

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**Categorical Exclusion
City of Bellflower, California
Water Infrastructure Improvement Projects**

Proposed Action

The City of Bellflower, California (“City”) is proposing water infrastructure improvements within its Bellflower Municipal Water System (“BMWS”). The City recognizes the need to upgrade its water system to current industry standards and to provide adequate infrastructure upgrades to meet the City’s operating system needs. The system must also be upgraded to provide adequate service under emergency conditions. The water system improvements will upgrade various water system deficiencies including:

- Aging and under-sized pipelines,
- Lack of backup water supply, and
- Inability of the system to provide adequate pressure, especially during emergencies, under current operating standards.

Projects in the Water System Improvements Program (WSIP) include: installation of a water system interconnection pipeline, construction of a high-capacity water supply well, and a series of water distribution system improvements (pipelines and appurtenances) within BMWS.

The proposed project consists of the following three components:

Water System Interconnection Pipeline

The Water System Interconnection Pipeline consists of approximately 2,500 feet of an 8-inch water pipeline connecting BMWS with the Bellflower Somerset Mutual Water Company (“BSMWC”), a neighboring water purveyor within the City of Bellflower. This interconnection pipeline will be owned by the City, and will provide the primary supply to BMWS from BSMWC. Interconnection will also allow the BMWS a secondary source for redundancy, fire protection, increased system pressure, and reliability to the system’s northerly service area.

High-Capacity Water Supply Well

The High-Capacity water well includes installation of a high capacity well within the BMWS including both drilling and equipping the well. The well would reduce reliance on imported water supplies by providing groundwater as its source of water supply. This project includes the design and construction of the well. The proposed well may be equipped with a submersible vertical pump. A disinfection system will be utilized to disinfect the well water.

Water Distribution System Improvements

The Water Distribution System Improvements consist of the replacement of undersized distribution and transmission water pipelines, the replacement of line valves, installation of flushing hydrants, and the replacement of outdated water services and meters. The pipelines will be up-sized as necessary in order to provide better service to its customers. Additional system pipelines will also be installed as necessary to provide for better system reliability, and to enhance system operations. Approximately 22,900 feet of pipeline ranging in size from 2-inches to 8-inches in diameter will be replaced by 6-inch and 8-inch diameter pipe.

Justification for Categorical Exclusion

The proposed action is consistent with the category of Categorical Exclusion specified in 40 CFR Part 6.107(d)(1) as it is directed toward the functional replacement of existing water system infrastructure and construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent to or appurtenant to existing facilities. The projects identified above will be entirely located within existing City public right of way. All projects will be located underground, except the wellhead. No new land or undisturbed areas will be affected. EPA has determined that the projects will not have any significant impacts on the quality of the human environment. The City has determined that the proposed projects are the most cost effective way to improve the City's water system to enhance public health and safety.

In determining the appropriateness of a Categorical Exclusion, EPA examined various federal cross-cutting laws and Executive Orders in accordance with 40 CFR 6.300. The laws, and analysis of the impacts of the proposed action, are described below:

National Natural Landmarks - The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to designate areas as Natural Landmarks for listing on the National Registry of Natural Landmarks pursuant to the Historic Act of 1935, 16 U.S. Code (USC) 461 *et seq.* No natural U.S. landmarks are within the areas for the proposed action or would be impacted by the proposed action.

Cultural Resources Data - The *Archeological and Historical Preservation Act* (AHPA) of 1974, 16 USC 469 *et seq.*, provides for the preservation of cultural resources of an EPA activity that may cause irreparable loss or destruction of significant scientific, prehistoric, or archeological data.

A California Historical Resources Information System ("CHRIS") records search was conducted for the Water System Improvement Plan by the South Central Coastal Information Center ("SCCIC") on December 17, 2007. The following information is based on SCCIC's review of all recorded archaeological sites within a ½-mile radius of the project site as well as a review of cultural resource reports on file. Additionally, SCCIC reviewed the California Points of Historical Interest ("PHI"), the California Historical Landmarks (CHL), the California Register of Historical Resources ("CR"), the National Register of Historic Places (NR), and the California State Historic Resources Inventory ("HRI") for the project. The following information is based on a report of SCCIC findings.

There are no archaeological sites identified within the project site or within a ½-mile radius of the project site.

Two additional cultural resources have been identified within a ½-mile radius of the project site; however, neither is located within the project site. Site #19-186110 is the Union Pacific Rail line right-of-way. SCCIC looks for patterns to see what could be there such as old buildings, industry, etc. The only structure noted in the Primary Report is Hobart Tower, a signaling device, located several cities away from Bellflower near the Vernon - Los Angeles border.

