

Monday, May 07, 2012 2:58 PM

Attn: Council, City
Re: RWQCP Master Plan

Dear Mayor Yeh and Members of the Council: Pasted in below and also attached are our comments re the RWQCP Master Plan.

Emily Renzel for the Baylands Conservation Committee

May 7, 2012

Mayor Yeh & Members of the City Council:

The Carollo firm has done an admirable job in scoping out the needs of the Regional Water Quality Control Plant over the next 50 years. It's a highly complex and interactive set of variables and also involves our regional partners and their needs.

Here are some questions that might require some clarification:

1. On page 1-20 there is discussion of possibly combining and moving the administration building and laboratory off-site to a neighboring commercial building. Are costs included for that proposal? Are those the costs shown in Table 1.7 (page 1-26) for Laboratory and Environmental Services Building?
1. Staff has indicated that a Capital Improvement project for moving the gas flare from Byxbee Park to RWQCP might occur next year. The proposed location is supposed to be in the green area called "future liquid treatment to meet nitrogen standards" in Figure 1.14. If the flare is moved in the future, where will it be located?
1. On page 2.7 there is discussion of Byxbee Park. It should clarify that all of the site (except the 10 acres recently undedicated) is park dedicated as Byxbee Park.
1. Figure 2.3 map should be revised to show the light green area as "Byxbee Park" -- not "Refuse Area".
1. We agree with the conclusions that composting on- or off-site do not result in energy or heat recovery and are not consistent with the undedication of parkland for the "exclusive use" as an organics to green energy facility as represented to voters.
1. Table 7-2 on page 7-23 "Initial Qualitative Screening Evaluation", for some reason, rates the Regional Options as the worst for meeting the Community/Neighbors standard. Since the Regional Alternatives #8, #9, and #10 will all most likely be built whether or not Palo Alto participates, that criteria should be reviewed only for Palo Alto's incremental impact which probably would be small.
1. On page 7-32 there is a discussion of the impacts of adding Fats, Oils & Grease and also food wastes at RWQCP (7.6.5.3.1). That analysis uses our City-Wide Waste Stream Review projection of 13,000 tons of Commercial food waste and 5,000 tons of Residential food waste. Since this is a Regional Water Quality Control Plant, do these numbers have to either 1) take into account food waste generated by our partners or 2) assume that Palo Alto customers will pay the incremental capital and O&M costs for processing exclusively our food waste?

We hope that you will get clarification on some of these points.

Sincerely,

Emily M. Renzel, Coordinator
Baylands Conservation Committee
1056 Forest Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

May 17, 2012

Emily,

Thank you for your review of the Regional Water Quality Control Plant's Long Range Facilities Plan. Responses to your questions and comments are below.

Jamie Allen
Plant Manager
650-329-2243

1. On page 1-20 there is discussion of possibly combining and moving the administration building and laboratory off-site to a neighboring commercial building. Are costs included for that proposal? Are those the costs shown in Table 1.7 (page 1-26) for Laboratory and Environmental Services Building?

Response: No costs are included for offsite properties, buildings, or building improvements. Further analysis will be performed on offsite options after completion of the Long Range Facilities Plan. The costs in Table 1.7 on Page 1-26 are for a Laboratory and an Environmental Services Building located onsite as shown in Figure 1.14.

2. Staff has indicated that a Capital Improvement project for moving the gas flare from Byxbee Park to RWQCP might occur next year. The proposed location is supposed to be in the green area called "future liquid treatment to meet nitrogen standards" in Figure 1.14. If the flare is moved in the future, where will it be located?

Response: Detailed facility planning for future (potentially in 20 years) nutrient regulations is not being performed as part of the Long Range Facilities Plan. The flare and a number of buried pipes might need to be relocated. The need to relocate depends on the selected nutrient removal technology and tank configuration; we narrowed down to three viable treatment options and each option has different site requirements. Improved technology options identified in the future may have very different site requirements as well. As a result of the three viable options, we identified available space for the nutrient treatment option having the largest footprint. Should the flare need to be relocated, a suitable site at the Regional Water Quality Control Plant would be identified.

