



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT, US ARMY CORPS OF
ENGINEERS, AND USDA FOREST SERVICE**

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF A JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT DOCUMENT**

NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETINGS AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

PROPOSED PACOIMA RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL PROJECT

FEBRUARY 19, 2015

To the State Clearinghouse/Office of Planning and Research, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested organizations and individuals:

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the California Public Resources Code (Section 21080.4[a]), the California Code of Regulations (CCR, Title 14, Section 15082), and in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD), as the lead agency under CEQA, is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project (PRSR Project).

Because the proposed PRSR Project is partially located on federal lands and may require federal permits, environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is also required. It is anticipated that the LACFCD will prepare a joint EIR and NEPA document for the proposed PRSR Project, satisfying the requirements of the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The type of NEPA document required (i.e., Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact [EA/FONSI] or Environmental Impact Statement [EIS]) will be informed by the scoping process and in coordination with USFS and USACE.

This Notice of Preparation has been prepared because the LACFCD is seeking input from responsible and trustee agencies, other agencies required to receive this Notice, and from the State Office of Planning and Research, and is also extending the outreach for early public consultation with other interested parties regarding the proposed PRSR Project. The LACFCD requests the timely submittal of comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Draft EIR related to each responsible/trustee agencies' statutory responsibility, pursuant to Section 15082(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Responsible and trustee agencies will be required to use this joint EIR and NEPA document when considering whether to issue permits and/or other approvals for the proposed PRSR Project. For all interested agencies, organizations and persons, this notice allows for an early opportunity to

provide comments on the proposed PRSR Project scoping pursuant to Section 15083 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and to NEPA regulations for federal agencies.

The general proposed Project Description, the location of the proposed PRSR Project, and the probable environmental effects of the proposed PRSR Project that will be studied in the Draft EIR are summarized in the attached materials entitled “Proposed Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project Overview,” which is included as part of this Notice. Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study has not been prepared because the LACFCD determined that the proposed PRSR Project may have a significant effect on the environment and an EIR is the appropriate CEQA document pursuant to Section 15064(a)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, an Initial Study is not required. All environmental issues will be discussed in the joint EIR and NEPA document.

Hardcopies of the Notice of Preparation and the Proposed Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project Overview are available for viewing during regular business hours at the following locations:

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
900 S. Fremont Avenue, 2nd Floor
Alhambra, CA 91803

Lake View Terrace Public Library
12002 Osborne Street
Lake View Terrace, CA 91342

San Fernando Public Library
217 North Maclay Avenue
San Fernando, CA 91340

Sylmar Public Library
14561 Polk Street
Sylmar, CA 91342

An electronic file of the Notice of Preparation and other PRSR Project-related information is available for online viewing at: www.lasedimentmanagement.com/Pacoima

NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW PERIOD

The LACFCD and federal agencies are voluntarily extending the opportunity to provide comments from the required 30-day comment period to an extended 45-day comment period, which will begin on Monday, February 23, 2015 and will end on Thursday, April 9, 2015. Comments on the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the joint EIR and NEPA document should be sent in writing to the LACFCD at the earliest possible date, but must be postmarked or received by the LACFCD no later than the close of business on **Thursday, April 9, 2015**.

Comments should be titled with "PRSR Project" in the subject line and the commenter's name, or the name of a contact person for public agencies and other organizations providing comment should be included. All written comments received by the LACFCD according to the timeframe set forth above will be included in the proposed PRSR Project's administrative record and will be included in an Appendix to the joint EIR and NEPA document. Written comments may be submitted in the following ways:

Mail: County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Works
Water Resources Division
P.O. Box 1460
Alhambra, CA 91802-9974
Attn: PRSR Project, 2nd Floor

Email: reservoircleanouts@dpw.lacounty.gov

Fax: (626) 979-5436

SCOPING MEETINGS FOR PROPOSED PACOIMA RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL PROJECT

The LACFCD, as lead agency under CEQA, and the USFS will conduct three scoping meetings, which exceeds the requirements set forth in Section 15082(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Section 220.4 (e)(1) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations regarding USFS scoping requirements. Three scoping meetings will be held to ensure that ample opportunity is provided for responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested organizations and individuals to hear a summary of the proposed PRSR Project and to provide written comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the joint EIR and NEPA document. The LACFCD will provide Spanish-translation services for the scoping meetings.

