

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: September 24, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, that the Planning Commission report whether the Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project along Crystal Springs Road (APNs 093070072, 093070050) conforms to the County General Plan.

County File Number: PLN2025-00280

PROPOSAL

Consideration of a request by the City and County of San Francisco, through the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), under California Government Code Section 65402(b), that the Planning Commission report whether the SFPUC's Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project (project) along Crystal Springs Road within unincorporated County areas conforms to the County General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission report that the SFPUC's Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project along Crystal Springs Road (APNs 093070072, 093070050) conforms to the County General Plan.

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: Bharat Singh

Applicant: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)

Owner: Janet Ng, SFPUC Project Management Bureau

Public Notification: A notice of the hearing was posted in the San Mateo County Times

Location: 4000 Crystal Springs Rd, Unincorporated Hillsborough/San Mateo Highlands

APN(s): 093070072, 093070050

Size: Not specified

Existing Zoning: RM

General Plan Designation: Open Space

Sphere-of-Influence: N/A

Existing Land Use: Open Space, Existing water transmission pipeline, part of the SFPUC's regional water supply system

Water Supply: The site contains a segment of the SFPUC regional water system.

Sewage Disposal: There is no sewage disposal on-site.

Flood Zone: Flood Zone X, area of minimal hazard.

Environmental Evaluation: A report that the proposed structure conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In addition, the San Francisco Planning Department determined that the project required an addendum to the Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2 Replacement Project Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (October 15, 2010) under the California Environmental Quality Act (Case No. 2005-0963ENV-03). The addendum determined that the conclusions reached in the EIR certified on September 30, 2010, remain valid. The proposed revisions to the project would not cause new significant impacts not identified in the EIR or substantially increase the severity of impacts identified in the EIR, and no new mitigation measures would be necessary to reduce significant impacts. The Addendum is publicly available (see the Notice of Availability Included as Attachment C to this report).

Setting: The project traverses various jurisdictions, including cities and unincorporated San Mateo County. The project section in the unincorporated County is adjacent to the San Mateo Highlands and the City of Hillsborough, along Crystal Springs Road, and the setting is typical of the Highlands. Given its nature as a water transmission pipeline, the setting involves existing infrastructure.

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

1. Project Description

The proposed project entails relining and rehabilitating Reach 5 of Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, which is a vital water transmission pipeline. The primary purpose of the project is to provide pipe corrosion protection; improve water quality and taste; modernize the pipe for maintenance by upgrading and/or installing new isolation valves, manholes, and appurtenances (e.g., blow offs, air release/vacuum valves); and replacement of pipe segments. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in spring 2026 and take approximately 2 years to complete.

Government Code Section 65402(b) requires that, prior to constructing a public building or structure in another city or county, a government agency (SFPUC in this case) must request a report on the project's conformity with the County's adopted General Plan.

2. Analysis

Because the subject property already has a pipeline (constructed in 2013), and the CEQA evaluation determined that the replacement project would not cause new significant impacts not identified in the 2010 EIR and no new mitigation measures would be necessary to reduce significant impacts, the proposed project does not implicate the General Plan's Vegetative, Fish and Wildlife Resources policies, Soil Resources policies, Mineral Resources policies, Visual Quality policies, Water Supply policies, Wastewater policies, Transportation policies, Solid Waste policies, Natural Hazards policies, Man-Made Hazards policies, or Climate Element policies.

The subject property is in the designated urban area of the County and does not implicate the General Plan's Rural Land Use policies.

The subject property contains no identified historic or archaeological resources and does not implicate the General Plan's Historical and Archaeological policies.

The proposed project is replacing and repairing an existing water pipeline. The project potentially implicates General Plan Urban Land Use Policy 8.36, Uses, which encourages the County to allow uses in zoning districts that are consistent with the overall land use designation. As the proposed project does not change the existing intensity of use or use of the property in a Resource Management (RM) district, the project is consistent with this policy.

B. SUMMARY

The proposed project does not conflict with any policies of the County General Plan. Any future change of use or development on the property would be subject to review by relevant agencies. All aspects of the project are consistent with the County General Plan.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to a report of conformity with the General Plan is for the Planning Commission to report that the proposed project does not conform to the policies of the County General Plan. Another alternative is to take no action. Upon expiration of 40 days from the submittal, failure to make a report will be deemed a finding that the acquisition as described in the submittal is in conformity with the adopted General Plan.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A report that the proposed acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

E. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Attorney's Office

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Findings
- B. SFPUC GPC request letter
- C. SF Planning Public notice of the availability of addendum 1 to Environmental Impact Report

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2025-00280 Hearing Date: September 24, 2025

Prepared By: Bharat Singh For Adoption By: Planning Commission

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

That the Planning Commission report that the SFPUC's Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project along Crystal Springs Road (APNs 093070072, 093070050) conforms to the County General Plan.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT B



August 11, 2025

Steve Monowitz
 San Mateo County Planning Services Director
 San Mateo County
 455 County Center, 2nd Floor
 Redwood City, CA 94063

Via Email and Certified US Mail – Return Receipt Requested

Re: Request for General Plan Conformity Determination for the Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project

Dear Steve,

The City and County of San Francisco, through the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), submits this letter seeking a general plan conformity determination under California Government Code Section 65402(b) from the San Mateo County Planning Department for the SFPUC's Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project (project).

The project entails relining and rehabilitating Reach 5 of Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2, a water transmission pipeline. Reach 5 extends for approximately 3.84 miles through the cities of Millbrae, San Bruno, and South San Francisco as well as unincorporated San Mateo County. The purpose of the project is to provide pipe corrosion protection and improve water quality and taste as well as to modernize the pipe for maintenance by upgrading and/or installing new isolation valves, manholes, and appurtenances (e.g., blow offs, air release/vacuum valves).

