

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Bay Division Pipeline Reliability Upgrade Project
Public Information Meetings and Workshops**

**Meeting Summary- Peninsula Meetings
East Palo Alto, March 15, 2006
Redwood City, March 16, 2006**

INTRODUCTION

In March 2006, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) hosted a series of public information meetings and workshops in key communities impacted by the Bay Division Pipeline Reliability Upgrade Project.

The project seeks to build a fifth Bay Division Pipeline along the existing SFPUC right-of-way, and a tunnel underneath San Francisco Bay. This pipeline will allow the SFPUC to take other sections of pipelines, some of which were built in the 1920's and 1930's, out of service for repair and maintenance, and will provide a lifeline pipeline that is designed to withstand earthquakes. This pipeline will pass through the cities of Fremont, Newark, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City.

To explain the project and the proposed work to the general public, including the residents who live along the right-of-way, other property owners, business operators, government officials and city administrators, the SFPUC held public meetings in East Palo Alto and Redwood City. Approximately 45 members of the public attended these meetings.

Please note that the following is not a precise transcript of the meeting, but is intended to show the topics and issues of discussion.

MEETING PRESENTATION

Betsy Lauppe Rhodes, SFPUC Communications, Paul Mazza from SFPUC operations, and Lawrence Soe from project engineering made a presentation of the overall project including benefits, anticipated construction and the environmental review process. They explained how the water system transports glacial snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to 2.4 million people in four Bay Area counties. Four Bay Division Pipelines carry water to 2/3 of our customers, as well as replenish the water levels of local reservoirs in spring months in anticipation for summer when demand is high.

The cities of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City receive 100% of their water from this system. SFPUC Staff reviewed the proposed project area with those in attendance and discussed possible pipeline construction techniques, the tunnel portion to go under San Francisco Bay and the function and appearance of 8 proposed valve vaults throughout the 21-mile alignment. SFPUC staff explained the correlation of these public meetings to the Environmental Review process and upcoming Scoping Meetings. Following the presentation from SFPUC staff, there was a brief question and answer period with the audience.

After the question and answer period, those in attendance went to various stations to view aerial and geographically defined maps showing the pipeline route and the

SFPUC Right-of-Way in proximity to specific parcels. The comments asked at these stations were answered by individual project team members and captured by note takers at each station.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1) Q. In the presentation, it was stated that the construction will start in 2009. What is the anticipated duration?**

A. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2009 and finish in 2013. However, due to the seasonal reservoir replenishment schedule, planned outages for construction and maintenance, and other projects' schedules, this timeline is subject to change. Even though construction is scheduled to span four years, this doesn't mean we will be in the same place for four years.
- 2) Q. How long will you be in my neighborhood?**

A. This type of construction moves fairly quickly. The construction team would be in one place - say behind someone's house - for a 2-week period to excavate, shore the trench, weld the pipe, coat the pipe, and back fill. However, if you live near a valve vault construction will take longer- up to a year.
- 3) Q. Will you start at both ends at the same time or work from one end to the other? Do you know which end you're starting with?**

A. At this point, it is too soon for the SFPUC staff to know. That will be determined by the pipeline contractors in consultation with SFPUC. The construction schedule will be determined by shut down schedules and environmental factors, and we will look at other factors such as school schedules, shopping seasons, commute hours, etc. It is possible that pipeline work may not be linear in all places- the Contractor may elect to work at several different sections at the same time.
- 4) Q. When will project design start?**

A. Detailed design is anticipated to begin in June, 2006.
- 5) Q. When you know the design and start date, what are the next steps? Will there be meetings afterwards?**

A. Yes. Scoping meetings through the environmental process will begin in spring/summer 2006. Likely there will be further meetings with neighbors well before construction.
- 6) Q. What is the timeline for the EIR? What is the full period and how will the public be notified?**

A. The Planning Department, which is the Lead Agency for environmental review, will hold scoping meetings in spring or summer of 2006 where members of the public can learn more about the environmental review process and comment on the scope and focus of the Environmental Impact Report. If you signed in at this meeting, you will be added to our mailing list for scoping meetings. Notices will be sent by mail when scoping meetings are scheduled. In addition, the Planning Department will be publishing a Notice of Preparation, or "NOP," that will describe the proposed project and open a 30-day public-comment period during which time you may also submit your comments in writing to the SF Planning Department. If you have any questions about the environmental review process, please contact Timothy Johnston at the SF Planning Department at (415) 558-5978 or timothy.johnston@sfgov.org.

