project:

- Adopt CEQA findings and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- Approve the Project, as described in these findings, and authorize the General Manager or his designee to obtain necessary permits, consents, agreements. Approvals include entering into an agreement with the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission ("SFRPD") for construction in and use of SFRPD-managed land for recycled water facilities and pipelines.

*3. San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission*

The Recreation and Parks Commission will adopt CEQA Findings and approve an agreement with SFPUC for construction, operation and maintenance of recycled water facility structures and pipelines on park lands.

*4. San Francisco Board of Supervisors Actions*

The Planning Commission's certification of the Final EIR may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors. If appealed, the Board of Supervisors will determine whether to uphold the certification or to remand the Final EIR to the Planning Department for further review.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors will adopt CEQA Findings, approve an allocation of bond monies to pay for implementation of the Project, and approve the recycled water facility structures in Golden Gate Park.

*5. Other – Federal, State, and Local Agencies*

Implementation of the Project will involve consultation with or required approvals by other local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Other San Francisco City entities, including the Department of Public Works and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
- California Army National Guard (lease amendment)
- California State Water Resources Control Board (loan approval; stormwater and recycled water discharges)
- California Department of Transportation (encroachment permit)
- California Coastal Commission (coastal permit)
- Presidio Trust (water supply agreement)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Regional Water Quality Control Board (NPDES permit)



To the extent that the identified mitigation measures require consultation or approval by these other agencies, this Commission urges these agencies to assist in implementing, coordinating, or approving the mitigation measures, as appropriate to the particular measure.

**E. Contents and Location of Records**

The record upon which all findings and determinations related to the Project are based (“Record of Proceedings”) includes the following:

- The Draft EIR and all documents referenced in or relied upon by the EIR. (The references in these findings to the EIR or Final EIR include both the Draft EIR and the Comments and Responses document.) The PEIR for the Phased WSIP Variant, which is incorporated by reference in the SFRW Project EIR.
- All information (including written evidence and testimony) provided by City staff to the SFPUC and Planning Commission relating to the EIR, the Project, and the alternatives set forth in the EIR.
- All information (including written evidence and testimony) presented to the SFPUC and the Planning Commission by the environmental consultant and sub-consultants who prepared the EIR or that was incorporated into reports presented to the Commission.
- All information presented at any public hearing or workshop related to the Project and the EIR.
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- All other documents available to the Commission and the public, comprising the administrative record pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167.6(e).

The Commission has relied on all of the information listed above in reaching its decision on the Project, even if not every document was formally presented to the Commission. Without exception, these documents fall into one of two categories. Many documents reflect prior planning or legislative decisions that the Commission was aware of in approving the Project. Other documents influenced the expert advice provided to Planning Department staff or consultants, who then provided advice to the Commission. For these reasons, such documents form part of the underlying factual basis for the Commission’s decisions relating to the adoption of the Project.

The public hearing transcript, a copy of all letters regarding the Draft EIR received during the public review period, the administrative record, and background documentation for the Final EIR are available at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, San Francisco. **Jonas P. Ionin**, Commission Secretary, is the Custodian of Records for the Planning Department Materials concerning approval of the Project and adoption of these findings are contained in SFPUC files, SFPUC Project No. CUW30102 in the Bureau of Environmental Management, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, 525 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102. The Custodian of Records is **Scott**

**MacPherson.** All files have been available to the Commission and the public for review in considering these findings and whether to approve the Project.

**F. Findings about Significant Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The following Sections II, III, and IV set forth the Commission's findings about the Final EIR's determinations regarding significant environmental impacts and the mitigation measures proposed to address them. These findings provide the written analysis and conclusions of the Commission regarding the environmental impacts of the Project and the mitigation measures included as part of the Final EIR and adopted by the Commission as part of the Project. To avoid duplication and redundancy, and because the Commission agrees with, and hereby adopts, the conclusions in the Final EIR, these findings will not repeat the analysis and conclusions in the Final EIR but instead incorporate them by reference and rely upon them as substantial evidence supporting these findings.

In making these findings, the Commission has considered the opinions of Commission staff and experts, other agencies, and members of the public. The Commission finds that (i) the determination of significance thresholds is a judgment decision within the discretion of the City and County of San Francisco; (ii) the significance thresholds used in the EIR are supported by substantial evidence in the record, including the expert opinion of the EIR preparers and City staff; and (iii) the significance thresholds used in the EIR provide reasonable and appropriate means of assessing the significance of the adverse environmental effects of the Project. Thus, although, as a legal matter, the Commission is not bound by the significance determinations in the EIR (see Public Resources Code, Section 21082.2, subdivision (e)), the Commission finds them persuasive and hereby adopts them as its own.

These findings do not attempt to describe the full analysis of each environmental impact contained in the Final EIR. Instead, a full explanation of these environmental findings and conclusions can be found in the Final EIR, and these findings hereby incorporate by reference the discussion and analysis in the Final EIR supporting the determination regarding the project impact and mitigation measures designed to address those impacts. In making these findings, the Commission ratifies, adopts and incorporates in these findings the determinations and conclusions of the Final EIR relating to environmental impacts and mitigation measures, except to the extent any such determinations and conclusions are specifically and expressly modified by these findings.

As set forth below, the Commission adopts and incorporates all of the mitigation measures set forth in the Final EIR and the attached MMRP to substantially lessen or avoid the potentially significant and significant impacts of the Project. The Commission intends to adopt each of the mitigation measures proposed in the Final EIR. Accordingly, in the event a mitigation measure recommended in the Final EIR has inadvertently been omitted in these findings or the MMRP, such mitigation measure is hereby adopted and incorporated in the findings below by reference. In addition, in the event the language describing a mitigation measure set forth in these findings or the MMRP fails to accurately reflect the mitigation measures in the Final EIR due to a clerical error, the language of the policies and implementation measures as set forth in the Final EIR shall control. The impact numbers and mitigation measure numbers used in these findings reflect the information contained in the Final EIR.

In Sections II, III and IV below, the same findings are made for a category of environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Rather than repeat the identical finding dozens of times to address each and every significant effect and mitigation measure, the initial finding obviates the need for such repetition because in no instance is the Commission rejecting the conclusions of the Final EIR or the mitigation measures recommended in the Final EIR for the Project.

