

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Executive Summary section is provided in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15123. As stated in the State CEQA Guidelines §15123(a), “[a]n EIR shall contain a brief summary of the proposed actions and its consequences. The language of the summary should be as clear and simple as reasonably practical.” State CEQA Guidelines §15123(b) states, “[t]he summary shall identify: (1) each significant effect with proposed mitigation measures and alternatives that would reduce or avoid that effect; (2) areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public; and (3) issues to be resolved including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects.” Accordingly, this summary includes a brief synopsis of the proposed project and project alternatives, environmental impacts and mitigation, areas of known controversy, and issues to be resolved during environmental review. Table 2-1 (at the end of this section) presents the summary of potential environmental impacts, their level of significance without mitigation measures, mitigation measures, and levels of significance with mitigation measures.

2.2 SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes the expansion of the existing Potrero Hills Landfill onto a 260-acre area owned by Potrero Hills Landfill, Inc. Both the existing landfill and the proposed expansion site are located within the secondary management area of the Suisun Marsh. The proposed project would add approximately 61.6 million cubic yards of fill capacity. The total site capacity would be approximately 83 million cubic yards and the disposal life of the landfill would increase by approximately 35 years.

The proposed project involves several components that require amendments to existing permits or new permits. Other project components involve ongoing operations and programs. The following project components are included in the proposed amendments to the Use Permit/Marsh Development Permit, Regional Water Quality Control Board’s Waste Discharge Requirements, and Solid Waste Facility Permit, or would require other new permits:

- ▶ Extending the landfill horizontally.
- ▶ Extending the landfill vertically.
- ▶ Relocating Spring Branch Creek.
- ▶ Applying tonnage limits only to materials buried in the landfill.
- ▶ Extending the operating hours from 20 to 24 hours per day.

- ▶ Adding biosolids to the composting operation and using other methods of handling sludge.
- ▶ Conducting an alternative daily cover (ADC) demonstration project.
- ▶ Selling landfill- and resource recovery-related commodities.
- ▶ Constructing a truck/container wash facility.
- ▶ Modifying restrictions on night lighting.
- ▶ Installing landfill gas-fueled power generation equipment and/or adding a fuel production facility.
- ▶ Combining high-moisture content and powdery materials.
- ▶ Installing a portable visitor center trailer along the northern landfill boundary.
- ▶ Adding a bypass lane on the landfill access road.
- ▶ Developing and conveying a supplemental water supply.

The following components of the Phase II Project involve permit approvals other than modifications to the County's Use Permit/Marsh Development Permit:

- ▶ vacating the extension of Scally Road,
- ▶ incorporating design elements of the bioreactor landfill concept,
- ▶ upsizing existing offsite PG&E power lines, and
- ▶ using an all-soil alternative final cover design.

A detailed description of these project components is included in Chapter 3, Project Description, of this document.

2.3 DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS AND PROJECT APPROVALS

The County has the primary approval authority over the proposed project. The EIR is to be certified by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, upon appeal, prior to the County taking action on the proposed project. Following certification of the EIR, the project will be considered for approval, conditional approval, or denial by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, upon appeal.

This EIR is also intended to be used by responsible and trustee agencies that may have authority over the project in the future. The following responsible and trustee agencies would have authority over the project: the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (NPDES Permit, Waste Discharge Requirements, and Section 401 certification), the Bay Area

Air Quality Management District (Air Pollution Control Permits), California Integrated Waste Management Board (Solid Waste Facilities Permit), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit), California Department of Fish and Game (Streambed Alteration Agreement and Endangered Species Permits), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Permits), San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (Marsh Development Permit), and the Local Enforcement Agency (Solid Waste Facilities Permit).

2.4 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY, ISSUES RAISED, AND AREAS RESOLVED IN THE EIR

The County submitted the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of this draft EIR to the California Office of Planning and Research on March 24, 2003. The NOP was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, as well as all other interested parties. The purpose of the NOP was to solicit comments from public agencies on issues germane to that agency that should be considered in the draft EIR. The public review period for the NOP ended 30 days after public distribution of the NOP. All of the issues raised in the NOP comment letters (Appendix A) have been addressed in the draft EIR.

2.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Chapter 4 of this draft EIR describes in detail the environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project. The county, in its review of the proposed project and determination for action, will consider the entire environmental assessment contained in this draft EIR. Upon completion of the environmental review process, the county will have the option to certify that the final EIR: (1) has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (2) was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency (i.e., the County Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors) and was reviewed and considered by the decision-making body prior to approving the project; and (3) reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis (State CEQA Guidelines §15090). If the EIR is certified, the County Planning Commission will make a decision in a separate action whether the proposed project (Use Permit and Marsh Development Permit) will be denied, approved, or conditionally approved. That decision may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors, who, upon appeal, will determine in a separate action whether the proposed project will be denied, approved, or conditionally approved. The Marsh Development Permit may be ultimately appealed to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

The county can approve or conditionally approve the proposed project, if it chooses, even if significant impacts are identified. When significant effects are identified and the lead agency wishes to approve or conditionally approve the project, State CEQA Guidelines §21081(a) requires that one of three specific findings be made for each significant effect. The county, as the lead agency, must also adopt a "statement of overriding considerations," in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines §21081(b), if the proposed project is approved with unavoidable significant effects to the environment. The statement of overriding considerations is a statement by the decision-makers acknowledging that significant unavoidable environmental

impacts are acceptable when balanced against certain economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project.

2.6 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

State CEQA Guidelines §15126.6, as amended, mandates that all EIRs include a comparative evaluation of the proposed project with alternatives to the project that are capable of attaining most of the project's basic objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. CEQA requires an evaluation of a "range of reasonable" alternatives, including the "no project" alternative. Chapter 5, Alternatives Analysis, of this draft EIR provides an analysis of the comparative impacts anticipated from two alternatives to the proposed project: 1) the No-Project Alternative, consisting of the continued operation of the landfill until it reaches its current capacity, at which time the landfill would be closed and waste would be transferred to an alternative disposal facility, and 2) Expansion of the Existing Phase I Landfill Alternative, consisting of expansion of the Phase I landfill to a higher elevation than proposed with the project in order to provide additional capacity without expanding into the Phase II area.

2.7 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Chapter 4 of this draft EIR provides a description of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as proposed measures to mitigate project effects to the extent feasible. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of cumulative impacts. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, all of the adverse effects associated with the proposed project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level and no impacts would be considered significant and unavoidable.

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