

Attachment – Project Description

Paradise Sewer Project Geotechnical and Other Investigations

The Town of Paradise proposes to construct and operate a new sewer system including a new Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) and a collection system within the Town of Paradise. The proposed sewer project is being evaluated under a separate and comprehensive CEQA analysis; however, the Town proposes to complete necessary subsurface geotechnical investigations, along with an Initial Site Assessment and Phase II testing and utility potholing to investigate site feasibility, inform site selection, and support establishing design criteria.

The geotechnical site investigations and potholing would occur in these potential locations of the proposed facilities, including the Collection System and the WWTF. Specific activities proposed within each of these components that may have potential impacts on the physical environment are described below.

Collection System

Geotechnical Investigations

Geotechnical subsurface explorations and sample testing will be performed to characterize the soil properties along the pipeline alignment to classify soil type, determine hardness of rock, measure groundwater depth if observed, and analyze corrosiveness. These factors inform the design of the pipeline and possible mitigation measures.

Prior to start of field work, a pre-investigation would be conducted, including review of existing geotechnical/geologic information, the geotechnical desktop study and soil/rock/groundwater information obtained for the project. The exploration program will consider access, traffic control, and geologic conditions. Underground Service Alert (USA North 811) would be completed, and access to exploration locations would be determined. Permits would be obtained from Butte County Environmental Health for borings and wells, and encroachment permits for borings within/adjacent to the public right-of-way would be obtained from Butte County and/or the Town of Paradise, depending on the jurisdiction affected.

The Town proposes up to 30 borings to assess the subsurface soil and groundwater conditions along the alignment (**Figure 1**). The borings would include:

- 24 borings along the pipeline from the downtown collections system to the WWTF location
- 6 borings along the collections system alignment downtown

The exploratory borings will be conducted at approximately 700 to 1,000 foot intervals along the collection system pipeline alignments, to depths of about 15 to 30 feet (or until refusal). Soil cuttings from auger borings will be stored in 55-gallon drums and tested for soil contamination. Soil drums will be stored on Town-owned property while testing is performed. Once soil testing is complete, the soil will be legally disposed.

Up to 15 seismic refraction surveys would be conducted in areas where shallow hard rock (i.e. less than 10 feet below ground surface) is expected. The seismic refraction survey measures acoustic velocity, which can be correlated to primary wave velocities, which would be used to estimate how excavatable the area would be.

Pre-investigation and permitting are anticipated to begin in the spring of 2026 upon approval of this categorical exemption. Subsurface explorations are anticipated to begin in spring 2026 after the pre-investigation.

Initial Site Assessment

The Initial Site Assessment (ISA) serves to determine if the collection system pipeline will cross through areas of contaminated soil that require special handling and disposal during construction. The Phase I ISA would be conducted to identify evidence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) within or adjacent to the proposed project alignment and the planned pump station location, and evaluate if these conditions would, or would have the potential to, impact the project design or implementation costs. The ISA would be performed according to ASTM E1527-21 and Caltrans standards.

Phase II environmental soil sampling would be conducted along about 24,000 lineal feet of surface roadway. Soil samples to be tested for the presence of hazardous materials would be collected from up to 24 sample locations. Sample locations would be spaced about 1,000 feet apart on alternating sides of the roadway. At each sample location, soil samples would be collected from about 0-6 inches, 12-18 inches, and 24-30 inches below ground surface. In addition, similar soil samples from 3 locations at the pump station would be collected. Samples would be collected using a hand auger (no power equipment), and the sampling equipment would be decontaminated between sample locations.

It is assumed that at least some of the existing concrete sidewalks, gutters, and curbing would be impacted by the sewer piping installation. Up to 10 samples of concrete along the project alignment would be collected and analyzed for asbestos.

It is anticipated that the Phase I ISA process would begin in spring 2026 after the approval of this categorical exemption and the Phase II process would begin in summer 2026, with results feeding into the ongoing Paradise Sewer Project design and environmental clearance.