Site #19-187698 is a one-story structure (business building) built in 1929 at 8846 Alondra Blvd., Bellflower that was evaluated because someone requested constructing a cell tower at or near that location. The *Primary Report* indicates that the structure has been significantly altered since 1929, and that its original architecture style is unknown. The *Primary Report* also indicates that the property does not appear to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under any of its criteria (Criteria A, B, C and D.), and that it is not a historic property for the purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The SCCIC indicates the following findings:

1. The California Point of Historical Interest (2007) of the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, lists no properties within a 1/2 mile radius of the project site.
2. The California Historical Landmarks (2007) of the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, lists no properties within a 1/2 mile radius of the project site.
3. The California Register of Historical Places (2007) lists no properties within a 1/2 mile radius of the project site.
4. The National Register of Historic Places (2007) lists no properties within a 1/2 mile radius of the project site.

The SCCIC indicates that although the project site is currently developed, there may be potential for subsurface and/or buried prehistoric and historic resource within the project boundaries. Therefore, the SCCIC recommends a halt-work condition for all ground disturbing activities; in the event evidence of cultural resources is encountered, all work within the vicinity of the find should stop. A professional archaeologist should be retained to assess such finds and make recommendations.

The Native American Heritage Commission has been contacted with regards to this project as well. The tribes consulted recommend the presence of a monitor during ground disturbing activities.

The project sites are developed urban sites and have been previously disturbed. There is no evidence to indicate any artifacts have been found; therefore, it is unlikely and not expected that any significant cultural resources would be affected directly or indirectly during implementation of the proposed action.

Cultural Resources - The *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA), as amended 16 U.S.C. 470, directs federal agencies to integrate historic preservation into all activities which either directly or indirectly involve land use decisions. The NHPA is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), and each federal agency. Implementing regulations include 36 CFR Part 800: *Regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Governing the NHPA Section 106 Review Process*. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into consideration the impact that an action may have on historic properties which are included on, or are eligible for inclusion on, the National Register of Historic Places. As indicated above, the National Register of Historic Places (2007) lists no properties within a 1/2 mile radius of the project site. The property for the proposed action is not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Wetlands Protection - EO 11990, "Protection of Wetlands" of 1977, requires federal agencies conducting certain activities to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impacts associated with the destruction or loss of wetlands and to avoid support of new construction in wetlands, if a practicable alternative exists. Discharge of dredge or fill material into wetlands and other waters of the U.S. are also regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. No areas that will be affected by the proposed action are located in or near federally protected wetlands. There are no federally protected wetlands in the City of Bellflower.

Floodplain Management - EO 11988, "Floodplain Management" of 1977, requires federal agencies to evaluate the potential effects of actions they may take in a floodplain to avoid, to the extent possible, any adverse effects associated with the direct and indirect development of a floodplain. The San Gabriel River is now a vast concrete-lined flood control channel. The channel lies adjacent and east of the City, and is designated to contain a 100-year flood. The channel is fully operational and is maintained by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. In Bellflower, the San Gabriel flood control channel and the City's storm drain system are adequate to handle a 100-year flood hazard. The City of Bellflower participates in the National Flood Insurance Program which provides Federal insurance to those structures, both residential and commercial, which are within the 100-year floodplain provided all new structures comply with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations. Most of the Projects are within Zone X of Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Map. Zone X is defined as areas determined to be outside the 500-year flood zone.

Important Farmlands - EPA Policy to Protect Environmentally Significant Agricultural Lands requires EPA to consider the protection of the nations' significant/important agricultural lands from irreversible conversion to uses that result in their loss as an environmental or essential food production resource. Moreover, the *Farmland Protection Policy Act* (FPPA), 7 USC 4201 *et seq.*, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) implementing procedures require federal agencies to evaluate the adverse effects of their actions on prime and unique farmland, including farmland of statewide and local importance. The proposed action does not involve conversion of, or otherwise affect, prime, unique, or important farmland (NRCS 1999).

Coastal Zone Management Act - The *Coastal Zone Management Act* (CZMA), 16 USC 1451 *et seq.*, requires that federal agencies in coastal areas be consistent with approved State Coastal Zone Management Programs, to the maximum extent possible. If an EPA action may affect a coastal zone area, the responsible official is required to assess the impact of the action on the coastal zone. The proposed action will not affect a coastal zone area.

Coastal Barrier Resources Act - The *Coastal Barrier Resources Act* (CBRA), 16 USC 3501 *et seq.*, generally prohibits new federal expenditures and financial assistance for development within the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) and therefore protects ecologically sensitive U.S. coastal barriers. The proposed action does not affect any coastal barriers.

Wild and Scenic Rivers - The *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* (WSRA), 16 USC 271 *et seq.*, establishes requirements applicable to water resource projects affecting wild, scenic, or recreational rivers within the National Wild and Scenic River System, as well as rivers designated on the national Rivers Inventory. No river systems will be affected by the proposed action.