<u>Meeting #1</u>	<u>Meeting #2</u>	<u>Meeting #3</u>
Wednesday, March 25 th 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM	Thursday, March 26 th 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM	Saturday, March 28 th 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Los Angeles Mission College Culinary Arts Institute Building 13356 Eldridge Avenue Sylmar, CA 91342	Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center 22900 Market Street Santa Clarita, CA 91321	Los Angeles Mission College Culinary Arts Institute Building 13356 Eldridge Avenue Sylmar, CA 91342

Date: Feb. 19, 2015

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Christopher Stone
Asst. Deputy Director



Upon 72 hours' notice, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works can provide program information and publications in alternate formats or make other accommodations for people with disabilities. In addition, program documents are available at our main office in Alhambra (900 South Fremont Avenue), which is accessible to individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations ONLY, or for more Americans with Disabilities Act information, please contact our departmental Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator at (626) 458-4081 or by TTY at (626) 282-7829, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT, US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, AND USDA FOREST SERVICE

PROPOSED PACOIMA RESERVOIR SEDIMENT REMOVAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

FEBRUARY 19, 2015

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), proposes to conduct the Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project (PRSR Project) to remove sediment behind Pacoima Dam.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PRSR PROJECT

The PRSR Project proposes to remove 3 million cubic yards (MCY) of sediment from Pacoima Reservoir plus additional sediment that could accumulate in the Reservoir over the approximate 5-year PRSR Project duration. The proposed PRSR Project would restore flood control and water conservation capacity to the Reservoir; increase the reliability of operations and safety of Pacoima Dam; and create a long-term, safe, and reliable means of access to the Reservoir.

The proposed PRSR Project is anticipated to include various components, as depicted on Exhibit 1, Local Vicinity and Project Components. The following proposed activities would occur annually over the course of the approximate 5-year implementation schedule:

- Access road construction/rehabilitation and operation
- Reservoir dewatering
- Sediment excavation and removal
- Conveyor belt assembly, operation, and partial disassembly
- Sediment staging and transport for placement

LACFCD anticipates that the proposed PRSR Project Description will be further developed and refined through the scoping process.

PRSR PROJECT LOCATION

Exhibit 1 provides a location map of all the proposed PRSR Project's sediment removal activities and includes the jurisdictions that cover each activity. As shown on Exhibit 1, Pacoima Dam is located approximately 2 miles northeast of El Cariso Community Regional Park in the City of Los Angeles and approximately 3 miles northeast of San Fernando, California (see Thomas Guide, page 4642, quadrants F6, F7, G6, G7, H5, and H6). Pacoima Dam is located on LACFCD property, and the Reservoir is on National Forest System (NFS) lands in the Angeles National Forest (ANF). The proposed access road that would connect the northern edge of Pacoima Reservoir to Little Tujunga Canyon Road is located on LACFCD property and on NFS lands in the ANF.

Pacoima Creek refers to the drainage upstream of Pacoima Reservoir, and the drainage downstream of the Pacoima Dam is referred to as Pacoima Wash. Pacoima Reservoir is an impoundment of Pacoima Creek and has a tributary watershed of 28.2 square miles. The natural watercourse below the Reservoir terminates approximately 2 miles downstream at the Lopez Basin, which is owned and operated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Downstream of the Lopez Basin is the Pacoima Wash Channel, a fully improved concrete channel. The Pacoima Wash Channel flows south by LACFCD's Lopez and Pacoima Spreading Grounds, then confluences with the Los Angeles River, which continues south to the Pacific Ocean.

