

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Gloria Way Well Retrofit Project for the City of East Palo Alto,
San Mateo County, California, United States

February 15, 2013

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 is considering authorizing the use of Special Appropriation grant funds to the City of East Palo Alto (City) for the Gloria Way Well Retrofit Project. EPA Region 9's authorization to use grant funds for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§4321-4370f. In accordance with NEPA, Council of Environmental Quality Regulations at 40 CFR §§1500.1-1508.28, and EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, EPA Region 9 has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) describing the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents EPA Region 9's decision that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Project Location and Description

The City provides domestic water supply to approximately 4,200 residential, commercial, and industrial customers within a 2.5-square-mile service area that encompasses most of the City and a portion of Menlo Park east of Highway 101. The City serves approximately 93 percent of the potable water used within the City limits. The City relies on the San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC) for its domestic water supply. Currently, the City's municipal water supply system does not have water storage facilities; consequently any interruption in the SFPUC supply could leave the City without potable water. The Gloria Way Well is located in the San Francisquito Creek Groundwater Subbasin, which is part of the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin.

In 1981, the City began operating the Gloria Way Well to supplement the City's domestic drinking water supply. Shortly after the Gloria Way Well became operational, residents complained of a strange taste and odor in the water, which was due to elevated concentrations of manganese. Although the water was safe to drink and passed all primary drinking water standards, the water exceeded secondary drinking water standards (aesthetic standards) for manganese, chloride, specific conductance, and total dissolved solids. The City switched to using the Gloria Way Well water for nonpotable purposes (e.g., street cleaning and construction dust control).

The City is now proposing to rehabilitate the Gloria Way Well for the purpose of providing potable drinking water. All existing water supply facilities and infrastructure on the Gloria Way Well site would be removed except the production well, well pump and electrical transformer. Manganese wellhead treatment facilities and supporting infrastructure would be constructed onsite to treat groundwater from the Gloria Way Well to meet regulatory standards. The manganese treatment facilities would also serve to reduce iron concentrations in the groundwater, thereby further improving the aesthetics of the water.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose and need for the Gloria Way Well Retrofit project is to secure a supplemental drinking water supply to assist the City in meeting projected near-term supply deficits, and to support future growth and economic development within the City. The project will also provide a backup potable water supply in the event that deliveries from the SFPUC are interrupted during an emergency.

Environmental Consequences

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), EPA and the City have prepared a joint Environmental Assessment (EA)/Initial Study (IS) that analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed action. After considering a wide range of regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors, the EA/IS did not identify any significant impacts to the environment that would result from the implementation of the proposed project. However, mitigation measures were established in the EA/IS for the proposed project and are enforceable under this FONSI. A copy of the mitigation measures is attached.

After carefully considering the regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors as described in the EA/IS, EPA has not identified any significant impacts to the environment that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

Public Review

The EA/IS can be viewed at: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/nepa/epa-generated>. Interested parties may submit comments on the EA/IS and this unsigned FONSI to Kelly White, Environmental Science Associates (ESA), 550 Kearny Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, California, 94108. Ms. White can be reached by telephone at 415-896-5900, by fax at 415-896-0332 or by email at kwhite@esassoc.com. Comments are due by 5:00 p.m. on March 26, 2013.

EPA will not take administrative action on the proposed project prior to the close of the comment period. If, after considering public comments, EPA concludes the proposed project will not have significant environmental impacts, EPA will revise this FONSI by adding a summary of the comments received and EPA's responses. The revised FONSI will be forwarded to the EPA Water Division Director for review and signature. The FONSI will be final upon signature. EPA will not recirculate the signed FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request