



Emergency Water Supply Project

Frequently Asked Questions

10.27.11

What is the Menlo Park Municipal Water District? To whom do they provide water?

The City's Menlo Park Municipal Water District purchases 100% of its water from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC) Hetch Hetchy System and delivers it to more than 14,000 residents and businesses located east of El Camino Real and in the Sharon Heights area. The area east of El Camino Real is known as the District's eastern service area. The City operates and maintains the water system which includes pipelines, valves, fire hydrants, a pump station, and a reservoir in addition to testing the water to ensure all safe drinking water standards are met. For more information about the Water District and water quality, view the [City's 2010 Water Quality Report](#).

Why does the City want to construct emergency wells?

The City wants to construct approximately 2-3 emergency wells to provide water supply reliability for the Menlo Park Municipal Water District's eastern service area (i.e. the area east of El Camino Real) in case the current water supply (Hetch Hetchy) is unavailable due to a major earthquake or other disaster. **There are no storage facilities or local water sources serving the eastern service area.** As a result, nearly 3,000 residents and businesses could be without water immediately for an undetermined period of time if earthquake damage interrupts the availability of the SFPUC supply.

How many emergency wells will the City construct?

The City plans to construct approximately 2-3 wells in order to provide approximately 3,000 gallons per minute (gpm) of water supply that meets state and federal drinking water standards. 3,000 gpm is the amount needed to meet the minimum fire-fighting and average-day potable water needs.

How can I determine if I am in the Water District's eastern service area?

Check your water bill. If your bill is from the Menlo Park Municipal Water District AND you live east of El Camino Real, then you live in the Water District's eastern service area.

What is a potential well site?

A potential well site is a site that MAY be used for an emergency well. The City cannot recommend specific well sites until after drilling test wells and determining well production rates and water quality.

What do the 4 tiers mean?

Each site was evaluated based on engineering criteria and community input from community meetings held during summer 2010. Sites were ranked into four tiers based on their overall scores.

- **Tier 1** sites are deemed **Most Desirable**. These are the most appealing sites and are the current front-runners for well installation.

- **Tier 2** sites are deemed **Desirable**. These sites have high potential for success, and because more than one well may be needed, it is likely that at least of one of these sites may be used.
- **Tier 3** sites are deemed **Potentially Feasible**. It is likely that at least of one of these sites may be used in order to meet the goal of 3,000 gallons per minute.
- **Tier 4** sites are deemed **Less Feasible**. These sites would have even less likelihood of being used unless the goal of 3,000 gallons per minute cannot be met using only Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 sites.

What are the engineering and community criteria used to “score” each potential well site?

The City Council approved the following criteria in October 2010. The community criteria is based on community input received last summer 2010.

Engineering Criteria	Community Criteria
Acquisition Feasibility	Site Access
Site Hydrogeology	Noise Disturbance Potential
Construction Feasibility	Aesthetic Concerns
Operation & Maintenance Feasibility	Parkland Concerns
Regulatory Compliance	Land Use Planning
Hydraulic Considerations	Consistency
Environmental Factors	
Construction Cost	

Is the City planning to construct wells at every potential well site?

No, the City only plans to construct approximately 2-3 emergency wells to reach the 3,000 gallons per minute of water supply that meets state and federal drinking water standards.

How were these potential well sites selected?

In order for a site to be considered, it needed to be within or near the Water District’s eastern service area; in an area where a well could produce sufficient water (i.e. the specific capacity is greater than 10 gallons per minute per foot); away from the salt ponds in the San Francisco Bay; and not near existing wells.

How will the well sites eventually be chosen?

Based on the preliminary site ranking and additional community input from the community meetings, City staff will recommend several sites to the City Council for authorization to drill test wells for additional evaluation. Outcomes of those studies will be used to select the sites with the best potential to reach the target of 3,000 gallons per minute of water supply that meets state and federal drinking water standards.

What are the next steps for this project?

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Nov 2011 | City Council meeting to seek approval on the top sites to begin test drilling and further evaluation |
| Winter 2012 | Drill test wells and determine viability of each site |

Spring 2012	City Council meeting to approve final list of sites for emergency wells and begin design phase
Fall 2012	Begin construction

What does the construction phase consist of and how long will construction take?

The construction phase will consist of well drilling and construction of the wellhead facilities, access, and site landscaping. The total duration of construction at each site will be approximately 6 months. During the well construction phase, drilling would continue for 24 hours/day for about 3-4 weeks. For the remainder of the construction period, work would be limited to 7:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday – Friday.

How will construction affect traffic?

Heavy trucks would be used to deliver equipment, materials, and supplies to the site, in addition to workers' personal vehicles. Heavy equipment would remain on the site until no longer needed. The construction work force would not be large, probably no more than 4-5 workers.

How will construction noise be handled?

The City will require contractors to follow noise reduction practices. Temporary noise barriers may also be constructed around the drill sites.

Once constructed, how often will trucks need to access the site for inspection and maintenance?

The City maintenance trucks (pickup truck or similarly sized vehicle) would need to access the site about once a month.

How will long-term operation of the wells affect noise?

Once construction is complete and the wells become operational, noise would be minimal. The City anticipates using submersible well pumps that are installed several hundred feet underground, so well operation noise would comply with the City noise ordinance.

What will a well site look like after construction?

The well will be housed inside a small one-story building, roughly 1500 square feet. The building will be designed to be architecturally consistent with the surrounding structures, to the greatest extent possible. The appearance could vary widely depending on the sites selected. The City will also look for opportunities to provide aesthetic benefits or enhance "vacant lot" space if that is the case.

Who can I contact for more information?

Contact Pam Lowe P.E., Associate Civil Engineer, at phlowe@menlopark.org or 650-330-6740.