



City of Arts & Innovation

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting

Project Title: Riverside Habitat, Parks and Water Project

Lead Agency: City of Riverside

Project Contact: Gisela Lopez, Senior Water Resources Analyst
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As the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Riverside (City), has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared for the **Riverside Habitat, Parks and Water Project** (proposed Project). The EIR will be prepared to meet the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) format requirements for CEQA-Plus documentation. The EIR will be sufficient to be used as an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), if needed by a federal lead agency. The proposed Project consists of the construction and operation of a new recycled water conveyance system to deliver tertiary treated recycled water from the Riverside Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) to tributaries to the Santa Ana River, and to parks and other landscaping within the City's service area. The purpose of the proposed Project is to maximize the beneficial reuse of recycled water to directly enhance native habitat, provide a drought-proof water supply to native aquatic and semi-aquatic species, and replace the use of potable water for landscape irrigation.

The City is soliciting input from members of the public, organizations, and government agencies on the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project.

Project Location

The proposed Project is in the City of Riverside, within Riverside County, California. (**Figure 1**).

Project Description

The Project is a collaborative effort between the City and the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) and proposes the construction and installation of approximately 81,600 feet of pipeline and additional facilities inclusive of a storage tank, pump stations, and dechlorination stations, to supply tertiary treated recycled water to tributaries to the Santa Ana River ("Tributary Restoration Sites") and to City parks and other landscaped areas for irrigation. The Project will divert up to 14,232 acre-feet per year (AFY) of treated recycled water from the Riverside Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) to Tributary Restoration Sites that are part of the conservation strategy of the Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Plan (Upper SAR HCP), and to City parks and other landscaped areas for irrigation. The diverted water will directly benefit aquatic, semi-aquatic, and riparian resources of the Santa Ana River (SAR) across six locations (tributaries) and serve 17 retail users. The Project consists of two independent pipeline routes, one that runs in a downstream, or westerly direction from the RWQCP ("West Branch"), and one that runs in an upstream, or easterly direction from the RWQCP ("East Branch"). Further, each of the branches may be constructed in phases, as financing becomes available.

1. The West Branch will include the construction of approximately 10,200 linear feet of pipeline that will run in a downstream, or westerly direction from the RWQCP, to supply tertiary treated recycled water to three Tributary Restoration Sites: Lower Hole Creek, Hidden Valley Creek, and Hidden Valley Wetlands (**Figure 2**). Additional Project elements will include upgrades to the RWQCP to facilitate the transmission of water to the aforementioned tributaries (e.g., pump station, diversion structure, electrical service, SCADA, etc.). The West Branch will consist of the redistribution of approximately 4,488 AFY of tertiary treated recycled water currently discharged from the RWQCP's outfall to the Santa Ana River, upstream of Van Buren Boulevard, to the three tributary locations. The first phase of the West Branch does not include the diversion of tertiary treated recycled water away from Santa Ana River for City park/landscape irrigation use. Of the approximate 4,488 AFY of redistributed water, approximately 1,448 AFY is proposed to supply Lower Hole Creek, 2,533 AFY is proposed to supply Hidden Valley Creek, and 507 AFY is proposed to supply Hidden Valley Wetlands.
2. The East Branch will consist of the construction of approximately 71,400 linear feet of pipeline that will run in an upstream, or easterly direction from the RWQCP. Additional Project elements will include further upgrades to the RWQCP to facilitate transmission of water (e.g., pump station upgrades, storage tank, SCADA, electrical, etc.). Other water appurtenances/facilities would also be needed (e.g., dechlorination stations, SCADA, etc.). The entire East Branch system will be constructed in multiple phases, and in total will include the redistribution and diversion of approximately 9,744 AFY of tertiary treated recycled water: approximately 4,344 AFY will be redistributed to three Tributary Restoration Sites: Anza Creek, Old Ranch Creek, and Tequesquite Creek (**Figure 3**), and

approximately 5,400 AFY¹ will be diverted for City park/City retailer use for landscape irrigation. Tentative phases for the East Branch include:

- a. Phase 1. Construction of pipeline and associated infrastructure to supply tertiary treated recycled water to Anza Creek, Old Ranch Creek, and Tequesquite Creek, and supply of recycled water to five (5) City Parks (Martha McLean, Ryan Bonaminio, Mountain View, Nichols. and Evans), two schools (Mountain View Elementary School and Central Middle School), and Riverside City College and Evergreen Memorial Cemetery for landscape irrigation.
- b. Phase 2. Construction of pipeline and associated infrastructure to supply tertiary treated recycled water for landscape irrigation at Fairmount Park.
- c. Phase 3. Construction of pipeline and associated infrastructure to supply tertiary treated recycled water for landscape to Fremont Elementary School, and AB Brown Sports Complex.

Pipeline and associated facilities will be constructed in previously disturbed areas (e.g., under roads, trails) to the maximum extent practicable. Upon Project completion, temporary impact areas will be restored to pre-project or superior habitat conditions.