BACKGROUND OF PROPOSED PRSR PROJECT AND NEED FOR SEDIMENT REMOVAL

In 1915, the State Legislature created the LACFCD and authorized it to provide flood protection and to conserve water within its boundaries. To accomplish this, reservoir capacity at LACFCD dams must be maintained since sediment accumulation can reduce available capacity below what is necessary to safely contain future sediment and storm inflows. In addition, other dam safety circumstances may dictate the need to remove sediment from a reservoir, including but not limited to the following:

- The dam's structural stability may be compromised due to the height of the sediment against the dam because sediment weighs more than water and increases the forces against the dam.
- The function of the outlet works may be hindered by accumulated sediment that can cause blockages and/or damage to outlet works. The outlet works need to function reliably in order to regulate storm flows and to empty the dam during an emergency.

Due to its size, Pacoima Dam falls under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD). DSOD requires that dams be designed to withstand a Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE), which is the largest magnitude earthquake that experts determine a particular earthquake fault can produce. These design standards have been adopted by the State to prevent the significant potential downstream damage and loss of life that could otherwise result from a seismic or flooding induced failure of a dam. For Pacoima Dam, the MCE has a magnitude 7.0 for the Santa Susana-San Fernando fault zone.

During the Marek (2008), Sayre (2008), and Station (2009) Fires, approximately 80 percent of the watershed that drains into Pacoima Reservoir was burned. Because of the burned watershed condition, storm events since the fires have deposited above-normal quantities of sediment in the Reservoir, thereby decreasing storage capacity and increasing the chances of plugging the outlet works with sediment or debris from subsequent storm events. In its current condition, the Reservoir does not have sufficient capacity to contain a large debris event without burying the outlet works.

According to the last topographic survey done in 2012, the lowest outlet gate was buried under approximately 65 feet of sediment. An additional 31 feet of sediment on the upstream face of the Dam would bury the inlets for all other flood control valves, making them inoperable. This would prohibit the regulation of releases from the Dam for flood control operations and would eliminate the ability to dewater the Dam in a timely manner after emergency events (e.g., a substantial

seismic event), as is required by the DSOD, resulting in substantially increasing flood risks to downstream properties.

The existing sediment level has decreased capacity for holding water in the Reservoir, which decreases water conservation activities. The high sediment level prohibits Dam operations to release water during scheduled times in order to recharge the groundwater aquifers. The reduced capacity can also result in uncontrolled flows during severe storm events, which results in water loss to the ocean.

In order to restore and maintain the outlet works free of sediment and debris so they can function properly and in order to preserve the Reservoir's capacity to retain storm flows and debris, the LACFCD proposes to remove 3 MCY of sediment over a 5-year period. The proposed PRSR Project would remove additional sediment that could accumulate in the Reservoir due to future storm events over the 5-year period.

Proposed Sediment Removal Schedule

All proposed PRSR Project activities—including access road construction, dewatering, sediment removal operations, staging, and sediment conveyance—would be conducted annually during drier months from April to December, as weather permits, over the course of approximately 5 years. During dry years, work could potentially start earlier and/or continue later. Sediment removal operations are anticipated to start in the fall of 2017. Other proposed PRSR Project-related activities conducted outside of Pacoima Reservoir and/or Wash, including equipment set-up and break-down and sediment transport/placement activities, would occur concurrently with sediment removal activities and could extend into the rainy season, as needed. Pacoima Dam and Reservoir would annually resume operations for flood protection during each rainy season.

Access Road Construction/Rehabilitation and Operation

Pacoima Reservoir currently has no vehicular access. The previously used access road in and along Pacoima Creek has completely degraded. The proposed PRSR Project would construct and maintain a new access road alongside Pacoima Creek (i.e., Pacoima Creek upstream of the Reservoir) to provide a permanent means of access for vehicles and equipment from Little Tujunga Canyon Road, which is approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the Reservoir. The proposed access road would accommodate one-way traffic with turnouts to allow approaching vehicles to pass one another, and would be designed and constructed to avoid as much sensitive vegetation as feasible. It is anticipated that the access road would require annual maintenance in order to maintain adequate long-term vehicular and equipment access to the Reservoir.