- 7) **Q. Why are you doing Environmental Review at the same time as Detailed Design?**
A. We are doing what's called 'designing at risk.' Ideally, the SFPUC could conduct CEQA activities and then implement design, but SFPUC capital improvements are on an expedited schedule because of system vulnerability, tight project budgets that will only increase with time, and deadlines imposed by the State of California. If public participation and environmental review reveal issues that change the design of the project, the project design will be changed accordingly.
- 8) **Q. I encourage you to work closely with transit agencies and school districts to avoid construction impacts.**
A. The SFPUC will coordinate with all transportation agencies with projects in the area and will evaluate school impacts in a separate category under CEQA.
- 9) **Q. What are the construction hours? Are they regular work hours?**
A. Construction work is typically limited to weekdays. If work needs to occur on a weekend, neighbors will be notified in advance. Tunneling is typically an around the clock operation, but the work will be far enough from houses that there should be no noticeable noise or dust. Truck traffic will be limited to specified hours.
- 10) **Q. At what point will we get an idea of the kind of disruption we can expect from truck noise and traffic from the tunnel site in East Palo Alto?**
A. SFPUC will study the truck routes as part of the environmental review process and incorporate those route considerations in the design. For the Baylands Restoration Project, SFPUC worked very closely with the contractors to organize when trucks can offhaul spoils from the site. We timed them such that they avoided peak traffic hours, and routed them so they turned up University Avenue and straight onto the Dumbarton Bridge with little impact to the nearby neighborhoods. We would work with our tunneling contractor in similar ways to reduce the impacts of truck traffic.
- 11) **Q. How will tunnel spoils be transported from the tunnel site? What will you do with the spoils once they are removed from the site?**
A. One option may be a conveyor belt to move the spoils to the salt pond restoration areas. Some spoils may be removed by truck. In most cases, they are mixed with biodegradable foam to form a slurry, then dried and transported off site.
- 12) **Q. When will each city have a chance to review the construction documents? – 30%? 60%? Will there be agreements with each City? Will they be able to review and create individual agreements with each city regarding permits, encroachment, hauling?**
A. SFPUC will work with local cities affected by construction. The specifics of the coordination issues depend upon the specifics of construction in each area. We will brief city staff at project milestones, starting now.
- 13) **Q. What is the precise route across the Bay? The Environmental Impacts depend on the precise route, don't they? Going under the bay is not like the above ground alignment.**
A. The SFPUC is conducting land- and marine-based geotechnical borings to determine the precise tunnel alignment and locations of the tunnel shaft. We do believe it will be somewhere within a specific corridor, as shown in the presentation. The Environmental Impact Report will examine potential impacts of the entire corridor.