Utility Potholing

Utility potholing is performed to measure vertical depth of existing utility pipelines and to record existing pipe parameters (e.g., size, material, crossing direction) where existing utilities are crossing the expected collection system pipeline alignment. The Town would complete up to 100 utility potholes along the project alignment down to the future potential WWTF site(s). Potholing would occur where existing utilities cross the potential sewer pipeline alignment. The efforts would include locating the utility type (as marked by USA), location, depth, size, and material type. Work would be performed in batches as potholing progresses.

It is assumed that individual potholes will be no greater than 10 feet below surface. It is further assumed that average utility depth will be 5 feet. A surveyor would survey pothole locations marked by the pothole crew and record the depth indicated. Six site visits are assumed for pothole surveys.

Utility potholing is expected to begin in fall 2026

WWTF

The Town is exploring viable locations that both meet the size criteria to accommodate the proposed WWTF and have agreed-upon Right Of Entry access from the owner. From there, the Town will use the subsurface investigations proposed through this CEQA process to explore technical feasibility and constructability of the site. Currently there are five proposed locations which meet these first two criteria. These sites, along Clark Road, selected to explore for WWTF site feasibility are the following:

- APN 054-110-029-000, 5325 Clark Road
- APN 054-110-028-000, Old Clark Road
- APN 055-180-001-000, Old Clark Road
- APN 055-180-043-000, 5325 Clark Road
- APN 055-180-085-000, 5234 Old Clark Road

Geotechnical investigations at these sites would take place to aid in the selection of sites where future additional investigation could occur. The Initial Site Assessment, and utility potholing if necessary, would occur only at the site(s) that the subsurface investigations have identified as technically feasible and constructable.

Geotechnical Investigations

Preliminary Geotechnical Investigations at Potential WWTF Sites

Proposed geotechnical investigations at the five Clark Road sites will each include:

- Up to 4 seismic refraction surveys to further define bedrock depths at the potential treatment facility (up to 8 total at both sites);
- Up to 6 test pits using a backhoe up to 15 feet deep or until refusal is reached to classify subsurface soils and rock (up to 12 total at both sites); and
- Up to 4 percolation tests between 5 to 10 feet deep to determine infiltration rates (up to 8 total at both sites).

Underground utilities would be marked prior to field visits. The overburden soil would be classified, thickness measured, and samples collected for lab testing (to be completed on select samples). Soil cuttings from auger borings and/or soil from test pits will be stored in 55-gallon drums and tested for soil contamination. Soil drums will be stored either at the site (pending property owner approval) or on Town-owned property while testing is performed. Once soil testing is complete, soil will be legally disposed.

Results would be incorporated to inform the Paradise Sewer Project design and environmental review processes. Upon completion of the study, a site selection process would occur, the result of which would be the selection of WWTF site(s) for further investigation. The Preliminary Geotechnical Study process, including field review observations and preparation of the study, is scheduled to begin in spring 2026 after approval of this CEQA categorical exemption.

Environmental Commitments for Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation

Figure 2 below shows the known constraints due to biological and cultural resources at each location. From this figure, several measures will be implemented by the Town to avoid the potential for impacts to special status species and their habitats.

Figure 2 identifies environmentally sensitive features (biological and cultural resources) based on survey data, as well as identifying areas that have not yet been surveyed. Investigations will only take place within areas designated as having no environmentally sensitive features (the regions identified in green on **Figure 2**).

Prior to the start of the investigations, a qualified biologist will conduct a mandatory biological resources awareness training for all personnel. A qualified biologist is defined as someone with training, knowledge, and experience with the species this document is concerned with. The training will cover special-status species and their habitats that could be encountered in the Project area. The training will cover the natural history, appearance (using representative photographs), and legal status of species, regulatory protections, penalties for noncompliance, benefits of compliance, as well as the avoidance and minimization measures to be implemented. Participants will be required to sign a form that states they have received and understand the training. The biological monitor will verify that the new personnel brought onto the Project receive the mandatory training before starting work.

Biological monitoring will be conducted during the entire work period. A qualified biologist will be present to monitor all Geotech related work and conduct pre-clearance surveys each morning prior to work. The monitor will also have the authority to stop work if issues arise during investigations. Geotechnical investigations will not take place in or within 250 feet of wetlands and waters (i.e., ponds, streams, reservoirs, or vernal pools) or other environmentally sensitive features, nor within areas that have not yet been surveyed for environmentally sensitive features.