Reservoir Dewatering

During each year of sediment removal, pre-dewatering activities are estimated to start on or shortly after April 16, the end of the rainy season; however, activities could start sooner or later depending on weather and Reservoir level.

During proposed pre-dewatering activities, Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be installed downstream in Pacoima Wash to ensure that sediment suspended during dewatering would be contained within LACFCD property. BMPs could include sand/gravel bags, silt fencing, and/or

other filtering devices to prevent sediment from flowing into downstream areas of Pacoima Wash. At the end of the storm season, the Reservoir level is expected to be at the elevation of the lowest outlet riser. Once pre-dewatering activities are completed, the Dam's lowest outlet gate would be opened to allow Reservoir water to drain out through an existing outlet tunnel. Alternately, if sediment accumulation immediately in front of the gate cannot be moved or flushed away to allow for use of the outlet gate, water may be pumped through the riser and allowed to drain thru one of the valves. Either method would allow water located within the Reservoir to flow downstream via Pacoima Wash, thereby dewatering the Reservoir.

Sediment Excavation and Removal

Upon completion of dewatering activities, the proposed Access Road would be used to deliver sediment-removal equipment and construction workers to Pacoima Reservoir. Equipment would include bulldozers, front loaders, excavators, tender trucks (for maintenance), and water trucks. The equipment in the Reservoir would remain operational through the duration of the year's sediment-removal activities and would be removed seasonally to allow the facility returns to flood control and water conservation operations. Screens to separate out large rocks and oversized materials would be operated in the Reservoir, and rock crushers would be used to process the materials to a size that would be acceptable for conveyor transport and sediment placement. Some boulders or materials could be reclaimed for reuse within the Forest boundaries.

Conveyor Belt Assembly, Operation, and Partial Disassembly

Prior to commencement of sediment-removal activities, a conveyor belt system would be installed that would extend approximately 3 miles from the upstream side of Pacoima Dam to Lopez Spreading Grounds. The conveyor belt system would begin within Pacoima Reservoir and pass through the outlet gate. From there, the sediment would be conveyed on the belt aligned along and within Pacoima Wash, around the outer edges of Lopez Basin, and to a staging area in Lopez Spreading Grounds. The majority of the conveyor belt system would remain assembled throughout the approximate 5-year proposed PRSR Project implementation period; however, certain components would be disassembled annually to ensure there is no interference with storms flows.

Sediment Staging and Transport for Placement

The conveyor belt would deposit the sediment at Lopez Spreading Grounds where it would be temporarily stockpiled until loaded into haul trucks for transport to appropriate facilities to receive the sediment such as landfills and/or pits or other locations for re-use such as construction material. Potential locations include local gravel pits in Sun Valley (approximately 5.5 miles southeast of Lopez Spreading Grounds) and/or Sunshine Canyon Landfill in the San Fernando Valley (approximately 6.5 miles northwest of Lopez Spreading Grounds). The transport of stockpiled materials from Lopez Spreading Grounds would continue through the rainy season, as necessary. Exhibit 2, Potential Sediment Placement Sites and Truck Routes, depicts the primary locations under consideration for the placement of excavated sediment and the potential trucking routes to deliver the sediment. A portion of the material may be transported out of the reservoir via the new access road for re-use within the ANF. Sediment from Pacoima Reservoir will not be placed at May Sediment Placement Site

ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, a joint Environmental Impact Report and NEPA document will be prepared and will assess a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed PRSR Project. The range of alternatives to be addressed will include alternatives that are specifically required by CEQA and NEPA, (i.e., No Project Alternative), as well as feasible alternatives identified through the various agencies' planning processes, through community outreach meetings conducted in 2013, and through comments received during review period and CEQA/NEPA Scoping Meetings. The joint EIR and NEPA document will consider alternate means of sediment removal (e.g., sluicing) as well as alternate locations for sediment placement (e.g., nearby canyons).

