TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: BRUCE BUEL

DATE: JUNE 5, 2009

AGENDA ITEM
E-1
JUNE 10, 2009

SCOPING HEARING: RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON CONTENTS OF SWUP DEIR

ITEM

SCOPING HEARING; Receive feedback on the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project Draft EIR [Receive Feedback]

BACKGROUND

Part of the process for preparing a Draft EIR is to hold a Scoping Hearing and to provide an opportunity for Trustee Agencies, Responsible Agencies and Interested Parties to comment on the scope of work. Attached is a copy of the notice that was mailed and posted. Anyone can submit comments through June 30, 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT

Development of this notice did use previously budgeted staff time and environmental consulting cost.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board receive any feedback and direct DWA to evaluate such feedback for inclusion on the scope of work for the project.

ATTACHMENT

- Notice

t:\documents\board matters\board meetings\board letter 2009\SWUP EIR Scoping.doc

NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

TO: Responsible Agencies
Trustee Agencies
Interested Parties
OPR

FROM: Nipomo Community Services District
P.O. Box 326
Nipomo, CA 93444

PROJECT TITLE: Nipomo Community Services District Wastewater Treatment System Improvements EIR

PROJECT APPLICANT: Nipomo Community Services District

HEARING DATE & TIME: June 10, 2009, 09:00 AM

LOCATION: Nipomo Community Services District
Hearing Room
148 S. Wilson Street
Nipomo, CA 93444

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Nipomo Community Services District will hold a scoping meeting on June 10, 2009 at 09:00 AM in order to receive public input concerning the preparation of a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report for the proposed NCSD Wastewater Treatment System Improvements. The proposed project involves: 1) replacement of a wastewater transmission main on South Frontage Road; 2) upgrading the influent pump station, provision of headworks improvements and reconstruction or re-use existing treatment ponds at the Southland Wastewater Treatment Plant and 3) transmission to and construction of percolation ponds at the selected effluent disposal site.

The Nipomo Community Services District is the Lead Agency for the preparation of a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project. Pursuant to Section 15082(c)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, "...for projects of statewide, regional or area-wide significance, the Lead Agency shall conduct at least one scoping meeting."

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to provide the opportunity for any person, organization or agency to express concerns about the impacts of the proposed project that should be discussed and analyzed within the Draft Environmental Impact Report. Additional information about the proposed project will be provided at the scoping meeting.

A Notice of Preparation has also been circulated which provides an opportunity for written response to express concerns about the impacts of the proposed project to be discussed and analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. The deadline for receipt of these written responses is June 30, 2009.

Signature

BRUCE BUEL
General Manager
Telephone (805) 929-1133
e-mail: bbuel@ncsd.ca.gov

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Nipomo Community Services District (NCSD or the District) was formed in 1965 and currently provides water, wastewater, lighting and solid waste disposal services to approximately 12,000 residents of the Nipomo area. The Nipomo Community Services District is a California Community Services District organized pursuant to Government Code Sections 61000 et. seq. The NCSD's service area overlies the southern portion of the Nipomo area within the unincorporated portion of San Luis Obispo County. The Nipomo Community Services District's authority does not include legislative or executive powers over zoning or land use.

The Nipomo Community Services District owns and operates the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). This facility treats a combination of domestic and commercial wastewater from the community of Nipomo. The Southland WWTF has a permitted capacity of 900,000 gallons per day (gpd) based on its maximum monthly flow. Average annual flow is approximately 600,000 gallons per day with a maximum recorded monthly flow rate of approximately 800,000 gallons per day.

On February 7, 2006, the District received a Notice of Violation from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) for several effluent water quality violations reported during 2005. In response to this notice, the District prepared an Action Plan (dated May, 2006), a Technical Memorandum (dated July, 2006) and a Draft Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan (revised February 19, 2007). These research efforts were intended to evaluate existing and future wastewater treatment demands of the Southland WWTF, identify required improvements to meet these demands and develop a capital improvements program to assist the District in planning and financing these facilities. The Draft Wastewater Treatment Master Plan addressed plans to upgrade the plant from 0.9 to 1.9 million gallons per day (MGD) on a maximum month basis. The Master Plan also recommended installing new influent screens, grit removal equipment, an extended aeration treatment system and clarification equipment in order to improve effluent quality and provide capacity for future demands.

