

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Preparation

To: California State Clearinghouse
1400 10th Street #12
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: City of Chico - Public Works
POBOX 3420
Chico, CA 95927

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

City of Chico - Public Works will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (is is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Richard Burgi, P.E. at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: City of Chico Storm Water Master Plan

Project Applicant, if any: City of Chico - Public Works

Date 9/29/21

Signature 

Title Interim Director of Public Works

Telephone (530)879-6901

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: September 29, 2021

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

From: City of Chico

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Chico Storm Water Master Plan and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting**

Review Period: October 1, 2021 to November 1, 2021

Public Scoping Meeting 5:30pm – 6:30pm, October 20, 2021

The City of Chico (City) proposes to develop a comprehensive update to the 1987 Storm Drainage Master Plan. This plan has been incrementally updated several times since 1987; however, this effort would develop a new Storm Water Master Plan (SWMP) consistent with current local, state, and federal standards. The SWMP will describe the typical features of drainage facilities throughout the City that are expected to be used for both private development and capital projects in order to meet the objectives of the SWMP. The purpose of the SWMP is to improve existing storm drainage, reduce the potential for flooding in the City, and to identify acceptable and compliant drainage facilities for future development. The City intends to prepare a program-level environmental impact report (EIR) that will consider potential environmental effects of the project, and will analyze these potential effects at the level of detail necessary to make determinations of significance pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.). The EIR prepared for the project will satisfy the requirements of CEQA and the City will serve as the lead agency for CEQA compliance.

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15082), the City has prepared this notice of preparation (NOP) to inform agencies and interested parties that an EIR will be prepared for the above-referenced project. The purpose of an NOP is to provide sufficient information about the proposed project and its potential environmental impacts to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the EIR, including mitigation measures that should be considered and alternatives that should be addressed (State CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR Section 15082[b]).

PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed SWMP Planning Area is located within the City of Chico, Butte County, California (Figure 1. Location Map). The SWMP Planning Area is within the Big Chico Creek and Little Chico Creek Watersheds; approximately 65 percent of the City drains to Big Chico Creek and approximately 35 percent drains to Little Chico Creek. The Study Area was divided into basin tributaries to follow primary waterways:

- Butte Creek
- Comanche Creek
- Little Chico Creek
- Big Chico Creek
- Lindo Channel
- Shasta Union Drainage Assessment District (SUDAD) Drainage Ditch
- Mud-Sycamore Creek
- Pleasant Valley Ditch



WOOD RODGERS
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ONE PROJECT AT A TIME