## **II. LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE MITIGATION**

Under CEQA, no mitigation measures are required for impacts that are less than significant (Public Resources Code, Section 21002; CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15126.4, subdivision (a)(3), 15091). Based on the evidence in the whole record of this proceeding, the Commission finds that the implementation of the Project either does not apply or will result in no impacts in the following areas: (1) Population and Housing: displace existing housing units or people or require new housing; (2) Transportation and Circulation: change air traffic patterns; (3) Noise: expose people to airplane noise or be substantially affected by existing noise levels; (4) Air Quality: create objectionable odors; (5) Recreation: create a need for new facilities; (6) Utilities and Service Systems: conflict with solid waste regulations; (7) Public Services: create a need for new or altered facilities; (8) Biological Resources: conflict with local policies protecting biological resources, such as trees, or a habitat conservation plan or other similar plan; (9) Geology and Soils: change existing topography or unique geologic features of the site; (10) Hydrology and Water Quality: expose housing to flooding hazard, impede or redirect flood flows, or expose people or structures to harm from flooding, seiche, tsunami or mudflow; (11) Hazardous Materials: create a safety hazard from aircraft or fires; (12) Mineral and Energy Resources: result in loss of mineral resource or availability of a resource recovery site; and (13) Agricultural Resources: all issues. These subjects are not further discussed in these findings.

The Commission further finds that implementation of the Project will not result in any significant impacts in the following areas and that these impact areas therefore do not require mitigation:

### **Land Use**

- **Impact LU-1:** The Project would not physically divide an established community.
- **Impact LU-2:** The Project would not conflict with any applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of any agency with jurisdiction over the Project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- **Impact LU-3:** The Project would not impact the existing character of the vicinity.
- **Impact C-LU:** The Project would not have a cumulative impact on land use.

### **Aesthetics**

- **Impact AE-1:** The Project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, scenic resource, or the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

- **Impact AE-2:** The Project would not result in a substantial source of light or glare.
- **Impact C-AE:** The Project would not have a cumulative impact on aesthetics.

#### **Population and Housing**

- **Impact PH-1:** The Project would not induce substantial population growth, either directly or indirectly.
- **Impact C-PH:** The Project would not have a project-specific impact on population and housing and, therefore, would not directly result in a significant cumulative impact on population and housing.

#### **Cultural Resources**

- **Impact CP-1:** The Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, including those resources listed in Article 10 or Article 11 of the San Francisco Planning Code.

#### **Transportation and Circulation**

- **Impact TR-1:** The Project would not result in conflict with an applicable congestion management program.
- **Impact TR-2:** Closure of travel lanes during Project construction would temporarily reduce roadway capacity and increase traffic delays on area roadways, causing temporary and intermittent conflicts with all modes of travel, but the effects would be of short duration and limited in magnitude.
- **Impact TR-3:** Project construction would cause temporary increases in traffic volumes on area roadways, but would not cause substantial conflicts with the performance of the circulation system.
- **Impact TR-4:** Project construction within roadways would not substantially limit access to adjacent roadways and land uses.
- **Impact TR-5:** Project construction would not substantially impair access to alternative transportation facilities (public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities), although it could temporarily deteriorate the performance of such facilities.
- **Impact TR-6:** Project operation and maintenance activities would cause some increases in traffic volumes on area roadways, but would not substantially alter transportation conditions and would not cause conflicts with alternative travel modes, including vehicles, emergency vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic.

- **Impact C-TR:** The Project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would not substantially contribute to cumulative traffic increases on local and regional roads.

#### Noise and Vibration

- **Impact NO-1:** The Project would not result in substantial groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.
- **Impact NO-2:** Project operations would not result in the exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards or a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in the Project vicinity.
- **Impact NO-3:** Construction of the Project would not result in a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels at the closest residential receptors, and would not expose persons to substantial noise levels in excess of standards established in the Noise Ordinance (Article 29 of the Police Code).
- **Impact C-NO:** The Project would not have significant cumulative noise impacts.

#### Air Quality

- **Impact AQ-1:** The Project would not create objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people.
- **Impact AQ-3:** The Project's construction activities would generate TACs, including DPM, but would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.
- **Impact C-AQ:** The Project could result in cumulative air quality impacts associated with criteria pollutant and precursor emissions and health risks, but the Project's contribution would not be cumulatively considerable.

#### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- **Impact C-GG-1:** The Project would generate greenhouse gas emissions during Project construction and operation, but not at levels that would result in a significant impact on the environment or conflict with any policy, plan, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Wind and Shadow

- **Impact WS-1:** The Project would not alter wind in a manner that substantially affects public areas.
- **Impact WS-2:** The Project would not create new shadow in a manner that could substantially affect outdoor recreation facilities or other public areas.

- **Impact C-WS:** The Project would not have significant cumulative wind and shadow impacts.

#### Recreation

- **Impact RE-1:** The Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities.
- **Impact C-RE:** The Project would not have a significant cumulative impact on recreation.

#### Utilities and Service Systems

- **Impact UT-1:** The Project would not result in construction or expansion of water or wastewater treatment facilities, exceed wastewater treatment requirements, or stormwater drainage facilities, exceed wastewater requirements, or result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that there is insufficient capacity to serve the Project.
- **Impact UT-2:** The Project would have sufficient water supply available, and would not require new or expanded water supply resources or entitlements.
- **Impact UT-3:** The Project would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste disposal needs.
- **Impact UT-4:** The Project would comply with all applicable statutes and regulations related to solid waste.
- **Impact UT-5:** The Project's construction would not result in a substantial adverse effect related to disruption, relocation, or accidental damage to existing utilities.
- **Impact C-UT:** The Project would not have a significant cumulative impact on utilities and service systems.

#### Biological Resources

- **Impact BI-2:** The Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS.
- **Impact BI-3:** The Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- **Impact BI-4:** The Project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

#### Geology and Soils

- **Impact GE-1:** The Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, seismic groundshaking, or seismically induced ground failure.
- **Impact GE-2:** The Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.
- **Impact GE-3:** The Project is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that could become unstable as a result of the Project.
- **Impact C-GE:** The Project would not have a significant cumulative impact related to geologic hazards.

#### **Hydrology and Water Quality**

- **Impact HY-1:** Project construction would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade water quality.
- **Impact HY-2:** Project operation would not contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems, provide substantial an additional sources of polluted runoff, or, with the exception of potentially violating water quality standards, otherwise substantially degrade water quality.
- **Impact HY-3:** The Project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.
- **Impact HY-4:** The Project would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the area in a manner that would result in substantial erosion, siltation, or flooding on or off the site.
- **Impact C-HY-1:** The Project would not have a significant cumulative hydrology and water quality impact.