ANTICIPATED DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS AND OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

Agency	Approval Required	Applicable PRSR Project Component	Purpose
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404 Permit	All proposed PRSR Project components	To allow discharge of dredge/fill material into "waters of the U.S."
	Section 408 Permit	Conveyor belt in Lopez Basin	To authorize alteration/modification to or use of an existing USACE facility, if applicable.
	Environmental Document Pursuant to NEPA	All proposed PRSR Project components	To support issuance of permits
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)	Section 7 Consultation	Conveyor belt in Lopez Basin	To authorize potential impacts to the least Bell's vireo, if applicable
	Environmental Document Pursuant to NEPA	Lopez Basin	To support issuance of permits, if applicable.
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)	Environmental Document Pursuant to NEPA	Access road and sediment removal within the Reservoir	To authorize the proposed PRSR Project on USFS lands
	Special Use Authorization	Access road	To authorize construction and long-term operation of the access road
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement	All proposed PRSR Project components	To authorize changes to the natural flow or bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake and associated impacts to biological resources.
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	Transportation Permit	Equipment and/or sediment transport	To authorize transport of oversized vehicles and equipment on freeways, if required.

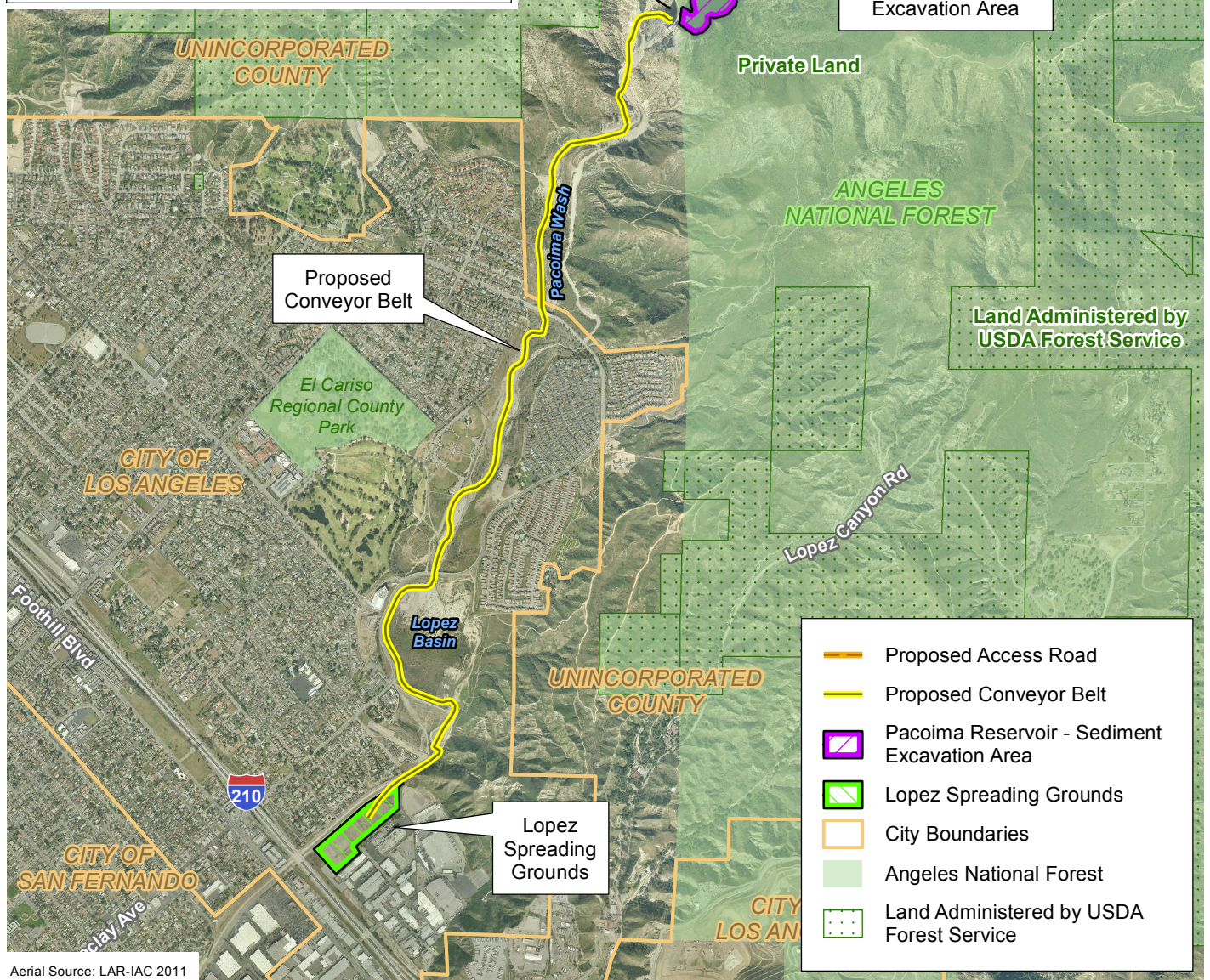
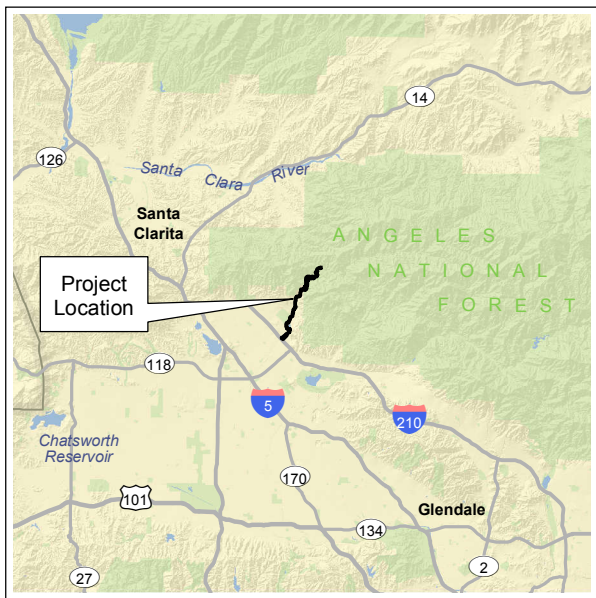
ANTICIPATED DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS AND OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