During the planning for the wastewater treatment facility expansion, the District reviewed available groundwater records and determined that a perched mound of treated effluent was beneath the existing wastewater percolation ponds. An aquitard located 60 to 140 feet below the ground surface was preventing the mound from percolating down to the deeper aquifer. Salinity measurements in Nipomo Creek and groundwater modeling studies suggest that the mound is slowly draining to the northeast, toward Nipomo Creek. The Creek is listed as an impaired water body in the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Basin Plan for fecal coliform.

The District has been working with RWQCB staff to evaluate regulatory constraints for continuing current discharge practices while pursuing other discharge or reuse alternatives after the plant upgrade is completed. Recent guidance from the Regional Board regarding probable discharge requirements for the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility indicates that alternative disposal or reuse options will need to be investigated. The District cannot continue to discharge effluent at the Southland WWTF at the current rate without risking continued horizontal and lateral growth of the mound. Continued growth of the mound may result in a reduction of percolation capacity of the ponds and increased contribution of flow into Nipomo Creek.

In response, the District has prepared several hydrogeologic studies in order to evaluate the feasibility of a variety of wastewater disposal methods that would be required with an expansion of the existing wastewater treatment plant facilities.

These planning and design efforts have resulted in the completion of the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan dated January, 2009 which addressed required wastewater treatment facility improvements and the Preliminary Screening Evaluation of Southland Wastewater Treatment Disposal Alternatives dated January, 2009 which analyzed a total of ten disposal locations, several of which could accommodate multiple disposal methods (i.e. percolation basins, subsurface systems, etc.).

Information in these studies provide the basis for the description of the proposed project within this section and the impact assessments contained within Section V. Environmental Analysis of this EIR.

B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The basic objective of the proposed Nipomo Community Services District Southland Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements is to construct additional collection, treatment and disposal facilities necessary to serve both existing and future wastewater treatment demands generated within the Southland WWTF service area of the Nipomo Community Services District consistent with the South County Area Plan (revised 1994). In so doing, the proposed project will also:

1. Provide reliable, high quality and cost effective wastewater capacity and services to existing and future customers within the District's Town Sewer Service Area.

2. Resolve the current and projected hydraulic surcharge problems in the South Frontage Road trunk main.

3. Respond to and remedy water quality violations associated with prior and current operations of the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility.

4. Improve the water quality of treated wastewater to comply with current and projected State Waste Discharge Order requirements and to minimize adverse impacts upon Nipomo Mesa groundwater.

5. Manage the average height and volume of the subsurface mound of treated wastewater under the Southland percolation basins and the resultant discharge of groundwater into Nipomo Creek over an annual period.

6. Assist in resolving the Nipomo Mesa water supply deficit by promoting the beneficial use of the treated wastewater to either offset current Nipomo Mesa non-potable water usage and/or, where feasible, to augment productive Nipomo Mesa groundwater aquifers.

7. To the extent feasible, minimize use of additional fossil fuels by offsetting project-related increased power utilization with a more sustainable energy source.

8. Coordinate the timing of project construction to maximize coordination of off-site collection system improvements with the South Frontage Road waterline installation proposed by the District's Waterline Intertie Project.

9. Improve the efficiency and reliability of operations of the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility.

C. PROJECT LOCATION

The Nipomo Community Services District encompasses approximately seven square miles southeast of the City of Arroyo Grande within the southern portion of San Luis Obispo County (see Figure 1, Regional Map). The proposed project extends from the existing wastewater transmission mains located on South Frontage Road south of Tefft Street and parallel to U.S. Highway 101 in Nipomo. This line leads to the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility located immediately south of the intersection of South Frontage Road and Southland Street. Proposed disposal sites will be located (at a precise location to be determined at a later date) on the Nipomo Mesa within five miles of the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility (see Figure 2, Vicinity Map and Figure 3, Aerial Photograph).

D. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project involves the provision of additional facilities necessary to expand the wastewater treatment capabilities of the existing Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility. The proposed project involves three basic elements related to the provision of additional facilities related to wastewater collection, treatment and disposal. The District's wastewater program would be completed in three (3) phases:

Phase IA – Upgrade of Frontage Road Sewer Main and process improvements at Southland WWTF. Frontage Road Sewer Main capacity will be increased to meet 2030 demands per the District's Water and Sewer Master Plan Update. Process improvements at Southland WWTF will include a new influent lift station, headworks, an extended aeration system, clarifiers, sludge drying bed improvements and conversion of two treatment ponds to sludge holding lagoons. The upgraded plant will be capable of handling 1.4 MGD of demand. Although plant capacity will be increased, additional disposal or reuse facilities will be required to meet wastewater demand beyond the existing 0.9 MGD limit.