#### **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

- **Impact HZ-1:** Project construction would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- **Impact HZ-2:** The Project would be constructed on a site identified on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 but excavation activities would not expose workers and the public to adverse effects from release of hazardous materials.
- **Impact HZ-3:** Reconfiguration of the chemical building interior would not expose workers and the public to hazardous building materials including asbestos-containing materials, lead-

based paint, PCBs, bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), and mercury, or result in a release of these materials into the environment during construction.

- **Impact HZ-4:** The Project would not result in adverse effects related to hazardous emissions or handling of acutely hazardous materials within ¼ mile of an existing school.
- **Impact HZ-5:** The Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- **Impact C-HZ-1:** The Project would not have a significant cumulative impact related to hazardous materials.

#### **Mineral and Energy Resources**

- **Impact ME-1:** The Project would not encourage activities that result in the use of large amounts of fuel, water, or energy, or use of these resources in a wasteful manner.
- **Impact C-ME:** The Project would not have significant cumulative mineral and energy impacts.

### **III. POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT OR SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS THAT CAN BE AVOIDED OR REDUCED TO A LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT LEVEL THROUGH MITIGATION AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE MITIGATION MEASURES**

CEQA requires agencies to adopt mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially lessen a project's identified significant impacts or potentially significant impacts if such measures are feasible (unless mitigation to such levels is achieved through adoption of a project alternative). The findings in this Section III and in Section IV concern mitigation measures set forth in the EIR. These findings discuss mitigation measures as proposed in the EIR and recommended for adoption by the SFPUC, which can be implemented by the SFPUC as set forth in **Exhibit A** in the MMRP. The mitigation measures proposed for adoption in this section and referenced following each Project impact discussed in this Section III, are the same as the mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR for the Project. The full text of each mitigation measure listed in this section is contained in the Final EIR and in **Exhibit A**, the MMRP. The Commission finds that for the reasons set forth in the Final EIR and elsewhere in the record, the impacts identified in this section would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this section. The Commission hereby adopts these mitigation measures and urges the SFPUC to adopt the mitigation measures.

#### **Project Impacts**

##### **Cultural Resources**

**Impact CP-2:** The proposed project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)



Based on the results of the background research, geoarchaeological assessment, and survey results, there is generally, throughout the CEQA Area of Potential Effect, a low potential for uncovering archaeological resources during Project construction. However, it is possible that previously unrecorded and buried (or otherwise obscured) archaeological deposits could be discovered during Project construction. Excavation, grading, and the movement of heavy construction vehicles and equipment could expose and cause impacts on unknown archaeological resources, which would be a *significant* impact. The impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through mitigation measure M-CP-2, which requires avoidance measures or appropriate treatment of cultural resources if accidentally discovered.

- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-2, Accidental Discovery of Archaeological Resources*

**Impact CP-3: The Project could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

Ground-disturbing activities associated with the construction of the recycled water treatment plant would extend about 23 feet into the Colma Formation, a geologic unit with a high paleontological sensitivity. Vertebrate fossils, including parts of mammoths and bison, have been found in the Colma Formation in San Francisco. Given the sensitivity of the Colma Formation and the depth of excavation, the Project could adversely impact paleontological resources at the water treatment plant site, a *significant* impact. The impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through mitigation measure M-CP-3, which requires the contractor to stop all ground disturbance within 50 feet if a paleontological resource is encountered and to implement actions to investigate the discovery and recover fossil remains by a qualified professional before ground-disturbing activities can resume.

- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-3, Accidental Discovery of Paleontological Resources*

**Impact CP-4: The proposed Project could accidentally disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

Based on the background research, geological assessment, and survey results, there is a low potential for Project construction to uncover human remains, except for the Project area adjacent to the Golden Gate Cemetery (see Impact CP-5). Although no known human burials have been identified within the Project site, the possibility of encountering human remains cannot be entirely discounted. Earthmoving activities associated with Project construction could result in direct impacts on previously undiscovered human remains. Therefore, the disturbance to human remains could be a *significant* impact. The impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through mitigation measure M-CP-4, which requires avoidance measures or the appropriate treatment of human remains if accidentally discovered.

- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-4, Accidental Discovery of Human Remains*

**Impact CP-5: Construction of the Project along Clement Street from 36th Avenue to 39th Avenue on the south side of Lincoln Park could disturb human remains associated with the historic-period Golden Gate Cemetery. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

The Project borders the boundary of Lincoln Park, the location of the historic-period Golden Gate Cemetery where 19th century inhabitants of San Francisco were buried. Past projects in the area have uncovered human remains, which have provided a wealth of information about the overall health of these former inhabitants. While there is a slight potential for the Project to uncover human remains, the disturbance of remains would be a *significant* impact. The impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of mitigation measure M-CP-5, which requires the development of a monitoring program to monitor for the presence of human remains in the historic-period during construction and to take specific steps to comply with legal requirements and to take mitigation actions to recover historically important data.

- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-5, Archeological Monitoring Program*

## Air Quality

**Impact AQ-2: The Project's construction activities would generate fugitive dust and criteria air pollutants, and could violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

When the construction schedules of components of the Project overlap, NOx emissions could exceed the BAAQMD's 54 pounds/day significance criterion, a *significant* impact. Mitigation measure M-AQ-2 would reduce the Project's combined construction-related criteria pollutant emissions below the significance criteria by using construction equipment with Tier 3 engines or better, reducing the impact to less than significant.

- *Mitigation Measure M-AQ-2, Construction Emissions Minimization*

## Biological Resources

**Impact BI-1: The Project would potentially have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

The overall potential of the Project area to support special-status fish or plant species is considered low because the Project area lacks suitable habitat. Several special-status animals might use habitat in certain parts of the Project area or vicinity for roosting, foraging, or breeding purposes, including California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, Yuma myotis, western red bat, and hoary bat. In addition, there are a number of native resident and migratory bird species protected under federal and State legislation with the potential to use trees, shrubs, and other habitats as well as buildings within the Project area for nesting and foraging.