Potential Environmental Effects

The City will evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed Project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines and will determine if the proposed Project would have potentially significant impacts. The EIR will assess and disclose any reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative impact that could likely result from the construction and operation of the proposed Project. The EIR will identify mitigation measures, if necessary, to avoid, minimize, or offset potentially significant impacts of the proposed Project. The EIR will also describe and evaluate Alternatives to the proposed Project that may avoid, minimize, or offset potentially significant impacts.

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed Project consistent with section 15060 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that an EIR should be prepared. In addition, consistent with section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has identified the following probable environmental effects of the Project, which will be addressed in the EIR for this Project:

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Aesthetics | • Land Use and Planning |
| • Agriculture and Forestry Resources | • Mineral Resources |
| • Air Quality | • Noise |
| • Biological Resources | • Population and Housing |
| • Cultural Resources | • Public Services |

¹ A portion of this total could also be used in a future phase of the West Branch, if the need for recycled water for irrigation arises.

- Energy
- Recreation
- Geology and Soils
- Transportation
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Wildfire

Notice of Scoping Meeting

The City will conduct a public scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting input from interested parties on the scope and content of the EIR in conformance with Section 21083.9 of the Public Resources Code. The public scoping meeting will be held virtually:

Date July 23, 2024

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Access via Zoom Link:

<https://sbvmwd.zoom.us/j/86361996244?pwd=ASBOcvRE8cD0aSRLDhPhhC3vAva481.1>

Public and Agency Review

The City has determined to make this NOP available for public review and comment pursuant to Title 14, section 15082(b) of the California Code of Regulations. The NOP review period is July 11, 2024 to August 12, 2024. Interested parties may submit their comments on the content of the EIR to:

Gisela Lopez

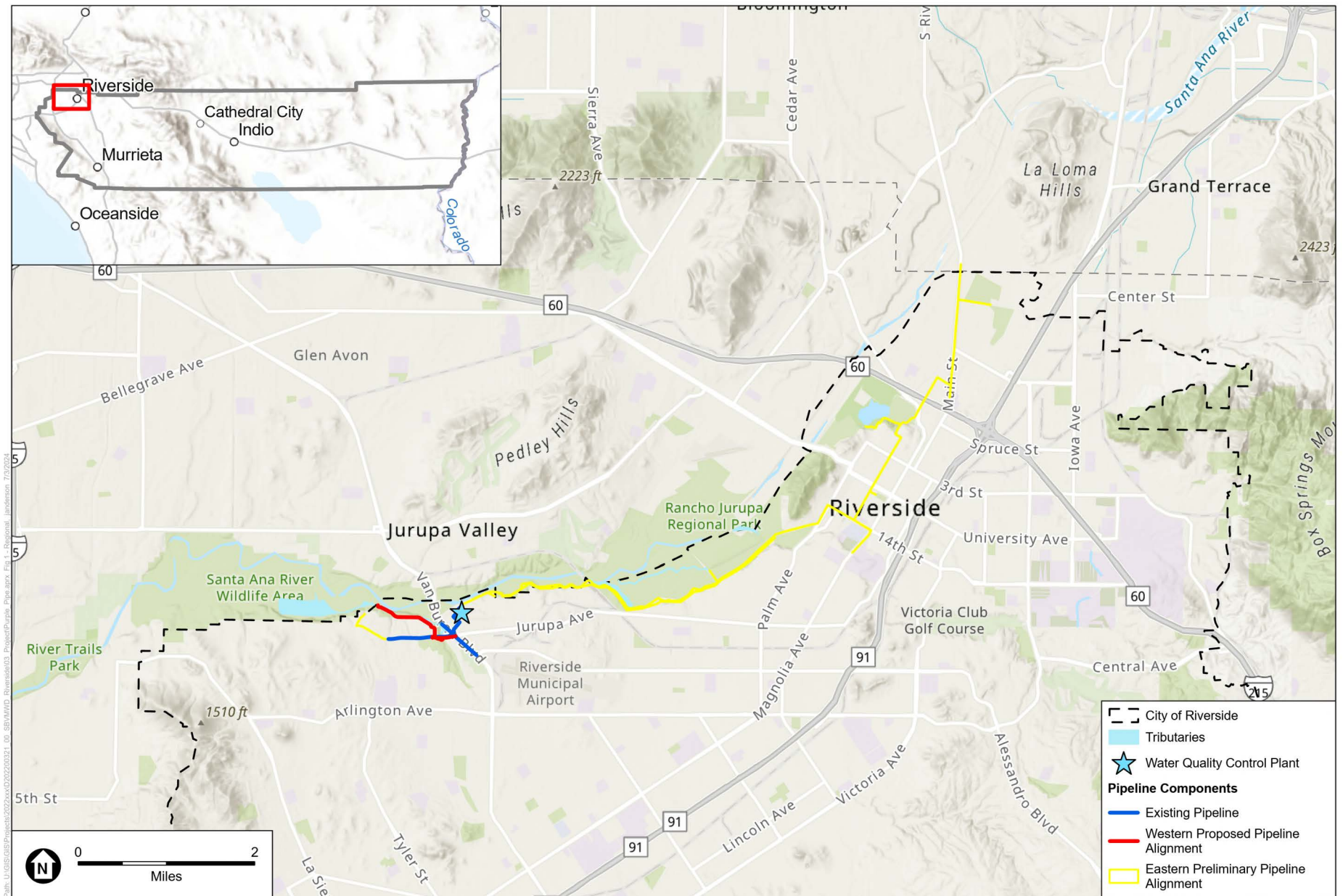
City of Riverside

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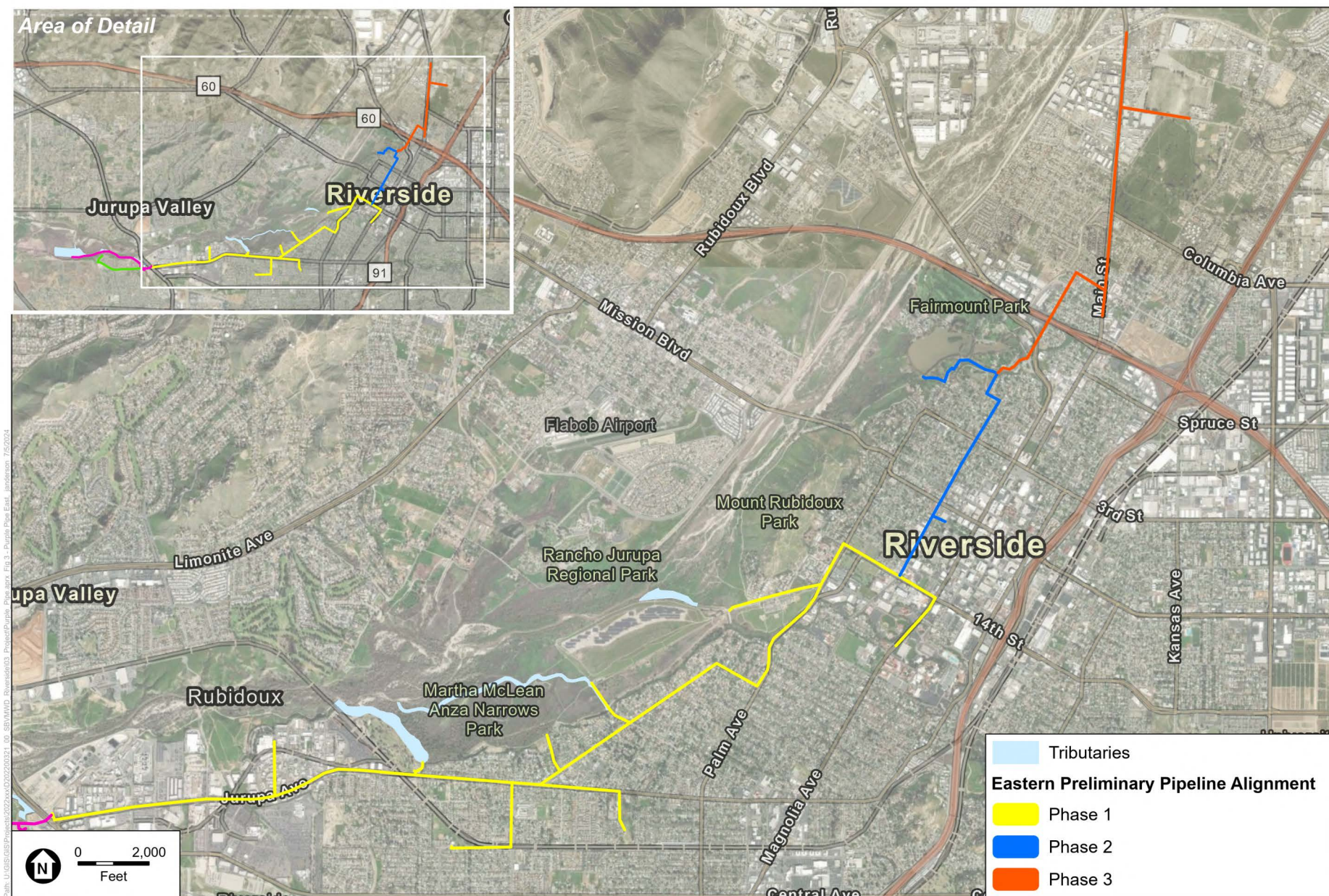
E-mail: GiLopez@riversideca.gov

Due to the time limits mandated by State Law, your response must be received within 30 days of receipt of this notice, by 5:00 p.m. August 12, 2024. Please indicate a contact person for your organization in your response. Questions regarding this notice should be directed to Gisela Lopez at the phone number and the e-mail noted above, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.



Riverside Habitat, Parks and Water Project

Figure 1
Regional and Local
Project Location



SOURCE: ESA, 2024

Riverside Habitat, Parks and Water Project

Figure 3
Pipeline East of WWTP