Phase IB - Construction of offsite disposal and/or recycled water distribution system. This will likely occur after completion of Phase IA and prior to Phase II, depending on availability of property and funding for this phase of work.

Phase II – Expansion of Southland WWTF to 1.8 MGD. This will include construction of two new drying beds, expansion of the existing onsite percolation system and additional onsite percolation capacity for use in temporarily storing treated effluent.

As discussed in Section I, Introduction and Purpose, the proposed project will be analyzed within this EIR in accordance with Section 15168, Program EIR where an EIR is "prepared on a series of proposed actions that can be characterized as one large project" which are "related either geographically or as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions." The approach involves analysis of all project phases within the Program EIR but allows for subsequent analyses of later project phases when additional project information is available.

Collection

The existing 12-inch sewer trunk main which runs along South Frontage Road from Division Street to the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility at Southland Street and South Frontage Road will be replaced with a 21-inch pipeline (see Figure 4, South Frontage Road Pipeline).

This pipeline replacement is based upon the results of a hydraulic analysis of the existing sewer trunk main on South Frontage Road from Division Street to the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility south of Southland Street. This analysis identified trunk main sections that are insufficiently sized to accommodate existing and/or future average and peak future wastewater flow rates. A 21-inch sewer main replacement was recommended in order to meet estimated future peak flow rates through the year 2030. It is anticipated that the installation of this sewer main will occur concurrently with the installation of upgraded water lines on South Frontage Road which are part of the NCSD Waterline Intertie project.

Treatment

The existing Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) currently has a permitted capacity of 900,000 gallons per day (gpd) with an average annual flow of 600,000 gpd and a maximum monthly flow of 800,000 gpd. This facility treats a combination of residential and industrial wastewater utilizing four aeration ponds and eight on-site percolation basins.

Proposed improvements to the WWTF are intended to increase the treatment capacity to 1.9 million gallons per day from the current capacity of 0.9 million gallons per day. Improvements would be accomplished in two phases, as described previously. This increased treatment capacity is intended to serve both existing and future wastewater treatment demands generated within the Southland WWTF service area of the Nipomo Community Services District. Demands were developed in the District's Water and Sewer Master Plan Update.

Specific improvements to the Southland wastewater treatment facility include: 1) upgrading the influent pump station; 2) provision of headworks improvements utilizing screening and grit removal; 3) reconstructing two of the four existing treatment ponds with extended aeration capabilities (a Biolac wave oxidation system) and settling facilities for biosolids; 4) use of the two remaining treatment ponds for storage, decanting and digestion of biosolids; 5) retrofit or improvements within the existing blower building and 6) associated piping, site work, electrical, and instrumentation improvements throughout the WWTF property (see Figure 5, Southland WWTF Improvements).

1) Influent Pump Station Upgrades

The existing influent pump station requires improvements in order to handle future wastewater flows. Previously-conducted analyses have indicated that the existing pumps possess the capacity to handle existing peak flows while the existing wet well is undersized for efficient and reliable performance. These factors cause rapid cycling and premature wear on the pumps. It is proposed to construct a replacement wet well and install three new centrifugal pumps for solids handling at the influent pump station in order to meet future (year 2030) projected wastewater treatment demands. In addition, a percolation basin will be installed at the existing wet well.

2) Headworks Improvements

Headworks improvements are intended to improve effluent quality, minimize inorganic content in secondary sludge, reduce plant maintenance requirements and reduce wear on plant equipment. Two parallel screens will be constructed for fine materials screening followed by two vortex grit removal systems.

3) Treatment Pond Reconstruction

Treatment pond reconstruction involving the facilities noted above will utilize the Parkson Biolac Wave Oxidation System which is an extended aeration process that utilizes a long solids retention time (SRT) (compared with conventional activated sludge) and moving aeration chains to reduce Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS) concentrations and total Nitrogen to acceptable levels. The extended SRT increases the stability of the system to better accommodate fluctuating demands. Airflow to aeration hoses and diffusers is controlled to create a wave of aerobic and anoxic zones, resulting in alternating nitrification and denitrification. Multiple fine-bubble diffusers are mounted on the flexible air tubing suspended across the pond. A primary advantage to this treatment method is the high level of treatment and relatively low cost relative to other comparable technologies. This system can be retrofitted into the existing ponds with some piping modifications and may utilize the existing blowers. To handle the future projected flow rates, two treatment ponds will ultimately be converted to Biolac systems.