Relining activities would require the excavation of temporary access pits along Reach 5 to provide access for equipment/materials and construction crews into the pipe. Project elements include replacement of pipe segments; installation, rehabilitation, and/or replacement of blowoff and air valves and manholes; upgrades to service connections; and installation of corrosion test stations and isolation valves. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in spring 2026 and take approximately 2 years to complete.

Daniel Lurie
 Mayor

Kate H. Stacy
 President

Joshua Arce
 Vice President

Avni Jamdar
 Commissioner

Stephen E. Leveroni
 Commissioner

Meghan Thurlow
 Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
 General Manager



Government Code Section 65402(b) requires that, prior to constructing a public building or structure in another city or county, the SFPUC must request review of the project's conformity with the County's adopted general plan. If the County does not respond within 40 days of this request, the project is deemed to be in conformity with the general plan.

Please note that although Section 65402(b) provides for the above review, under the doctrine of intergovernmental immunity, the SFPUC is exempt from a requirement to conform to zoning ordinances, building codes, and the general plans of other cities and counties when the SFPUC performs work on property outside of San Francisco, regardless of whether the SFPUC owns the property, or when SFPUC leases or acquires property for public purposes in other cities and counties.^[1]

The San Francisco Planning Department determined that the project required an addendum to the Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2 Replacement Project Final Environmental Impact Report under the California Environmental Quality Act (Case No. 2005-0963ENV-03). The addendum is available at: [Environmental Review Documents | SF Planning](#)

This letter is provided to satisfy the noticing requirements of Government Code Section 65402(b) and does not necessarily require any action or reply on the part of the County. If you wish to respond, please contact me at jng@sfgwater.org or (415) 551-4614. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Janet Ng, P.E.

Project Manager, SFPUC Project Management Bureau

Cc:

Hannah Young, Environmental Project Manager, SFPUC Environmental Management

^[1] See *Lawler v. City of Redding* (1992) 7 Cal. App. 4th 778, 782-783 (Government Code Sections 53090 and 53091 prevail over the provision of Section 65402(b)), and an early case involving Sonoma County and the City of Santa Rosa, *Akins v. County of Sonoma* (1967), 67 Cal. 2d 185, 194.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT C



PUBLIC NOTICE

AVAILABILITY OF ADDENDUM 1 TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT INFORMATION		
Date:	August 6, 2025	Project Sponsor:
Project Title:	Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2 Reach 5 Lining Replacement Project	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Hannah Young (415) 551-4558 hmyoung@sfgwater.org
Address:	Cities of South San Francisco, San Bruno, Millbrae, and unincorporated San Mateo County	Environmental Case Coordinator: San Francisco Planning Department Julie Moore (628) 652-7566 Julie.Moore@sfgov.org
Case No.:	2005-0963ENV-03	

The San Francisco Planning Department has prepared an addendum to an environmental impact report in connection with this project. The report is available for public review on the Planning Department’s environmental review documents web page (<http://www.sfplanning.org/sfceqadocs>). Paper copies are available upon request to the environmental case coordinator listed above.

On September 30, 2010, the San Francisco Planning Commission certified the Crystal Springs Pipeline No. 2 (CSPL2) Replacement Project Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), and on October 15, 2010, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) approved the project. The approved project included pipeline rehabilitation and improvement activities for CSPL2, an approximately 19-mile-long water transmission pipeline with a capacity of 52 million gallons per day that transports water from Crystal Springs Pump Station at the base of Lower Crystal Springs Dam to the University Mound Reservoir in San Francisco. CSPL2 has eight sections, or “reaches.” The approved project included work across various portions of seven reaches (Reaches 2 through 8) of CSPL2 as well as a variety of staging areas in close proximity to the pipeline. The work included pipeline rehabilitation and seismic retrofit activities, pipeline replacements and relocation, slip lining, general improvements, retrofitting pipe bridge piers, and installation of cathodic protection equipment and insulated flange joints (electrical isolation). The approved project alignment crosses unincorporated San Mateo County, the Town of Hillsborough, and the cities of San Mateo, Burlingame, Millbrae, San Bruno, South San Francisco, Brisbane, and Daly City before it terminates in San Francisco on right-of way that either is owned in fee title by the SFPUC or for which the SFPUC has easements.

Since completion of construction of the approved project in 2013, SFPUC has conducted a condition assessment that indicates other portions of Reach 5 that were not included in the approved project are currently in need of rehabilitation and relining. The SFPUC proposes to reline and rehabilitate Reach 5 of CSPL2, which extends through the cities of Millbrae, San Bruno, and South San Francisco, and unincorporated San Mateo County to provide pipe corrosion protection, improve water quality and taste, as well as modernize the pipe for maintenance. The proposed project includes the following: relining approximately 3.84 miles of pipeline, accessed from about 25 temporary access pits; replacement of pipe segments at access pits and other locations along the pipeline; installation, rehabilitation, replacement, and/or abandonment of approximately 40 blowoff and air valves and 40 manholes; replacement and upgrade of equipment at 10 service connection sites; installation of approximately 8 corrosion test stations and 10 isolation valves.

The San Francisco Planning Department has concluded that the conclusions reached in the EIR certified on September 30, 2010 remain valid. The proposed revisions to the project would not cause new significant impacts not identified in the EIR or substantially increase the severity of impacts identified in the EIR, and no new mitigation measures would be necessary to reduce significant impacts.