Existing trees at the Oceanside WPCP facility and the California Army National Guard property, and in the vicinity of the Central Pump Station, could support native nesting birds. Removal and/or relocation of trees with active nests and construction noise and activity adjacent to such trees during bird nesting season could result in nest abandonment, destruction, injury or mortality of nestlings and disruption of reproductive

behavior during the breeding season, including mortality of individual birds, such as red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk, or American kestrel, a *significant* impact. Implementation of mitigation measure M-BI-1a would reduce potential impacts on special-status birds to a less-than-significant level by requiring surveys of the Project site to identify nests and protection of nesting birds.

Vegetation clearing (including tree removal) at the Oceanside WPCP and the Central Pump Station could result in direct mortality of special-status bats. Direct mortality of special-status bats would be a *significant* impact. Mitigation measure BI-1b would require surveys of the Project site within two weeks of tree removal. With implementation of M-BI-1b, the impact on roosting bats would be reduced to less than significant.

Due to the proximity of aquatic habitats to the Lake Merced, North Lake, and Central Pump Station well facility sites, western pond turtle and California red-legged frog could utilize upland habitat where the Project construction activities will occur. If California red-legged frog or western pond turtle are present, they could be injured or killed, a *significant* impact. Mitigation measure M-BI-1c would mitigate the effect by requiring pre-construction surveys within 14 days of the construction activity. With implementation of mitigation measure M-BI-1c, the impact would be less than significant.

- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1a, Nesting Bird Protection Measures*
- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1b, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Bats*
- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1c, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for California Red-Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle*

### **Cumulative Impacts**

#### **Cultural Resources**

**Impact C-CP: The Project could result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to historical, archaeological, paleontological resources or human remains. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

Cumulative projects in the Project vicinity could adversely affect the same cultural resources affected by the Project and the Project could make a considerable contribution to a cumulative cultural resource impact, a *significant* impact. The Project's impacts, however, are site specific and implementation of site-specific mitigation measures M-CP-2, M-CP-3, M-CP-4 and M-CP-5 would reduce Project impacts such that the Project's contribution to this cumulative impact would be less than significant.

- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-2, Accidental Discovery of Archaeological Resources*
- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-3, Accidental Discovery of Paleontological Resources*
- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-4, Accidental Discovery of Human Remains*
- *Mitigation Measure M-CP-5, Archeological Monitoring Program*

## Biological Resources

**Impact C-BI-1: The Project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the vicinity, could result in significant cumulative impacts on biological resources. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

Construction of the Project has the potential to adversely affect special-status species, if present, including California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, special-status bats, and native nesting birds. It is assumed that the cumulative projects including the past cumulative projects have already caused substantial adverse cumulative changes to biological resources in San Francisco; the Project area was converted from its original sand dune habitat to current uses. Current and reasonably foreseeable projects could have construction-related impacts if construction occurs at the same time as the Project. These projects include the Vista Grande Drainage Basin Improvement Plan, the Parkmerced Project, and the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project. The Project's contribution to cumulative impacts on biological resources would be cumulatively considerable, a *significant* impact. However, with the implementation of Project-level mitigation measures to reduce impacts to these species, the Project's incremental contribution to potential cumulative impacts on biological resources would not be cumulatively considerable (less than significant).

- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1a, Nesting Bird Protection Measures*
- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1b, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Bats*
- *Mitigation Measure M-BI-1c, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for California Red-Legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle*

## IV. SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED OR REDUCED TO A LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT LEVEL

### **WSIP Impact**

Based on substantial evidence in the whole record of these proceedings, the Commission finds that, where feasible, changes or alterations have been required or incorporated into the SFRW Project to reduce the significant environmental impacts as identified in the Final EIR for the Project. All Project-specific impacts will be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed in the Final EIR and set forth in the MMRP, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

The Commission further finds, however, that the Project is a component of the WSIP and, therefore, will contribute to the significant and unavoidable impact caused by the WSIP water supply decision. For the WSIP impact listed below, the effect remains significant and unavoidable. The Commission determines that the following significant impact on the environment, as reflected in the Final PEIR, is unavoidable, but under Public Resources Code Section 21081(a) (3) and (b), and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091(a) (3), 15092(b) (2) (B), and 15093, the Commission determines that the impact is acceptable due to the

overriding considerations described in Section VI below. This finding is supported by substantial evidence in the record of this proceeding.

The WSIP PEIR and the SFPUC's Resolution No. 08-0200 related to the WSIP water supply decision identified three significant and unavoidable impacts of the WSIP: **Impact 5.4.1-2- Stream Flow: Effects on flow along Alameda Creek below the Alameda Creek Division Dam**; **Impact 5.5.5-1-Fisheries: Effects on fishery resources in Crystal Springs reservoir (Upper and Lower)**; and **Impact 7-1-Indirect growth inducing impacts in the SFPUC service area**. Mitigation measures that were proposed in the PEIR were adopted by this Commission for these impacts; however, the mitigation measures could not reduce all the impacts to a less than significant level, and these impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable. The SFPUC has already adopted the mitigation measures proposed in the PEIR to reduce these impacts when it approved the WSIP in its Resolution No. 08-0200. The SFPUC also adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as part of that approval. The findings regarding the three impacts and mitigation measures for these impacts set forth in Resolution No. 08-0200 are incorporated into these findings by this reference, as though fully set forth in these CEQA Findings.

Subsequent to the certification of the PEIR, the Planning Department has conducted more detailed, site-specific review of two of the significant and unavoidable water supply impacts identified in the PEIR. In the case of **Impact 5.5.5-1**, the Project-level fisheries analysis in the Lower Crystal Springs Dam Improvement Project Final EIR modifies the PEIR impact determination based on more detailed site-specific data and analysis and determined that impacts on fishery resources due to inundation effects would be less than significant. Project-level conclusions supersede any contrary impact conclusions in the PEIR. The SFPUC adopted CEQA Findings with respect to the approval of the Lower Crystal Springs Dam Improvement Project in Resolution No. 10-0175. The CEQA Findings in Resolution No. 10-0175 related to the impacts on fishery resources due to inundation effects are incorporated into these findings by this reference, as though fully set forth in these CEQA Findings.

In the case of **Impact 5.4.1-2**, the project level analysis in the Calaveras Dam Replacement project Final EIR modifies the PEIR determination and concludes that the impact related to stream flow along Alameda Creek between the diversion dam and the confluence with Calaveras Creek (PEIR Impact 5.4.1-2) will be less than significant based on more detailed, site-specific modeling and data. Project-level conclusions supersede any contrary impact conclusions in the PEIR. The SFPUC adopted CEQA Findings with respect to the approval of the Calaveras Dam Improvement Project in Resolution No. 11-0015. The CEQA Findings in Resolution No. 11-0015 related to the impacts on fishery resources due to inundation effects are incorporated into these findings by this reference, as though fully set forth in these CEQA Findings.