4) Treatment Pond Re-use

Two of the four existing treatment ponds at the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility will be utilized for storage, decanting and partial digestion of biosolids. This will require replacement of the existing aerators with four new 10-hp aerators (2 per pond). Biosolids generated from wastewater treatment will be disposed of through one or a combination of methods including landfill disposal, land application or composting at a regional composting facility.

Disposal

After Phase IA of construction is completed, the Nipomo Community Services District will need to expand wastewater disposal capabilities in order to accommodate future wastewater flows. These expanded wastewater disposal facilities involve two elements: the potential provision of four additional filtration ponds at the existing Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility and construction of one or multiple off-site percolation facilities.

The additional percolation ponds would be constructed on approximately ten acres adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment ponds (see Figure 6, Potential Effluent Disposal Sites). The ponds would not be lined but would instead utilize the soil column in order to filter treated effluent, which would then be pumped to the surface after underground filtration. This filtered effluent could then be sent to areas for percolation pond, subsurface percolation or irrigation disposal.
A portion of the effluent in these filtration ponds may be allowed to continue percolation into the underground aquifer as long as subsurface conditions are not impacted. The District is investigating the potential for percolation of up to 0.57 million gallons per day

(MGD) of effluent if it is determined that such percolation would not affect the size or drainage of the perched mound of treated effluent currently beneath the existing wastewater percolation ponds. In addition, groundwater modeling studies have concluded this level of onsite percolation would contribute less than 0.09 MGD of flow to Nipomo Creek. Additional testing and analysis would be required to determine if percolation and extraction is feasible.

An alternative method for on-site filtration of effluent would involve provision of above-ground filtration equipment.

The District has also evaluated several locations for off-site disposal of remaining effluent after treatment, storage, and partial disposal at the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility. Potential disposal methods that were the subject of these investigations included discharge into percolation ponds, discharge into subsurface disposal systems, surface irrigation of either agricultural or recreation/open space areas or deep percolation as a part of Phase IB project improvements. As a result of these investigations, three separate locations for off-site effluent disposal were selected for evaluation in this Draft EIR. Two options involve the provision of percolation basics at either the Pasquini or Kaminaka properties with the third option being the use of treated water for irrigation of areas south of the existing Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility (see Figure 6, Potential Effluent Disposal Sites). Depending upon the extent of percolation at these three potential sites, the District may elect to utilize one or more of these facilities in order to accommodate increased wastewater disposal needs in the future.

The Pasquini Property consists of 192 acres located southwest of Orchard Road and south of Southland Street (see Figure 6, Potential Effluent Disposal Sites). Treated effluent would be transmitted via an appropriately sized pipeline approximately 4,500 linear feet from the wastewater facility to the northern portion of the Pasquini property. Recent geohydrologic analyses indicate that the northerly 35 acres of the Pasquini property would be suitable for use as a percolation facility. Percolation at this location could occur through the provision of surface percolation basins or in a subsurface percolation system. Approximately 24 acres of land would be utilized for percolation area, perimeter berms and access roads. Construction and operation of this percolation facility would require its acquisition by the District or by securing a land lease and an easement from the property owner.

The Kaminaka Property consists of 40 acres of agricultural land bounded by Pomeroy Road and Calle Fresa (see Figure 6, Potential Effluent Disposal Sites). Treated effluent would be transmitted via an appropriately sized pipeline approximately 24,000 linear feet from the wastewater treatment facility and along Orchard Road to a suitable location on the Kaminaka Property. Percolation at this location would occur via a subsurface percolation system. Approximately 18 acres of land would be utilized for percolation area and access roads. Construction and operation of this percolation facility would require its

acquisition by the District or by securing a land lease and an easement from the property owner.

The final effluent disposal option involves the irrigation of agricultural land on areas within the Nipomo Mesa southeast of the Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility. Treated effluent would be transmitted via an appropriately sized pipeline an estimated maximum of 5,000 linear feet to areas generally within one mile of the wastewater treatment facility (see Figure 6, Potential Effluent Disposal Sites). This effluent would be supplied to the future customers and applied to crops. Property owners would be required to provide their own on-site pumping and distribution facilities in order to utilize the effluent for irrigation purposes. Storage facilities at this location may also be required. The quantity of land to be utilized will depend on the type of crop and available area. Long-term contracts would be established between the District and the property owner(s) which would specify the terms of water delivery. Property acquisition and/or easements for pipelines and support facilities may also be required.