Geotechnical Investigations at Selected WWTF Site

Upon selection of the potential WWTF site(s) by Town staff, the following additional field investigations will be performed to obtain additional site-specific design parameters:

- 8 seismic refraction surveys to further define bedrock depths;
- 6 test pits using a backhoe up to 15 feet deep or until refusal is reached to classify subsurface soils and rock;
- 4 percolation tests between 5 to 10 feet deep to determine infiltration rates; and
- 5 borings between 5 and 20 feet deep near the proposed WWTF structures.

The overburden soil would be classified, thickness measured, and samples collected for lab testing (to be completed on select samples). Seismic parameters per the California Building Code will be established.

The field investigations are scheduled to begin in spring 2026.

Initial Site Assessment

As with the Collection System, the Initial Site Assessment serves to determine if the potential WWTF site(s) contain areas of contaminated soil that require special handling and disposal during construction. The Phase I ISA would be conducted to identify evidence

of RECs within the WWTF site, and evaluate if these conditions would, or would have the potential to, impact the project design or implementation costs. The ISA would be performed according to ASTM E1527-21 and Caltrans standards.

Phase II environmental soil sampling would be conducted at the selected WWTF site at locations determined by the ISA.

Utility Potholing

In the event that existing underground utilities are encountered at the potential WWTF site, up to 5 potholes may be completed to further characterize the utilities. Potholing on the potential WWTF site would be conducted in a similar manner to potholing in the Collection System area.

