

# SCOPING REPORT

## City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District (scwd<sup>2</sup>) Regional Seawater Desalination Project

*January 2011*

### Prepared for:

City of Santa Cruz Water Department  
Soquel Creek Water District

### Prepared by:



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## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

The City of Santa Cruz and the Soquel Creek Water District (**scwd**<sup>2</sup>) conducted an environmental scoping process for the proposed **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Regional Seawater Desalination Project (proposed project). On November 15, 2010, the agencies formally initiated environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed project with the issuance of a Notice of Preparation. On December 8, 2010, two public scoping meetings were held to solicit comments on the proposed scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Scoping comments were received throughout the scoping period, which ran for an extended period from November 15, 2010 until January 10, 2011. This report summarizes the scoping process and provides a detailed account of the public noticing and scoping meetings that were conducted. Additionally, the report appendices contain copies of all of the public notices, meeting materials, and public comments received during the scoping period.

## 2.0 Project Overview

The City of Santa Cruz (City) and the Soquel Creek Water District (District) have partnered to implement the proposed project to provide up to 2.5 million gallons per day of desalinated water for potable use. The proposed project would help the District meet its water needs as it reduces its groundwater withdrawals of the overdrafted Soquel-Aptos area to prevent seawater intrusion, consistent with its *Urban Water Management Plan Update* and its *Integrated Resources Plan*. In addition, the proposed project would help the City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD) meet the water needs of its service area during drought periods, as spelled out by both its *Integrated Water Plan* and its *Urban Water Management Plan*.

The proposed project would consist of: (1) a seawater intake structure, associated pump station, and conveyance piping; (2) a seawater desalination plant that would provide for pretreatment filtration, seawater reverse osmosis, post-treatment conditioning and disinfection, and solids handling processes and their associated support facilities; (3) a brine disposal and conveyance system; and (4) water supply delivery system improvements (see Appendix A, Figures 1 through 4). Refer to Appendix A, Notice of Preparation/Initial Study for additional information regarding the proposed project.

### 3.0 Environmental Review Process

In compliance with CEQA, the City and District are undergoing a thorough environmental review. CEQA is a California statute that requires state and local agencies to identify any significant environmental impacts of the projects they propose and/or approve.

The proposed project will be studied in an EIR. An EIR is an informational document that evaluates the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project and provides key data and analysis for decision-makers and the public. An EIR must be considered by a public agency or agencies and certified prior to approval or disapproval of a project. An EIR identifies and evaluates the significant environmental impacts of a project, whether the impacts can be avoided or reduced, and alternatives to the project that should also be considered. The first step in preparing an EIR is to release a Notice of Preparation.

### 4.0 Notice of Preparation/Initial Study

The City and the District issued a Notice of Preparation and Initial Study (NOP/IS) on November 15, 2010 pursuant to CEQA to notify all interested parties, including involved public agencies, interested organizations, and members of the public that they will be preparing an EIR to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project (*see Appendix A*). Although not required under CEQA, an IS can be attached to a NOP to supply the information required for the notice. The NOP formally launches the scoping period for the project under CEQA. The scoping period is used to gather input from public agencies, interested organizations, and members of the public on the scope and content of the EIR.

The NOP/IS contains a description of the proposed project, a discussion of possible alternatives that may be considered, maps of the project location and project components, and a summary of the probable environmental effects of the project to be addressed in the EIR. The NOP/IS gives the public and public agencies the opportunity to review the proposed project and probable environmental effects and provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR.

The scoping period began on November 15, 2010 with the issuance of the NOP/IS and ended at 5 p.m. on January 10, 2011. This review period constitutes an extended scoping period beyond the 30-day review required by State law.

## 4.1 Notification of Scoping Period

As indicated above, the City and District formally initiated the scoping period for the proposed project by issuing the NOP/IS for public review. (*See Appendix A*) The NOP/IS was sent to the State Clearinghouse, which distributed it to 14 State agencies. In addition the NOP/IS was sent directly to 23 Federal, State, and local agencies.