The proposed project also involves regulatory and public education efforts aimed at reducing salt loading from regenerative water softeners within the District. These efforts are intended to reduce salt loading at the Southland WWTF as well as at the off-site percolation ponds.

E. REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The proposed Nipomo Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Facilities involves a series of approvals and discretionary actions by the Nipomo Community Services District, as Lead Agency, and other involved regulatory agencies. The proposed project involves the following approvals by the Nipomo Community Services District:

1. Certification of environmental documentation for the proposed Nipomo Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements project.

2. Approval of the Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Nipomo Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements project.

3. Review and approval of detailed plans for pipelines, upgraded treatment facilities, percolation ponds and any other infrastructure for the proposed wastewater treatment facilities improvements.

The proposed Nipomo Community Services District Waterline Intertie may also require the following approvals by other involved regulatory agencies including:

4. Section 404 Permits under the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, which regulates the discharge of dredged and/or fill material into the "waters of the United States."

5. Public Resources Code Sections 1601-1603 Streambed Alteration Agreements from the State of California, Department of Fish and Game, which regulates all diversions, obstructions or changes in the natural flow of a bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake which supports fish or wildlife.

6. A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to comply with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the State Water Quality Control Board.

7. A Section 401 Water Quality Certification and a General Permit for Storm Water Discharges from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

8. A new Waste Discharge Order issued by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

9. A Section 7 Consultation or Section 10(a) Permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service which allows the "taking" of an endangered species.

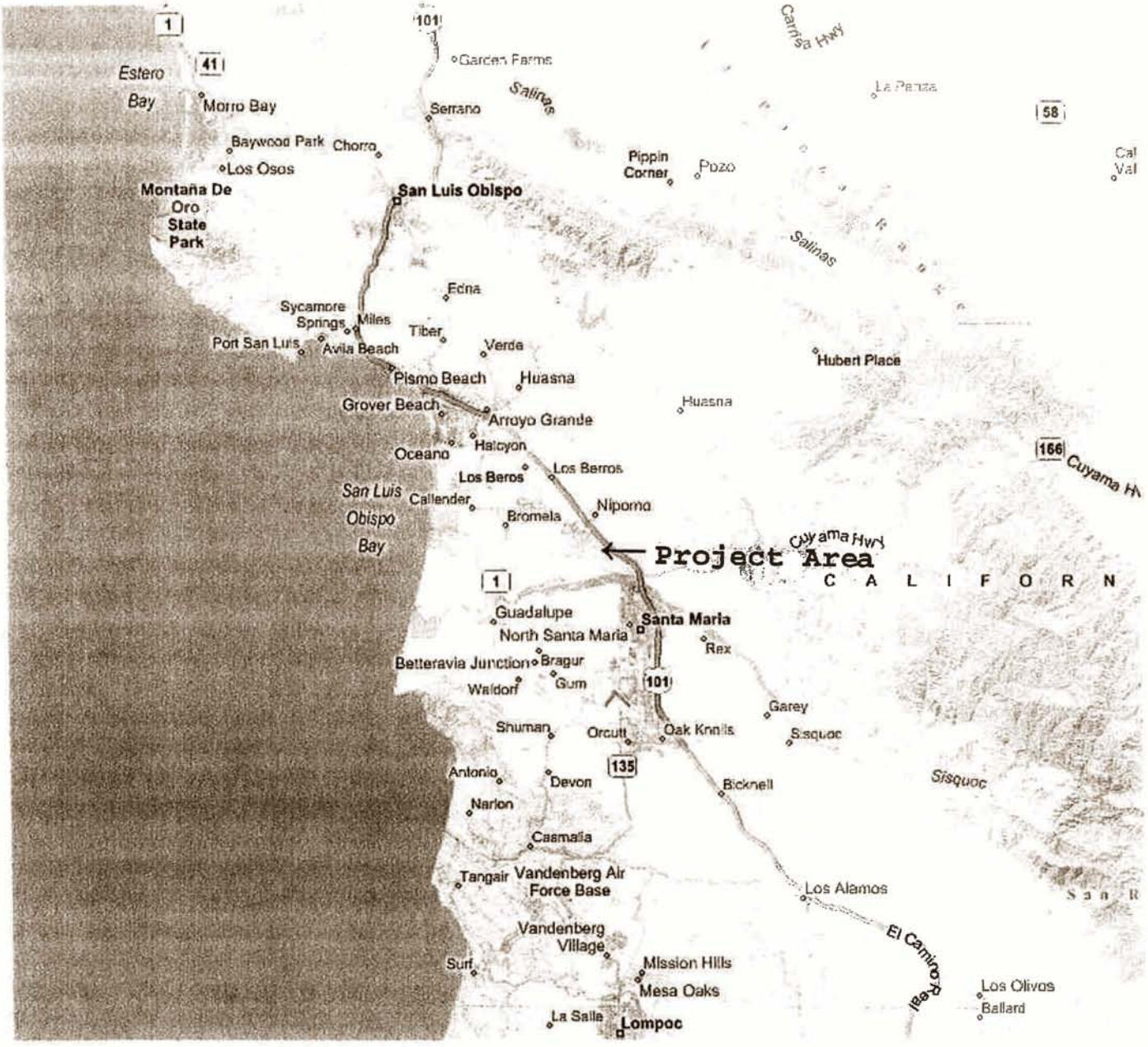
10. Easements secured from landowners in the Nipomo area or other entities for right-of-way and construction.

