Leland Reservoir Replacement Project

Community Meeting #2 (September 15, 2016)
Questions & Answers
Prepared: October 2016
Updated: January 2018
Updated answers are in bold italics.

Tree Removal and Views

Q: How old are the trees on the Leland Reservoir site? Who planted the trees?

A: Based on a review of historical photographs following the reservoir construction, the 1958 Leland Reservoir Planting Plan, and a 2016 inventory of trees on the site, all but one tree on the site (a valley oak) were established after Leland Reservoir was constructed in the 1950s. Following construction of the Leland Reservoir, EBMUD planted eucalyptus, pine, and poplar trees on the embankment surrounding the reservoir. Over time, native oaks and other species of trees have established themselves on the site.

Q: How many trees would be removed? How many of the trees that would be removed are heritage trees?

A: ***A total of about 90 trees would be removed for the Project (not including those to be removed as part of routine maintenance activities), out of which 16 are considered protected trees under the City of Lafayette Tree Protection Ordinance (City of Lafayette Ordinance Section 6-1702). Section 6-1702 of the Lafayette Tree Protection Ordinance defines a "Protected tree" as a native tree of specific species on developed property with a trunk diameter of twelve inches or more; the list of species includes various species of oak, California bay, California buckeye and madrone. The protected species found on the Leland Reservoir site include the coast live oak and valley oak.***

EBMUD retained an arborist to evaluate all trees on the reservoir site to determine their condition, make recommendations regarding trees that should be preserved, if possible, and to identify any existing trees that might present a hazard to personnel who work at the site. The arborist identified approximately 30 additional trees that were in poor conditions and were recommended for removal;

Q: Will EBMUD replace all of the trees that are removed?

A: ***No, not all of the trees that are removed would be replaced. Site landscaping needs to be balanced against other functional, security, and maintenance concerns. The preliminary conceptual landscaping plan that was presented at the September 15, 2016 meeting showed that a total of 45 native oak trees would be planted at the site. Subsequent to the EIR scoping meetings, the landscape plan was revised to include the***

planting of 30 additional native oak trees, for a total of 75 native oak trees to be planted at the site. Planted trees would be coast live oak and valley oaks.

Q: What size are the oaks being used as replacement trees?

A: Twenty-four-inch box size oaks are being recommended by EBMUD's landscape architectural consultant; final sizes and landscape plans will be included in the Project EIR. A 24-inch box size is recommended, because this size provides the best balance of fairly large size and immediate visual impact with adaptability and good growth rate over the long term. While larger trees provide more immediate impact, over the long term, they grow more slowly as they have become adapted to growing in a container and may not thrive and grow as well when planted on site. Trees smaller than 24-inch box size (e.g., trees in five-gallon and 15-gallon containers) adapt more quickly within the first couple of years, but their size is perceived as very small and delicate upon planting. Trees larger than 24-inch box typically grow slower and may remain smaller than trees that are planted as 24-inch box trees.

Q: Will the plants/trees/flowers be irrigated?

A: ***EBMUD plants drought-tolerate, lower-water native plants at its sites. The site would be revegetated with a mixture of native grasses and trees. Newly planted trees would be irrigated until the plants are well established, which typically takes about five years.***

Q: How many years after planting do the landscape renderings simulate?

A: The landscape rendering presented at the Community Meeting are representative of 15 years after planting.

Q: Who has views of Leland Reservoir?

A: The Leland Reservoir site can be viewed from Leland Drive, Sunset Loop, Ruth Court, Mars Court, Maryola Court, and Windsor Court. Views of the reservoir structure are mostly screened by existing topography and trees. EBMUD hired a landscape architect to simulate existing reservoir views and to develop a landscaping plan that minimizes potential impacts to views from the neighboring properties. Potential visual impacts from the Project will be addressed in the Aesthetics section of the EIR.

Construction Duration and Hours

Q: Anticipated construction hours are not optimal. Seven o'clock in the morning is too early.