- 14) Q. With vibrations and borings, are there impacts on fish and wildlife? Could the project avoid going directly through sensitive areas?**
A. *The tunnel will be constructed at significant depths below the bottom of the bay. By tunneling so far underground, we will bypass these environmentally sensitive areas. Environmental considerations were carefully taken into account when determining the boring sites as well.*
- 15) Q. How do you know the tunnel is being bored in the right direction?**
A. *Modern tunneling technology allows contractors to use laser equipment that can very accurately maintain the tunneling in the right direction.*
- 16) Q. There is a tunnel and a pipeline in this project?**
A. *The tunnel and pipeline are technically part of the same project. The tunnel will connect the pipelines on either side of the bay.*
- 17) Q. Do you plan to abandon the old bay pipes in place once the tunnel goes in?**
A. *SFPUC does plan to discontinue use of the pipelines 1 & 2 where they cross over San Francisco Bay when the tunnel is completed. At this point, it may cause more environmental disruption to remove them than to leave them in place. These pipelines pass through very sensitive habitats. Following completion of the Bay Tunnel, the SFPUC will determine the best means of decommissioning the old bay pipes while minimizing environmental disruption.*
- 18) Q. Are the existing BDPL pipes resting in the Bay floor? Are they exposed?**
A. *Yes, the pipes are partly exposed. They rest a few feet below the surface in Bay sediments.*
- 19) Q. What is the SFPUC's relationship with the Dumbarton rail program? Has there been any collaboration on this project across the Dumbarton strait? Can you put the pipeline on the railroad bridge?**
A. *We have had meetings with SamTrans. We're designing our tunnel so as not to interfere with the proposed rail alignment. The tunnel will have to avoid several deep piers during construction. It is infeasible to put the pipeline on a bridge used by railroads or motorists. We've looked into it in the past.*
- 20) Q. Will you hire local contractors in East Palo Alto for the work here?**
A. *SFPUC is currently working on plans and agreements to do just that. We can work language into our construction specifications that require a certain percentage of local hire, local training, or other projects that benefit the community*

In March of 2006 the Commission authorized SFPUC staff to proceed with negotiations of a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) for all WSIP construction. A PLA is intended to create a framework that will allow the SFPUC, contractors and construction unions to successfully complete the project. The Commission's resolution directed staff to ensure that the PLA contain provisions that would require local and area hire; and disadvantaged worker participation through existing training programs, including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. SFPUC will be working with East Palo Alto-based organizations, among others, to successfully comply with this directive.

Additionally, San Francisco is in the process of enacting a new Small and Micro Local Business program, which will expand the opportunity for participation to small contractors located within the service territory of Hetch Hetchy, including East Palo Alto.

- 21) Q. On the map, the Peninsula and San Francisco are at the end of the water delivery system. How will a new pipeline decrease the vulnerability? It seems that strategic reservoirs would be better?**

A. The system is storage poor. You are right in that there is not enough storage capacity in the reservoirs that we have. However, there is not sufficient room to put in the size of reservoirs that we would need to increase reliability. There is only so much empty space to work with. The cost and environmental impact of building new reservoirs in the Bay Area is also prohibitive. In addition to being a lifeline facility during an earthquake, the fifth pipeline will also allow the SFPUC to take existing pipelines out of service for repair and maintenance more often and for longer periods of time. This also increases overall system reliability.

- 22) Q. Many trees been marked with spray paint on Bay Road and Ivy Drive. What is going to happen with those trees? What will be taken down and what will be preserved?**

A. It depends upon which part of the right-of-way you are referring to. Part of Bay road is leased to the city of Menlo Park, and under the terms of their lease, they maintain it. We did mark some trees to show strategic thinning in that area, since trees directly on top of the pipelines pose a threat to them. The root system interferes with the pipelines. We will not know which trees will need to be removed until further into detailed design. We understand that the neighbors in this area have had extensive communications with SFPUC staff in the past regarding landscaping along Bay Road, and we hope to continue positive discussions with you as we move forward. That's why we're coming out so early in the process.

- 23) Q. You will be impacting some homes very directly in North Fair Oaks and Redwood City. What are the specific plans for these areas? Can micro tunneling technologies be used in these areas?**

A. Micro tunneling does not necessarily eliminate impacts to above ground areas. In many cases, micro tunneling has greater impacts than trenching. Picture a railroad crossing. In order to micro tunnel underneath it, we would dig large excavation pits on either side of the railroad in order to cross underneath it. Micro tunneling in small areas to install a relatively small pipe may be cost prohibitive. It is not possible at this early stage in the project to say exactly what we will do in this area.