11. Any necessary construction and/or encroachment permits from the County of San Luis Obispo for equipment staging and construction operations.

F. PROJECT TIMING

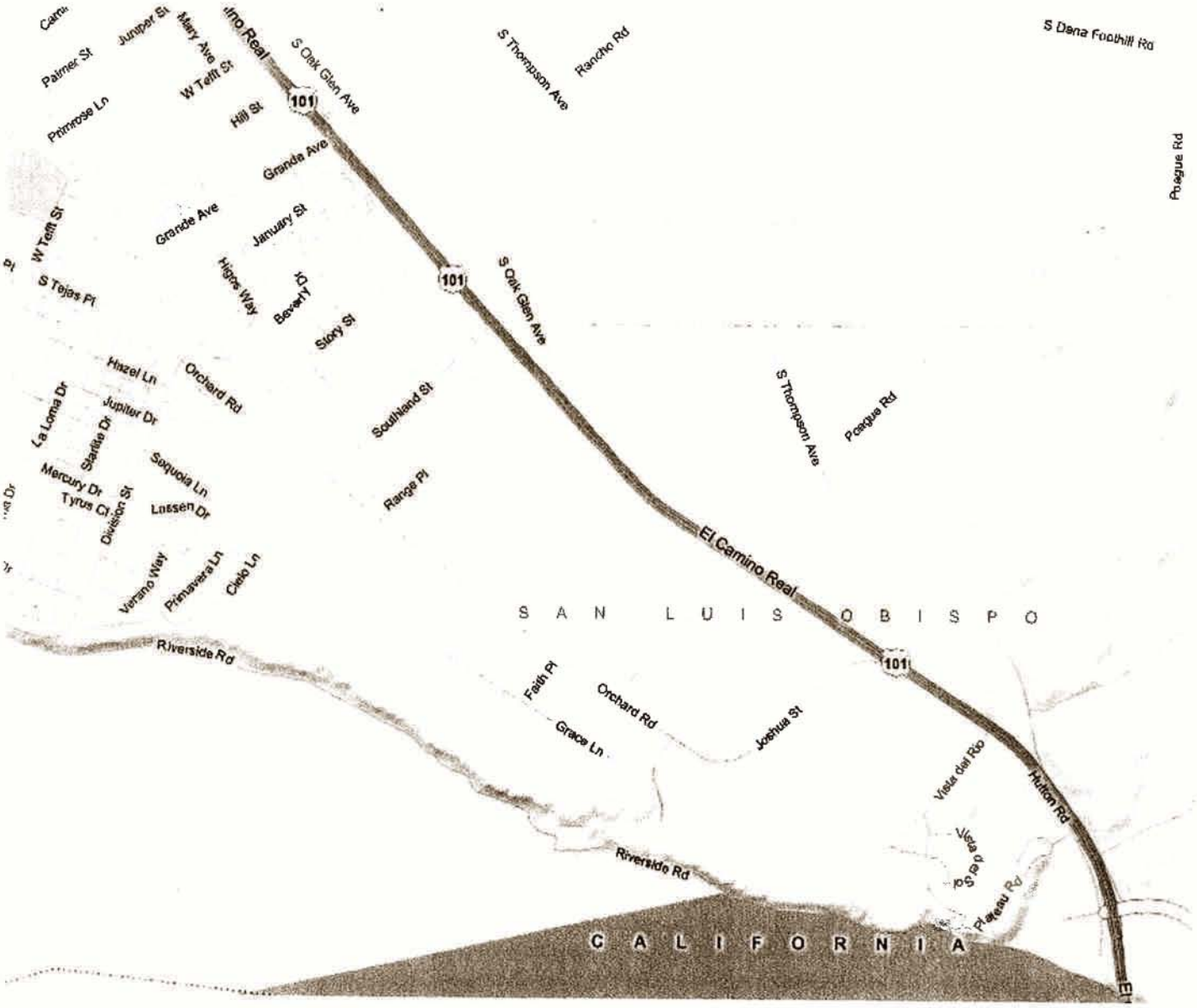
The proposed project will be constructed within three phases. Phase IA will involve construction of upgraded collection and treatment facilities. Construction of the upgraded collection facilities (upsized pipeline on South Frontage Road) is anticipated to require two to four months while upgrades to the treatment plant are estimated to require a total of nine to twelve months. Phase IB will involve construction of off-site transmission mains and disposal site(s). Construction of transmission mains and the proposed disposal site will require six to twelve months depending on its location. Phase IA is anticipated to begin in 2010 while completion of Phase IB facilities will require substantial additional study with no known timetable as of this date. Phase II timing will depend on the rate of growth in the Southland WWTF service area. Several of these construction activities may be performed concurrently. The project engineer has recommended that the South Frontage Road pipeline be constructed concurrently with the Waterline Intertie Project.