On page 2.7 there is discussion of Byxbee Park. It should clarify that all of the site (except the 10 acres recently undedicated) is park dedicated as Byxbee Park.

Response: The report will be clarified.

Figure 2.3 map should be revised to show the light green area as "Byxbee Park" – not "Refuse Area".

Response: The map will be revised.

We agree with the conclusions that composting on- or off-site do not result in energy or heat recovery and are not consistent with the undedication of parkland for the “exclusive use” as an organics to green energy facility as represented to voters.

Response: Comment noted.

Table 7-2 on page 7-23 “Initial Qualitative Screening Evaluation”, for some reason, rates the Regional Options as the worst for meeting the Community/Neighbors standard. Since the Regional Alternatives #8, #9, and #10 will all most likely be built whether or not Palo Alto participates, that criteria should be reviewed only for Palo Alto’s incremental impact which probably would be small.

Response: The regional options are the worst for meeting the Community/Neighbors standard because they require trucking raw sludge through both Palo Alto and another community. The extra trucking and odor impacts are considered higher for the regional options than the onsite solids handling options where truck traffic is less and odors are easier to manage.

On page 7-32 there is a discussion of the impacts of adding Fats, Oils & Grease and also food wastes at RWQCP (7.6.5.3.1). That analysis uses our City-Wide Waste Stream Review projection of 13,000 tons of Commercial food waste and 5,000 tons of Residential food waste. Since this is a Regional Water Quality Control Plant, do these numbers have to either 1) take into account food waste generated by our partners or 2) assume that Palo Alto customers will pay the incremental capital and O&M costs for processing exclusively our food waste?

Response: The Regional Water Quality Control Plant provides regional wastewater treatment services. The current contracts with our partner agencies are limited to wastewater treatment and recycled water delivery services. The food waste numbers were not driven by partner requirements. The scope of the Long Range Facilities Plan was very limited in regard to food waste. The analysis only included evaluation of surplus and redundant capacity for some of Palo Alto’s food waste for an anaerobic digester option. Food wastes mixed with biosolids in an anaerobic digester can improve overall methane and volatile solids breakdown of the biosolids. If food wastes were added to a biosolids handling option, then solid waste customers providing the source of the food waste would be responsible for the associated expenses and/or revenues related to that food waste in the wastewater treatment system.

From: JLucas1099@aol.com [mailto:JLucas1099@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2012 12:00 PM
To: Bobel, Phil
Cc: Holman, Karen
Subject: Re: Successful Noise Reduction at Wastewater Plant Incinerator

Phil,

On another matter entirely...

Your presentation on Wastewater Plant upgrade at last week's City Council meeting was good and clear, as always, but would agree with council members who expressed concern about flooding and suggested that new plant be padded up. Think to raise an upgraded facility some eight to ten feet would be wise, as fencing alternatives (as done at Redwood Shores) are expensive and still liable to circumvention by floodwaters.

It needs to never be forgotten that plant facilities are located in old San Francisquito Creek channel, which, I believe, means that significant underflow persists. This also portends that in times of 100 or 500 year flood events, when low barometric pressure causes bay levels to rise four to five feet above high tide and when a heavy storm system is occurring in coastal range, then San Francisquito Creek floodwaters will be unable to overbank into Faber Tract to north but will return to historic channel. This was evident in 1998 storm event.

Also, one must consider that COE now estimates high flows in San Francisquito Creek at 9400 cfs, while flows peaked at 7600 cfs in February 2-9, 1998 storm system. So conditons for reflux are even more critical. Believe this COE flow evaluation reflects San Francisquito Creek cfs increases likely to be anticipated from global warming high intensity storms.

However, as COE super levee can not increase Palo Alto's Flood Basin capacity to provide protection from increased fluvial flooding, believe Wastewater Plant upgrade must incorporate most conservative measures in a raised site design. And this could carry over to a ten-foot higher level for proposed greenwaste operations.

In regards the latter, a Council Member's consideration for expansion of service area for greenwaste needs an evaluation relative to actual reuse potential of greenwaste. In greenwaste's present single stream state, don't purification processes render resultant material too sterile for agricultural or horticultural uses? Can this be remedied? At present hear city staff has to coax public to use greenwaste at all?

Libby Lucas