- 24) Q. In 2001 in North Fair Oaks, we worked hand-and-glove with the SFPUC to work out a permitting program for the SFPUC right-of-way that became a model for other neighborhoods. Why were we not informed of plans for a pipeline replacement along this alignment at that time? I hope the SFPUC will work with residential groups very closely during this process.**

A. SFPUC did not know that a pipeline would have to go through this area until 2004. In our original plans, the alignment would have gone south around the bay. The SFPUC appreciates the importance of the right-of-way in this particular area, and will work with the neighbors as we've done before, as we move forward with this process.

- 25) **Q. Will there be separate construction agreements with each City?**
A. SFPUC will work with the cities that we pass through to receive the appropriate permits.
- 26) **Q. I understand that my fence juts out into your right of way, and that I may need to move it prior to construction. However, can I put it back up after construction is completed?**
A. We would have to look at the fence and the situation with you before we're able to respond.
- 27) **Q. I don't want you to restrict access to the right of way.**
A. We will most likely have to restrict access during construction for safety reasons. What we do with the right-of-way after construction is completed will depend upon the area. There are no plans at this time to fence in areas that are not currently fenced in, although for safety and security reasons, new fences may be installed in certain areas.
- 28) **Q. What is SFPUC's policy regarding leases and encroachments and what will be left after construction?**
A. SFPUC's policy regarding encroachments can be found on our web site – sfwater.org. We understand that the situation on Bay Road is a bit different than other parts of the right-of-way, and we will make certain that the Bay Road residents and SFPUC's real estate division will be able to review and discuss these particular permits well before construction.
- 29) **What will you do with the right-of-way when you leave? Does the SFPUC plan to return disturbed lands to their original condition?**
A. Typically we hydro-seed any land we disturb with native grasses, though it will depend on the terms of individual lease agreements. It is too early in the project at this juncture to tell how we're going to construct in these areas, let alone what would be left when we're done.
- 30) **Q. Will vibrations from construction activity damage my house?**
A. Vibrations from construction activity should be minimal, especially along the right of way where we are digging through grass and dirt. If you are located near a valve vault, there is a larger chance of vibrations. We often set up vibration monitoring equipment near the site throughout the construction.
- 31) **Q. Why don't you just slip-line the existing pipelines and not worry about a fifth pipeline?**
A. When these pipelines were built they passed through farmland and fields. Today, they serve booming residential communities. Our system is running at full capacity right now. Shut downs for planned maintenance need to be carefully timed so as to avoid any disruptions in service. We simply do not have the system capacity to perform maintenance on these pipelines without building some sort of redundancy into the system. When the fifth pipeline is built, it will act as a lifeline so that the other two pipelines can be taken out of service for maintenance and rehabilitation.
- 32) **Q. When will you do slip-lining/rehabilitation of BDPL 1?**
A. If we decide that slip-lining is the appropriate course of rehabilitation, we would do it following the construction of BDPL 5.

- 33) **Q. Will the new pipeline be entirely underground? Will you go back and bury the aboveground portions of the existing pipes?**
A. *The new pipeline will be entirely underground. In some areas we may cover exposed areas of the old pipeline, but it is too soon to tell.*
- 34) **Q. Where is the money for this project coming from? Will you be raising our taxes? Are all ratepayers sharing the cost of this project equally?**
A. *The Water System Improvement Program, or WSIP, is a voter-approved bond for financing capital improvements to repair, replace and upgrade the system's aging pipelines, dams and other infrastructure. The revenue bonds will be paid back through rate increases over time. Our suburban customers are represented by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency, or BAWSCA, which adjusts its rates to pay back wholesale and construction fees.*
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Questions?

For more information about the Bay Division Pipeline Reliability Upgrade Project, contact Betsy Lauppe Rhodes or Christina Kerby at 1-800-571-6610 or baydivision@sfgwater.org. Visit us online at www.sfgwater.org.

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