Agency	Approval Required	Applicable PRSR Project Component	Purpose
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)	Construction General Permit	All proposed PRSR Project components	For water quality protection during construction activities.
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	Section 401 Water Quality Certification	All proposed PRSR Project components	To protect water quality within “waters of the State”.
City of Los Angeles	Overload Permit	Equipment and/or sediment transport	To allow for trucks and equipment to be transported through City streets, if required.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The LACFCD has determined that there is substantial evidence that significant effects may occur from the proposed PRSR Project, thereby necessitating the preparation of an EIR. The joint EIR and NEPA document will address the short-term and long-term effects of the proposed PRSR Project on the environment. The joint EIR and NEPA document will focus on the following topical areas that may have potentially significant impacts, including potential pre-construction, construction, operation and maintenance impacts: aesthetics, agricultural and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use, noise, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems, and cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures will be proposed for impacts that are determined to be potentially significant. A mitigation monitoring program will also be developed for any mitigation measures to be incorporated in the analysis.

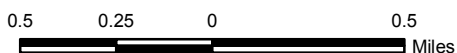
The proposed PRSR Project is not anticipated to have significant impacts on the topics of population or housing due to the temporary nature of the sediment removal activities, which would not affect population growth or housing availability, and mineral resources since no mining operations would be affected by the project. However, these topics will be assessed within the joint EIR and NEPA document and the explanation of the reasons why these environmental areas are not potentially significant will be included.



