

Encinitas Ranch Recycled Water Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

The following is a set of commonly asked questions regarding the recycled water project in the south mesa of Encinitas Ranch.

Questions, Concerns, Comments, Issues Raised and Responses Given

Q=Question(s) A=Answer

Q. What is the background on this project?

A. The Encinitas Ranch Community Association (ERCA) Board of Directors approached the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (SEJPA) in May of 2015 to gauge their interest in helping the community bring in recycled water to the south mesa. All other parts of Encinitas Ranch were already served by recycled water for the common areas and slopes except for the south mesa. This is the area of homes accessible from either Paseo de las Flores or Paseo de las Verdes.

The reaction from SEJPA was positive and this began a long process to determine overall costs, return on investment (ROI) and savings in the cost of water. SEJPA was willing to commit to paying for all of the infrastructure for the project and ERCA was asked to pay for a connection fee.

The board believed that further drought restrictions would require a situation wherein the community might be forced to turn off all water to the common areas in the south mesa putting millions of dollars of landscaping at risk of either dying or being in very poor physical shape. During serious drought in 2015-2016 the community had to cut down to watering only twice a week for ten minutes each. This provided the board with more reason to aggressively pursue the project.

Further financial analysis revealed that the project could be undertaken without an increase on homeowner assessments. This analysis also showed the the project payback period would be less than ten years given the annual increases in water costs and the big difference in costs between potable and recycled water.

The board formally approved the project in the fall of 2016. Numerous letters, newsletters and emails went published on a regular basis to the membership making them aware of the project.

Q. Who in the Encinitas Ranch community and Home Owners Association actually read and approved this original project? Were the project and the proposed changes presented before the Encinitas Ranch HOA board meeting, in a public forum? When?

A. The Encinitas Ranch Community Association (ERCA) has been involved in this project beginning in the spring of 2015 when the community approached SEJPA about bringing in recycled water to the south mesa. The entire Board, the Landscaping Committee and their landscaping

contractor, BrightView, have been intimately involved in every step of the project and approved a formal agreement with SEJPA in 2016 that was written, reviewed and approved by legal counsel.

The community has been briefed at every monthly board meeting and there have been numerous newsletter articles, emails and website posts on the project on at least a quarterly basis. Please visit Encinitasranch.org and look under Community News on the home page for recent posts.

SEJPA hosted a citizen participation program (CPP) meeting in the summer of 2017 at the Encinitas Ranch Golf Course club house and all residents within 500 feet of the project alignment were invited to attend and ask questions. Approximately six residents of Encinitas attended and all questions were answered to their satisfaction.

Q. How much will this project cost?

A. SEJPA's portion of the project is estimated to cost \$2 million. ERCA's net cost for conversion to recycled water is approximately \$340,000. The agency is qualified for grant funding of more than \$500,000 for the project. ERCA is also pursuing grant funds for the conversion through the Metropolitan Water District.

Q. Who is paying for this project?

A. SEJPA is responsible for approximately 85% of all project costs. The remaining costs are being shared by ERCA, the City of Encinitas as well as FoxPoint Farms and the costs are to be split based on actual water usage.

ERCA, the City of Encinitas and Fox Point Farms are all responsible to pay a connection fee and for converting over the common area sprinkler heads, valve box covers and concrete mow curbs to provide a clear separation between recycled water and potable water systems.

Q. What is the return on investment, and pay-back period of this project? How much water cost would this project really save, over what period of time, verse the cost of digging and laying new pipes?

A. As report by the ERCA governing board, "Phase 1 of the project in the south mesa was completed in the summer of 2016 and converted over approximately 25% of the common areas to recycled water. The ERCA community is already seeing reduced water costs because of that conversion.

The net costs for ERCA for Phase 1 and 2 will be approximately \$340K and all of those costs will be recovered in approximately ten years. The latest estimates from the San Dieguito Water District (SDWD) are that potable water costs will increase approximately 6.5% per year while recycled water is currently 20% less expensive. By 2020, it is expected we will save over \$24K in water costs per year.

Q. What are the start and completion dates of the project?

A. The anticipated start date is Tuesday, October 9th and the project is expected to finish in March of 2019. The construction contract will include financial penalties to the contractor for not finishing on time.