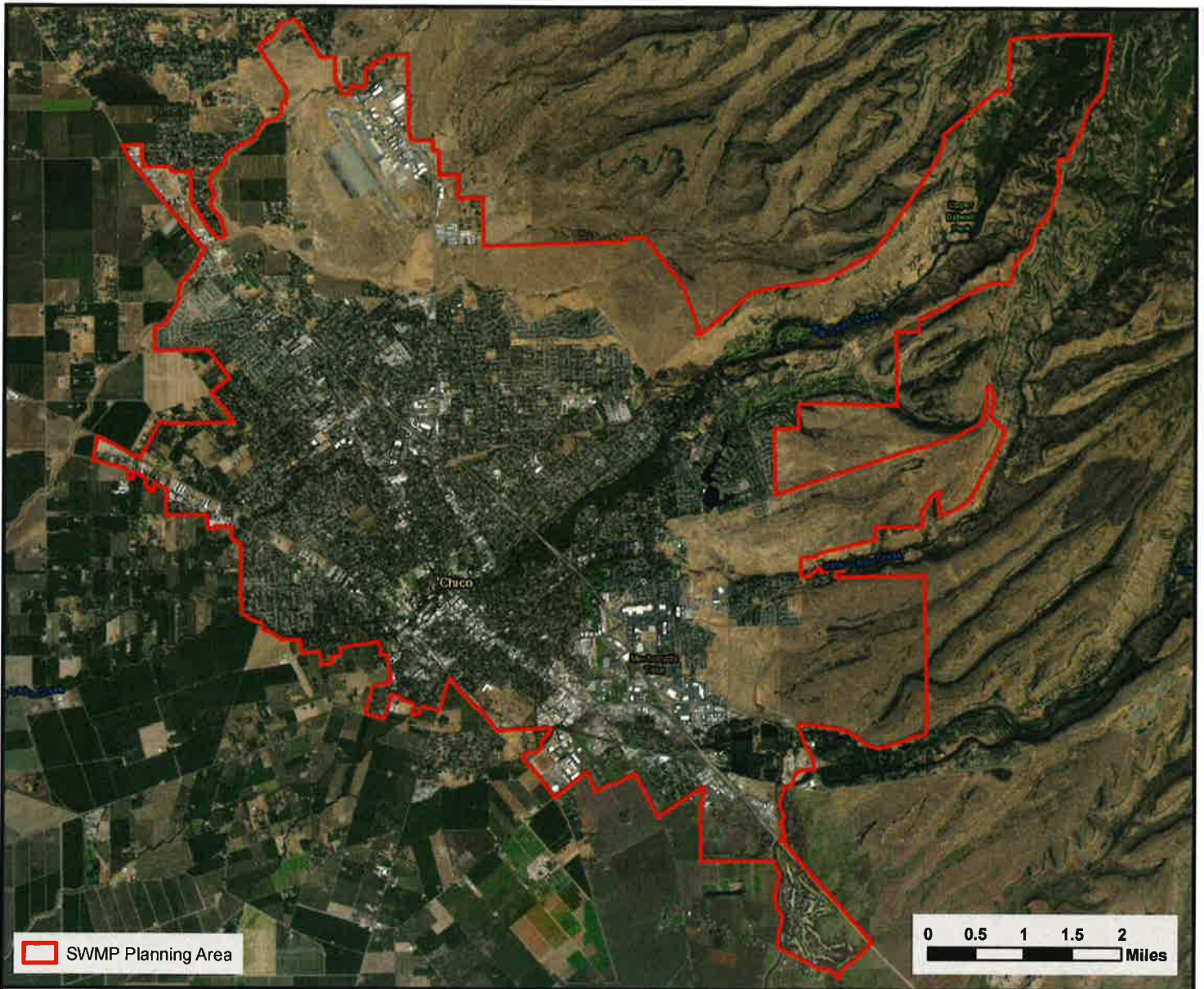


FIGURE 1
Location Map

City of Chico
Storm Water Master Plan

Chico, California

September 2021



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City is developing a SWMP to address current infrastructure needs, address a range of regulatory requirements, and plan for future needs and development. As a part of the overall effort, the SWMP will be consistent with and assist in addressing the regulatory requirements and other related planning and implementation programs pertaining to storm water quality, pollutant load reductions, and implementation of treatment controls. The SWMP will incorporate information from existing plans, provide models and documentation of existing conditions, provide recommendations for capital improvements, and meet state and federal requirements for permitting the City's storm water system.

The proposed SWMP would include recommendations for typical features, activities, and types of drainage facilities expected to be used by both private development and capital projects throughout the SWMP planning area. Recommended improvements may include replacement of existing pipes, placement of new pipes, installation of pump stations, construction of peak flow attenuation facilities (detention basins), bank and/or bed stabilization facilities, storm water quality facilities, data collection programs, and maintenance of facilities. The program level EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 would evaluate the potential for environmental impacts associated with development of the new Storm Water Master Plan. It is expected that implementation of some of the recommended improvements would be covered by the EIR; however, some projects may require additional project specific environmental analysis after detailed design of those projects have been completed. The following descriptions form the basis of the evaluation of environmental impacts of the SWMP. Though the specific size and design of individual facilities would vary, each project would adhere to standards, performance and design criteria consistent with the SWMP.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the SWMP is to establish and determine, at a conceptual level, the public storm drain improvements necessary to serve a major portion of the Chico Urban Area at full General Plan buildout. The specific project objectives include:

- Updates to existing and preparation of new maps and computer models of the drainage and flood control systems to identify improvements to the overall system;
- Identification of drainage system deficiencies and measures to alleviate them;
- Preparation of a storm drain master plan for drainage systems appropriate to serve future development;
- Providing recommendations for new catch basins and/or upgrades to achieve target pollutant load reductions that would improve storm water quality;
- Providing recommendations for new detention basins and/or upgrades to existing detention basins for pollutant load and peak flow reductions;
- Review of creek and channel capacity and identification of other issues with the channels such as erosion, sedimentation, overgrowth of vegetation, and measures to address these issues;
- Development of planning-level cost estimates for recommended improvements;
- Providing a prioritized list of project recommendations that consider opportunities to reduce flows using infiltration, reuse, biofiltration and other measures, in addition to increasing conveyance capacity.