Local Vicinity and Project Components

Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project

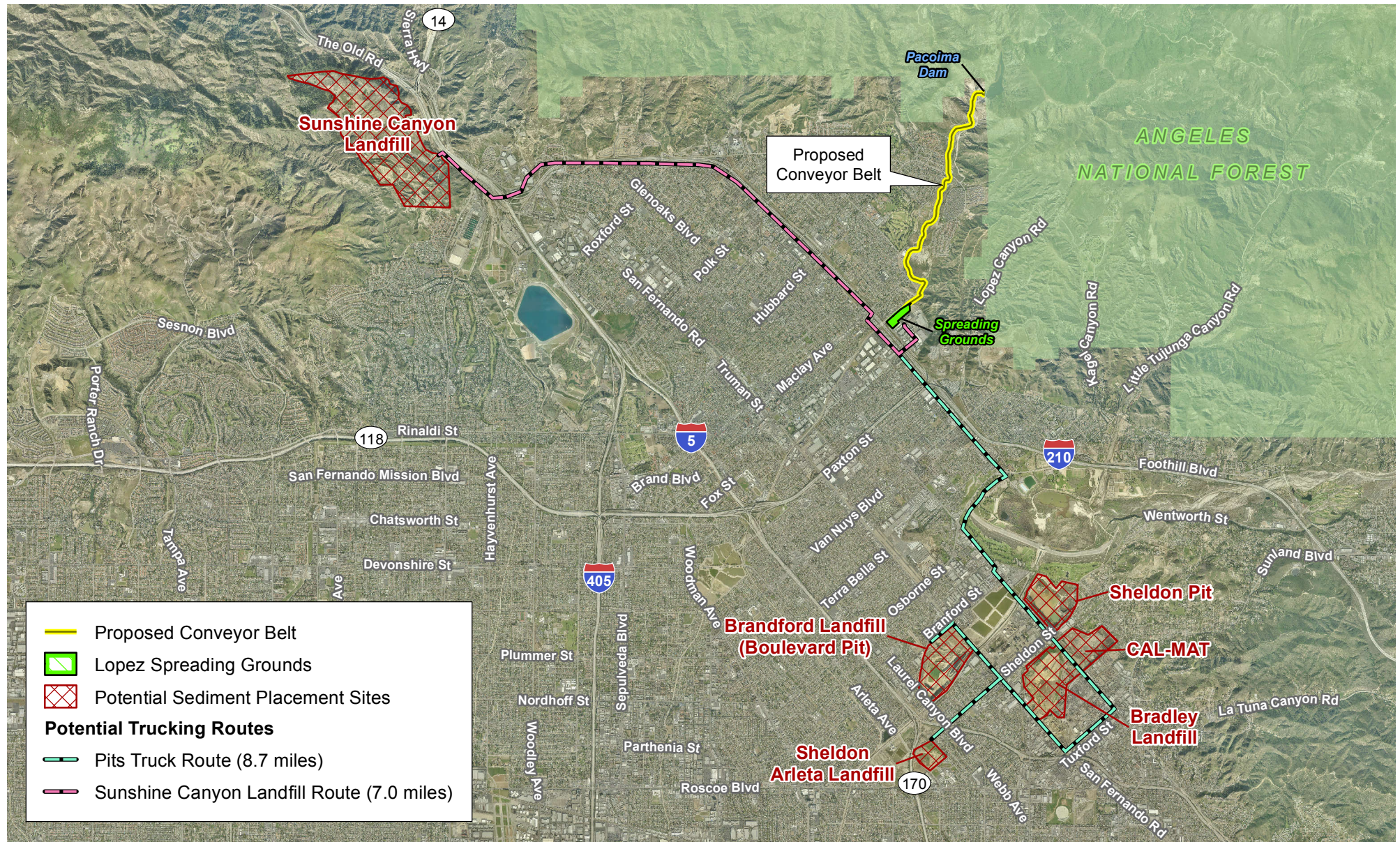
Exhibit 1



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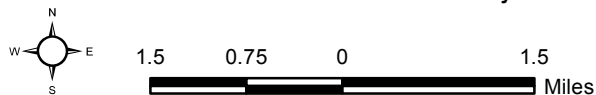
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Potential Sediment Placement Sites and Truck Routes

Exhibit 2

Pacoima Reservoir Sediment Removal Project



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