To inform the public, a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the NOP/IS was placed in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, a newspaper of general circulation within the City and District's service areas. The NOA described the proposed project, the availability of the NOP/IS, resources for learning more, and information on how to submit comments.

An email notice with a link to the NOP/IS was sent to the **scwd**<sup>2</sup> email list for the project. A copy of the NOP/IS was also made available at the project website, [www.scwd2desal.org](http://www.scwd2desal.org), and each of the following local libraries and public offices.

- Central Branch, 224 Church Street, Santa Cruz
- Branciforte Branch, 230 Gault Street, Santa Cruz
- Garfield Park Branch, 705 Woodrow Avenue, Santa Cruz
- Live Oak Branch, 2380 Portola Drive, Santa Cruz
- Capitola Branch, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola
- Aptos Branch, 7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos
- Porter Memorial Library, 3050 Porter Street, Soquel
- La Selva Branch, 316 Estrella Avenue, LSB
- Santa Cruz Planning and Community Development Department, 809 Center Street Room 107, Santa Cruz, CA
- City of Santa Cruz, City Clerk, 809 Center Street Room 9, Santa Cruz, CA
- City of Santa Cruz Water Department, 212 Locust St., Suite C, Santa Cruz, CA
- Santa Cruz County Clerk's Office: 701 Ocean St., Room 210, Santa Cruz, CA
- Soquel Creek Water District Office, 5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA

A NOA mailer describing the NOP/IS and scoping period was also sent to local elected officials, local agencies, and property owners within approximately 300 feet of the project area. The mailer included a description of the project, maps of the project area, and information on the opportunities for public input. (*See Appendix A*)

Via the NOP/IS and the NOA, interested agencies, public officials, and members of the public were invited to submit formal comments on the NOP/IS until 5 p.m. on January 10, 2011.

## 4.2 Opportunities for Public Comment

Agencies and members of the public were provided multiple opportunities to submit comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Public comments were accepted in writing for the duration of the public comment period, from November 15, 2010 until January 10, 2011. Written comments were accepted via email and postal mail. A total of 59 separate written comments were received during the comment period, including written comments collected at the scoping meetings (*see Appendix C*). Public comments were received by Heidi Luckenbach, **scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Program Coordinator, either by posted mail or email at the addresses below.

### Postal Mail:

Heidi Luckenbach  
**scwd**<sup>2</sup> Desalination Program Coordinator  
City of Santa Cruz, Water Department  
212 Locust Street, Suite C  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Email:** [hluckenbach@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:hluckenbach@cityofsantacruz.com)

A total of 32 verbal comments were accepted and transcribed by a court reporter at two public scoping meetings held on December 8, 2010. (*See Section 5.0 Public Scoping Meetings and Appendix C*)

## 5.0 Public Scoping Meetings

On December 8, 2010, the City and the District hosted two public scoping meetings, one daytime meeting in the City's service area and one evening meeting in the District's service area. Interested participants were invited to attend either or both meetings.

The same presentation, handouts and staff were available at each meeting. Additionally, each meeting followed the same format: a one-hour open house, a 30-minute presentation, and then a formal public comment period where attendees could provide their comments orally. These comments were transcribed by a court reporter. The table below provides information about the location, time, format, and content of each meeting.

	City's Service Area	District's Service Area
<b>Location</b>	First Congregation Church 900 High Street Santa Cruz, CA	New Brighton Middle School 250 Washburn Avenue Capitola, CA
<b>Time</b>	12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
<b>Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Open House</li> <li>• 1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Presentation</li> <li>• 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Oral Comment Period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Open House</li> <li>• 7:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Presentation</li> <li>• 8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Oral Comment Period</li> </ul>
<b>Public Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58 participants signed in</li> <li>• 18 speakers during the public comment period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 participants signed in</li> <li>• 14 speakers during the public comment period</li> </ul>

## 5.1 Notification of Scoping Meetings

A variety of methods were used to inform the public of the scoping meetings, as described below.