The remaining significant and unavoidable water supply impact listed in Resolution No. 08-0200 is as follows, relating to **Impact 7-1**:

### **Potentially Significant and Unavoidable WSIP Water Supply and System Operation Impact**

- **Growth:** Indirect growth-inducement impacts in the SFPUC service area.

## **V. EVALUATION OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES**

This section describes the Project as well as alternatives and the reasons for approving the Project and for rejecting the alternatives as infeasible. CEQA mandates that an EIR evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project or the Project location that generally reduce or avoid potentially significant impacts of the Project. CEQA requires that every EIR also evaluate a “No Project” alternative. Alternatives provide a basis of comparison to the Project in terms of their significant impacts and their ability to meet Project objectives. This comparative analysis is used to consider reasonable, potentially feasible options for minimizing environmental consequences of the Project.

### **A. Reasons for Approval of the Project**

The overall goals of the WSIP for the regional water system are to:

- Maintain high-quality water and a gravity-driven system.
- Reduce vulnerability to earthquakes – deliver basic service to the three regions in the service area within 24 hours and restore facilities to meet average-day demand within 30 days after a major earthquake.
- Increase delivery reliability – allow planned maintenance shutdown without customer service interruption and minimize risk of service interruption from unplanned outages.
- Meet customer water supply needs through 2018 – meet average annual water purchase requests during non-drought years and meet dry-year delivery needs while limiting rationing to a maximum 20 percent systemwide; diversify water supply options during non-drought and drought years and improve use of new water resources, including the use of groundwater, recycled water, conservation and transfers.
- Enhance sustainability.
- Achieve a cost-effective, fully operational system.

The Project would help meet WSIP level-of-service goals and system performance objectives. Specific objectives of the Project are to:

- Diversify the SFPUC’s water supplies by developing recycled water.
- Develop a new water supply in San Francisco that is both reliable and drought resistant.
- Reduce the use of potable water and groundwater for irrigation and other nonpotable uses by supplying those demands with recycled water.

The WSIP aims to provide a total of 10 mgd annual average of water supply from recycled water, groundwater, and conservation projects to meet retail demand in San Francisco. Of this amount, the WSIP project description indicated that approximately 4 mgd annual average would be derived from recycled water projects in San Francisco. This Project would provide up to 2 mgd of recycled water; currently identified customers are estimated to use 1.6 mgd. Also, this Project would enable implementation of the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, approved by the SFPUC in December, 2013. The SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project calls for installation of new groundwater wells to recover 2.5 to 3.0 mgd of groundwater in the first phase and conversion of existing irrigation wells in Golden Gate Park to potable use, providing 1.0 to 1.5 mgd of groundwater in the second phase. The second phase cannot occur until recycled water is available for Golden Gate Park landscaping or until another landscaping water source is identified. Thus the Project would also help meet the WSIP goal of providing approximately 4 mgd annual average of water supply from groundwater.

This increase in water supply would improve the SFPUC's ability to deliver water to its customers in San Francisco during both drought and non-drought periods. The Project will help the SFPUC to diversify its water supply portfolio, which largely consists of imported surface water. It would add up to 2 mgd from recycled water to the SFPUC water supply, and enable implementation of the second phase the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, which would provide 1.0 to 1.5 mgd of groundwater to the SFPUC's potable water supply. The proposed Project is a fundamental component of the SFPUC's WSIP and is needed to fully meet WSIP goals and objectives, in particular those for seismic reliability, delivery reliability, and water supply reliability.

## **B. Alternatives Rejected and Reasons for Rejection**

The Commission rejects the alternatives set forth in the Final EIR and listed below because the Commission finds that there is substantial evidence, including evidence of economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations described in this section in addition to those described in Section VI below under CEQA Guidelines 15091(a)(3), that make such Alternatives infeasible. In making these infeasibility determinations, the Commission is aware that CEQA defines "feasibility" to mean "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors." The Commission is also aware that under CEQA case law the concept of "feasibility" encompasses (i) the question of whether a particular alternative promotes the underlying goals and objectives of a project, and (ii) the question of whether an alternative is "desirable" from a policy standpoint to the extent that desirability is based on a reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors.

Under the No Project Alternative, the SFRW Project would not be constructed or operated. The proposed recycled water treatment, storage, and distribution facilities would not be constructed and 1.6 mgd of recycled water would not be produced or delivered to customers to offset potable demand. Existing irrigation demand at Golden Gate Park, Lincoln Park, and the Presidio, as well as lake refill would continue to be met with existing potable sources and groundwater. The two existing irrigation wells in Golden Gate Park that are part of the second phase of the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project would

not be converted to potable groundwater well facilities unless and until another source of water for irrigation and lake fill can be found.

The No Project Alternative would not meet any of the project objectives, which are to diversify the SFPUC's water supplies by developing recycled water, develop a new water supply in San Francisco that is both reliable and drought resistant, and reduce the use of potable water and groundwater for irrigation and other nonpotable uses by supplying those demands with recycled water. Also, it would fail to meet the WSIP goals and objectives that rely directly on the contribution of the Project to fulfill systemwide level of service objectives. If the Project is not constructed, the SFPUC's water supply portfolio would not include up to 2 mgd of recycled water. It would also prevent the SFPUC from implementing the second phase of SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, which would produce 1.0 to 1.5 mgd of groundwater. This phase of the project cannot be implemented until another source of water besides groundwater is provided to Golden Gate Park for irrigation and lake refill. The SFPUC would be limited in its ability to meet its adopted WSIP seismic delivery and water supply reliability goals, particularly in the San Francisco region, because of reduced water supply in San Francisco.

Under the No Project Alternative, current conditions would continue and all construction-related impacts would be avoided. Consequently, there would be no potential to encounter previously unrecorded and buried archaeological deposits, archeological resources, human remains, or legally-significant prehistoric depositions within the Colma Formation at the Oceanside WPCP. No construction activities means that fugitive dust and criteria pollutant emissions would not occur and there would be no construction-related effects or disturbance to special-status species, including the California red-legged frog, western pond turtle, nesting birds and roosting bats. While the No Project Alternative would avoid or reduce impacts that would occur compared to those of the Project, the Project impacts would be fully mitigated through the adoption of identified mitigation measures. The only unmitigated impact that would occur with the Project is the Project's contribution to the WSIP impact of indirect impacts related to growth. To the extent that the 2 mgd of water supply from the Project contributes to growth, the Project's contribution to the indirect impacts associated with growth would not occur with the No Project Alternative.