A: ***Construction would typically occur between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with afterhours or weekend construction activity limited to unplanned/unexpected occurrences or critical shutdowns and emergencies. Construction trucks and personnel could report to the site at 7:00 am for minor tasks and meetings, but no construction work that generates noise over 90 decibels (dBA)***

would occur until 8:00 am. Nighttime work would likely be required for the tie-ins of the new pipeline to the existing distribution system.

The Project EIR will include a detailed analysis of potential noise impacts. A technical study will be performed to identify existing noise levels and sensitive receptors and provide an assessment of future noise levels with construction, including the duration of the impacts. Mitigation measures will be identified, as appropriate.

Q: What time of year will construction occur? Will school and traffic be considered in the EIR?

A: Construction activities would occur year-round. ***To minimize interruptions on the pipeline construction in front of The Meher Schools, pipeline construction in front of the school would be scheduled during periods when school is not in session.*** Potential impacts to the school, public safety, and to traffic from the construction activities will be addressed in the EIR.

Q: Two and a half years is a long time for construction. Will reservoir construction be subsequent to pipeline construction?

A: Although the construction is estimated to be approximately ***three*** years, this duration includes periods of time where there is no significant construction activity at the site (for example, when concrete is curing). The estimated construction duration will be defined by key construction activities in the EIR. Reservoir construction will be subsequent to pipeline construction, since the new pipeline must be placed in service before the existing reservoir can be demolished.

Construction Traffic

Q: Will EBMUD's construction traffic go on one or both proposed truck routes (i.e., Old Tunnel Road and/or Condit Road)? What is the plan for traffic control on Old Tunnel Road during commute hours?

A: Typically, the construction contractor would choose their preferred truck route. The proposed construction routes to be analyzed in the EIR have the most direct access to the proposed pipeline and reservoir sites; therefore, the Old Tunnel and/or Condit Road routes would likely be the preferred truck routes for the construction contractor. The EIR will include a detailed traffic study that will identify impacts to traffic from construction for the proposed construction routes. If necessary, mitigation measures would be identified to minimize traffic impacts.

Pipeline Construction

Q: There have been past water pipeline breaks at Old Tunnel Road and Windsor Drive. Why isn't EBMUD replacing the section of 30-inch-diameter transmission pipeline in Old Tunnel Road between Pleasant Hill Road and Windsor Drive?

A: There are no known breaks on the 30-inch transmission pipeline in Old Tunnel Road between Pleasant Hill Road and Windsor Drive. An eight-inch-diameter unlined cast-iron water main is also located in Old Tunnel Road. This eight-inch water main was repaired by EBMUD following a main break at Old Tunnel Road and Windsor Drive in May 2016.

Q: The pipeline construction work will be a nuisance in front of homes. Will I be able to access my home if the road is closed for construction?

A: ***During pipeline construction activities requiring full roadway closures, the affected roadway segments would be closed to through-traffic except emergency vehicles, garbage collection, and the U.S. Postal Service. Access for local residences would generally be maintained with controlled access to and from their locations. Only the roadway segments under construction would be closed. Upon completion of construction for a specific segment, access to that segment would be restored. Open trenches would be covered with plates during non-construction hours and road closures would be removed to allows for access during non-work periods.***

Q: Will emergency vehicles have access to the construction area?

A: Emergency vehicles will be allowed on the closed streets to service residents within the construction area.

Q: Is EBMUD putting the pipeline down the middle of the street on Windsor Drive?

A: Typically, EBMUD does not construct pipelines directly down the middle of a street. The exact location of the pipelines will be determined during the final design of the Project and depends upon where other existing utilities are located in the street. Occasionally, unforeseen conditions may require alignment adjustments.

Q: What will happen to the abandoned pipeline?

A: The section of the pipeline that is located under the existing Leland Reservoir basin where the new tanks would be constructed would need to be removed and disposed of offsite. The remaining section of abandoned pipeline in Old Tunnel Road, in the EBMUD right-of-way, and on the Leland Reservoir site would be left in place and filled with a low-density fill material, such as cellular concrete.

Q: How will street pavement be restored following pipeline construction?