POTENTIAL PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

DISCRETIONARY PROJECT APPROVALS

The SWMP and EIR will require the following actions from the City of Chico:

- Certification of the EIR; and
- Adoption of the SWMP.

In addition, the City would request that the document be adopted by Butte County to guide storm water design and improvements for properties within the Chico Urban Area but currently within the County's jurisdiction.

REGULATORY APPROVALS AND AGREEMENTS

No other regulatory agency approvals are required for adoption of the EIR document. However, future facilities constructed in compliance with the proposed EIR document would require potential approvals and agreements, as applicable.

Federal

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) approval for dredge and fill activities within waters of the U.S. throughout the SWMP area.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency (USFWS) Endangered Species Act (ESA) approval for potential take authorization of federally listed threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Endangered Species Act approval for potential take authorization of federally listed threatened or endangered anadromous fish species.
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 Permit – Administered by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

State

- California Fish and Wildlife Department (CDFW) Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 1602, Streambed Alteration Agreement for project effects to CDFW jurisdiction habitats. The City may also request a long term 1602 Agreement for routine maintenance of storm drain facilities in the SWMP Area.
- CDFW FGC Section 2081 California Endangered Species Act (CESA) approval for take authorization of state listed threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species.
- Section 401 of the CWA, Water Quality Certification approval for dredge and fill activities within waters of the U.S. and State – Administered by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Encroachment permits from California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for work within the State highway right-of-way, State Reclamation Board for work affecting existing levees, Central Valley Flood Protection Board for activities within designated floodways and regulated streams, and any other state jurisdictions where SWMP-related activities are constructed.

Local

- Butte County Air Quality Management District. Authority to Construct Permit.
- Chico Municipal Code Chapter 16.66: Tree Preservation Regulations. Tree Removal Permit.
- Butte Regional Conservation Plan (BRCP) Implementing Entity approval for project consistency of BRCP covered activities within the BRCP Plan Area (if adopted).

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The EIR will analyze program level potentially significant impacts that result from construction and operation of the proposed Project. The EIR would evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated for consideration under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines including:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ▪ Aesthetics | ▪ Mineral Resources |
| ▪ Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ▪ Noise and Vibration |
| ▪ Air Quality | ▪ Population and Housing |
| ▪ Biological Resources | ▪ Public Services |
| ▪ Cultural Resources | ▪ Recreation |

- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities / Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative Impacts

These issue areas will be discussed further in the EIR, providing a description of the existing setting, potential impacts of the proposed project, potential cumulative effects, and feasible and practicable mitigation measures will be recommended to reduce any identified potentially significant impacts.

ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE EIR

In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15126.6), the EIR will describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that are capable of meeting most of the projects' objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will provide an analysis of the No-Project Alternative and will also identify the environmentally superior alternative.

PROVIDING COMMENTS

Agencies and interested parties may provide the City with written comments on topics to be addressed in the EIR for the project. Because of time limits mandated by State law, comments should be provided no later than 5:00 PM on November 1, 2021. Please send all comments to:

City of Chico – Public Works
965 Fir Street
Chico, CA 95928
Attention: Richard Burgi, P.E.
Telephone: (530) 879-6950
Richard.Burgi@Chicoca.gov

Throughout development of this project, the City will post current relevant project information on their webpage at the following location: <https://chico.ca.us/sewerstorm-drain-engineering>.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

A virtual public scoping meeting will be held by the City to inform interested parties about the proposed project, and to provide agencies and the public with an opportunity to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR. The meeting time and a link to join the meeting using Microsoft Teams video conference are provided below:

October 20, 2021
5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.
<https://tinyurl.com/54s86f52>

Individuals with disabilities that prevent them from attending this virtual meeting will be accommodated to the City's best ability. For more information, please contact Richard Burgi (at the contact information above) at least 48 hours before the meeting.