The Commission rejects the No Project Alternative as infeasible because it would not meet any of the project objectives, and because it would jeopardize the SFPUC's ability to meet the adopted WSIP goals and objectives as set forth in SFPUC Resolution No. 08-0200.

Alternative B: Project Design Alternative, would locate the recycled water treatment plant at the San Francisco Zoo overflow parking lot, a 2.3 acre site north of the Oceanside WPCP and east of the Great Highway. Under the Project as proposed, the site would be used for construction staging. Storage and pumping facilities that under the Project would be located at the Central Reservoir site in Golden Gate Park would instead be located with the recycled water treatment plant at the San Francisco Zoo overflow parking lot. Under this Alternative, distribution pipelines would avoid Route 35/Skyline Boulevard and streets adjacent to Sunset Boulevard and instead, distribution pipelines would run from the San Francisco Zoo overflow parking lot north to Wawona Street, then east to 34th Street, and north up 34th Street into Golden Gate Park. Construction activities would be sequenced and staggered, reducing the amount of concurrent construction and extending the overall Project construction duration. Staging would not occur



at Harding Road and Herbst Road. Other aspects of the Project would remain unchanged and the Project would be able to produce the same 5 mgd peak flow amount, or 2 mgd annual average amount of recycled water.

This Alternative reduces impacts on cultural resources in several ways. As a result of decreasing the area of construction activities slightly by consolidating the treatment and storage facilities to one area at the San Francisco Zoo overflow parking lot instead of at the Oceanside WPCP and Central Reservoir sites, the impacts on unknown archaeological resources and human remains would be reduced. This Alternative would eliminate the potential impacts to paleontological resources because it would avoid construction in the Colma Formation below the Oceanside WPCP site. As a result of reducing impacts on cultural resources, the Alternative would make less of a contribution to cumulative impacts on cultural resources.

The daily impact on air quality would be less under Alternative B than the Project. By construction sequencing and staggering construction activities, Alternative B would reduce the amount of fugitive dust and criteria pollutants emitted at one time, thereby reducing the potential to exceed regulatory thresholds based on emissions per day. However, the total amount of construction would not be reduced and the total amount of air pollution would be the same as for the Project.

Alternative B would reduce impacts on biological resources. Fewer impacts could occur to nesting birds because trees would not need to be removed between the Oceanside WPCP and the California National Guard property. Also, vegetation clearing at the Central Reservoir site would be avoided as would disturbance of trees on Route 35/Skyline Boulevard and Sunset Avenue. Pipeline construction that would instead occur on Wawona Street and 34th Avenue would disturb few trees. Alternative B also would reduce impacts on roosting bats by reducing construction near trees in the vicinity of the Oceanside WPCP, Lake Merced, and the Central Pump Station site where bats are thought most likely to roost. Finally, the elimination of construction near Lake Merced, along Route 35/Skyline Boulevard, and near Harding and Herbst Roads, and elimination of most construction around the Central Reservoir site, would reduce impacts on the Western Pond turtle and California red-legged frog, which may be found in upland habitat in these areas. The only remaining areas where these species may be found, at Metson and Lloyd Lakes in Golden Gate Park would have minimal construction nearby, limited to installation of pipeline distribution lines. As a result of reduced impacts on biological resources under Alternative B, the contribution to cumulative impacts to biological resources also would be reduced as compared to the Project.

This Alternative also would increase certain impacts as compared to the Project and result in different impacts than the Project in the areas of noise, traffic, and energy use. Alternative B would increase construction and operational noise levels in the vicinity of the San Francisco Zoo by moving the construction activities and facilities approximately 900 feet closer to Zoo facilities as compared to the Project. Increased noise could negatively impact Zoo animals. Operational noise impacts might be reduced through noise reduction berms.

Shifting the location of construction of the recycled water treatment plant could increase truck traffic along the Great Highway and potentially require lane detours. Also, relocating distribution pipelines from

Route 35/Skyline Boulevard and Sunset Avenue to Wawona Street and 34th Avenue would cause an increase in traffic on narrower roadways, possibly increasing traffic impacts.

Finally, locating the recycled water storage reservoir at the Zoo parking lot instead of at the Central Reservoir site would require additional energy to pump recycled water over longer distances and elevations to customers north of the Central Reservoir site. Under the Project, four 100 horsepower pumps (one standby) would be installed at the Central Reservoir site in a new pump station to pump recycled water from the Central Reservoir to users in Golden Gate Park and north. There also would be three pumps with motors of up to 200 horsepower to pump recycled water from the treatment facility to the Central Reservoir site. Under Alternative B, a new pump station would be installed instead at the Zoo parking lot site, with three or more up to 400 horsepower pumps installed to pump recycled water to all the planned distribution points. By comparison, Alternative B would require more energy to distribute the recycled water to the same planned distribution points.

The Project Design Alternative would meet all of the Project objectives and WSIP goals and objectives, although completion of the Project would be delayed due to a longer construction schedule. It is also possible that future treatment plant operations would be restricted because of proximity to the Zoo facilities and concern by the Zoo of disruption to Zoo activities and disturbance of animals.

The Commission rejects the Project Design Alternative as infeasible. While the Project Design Alternative would reduce some impacts to cultural resources, biological resources, and air quality, all of the Project impacts that it would reduce will be reduced to less than significant levels under the Project with the implementation of adopted mitigation measures. The Project Design Alternative will increase other impacts in the areas of noise and traffic. It is possible that such effects, if significant, could be mitigated but may affect Project operations. Alternative B also would increase energy use by requiring the pumping of recycled water over a longer distances and elevations than under the Project, resulting in energy waste. Thus, the Project Design Alternative does not have a clear environmental benefit over the Project as the Project would mitigate its impacts and it is unclear whether the increased impacts of the Project Design Alternative can be fully mitigated.

