

Westside Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System

WHAT: The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission proposes to construct a new Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System in San Francisco's western neighborhoods. The new system would be seismically resilient. It would serve drinking water and be used for emergency firefighting as needed. Environmental review is about to begin.

WHEN: The proposed project would be constructed in phases starting in 2026. Construction would initially start from south to north along the western edge of the proposed alignment, allowing the project to access key water supply sources at Lake Merced.

The remainder of the proposed project would be constructed in subsequent phases as shown on the following graphic.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

San Francisco's Emergency Firefighting Water System is vital for protecting lives, homes, and businesses from large fires. Originally built following the 1906 Great Earthquake and fires, it provides secondary defense to the domestic (drinking water) firefighting system, which may be damaged during a large earthquake. The majority of the current Emergency Firefighting Water System serves the central and eastern areas of the City. The outer western neighborhoods currently rely on the existing domestic firefighting water system and emergency water storage cisterns.

The proposed new Westside Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System would increase protection for the western neighborhoods. Generally it would extend from Lake Merced in the south to Lincoln Park and the Presidio in the north and bounded by Highway 1 on the east and the Great Highway on the west.

The Westside Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System would be seismically resilient providing emergency firefighting water immediately following a major earthquake. This could include drawing water from Lake Merced should other sources not be available. After fires are extinguished, these same pipelines would provide drinking water as well.

There are multiple benefits to constructing a potable emergency firefighting system that serves both drinking water and emergency firefighting supply. Instead of constructing separate new seismic systems for drinking water and emergency firefighting, we accomplish both goals with this one project. This makes the most out of ratepayer dollars and bond funds.

PROJECT OVERVIEW: The proposed Westside Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System would include:

- Approximately 16 miles of seismically resilient pipeline ranging from approximately 2 to 3 ½ feet in diameter.
- Underground concrete vaults with large valves.
- Above-ground cabinets for remote monitoring and control of the system.
- Fire hydrants along the sidewalks.
- Modifications to the existing Lake Merced Pump Station
- Construction of a new Central Pump Station and Sunset Reservoir Pump Station to move water at high pressure through the new system.

These improvements are funded by both the Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response (ESER) General Obligation Bonds and the SFPUC Water Capital Improvement Plan bonds.

For more information, visit sfpuc.gov/EmergencyWater.

Proposed Westside Potable Emergency Firefighting Water System Overview

