

1.0 Introduction

This draft Environmental Impact Report (draft EIR) provides an environmental assessment of the proposed Gordon Water Line Relocation Project (also referred to as the Rockville Road Water Main Project), hereafter referred to as ‘project’. Solano Transportation Authority (STA) proposes to relocate a portion of the Gordon Water Line to Rockville Road from its current alignment along Interstate-80 (I-80) and State Route 12 (SR 12). Rockville Road is located in unincorporated Solano County, near the City of Fairfield. The project limits include approximately 3 miles of Rockville Road right-of-way (ROW) between the intersection of Rockville Road and Suisun Valley Road to a point 1,600 feet west of Green Valley Road (just east of the intersection of Rockville Road and Paseo Arboles).

The current alignment of the Gordon Water Line along SR 12 is in conflict with the approved Jameson Canyon project, which will widen Jameson Canyon Road (also known as SR 12) from two lanes to four lanes between State Route 29 (SR 29) in Napa County and Red Top Road in Fairfield, CA. As part of that project, all utilities within the Jameson Canyon Road ROW will be relocated to accommodate the widening.

The Jameson Canyon project was analyzed in a mitigated negative declaration/ environmental assessment (MND/EA), which was adopted by Caltrans in February 2008. The Jameson Canyon project MND/EA proposed relocating the Gordon Water Line within the widened Jameson Canyon Road ROW. The Jameson Canyon project is funded and is scheduled for construction starting in late 2010 or early 2011.

STA has determined that the relocation of the Gordon Water Line to Rockville Road—rather than within the SR 12 corridor—would have the following benefits:

- would improve operation of the Vallejo water system¹ (by allowing a larger section of the line to be down-sized from 24 inches to 12 inches) and updating from 1920s design standards;
- would reduce the cost for ongoing maintenance of the Vallejo water system;

¹ The Gordon Water Line forms part of the Vallejo Lakes water system, a public water system operated by the City of Vallejo that serves approximately 900 connections in Green Valley Road, portions of Suisun Valley Road, and unincorporated Old Cordelia.

- would avoid future conflicts (and relocation costs) associated with other planned roadway improvements along the I-80/I-680/SR 12 corridor that are currently being evaluated as part of the I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange project; and
- would reduce the potential cost of the relocation anticipated as part of the Jameson Canyon and I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange projects by up to 1 million dollars.

The existing 24-inch Gordon Water Line is over 80 years old and has at least four times more capacity than it needs to serve the limited number of customers in Cordelia and along Suisun Valley Road and Green Valley Road. This excess capacity leads to ongoing maintenance efforts to ensure water quality. Additionally, maintenance and repairs to the old pipes, valves, and fittings are more expensive than they would otherwise be with an appropriate-sized, newer system. The relocation of the Gordon Water Line to Rockville Road will provide a more balanced design for the Vallejo water system by providing the correct sized water line for existing users in that area.

The relocated Gordon Water Line would not change the capacity of the overall Vallejo Lakes water system or provide an opportunity for new connections. The Vallejo Lakes water system is already operating at or near capacity and the City of Vallejo has imposed a permanent moratorium to prohibit water connections to properties not currently eligible to be served by this system.²

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT EIR

This draft EIR is intended to inform the STA decision makers; responsible, trustee, and interested agencies; and the public of the environmental consequences that could occur if the project were implemented. As the Lead Agency for the environmental review of this project, the STA has prepared this draft EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).³ CEQA requires that all state and local government agencies consider the consequences to the natural and human environment of any project the agencies carry out or approve.

This draft EIR is a public document that discloses the significant environmental impacts of the project and identifies: 1) mitigation measures to reduce these effects; 2) significant impacts that cannot be avoided; 3) growth-inducing impacts; 4) effects found not to be significant; and, 5) cumulative impacts of the project in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

² *City of Vallejo, Eric Jansen, P.E., Water Division, Personal Communication, October 2009*

³ Regulations for the CEQA are set forth in California laws known as the CEQA Statutes (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq) and the *State CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq), as amended.

The EIR is an informational document to be used in the planning and decision-making process and is designed to encourage public disclosure and assist decision-makers in understanding the environmental consequences of a project and balancing them with the potential benefits. It is not the purpose of an EIR to recommend approval or denial of a project. Per CEQA, project approvals may occur after the STA certifies the EIR as adequate and makes certain findings required by CEQA.

1.2 LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

As noted in *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15146, the degree of specificity in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity in the underlying activity described in the EIR. Based on the specificity of the project plans (see **Chapter 3.0**), this EIR provides a project-level analysis of the proposed action. The level of analysis contained in this EIR will be sufficient to proceed with project implementation without further environmental review.