Q. What is the project daily work schedule?

A. Construction work schedule is 7am- 4pm.

Q. What should I expect to see as the project progresses?

A. The general contractor is Burtech Pipeline and the construction manager is Black & Veatch. Burtech expects to trench, fill and pave approximately 200 feet per day, four days a week. They will use Fridays to place a final layer of asphalt on the street. The street will be driveable at the end of every day. The contractor plans to start the trenching at the intersection of Quail Gardens Drive then proceed up the entire length of Paseo de las Flores then make a right turn down Lynwood Drive to the very south end.

A booster pump station will be built and installed behind the restrooms on the golf course near the cross walk on Paseo de las Flores. It will be housed in a building that will look nearly identical to the restrooms. The booster pump station will be installed as the last major part of the project in early 2019.

Q. What will be the impact to homeowners?

A. Homeowners who use Paseo de las Flores to enter or exit the community may encounter one lane of traffic for short distances during construction. There will be flag men who will be directing traffic. To avoid potential traffic disruptions homeowners who live in the south mesa should consider using Paseo de las Verdes.

For homeowners who live on Paseo de las Flores or on Lynwood Drive south of Paseo de las Flores they should expect that they will need to park their vehicles on other streets during the day when construction is taking place in front of their homes. They will not have access to their driveway the day of construction. They should move their vehicles the day before construction is to take place in front of their homes to another street. After construction is completed in front of their homes they can return their vehicles to the driveway or garage.

Q. If you are proposing to cut the asphalt, what is your plan to restore the street to its original condition, so there is no evidence of the work having been done?

A. SEJPA will compact and fill in the trench where the pipeline will be laid and will warranty work that requires additional recompaction. Furthermore, the ERCA community has delayed resealing the streets for the past year until the project is over at which point resealing and repaving will be done such that the streets appear as if they were untouched.

The following is a combination of all comments and questions received from the public after the date of the first public notice to February 8th, 2018, the last day to submit public comments for this project. All of these questions were previously responded to by the SEJPA, the City of Encinitas and ERCA.

Q. I am concerned about the changes to the Encinitas Ranch portion of the recycled water project. The last public meeting I attended and mailing I had received beforehand clearly had the pipeline being installed along the Hiking Trail once it got up Paseo De Los Flores. Now the new plan shows the installed pipeline going in Lynwood Drive almost its entire length. I have concerns about the disruption this will cause on Lynwood where all our homes enter and exit on Lynwood. I have concerns about what infrastructure exactly is under Lynwood at present and how much room the new pipeline will take up in width and depth. Our powerlines are buried. Our sewers are buried. Many of our communication lines are buried. How exactly do you envision this working? Why was the plan changed from the hiking trail to the street? I look forward to your reply. I would gladly attend any informational meeting that is again scheduled to answer questions. At this moment you can understand why I cannot give approval to such a change?

A. During the permit and design review with the City of Encinitas, it was determined that the original proposed pipeline alignment (1) conflicted with existing Torrey Pines and other tree species, (2) had geotechnical concerns with bluff stability, (3) would be more difficult to maintain (requiring access of maintenance vehicles on the dirt walking trails), (4) would take longer to permit due to the requirement of additional studies and environmental findings, (5) depending on the outcome of these studies, this pipeline alignments could still be rejected by the City or State, (6) would be exposed to permit delays and protests, and (7) would likely miss grant funding due to a protracted project schedule. For these reasons, an alternate pipeline alignment was developed with input from the Encinitas Ranch Community Association that utilizes the more traditional public right of way within the roadway.

Concerns about the disruption they may cause on Lynwood (with homes enter and exit on Lynwood) have been raised and were discussed with the Encinitas Ranch Community Association. The proposed pipelines will be constructed in the public right of way to minimize community disturbance, ingress and egress from the community will be available along Paseo de Las Verdes as well as limited access will be available on Lynwood during construction, furthermore construction hours will be limited to 7am to 4pm (except under limited special conditions).

The design of the new pipeline alignment has mapped existing underground utilities and the pipeline alignment meets industry requirements/standards for pipeline depth and separation from buried gas, sewer, water, storm water, and communications utilities.

Q. The location within Encinitas Ranch is not clear. Why is this needed? After construction are the trails going to be restored?