A: EBMUD will do a T-cut repair, which means a replacement of the roadway to one foot beyond the edge of the trench. Where the edge of the trench is within two feet of a gutter lip or the edge of pavement, the pavement between the trench cut and the gutter lip or edge of pavement will be removed and replaced. The permanent replacement paving will be installed towards the end of the Project, so initially residents will see temporary asphalt in the trench area.

Q: Where are pipeline materials and equipment stored during non-working hours (evenings, weekends, and holidays)?

A: Construction staging would generally be located within the roadways directly adjacent to the pipeline routes. While most excavated soil and other materials would be hauled off site for disposal or storage on a daily basis, staging areas would provide short-term, including overnight, storage of heavy equipment, piping, and other materials, subject to restrictions by the City of Lafayette. To minimize the amount of construction equipment and material storage along the public right-of-way, a staging area for the construction equipment and materials will also be located at EBMUD's Leland Reservoir site.

Reservoir Construction

Q: Have other reservoirs been replaced similar to what is being proposed and where has work like this been undertaken?

A: Yes, EBMUD has replaced several open-cut reservoirs with tanks in recent years. Examples of similar reservoir replacement projects include Berryman Reservoir (Berkeley), Estates Reservoir (Oakland), and Summit Reservoir (Berkeley/Kensington, under construction).

Q: How is soil stockpiled? Are the stockpiles covered?

A: Stockpile construction methods are determined by the construction contractor. However, typically, temporary stockpiles are constructed at a 1:1 to 2:1 slope and could be up to 40 feet in height, with terraces for construction equipment access and stability. Where necessary, temporary retaining walls may be used along the stockpile to maximum stockpile height and minimize the stockpile footprint. Erosion control methods will be addressed in the EIR.

Q: What is the advantage of backfilling? Would backfilling impact homes?

A: The advantage of backfilling is that it allows excavated soil to be reused on the reservoir site and reduces the quantity of soil that must be hauled off of the site. Backfilling would not impact homes.

Q: Will seismic issues be addressed in the EIR? What is the current seismic code?

A: Yes, potential impacts from seismic events will be addressed in the Geology and Soils section of the EIR. EBMUD builds all of its structures to meet all current seismic codes.

Project Funding

Q: How much will the Project cost? Who is paying for it, and will the Project increase our water rates?

A: The estimated Project cost is approximately $30 million. There will not be a separate assessment imposed on the current utility users who benefit from the new reservoir and pipeline. The revenue collected from water sales funds EBMUD's operating and capital costs throughout EBMUD without geographic restrictions. Customers throughout EBMUD share in the operating, maintenance and rehabilitation/replacement cost of each facility through the water rates. In setting the water rates, EBMUD anticipates the capital improvement needs for rehabilitating and replacing its aging infrastructure. In some instances, EBMUD will issue bonds to pay for the rehabilitation/replacement capital projects, which will be repaid from future water sales revenue from all customers. As EBMUD's infrastructure continues to age, there may be increased spending on facility rehabilitation/replacement, which will require EBMUD to increase overall water rates to all customers to fund these projects.

Public Access

Q: Who visits the Leland Reservoir site besides EBMUD?

A: Only EBMUD staff and EBMUD-hired contractors are allowed to visit the reservoir site.

Q: There are not enough nearby recreational areas. Is there room for a park to be built at the Leland Reservoir site towards the current entrance?

A: Public access for a park or recreational area is not planned for the Leland Reservoir site. The site is constrained by hillslopes and the reservoir, which needs to remain secure as a public drinking water source. EBMUD has stringent security requirements with respect to its drinking water supply facilities. The new 36-inch-diameter, inlet-outlet pipeline would be constructed across one of the few relatively flat areas on the property, within the EBMUD property line, on the eastern side of the property between the existing access road and Patty Way. Access to this pipeline must be maintained at all times; therefore, a park or other recreational facility would not be appropriate for this location. In addition to the security requirements, a public park would also pose a liability risk; EBMUD also does not have funds or resources to construct or maintain parks or playgrounds on its sites.

DJR:JLM
sb17_206_rev2.Leland2QA