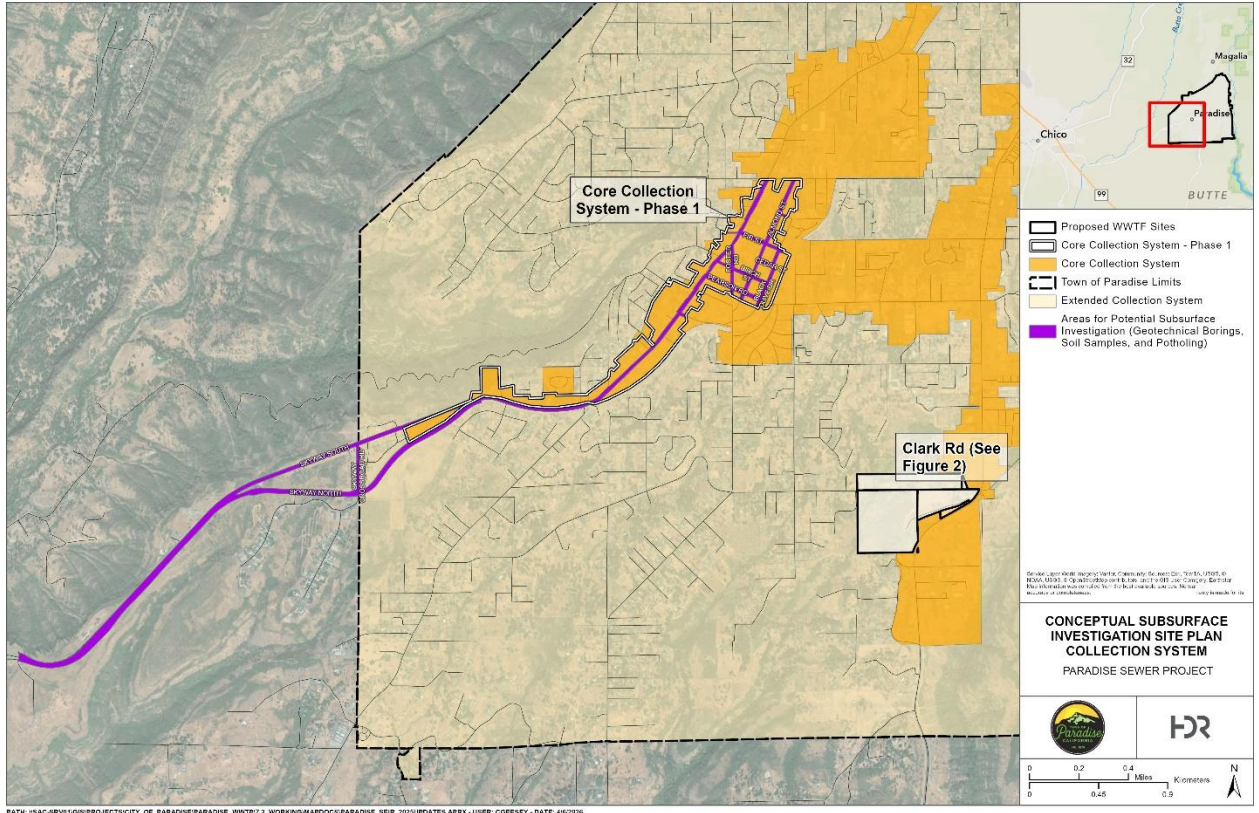


Figure 1 – Subsurface Exploration Site Plan

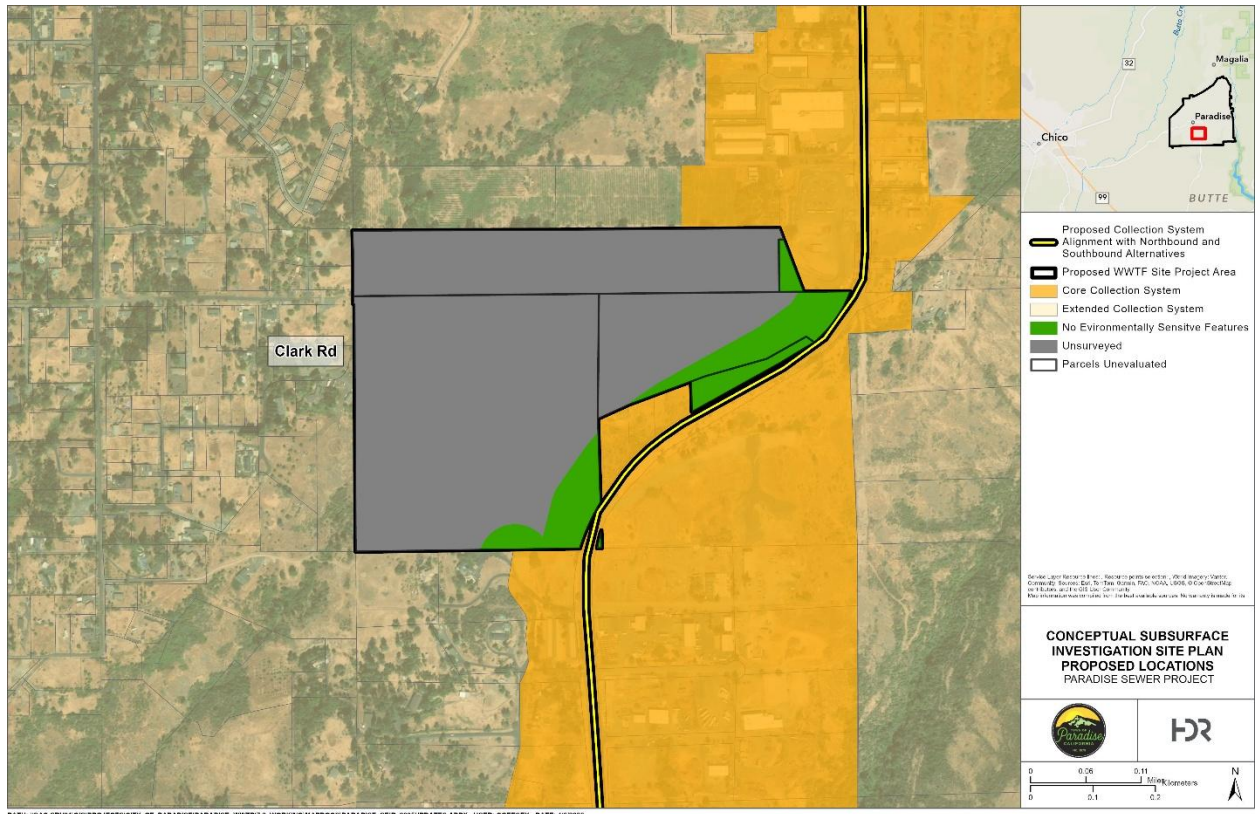


Figure 2 – Subsurface Exploration Site Plan Locations