**Project NOA Mailer Sent via Postal Mail:** The NOA mailer described in Section 4.1 also included information about the date, locations, and times of the scoping meetings. (*See Appendix A*)

**Meeting Notices Sent via Email:** Email notices were sent to addresses on the project email list to notify the recipients about the scoping period and scoping meetings. The emails included a brief description of the project and information on the opportunities for public input, including information about the date, locations, and times of the scoping meetings. (*See Appendix A*)

**Display Advertisement Placed in Local Newspapers:** Display advertisements were placed in local newspapers to inform readers of the upcoming public scoping meetings. The display advertisement provided a brief description of the project and information about the date, locations, and times of the scoping meetings. (*See Appendix A*)

- Aptos Times: December 1, 2010 edition
- City on the Hill: December 1, 2010 edition
- Good Times: December 2-8, 2010 edition
- Santa Cruz Weekly: December 1-8, 2010 edition
- The Post (color ad): November 23, 2010
- Capitola-Soquel Times: December 2010 edition
- Santa Cruz Sentinel: December 1 and 5, 2010

**Meeting Dates Posted to Project Website:** Meeting information and additional background information on the CEQA public scoping process were made available on the project website, [www.scwd2desal.org](http://www.scwd2desal.org).

**Press Release Sent to Local Media:** A press release was distributed to local media outlets for distribution to their readers. The press release included a brief description of the project and information on the opportunities for public input, including information about the date, locations, and times of the scoping meetings. (See *Appendix A*)

## 5.2 Open House

The open house provided an opportunity for participants to view exhibit boards with project information and ask questions of staff representatives and project team members. Attendees viewed exhibits on background information describing the purpose of this project, preliminary project description and related mapping, previous and current studies, and the CEQA process. Specifically, the exhibits stations included:

**Welcome Station:** Sign-in table, comment sheets, speaker cards, and public scoping agenda and open house program.

**Project Background and Need for the Project:** Project history, purpose and need for a desalination project, and information on the agencies involved in the project.

**Project Description:** Map and description of project area and components.

**Project Components and Related Technical Studies:** Overview of the technical studies completed and pending that will be considered during the environmental review process.

**Environmental Review Process:** Description of the environmental review process, project timeline, and project next steps.

**Public Comment Station:** Comment cards, comment box, information on how to effectively comment, and contact information.

See *Appendix B* for copies of the agenda and open house program and exhibits.

## 5.3 Presentation and Opportunity for Public Comment

A 30-minute presentation was given at each scoping meeting to explain the purpose of the meeting, provide background information on the project, and provide an overview of the environmental review process. (See *Appendix C*)

The presentation was followed by the oral comment period. Participants that desired to make a formal, oral public comment were able to do so by submitting a speaker card with their name. Speakers were then called to the microphone in an orderly fashion and either gave their public comment verbally, or requested that a staff member read their comment aloud. Participants were asked to be mindful of a three-minute time limit but were assured that the meeting would last until all public comments were heard. A court reporter was available to record the oral comments of each person that spoke. (See Appendix C)

## 6.0 Next Steps

Before any final decisions are made to proceed with the proposed project, the City and District are undertaking a thorough environmental review of the proposed project in compliance with CEQA. During the next several months, the project team will review public comments received during the scoping period. The comments will be used to help define the scope and content of the EIR. The community will have multiple opportunities to participate and comment during the environmental review process.

The schedule for the EIR process for the proposed project is provided on [http://www.scwd2desal.org/Page-Project-phases\\_EIR\\_Process.php](http://www.scwd2desal.org/Page-Project-phases_EIR_Process.php). Below is an overview of the next key steps in the environmental review process:

- **Draft EIR:** After the scoping period closes and scoping comments are considered, the Draft EIR will be prepared. The Draft EIR will be circulated for public review and comment and public meetings will be held to provide information about the Draft EIR and to collect comments on the adequacy of the document.
- **Final EIR:** Once the public review of the Draft EIR closes, public comments received will be responded to and provided in the Final EIR. The Final EIR may also include additional study and analysis, as well as revisions to the Draft EIR, as warranted.
- **Certification and Decision Process:** The decision-making process includes consideration of the following: EIR certification followed by project approval. The public is invited to comment during public meetings of the two lead agencies during their consideration of EIR certification and/or project approval.

## **Appendices**