Most problematic from a feasibility perspective is the fact that the SFPUC does not have control over the proposed site for the co-located recycled water treatment plant, pump station, and water storage facilities at the San Francisco Zoo overflow parking lot. The parking lot is under the management of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department with the premises leased to the nonprofit San Francisco Zoological Society. The SFPUC would need the consent of the San Francisco Zoo and the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Departments to obtain use of the site. The SFPUC has been informed that the Zoo has plans to use the site for necessary Zoo operations, including meeting stringent animal isolation and testing requirements. The San Francisco Zoo and the Recreation and Parks Departments are therefore, unlikely to readily agree to the SFPUC taking over use of the site.

Under the circumstances, the Commission finds that the Project Design Alternative is not feasible as the site is currently and in the future projected to be needed by the San Francisco Zoo for its own operations. In addition, even if the San Francisco Zoo and the Recreation and Parks Departments might eventually agree to the SFPUC's use of the site, the SFPUC is faced with an unpredictable period of delay in

implementing the Project. Finally, the Project Design Alternative would result in minimal to no benefit to the environment. All Project impacts, with the exception of the WSIP-related impact to growth are mitigable. On the other hand, the Project Design Alternative would cause energy waste and it would have the same WSIP-related impact to growth. For all of these reasons, the Commission rejects the Project Design Alternative as infeasible.

***Alternative C: Reduced Project Alternative***

The Reduced Project Alternative would eliminate recycled water supply to Lincoln Park and the Presidio. Under the Reduced Project Alternative, a new underground storage reservoir and pump station would not be constructed at the Central Reservoir site and distribution pipelines north of the Central Reservoir would be eliminated. The size of the recycled water treatment plant and storage at the Oceanside WPCP would be reduced somewhat and the construction duration would be shorter. As a result of these changes from the Project, the recycled water treatment plant would have a reduced peak-day capacity of 3.8 mgd instead of 5 mgd and an annual average capacity of 1.7 mgd instead of 2.0 mgd.

This Alternative reduces impacts on cultural resources in several ways. First, as a result of eliminating recycled water supply to Lincoln Park, significant potential impacts on human remains that may be associated with the former Golden Gate Cemetery site (e.g. Lincoln Park) would be avoided. Second, construction of a smaller recycled water supply treatment plant, eliminating new storage and pumping facilities at the Central Reservoir site, and eliminating distribution pipelines north of the Central Reservoir reduces the area of excavation, reducing potential exposure to unknown archeological resources and unknown human remains. Third, constructing a smaller recycled water treatment plant reduces potential impacts to paleontological resources that may be found in the Colma Formation as less excavation in that area would be required. Finally, by reducing cultural resource impacts, the contribution to cumulative impacts on cultural resources also would be reduced.

Alternative C would not reduce the daily impact on air quality, but because total construction activities are reduced, the total volume of air pollution emitted during construction is less under Alternative C than the Project.

Alternative C would reduce impacts on biological resources. Fewer impacts could occur to nesting birds, California red-legged frog and western pond turtle as a result of reduced construction activities at the Central Reservoir site where these species could be impacted. As a result of reduced impacts on biological resources under Alternative C, this alternative would make less of a contribution to cumulative impacts to biological resources as compared to the Project.

Alternative C also would reduce energy usage as compared to the Project because it would eliminate the need to pump recycled water to Lincoln Park and the Presidio from the Central Reservoir site. Alternative C would also reduce the contribution to the WSIP's indirect growth inducing impact by reducing the amount of water that could be supplied to a growing population.

Alternative C: Reduced Project Alternative would meet the Project objectives, which are to diversify the SFPUC's water supplies by developing recycled water, develop a new water supply in San Francisco that

is both reliable and drought resistant, and reduce the use of potable water and groundwater for irrigation and other nonpotable uses by supplying those demands with recycled water. However, by reducing the capacity of the recycled water treatment plant, Alternative C would not provide the full amount of recycled water supply provided under the Project so the degree to which it would meet the last of these objectives would be reduced somewhat. Alternative C would enable implementation of the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, approved by the SFPUC in December, 2013, because it would provide recycled water to Golden Gate Park, facilitating the implementation of the second phase of the SFPUC's Groundwater Supply Project, which calls for conversion of existing irrigation wells in Golden Gate Park to potable use, providing 1.0 to 1.5 mgd of groundwater.

However, Alternative C would only partially meet the WSIP goals and objectives that rely directly on the contribution of the Project to fulfill systemwide level of service objectives. The WSIP aims to provide a total of 10 mgd annual average of water supply from recycled water, groundwater, and conservation projects to meet retail demand in San Francisco. Of this amount, the WSIP project description indicated that approximately 4 mgd annual average would be derived from recycled water projects in San Francisco. The Project would provide up to 2 mgd of recycled water on an annual average basis, and 5 mgd peak day flow, but under Alternative C this would be reduced to 1.7 mgd annual average and 3.8 mgd peak day flow. Under the project, currently identified customers have a demand of 1.6 mgd annual average and 4 mgd peak-day, but customer served would be reduced to those with a demand of 1.38 mgd annual average and 2.81 mgd peak day. Customers at Lincoln Park and the Presidio that could use recycled water would continue to use potable water sources for irrigation.

To the extent that Alternative C fails to fully satisfy WSIP identified water supply goals and objectives as approved under SFPUC Resolution 08-0200, it would limit the SFPUC's ability to provide water to customers during both drought and non-drought periods and may prevent the SFPUC from limiting rationing during drought periods to a maximum 20 percent systemwide. Customers in San Francisco would be most affected as water supply in the city would be reduced during peak demand periods by up to 1.2 mgd. As a result, the SFPUC may need to revise the WSIP goals and objectives or develop additional water supply projects.

**Environmentally Superior Alternative.** The Reduced Project Alternative would be the Environmentally Superior Alternative, other than the No Project Alternative. The Reduced Project Alternative would not increase any impacts and it would reduce impacts on cultural resources and biological resources. Also, it would reduce energy use and reduce the total amount of air pollution produced by the Project.

The Reduced Project Alternative would still contribute to the WSIP's significant and unavoidable indirect impact related to growth, but to a lesser degree than for the Project, as it would provide 0.3 mgd less of water supply on an annual average basis that could contribute to growth.