1.3 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT EIR

The project was originally anticipated to be exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303(d), which covers “new construction”. However, preliminary analysis confirmed that a previously identified Native American cultural resource is located at the eastern terminus of the project site and would require analysis as part of an EIR.

Based on the current project understanding, the EIR will address all the CEQA topics described in Section 15060 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, but will focus on two key environmental topics that could be affected by the project: cultural and biological resources. All other topics will be addressed at a lesser level of detail in **Section 4.3**.

The scope of the draft EIR was informed by comments submitted in response to a Notice of Preparation (NOP) that was published and circulated on December 21, 2009. A copy of the NOP is included in **Appendix A**. During the 30-day comment period (ending January 20, 2010), written comments regarding the scope and content of the draft EIR were received and were taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft EIR. A summary of comments received during the scoping period is provided in **Chapter 2.0**. A copy of each letter submitted in response to the NOP is appended as **Appendix B** to this EIR.

1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction provides an introduction and overview of the purpose of this draft EIR and describes the environmental review process.

Chapter 2: Summary provides a summary of the potential environmental impacts related to implementation of the project, and also describes the project alternatives. This chapter provides a summary table that identifies the significant impacts, mitigation measures, and the level of significance of an impact before and after the mitigation measure is incorporated.

Chapter 3: Project Description describes the project, including the project setting, project characteristics, and construction phasing.

Chapter 4: Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures describes the environmental setting; applicable plans and policies; an analysis of the environmental impacts of the project; and mitigation measures that would reduce their significance.

Chapter 5: Alternatives considers alternatives to the project and compares the impacts of these alternatives to the project.

Chapter 6: CEQA Required Assessment Conclusions provides a summary discussion of project-related effects, including the effects found not to be significant, unavoidable significant effects, and a discussion of the project's potential to induce growth in the area.

Chapter 7: Report Preparation identifies the Lead Agency and consultants involved in the preparation of this draft EIR.

The **Appendices** include the NOP, copies of the comments received on the NOP, and technical reports prepared by environmental and technical specialists for the evaluation of the project.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Comments on the draft EIR can be submitted until April 16, 2010 at the following address:

Solano Transportation Authority
One Harbor Center, Suite 130
Suisun City, CA 94585

ATTN: Janet Adams, Deputy Executive Director/Director of Projects

While reviewing the draft EIR, reviewers should focus on the document's adequacy in identifying and analyzing effects on the environment and on the ways in which any significant effects might be avoided or mitigated.

Following the close of the public comment period, responses to public input will be prepared and published as a separate document. The draft EIR text and appendices, together with the responses to comments document, will constitute the final EIR.

1.6 STA BOARD DECISION-MAKING

Following the publication of the final EIR, the STA Board of Directors (Board) will hold a public hearing to consider the adequacy of the EIR and the environmental consequences of the project. In reaching a decision, the Board will consider comments received during the public review process. If the Board determines the EIR to be adequate, it will certify the EIR and adopt a resolution including the findings of fact and the mitigation monitoring reporting program.

Following certification of the EIR, the Board will consider the project as a whole. Upon approval of the project and associated resolution, the Executive Director will file a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk of Solano County and with the State Office of Planning and Research and authorize payment of filing fees.

1.7 LEAD AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

The STA has the principal responsibility for approving the project. For this reason, STA is the “Lead Agency” as defined by CEQA and STA is responsible for preparation of this environmental document. As defined by CEQA, “Responsible Agencies” are public agencies other than the Lead Agency that have discretionary approval over the project. The EIR would serve as the primary source of environmental information for each Responsible Agency. The following agencies are considered responsible agencies for this project.

- **United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR).** USBR is an agency under the US Department of Interior that oversees water resource management, specifically as it applies to the oversight and/or operation of numerous water diversion, delivery, and storage projects throughout the western US. Near the eastern terminus of the alignment, Rockville Road crosses Putah South Canal, which is under the jurisdiction USBR. To address the portion of the project that crosses the Putah South Canal, the USBR is preparing a separate document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is anticipated that the USBR will prepare a Categorical Exclusion for this project.
- **Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC).** For the purpose of protecting tribal cultural resources, cities and counties must notify and consult with California Native American Tribes about proposed local land use planning decisions. Coordination between STA and NAHC began in November 2009. A meeting was held in December 2009 between representatives of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and STA. The intent of the meeting was to discuss the project’s potential impacts to human burials and other cultural resources, and the mitigation measures and data recovery plan if an impact were to occur. No discretionary action is required by the NAHC.

- **County of Solano.** Rockville Road is located in Solano County. STA must obtain an Encroachment Permit and Grading Permit from the County before starting construction.
- **City of Vallejo.** The project involves a change to the City of Vallejo's water supply system. The City must authorize the relocation and design of the proposed water line.