A. The comment is not applicable as the design has changed to be within Lynwood Drive.

Q. I am writing to express concern over the recent change in the plan for the Encinitas Ranch Recycled Water Extension Project Case # 17-092 CDP. The previous plan seemed to involve trenching along the existing dirt path for the installation of a recycled water line. This seemed sensible. The updated plan seems to involve trenching in the existing street for the entire length of Paseo de las Flores and most of the length of Lynwood Drive. I can't imagine how this makes sense. This revised plan seems unnecessarily destructive, disruptive and no doubt much more costly than the original plan. I have some significant concerns over noise, safety and damage to property values as a result of this revision. Is there any planned action by the Encinitas Ranch Homeowners association with respect to this project?

A. During the permit and design review with the City of Encinitas, it was determined that the original proposed pipeline alignment (1) conflicted with existing Torrey Pines and other tree species, (2) had geotechnical concerns with bluff stability, (3) would be more difficult to maintain (requiring access of maintenance vehicles on the dirt walking trails), (4) would take longer to permit due to the requirement of additional studies and environmental findings, (5) depending on the outcome of these studies, this pipeline alignments could still be rejected by the City or State, (6) would be exposed to permit delays and protests, and (7) would likely miss grant funding due to a protracted project schedule. For these reasons, an alternate pipeline alignment was developed that utilizes public right of way within the road.

It should be noted, that the development of both the initial and final proposed pipeline alignments were developed with close coordination with representatives from the Encinitas Ranch Community Association, their landscape service provider, and the San Dieguito Water District. The final proposed pipeline alignment was developed with consideration to noise, safety, minimizing property and community disruption; and, as such, has received full support from the Encinitas Ranch Community Association (ERCA) governing body.

Furthermore, the work in the streets will not cause any street to be closed. The work is expected to proceed relatively quickly in trenching the road and then in compacting it to its original condition. ERCA plans to reseal the road immediately after the project is complete and the streets will appear to be "brand new." The SEJPA will provide a warranty on its work and make repairs per the warranty if problems occur.

The project is expected to benefit the community financially by providing a drought resistant water supply that help protect the community's investment in common area landscaping (during the last drought, the community was place on notice for strict outdoor water restrictions that puts the health and viability of the community's landscaping at risk) and increase fire hazards due to under-watered and stressed landscaping. In addition, recycled water is less expensive than potable water and the price difference will likely increase in the future.

The project will not result in any higher assessment fees for any homeowner for 2019. All expenses are being managed through the operations budget and spread over multiple years to reduce the impact on other budget line items."

Q. Why can you not tap into existing lines in the neighborhood with the recycled water source, and avoid laying any new pipes altogether?

A. There is no recycled water available in the south mesa except for several streets off of Paseo de las Verdes and those areas were converted back in 2016. The only source of recycled water for un-served areas of the south mesa is from a recycled water line located within Quail Gardens Drive.

Q. It is not clear in your language, but it appears that your proposal is actually cut the PRIVATE streets of Paseo de la Flores and Lynnwood Drive in order to lay the piping. These streets in Encinitas Ranch are not public, as your letter suggests, they are private.

A. Paseo de las Flores is a public street up and through the intersection with Jensen Court and Cypress Hills Drive. The other small remaining portion of Paseo de las Flores and Lynnwood Drive is private. ERCA has the authority to grant an easement to a public entity for such projects and for those portions of the streets to allow for construction. ERCA has provided this authority to this project for the greater good of the community and the conservation of natural resources such as potable water.

Q. Why would you cut asphalt of a street, rather than bury to piping in the dirt path in the original proposal? Cutting and restoring asphalt will be a lot more expensive, destructive, and inconvenient.

A. During the permit and design review with the City of Encinitas, it was determined that the original proposed pipeline alignment (1) conflicted with existing Torrey Pines and other tree species, (2) had geotechnical concerns with bluff stability, (3) would be more difficult to maintain (requiring access of maintenance vehicles on the dirt walking trails), (4) would take longer to permit due to the requirement of additional studies and environmental findings, (5) depending on the outcome of these studies, this pipeline alignments could still be rejected by the City or State, (6) would be exposed to permit delays and protests, and (7) would likely miss grant funding due to a protracted project schedule. For these reasons, an alternate pipeline alignment was developed with input from the Encinitas Ranch Community Association that utilizes the more traditional public right of way within the roadway.

Q. How long is this project going to take, and disrupt the residents of the Encinitas Ranch community?

A. The actual street work will take several months to complete. However, at no time will any street be completely blocked for traffic to flow. The pipeline work will be staged to mitigate disruption.