The Commission rejects the Reduced Project Alternative as infeasible because it will not allow the SFPUC to fully meet WSIP goals and objectives. Additionally, although this alternative would generally meet the SFPUC's objectives for the Project, it would not satisfy the Project's third objective to the same degree as the Project, namely to reduce the use of potable water and groundwater for irrigation and other nonpotable uses by supplying those demands with recycled water. Likewise, it would only partially meet

the WSIP goals and objectives, which rely directly on the up to 2 mgd of local recycled water supply on the west side of San Francisco that the Project would provide to fulfill systemwide level of service objectives. The total average yield under normal operations for the Reduced Project Alternative would be 1.7 mgd, causing the SFPUC to fall short of the 2 mgd annual water supply designed for the Project and the WSIP identified supply need of 4 mgd from local recycled water supply by 2018. Although the SFPUC originally envisioned that the 4 mgd of recycled water would supply customers on the west side of San Francisco and now the SFPUC expects the west side recycled water demand to be somewhat reduced, the SFPUC has not revised its originally WSIP goal of obtaining 4 mgd from recycled water and is exploring recycled water supply options on the east side of the City. Thus, if the Project were sized below the Project size of 2 mgd annual average, and designed not to serve Lincoln Park and the Presidio, some viable recycled water supply customers on the west side of San Francisco would not be able to make use of recycled water and instead would need to continue to use groundwater or imported surface water for irrigation and other nonpotable uses. Such a situation would be contrary to the WSIP goal of diversifying water supply options and improving use of new water resources, such as recycled water. For these reasons, the Commission rejects the Reduced Yield Alternative as infeasible.

## **VI. STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS**

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21081 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, the Commission hereby finds, after consideration of the Final EIR and the evidence in the record, that each of the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological and other benefits of the Project as set forth below, independently and collectively outweighs the significant and unavoidable impacts and is an overriding consideration warranting approval of the Project. Any one of the reasons for approval cited below is sufficient to justify approval of the Project. Thus, even if a court were to conclude that not every reason is supported by substantial evidence, the Commission will stand by its determination that each individual reason is sufficient. The substantial evidence supporting the various benefits can be found in the preceding findings, which are incorporated by reference into this section, and in the documents found in the Record of Proceedings, as defined in Section I.

On the basis of the above findings and the substantial evidence in the whole record of this proceeding, the Commission specifically finds that there are significant benefits of the Project in spite of the unavoidable significant impacts, and therefore makes this Statement of Overriding Considerations. The Commission further finds that, as part of the process of obtaining Project approval, all significant effects on the environment from implementation of the Project have been eliminated or substantially lessened where feasible. All mitigation measures proposed in the Final EIR for the Project are adopted as part of this approval action. Furthermore, the Commission has determined that any remaining significant effects on the environment found to be unavoidable are acceptable due to the following specific overriding economic, technical, legal, social, and other considerations.

The Project will have the following benefits:

- The Project will expand and diversify the SFPUC's water supply portfolio to increase system reliability, particularly for retail customers in San Francisco. The Project provides an additional 2

mgd of water supply from other than imported surface water, the main water supply source in the SFPUC water system.

- The Project will increase the use of local water supply sources. The Project provides 2 mgd of recycled water to irrigators on the Westside of San Francisco who are now using imported potable surface water or groundwater for irrigation.
- The Project will reduce dependence on imported surface water. The Project provides 2 mgd from local recycled water.
- The Project, by providing recycled water for irrigation and lake refill in Golden Gate Park will enable the implementation of the second phase of the SFPUC's San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project, which will provide 1.0 to 1.3 mgd of potable groundwater supply.

In addition, the Project will further the WSIP's goals and objectives. As part of the approval of Resolution 08-2000, the SFPUC adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations as to why the benefits of the WSIP outweighed the significant and unavoidable impacts associated with the WSIP. This Statement of Overriding Considerations is relevant to the significant and unavoidable impact related to growth-inducement to which this Project contributes. The findings regarding the Statement of Overriding Considerations set forth in Resolution No. 08-2000 are incorporated into these findings by this reference, as though fully set forth in these CEQA Findings. In addition, for the particular reasons set forth below, this Project helps to implement the following benefits of the WSIP:

- Implementation of the WSIP will reduce vulnerability to earthquakes. The WSIP includes many features that are designed to improve the seismic safety and reliability of the water system as a means of saving human life and property under a catastrophic earthquake scenario or even a disaster scenario not rising to the level of catastrophe. Effecting the improvements to assure the water system's continued reliability, and developing it as part of a larger, integrated water security strategy, is critical to the Bay Area's economic security, competitiveness and quality of life. This Project provides a critical source of water – local recycled water – that will be available even if it is not possible for a period of time to obtain imported surface water from the SFPUC's regional water system.
- The WSIP would meet SFPUC customer water supply needs by providing 265 mgd of retail and wholesale customer purchases from the SFPUC watersheds, and meet or offset the remaining 20 mgd through conservation, recycled water, and groundwater in the retail and wholesale service areas. Ten mgd of this would be met, as proposed under the WSIP, through conservation, recycled water, and groundwater projects in San Francisco, and 10 mgd would be met through local conservation, recycled water and groundwater in the wholesale service area. Of the 10 mgd that would come from projects in San Francisco, the WSIP identifies 4 mgd from local recycled water. This Project would provide up to 2 mgd of this critical 4 mgd of local recycled water. In addition, by providing recycled water to Golden Gate Park, this Project will enable implementation of the second phase of the SFPUC's San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project, which will provide 1.0 to 1.3 mgd of potable groundwater for San Francisco residents, water that is currently used for irrigation and lake refill in Golden Gate Park.

- The WSIP will substantially improve use of new water sources and drought management, including use of groundwater, recycled water, conservation, and transfers. A critical part of the WSIP is to provide water from new sources other than from imported surface water from the Hetch Hetchy Valley or watersheds in Alameda County and the Peninsula. This Project is important to meeting the WSIP goal of providing local recycled water in San Francisco.
- The WSIP projects are designed to meet applicable federal and state water quality requirements. This Project, which will produce recycled water by treating sanitary sewage with microfiltration/ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light disinfection, will provide recycled water that meets or exceeds the California Department of Public Health requirements for disinfected tertiary recycled water.
- The WSIP will diversify water supply options during non-drought and drought periods. The Project supports this WSIP objective by providing up to 2 mgd of local recycled water during both drought and non-drought periods.

Having considered these benefits, including the benefits discussed in Section I above, the Commission finds that the benefits of the Project and the Project's furtherance of the WSIP goals and objectives outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, and that the adverse environmental effects are therefore acceptable.

### 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 **ADOPTS** findings under the California Environmental Quality Act, including rejecting alternatives as infeasible, adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and **ADOPTS** a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, attached as **Exhibit A**.

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on September 3, 2015.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 3, 2015