Fish and Wildlife Protection - The *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* (FWCA), 16 USC 661 *et seq.*, requires federal agencies involved in actions that will result in the control or structural modification of any natural stream or body of water for any purpose, to take action to protect the fish and wildlife resources that may be affected by the action. No streams or waterbodies will be structurally modified or controlled by the proposed action.

Endangered Species Protection - The *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), 16 USC 1536 *et seq.*, prohibits agencies from jeopardizing threatened or endangered species or adversely modifying habitats essential to their survival. The City of Bellflower contains biological resources typical to urban areas of Southern California. All of the significant original native chaparral and grassland vegetation has been removed from the area over the years. These areas and their associated wildlife have long since been replaced by ornamental planting, which includes a variety of tree species. In general, wildlife habitat is located outside the developed areas of Bellflower. Most species found within the city limits are typical of species found in urban areas dominated by humans. There are only a few vacant parcels within the City. These lots are utilized by animal species that have adapted to highly disturbed and urbanized environments and are not suitable habitat for endangered or protected species.

No threatened or endangered species or their habitats are known to utilize the proposed sites. The United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was notified of the proposed action in an informal consultation letter. The letter requested information about threatened and endangered species that could be present in the vicinity of the proposed action. The FWS did not have site-specific information for the project area. In their response, the FWS attached a list of federally endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species that may occur in the City of La Habra Heights, located in Los Angeles County. The City of La Habra Heights is approximately 15 miles from the City of Bellflower. However, La Habra Heights is vastly different from Bellflower, with a more rural setting and a population of only 6,172. Therefore, these species are much more likely to exist in La Habra Heights than in the City of Bellflower. No threatened or endangered species or their habitats are known to utilize the proposed project area and EPA has determined that the project will have “no effect” on federally listed species.

Wilderness Protection - The *Wilderness Act* (WA), 16 USC 1131 *et seq.*, establishes a system of National Wilderness Areas. The WA establishes a policy for protecting the system by generally prohibiting motorized equipment, structures, installations, roads, commercial enterprises, aircraft landings, and mechanical transport. The locations for the projects are within the urban area of the City of Bellflower, California. The City of Bellflower is a built-out city; no wilderness areas occur within the sites of the projects.

Air Quality - The *Clean Air Act* (CAA) requires federal actions to conform to any state implementation plan approved or promulgated under Section 110 of the Act. The air quality from the proposed action would be subject to negative impacts from the exhaust fumes and fugitive dust generated by construction and grading equipment during the site preparation and construction. Emissions of several criteria pollutants, including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and fine particulate matter would be generated by the construction equipment and by construction crews traveling to and from the proposed construction site. Such impacts would be direct, short-term, and minor because the implementation of the proposed action would involve a number of localized construction projects that would not operate concurrently.

In addition, mitigation measures would be executed to use the best management practices to minimize dust and efficient construction management practices to minimize exhaust fumes by reducing vehicle traffic to and from the project sites. All proposed facilities that generate air emissions would comply with the Rules and Regulations established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) in 1997 and the California emissions standards.

Emissions would dissipate into adjacent regions and would cease after completion of construction; there are no emissions associated with long term operation of the projects.

Environmental Justice - EO 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” and the accompanying presidential memorandum, advise federal agencies to identify and address, whenever feasible, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority communities and/or low-income communities. The proposed action is not expected to

disproportionately adversely affect minority populations and/or low-income populations in this area. The proposed project is not expected to disproportionately affect any distinct minority, ethnic, elderly, or disabled populations in the City of Bellflower, in fact, the proposed action will have equally beneficial impacts for all residents. The proposed project will not displace any residential or commercial structures.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative impacts associated with the proposed action would include impacts from the incremental effects of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions. The goal of cumulative impact analysis is to determine the magnitude and significance of environmental consequences of the proposed action in the context of such past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

The proposed action would result in a direct short-term minor cumulative impact associated with other projects in the City of Bellflower. The proposed projects under the proposed action would not occur concurrently with one another. The proposed projects would be constructed in series, thereby reducing the potential that cumulative impacts would result from the implementation of the proposed action and other activities in the City of Bellflower. Several other projects in the City of Bellflower include water distribution improvements in other systems, the replacement/repair of hydro tanks, and fire hydrant replacement. The City of Bellflower is essentially built-out, with little room for substantial population growth, and therefore the proposed action would not induce substantial population growth

The proposed action, individually or in conjunction with past, present, or foreseeable future projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the human environment.

Public Support

The City of Bellflower has prepared an Initial Environmental Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and determined that its project will have no significant environmental impact. Following a 30-day public review and comment period, the Bellflower City Council approved the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project at its public meeting on April 28, 2008. The City of Bellflower submitted a copy of the completed Mitigated Negative Declaration to EPA on May 7, 2008.

Cost Effectiveness

Rehabilitation and replacement of the deteriorating water system infrastructure would be the most cost-effective and expedient methods of resolving water supply concerns within the City of Bellflower.