FIGURE 1
Regional Map



NCSD Southland Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements

FIGURE 2
Vicinity Map



NCSD Southland Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements

FIGURE 3
Aerial Photograph

FIGURE 4
South Frontage Road Pipeline

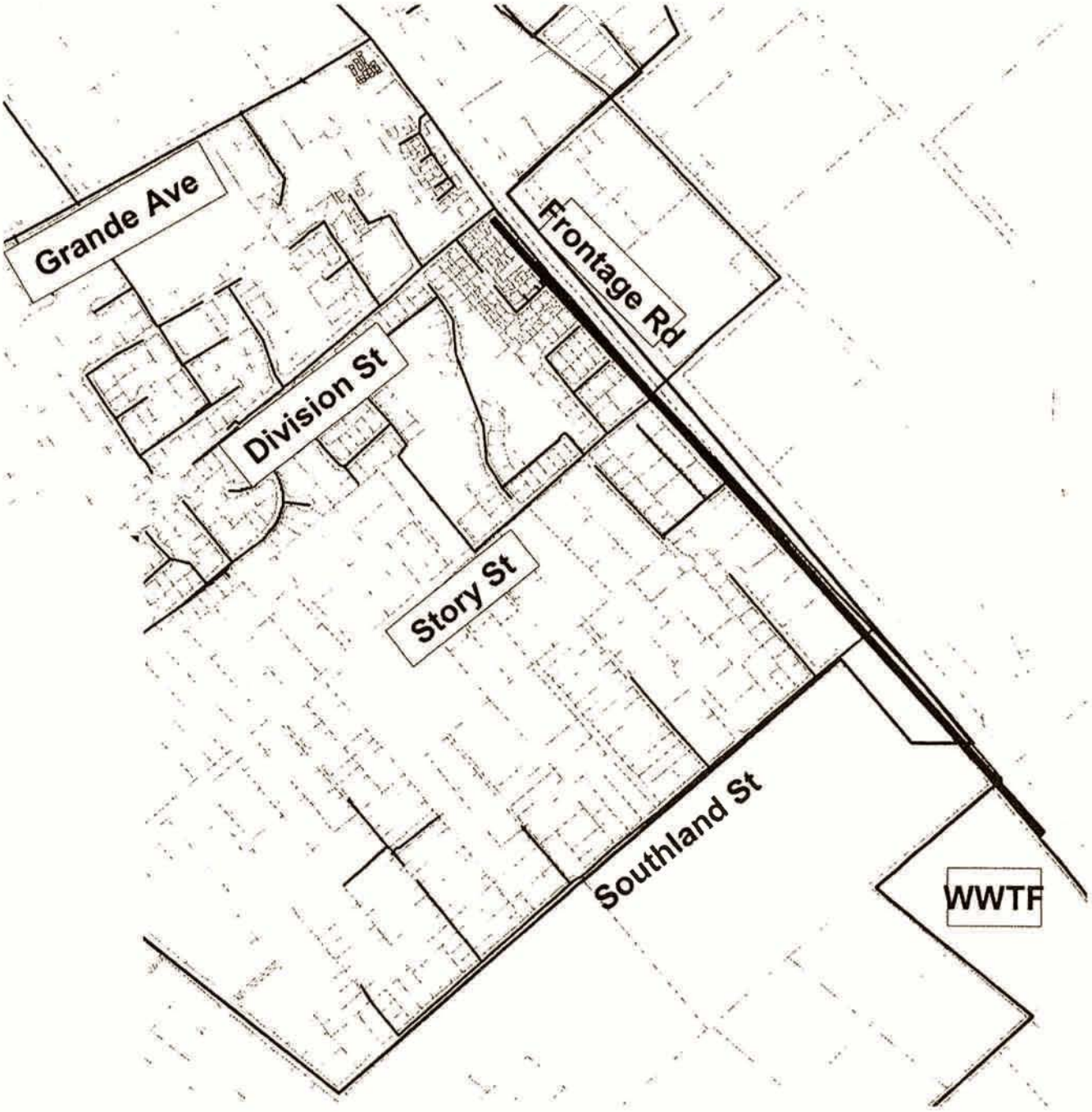


FIGURE 5
Southland WWTF Improvements

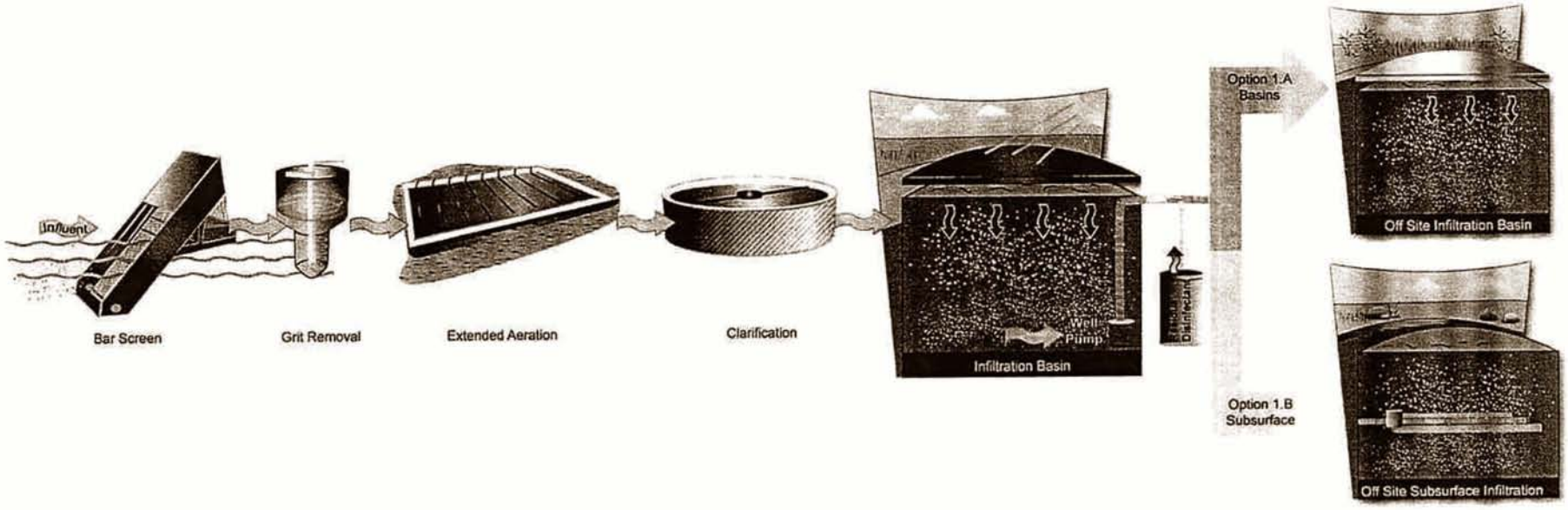
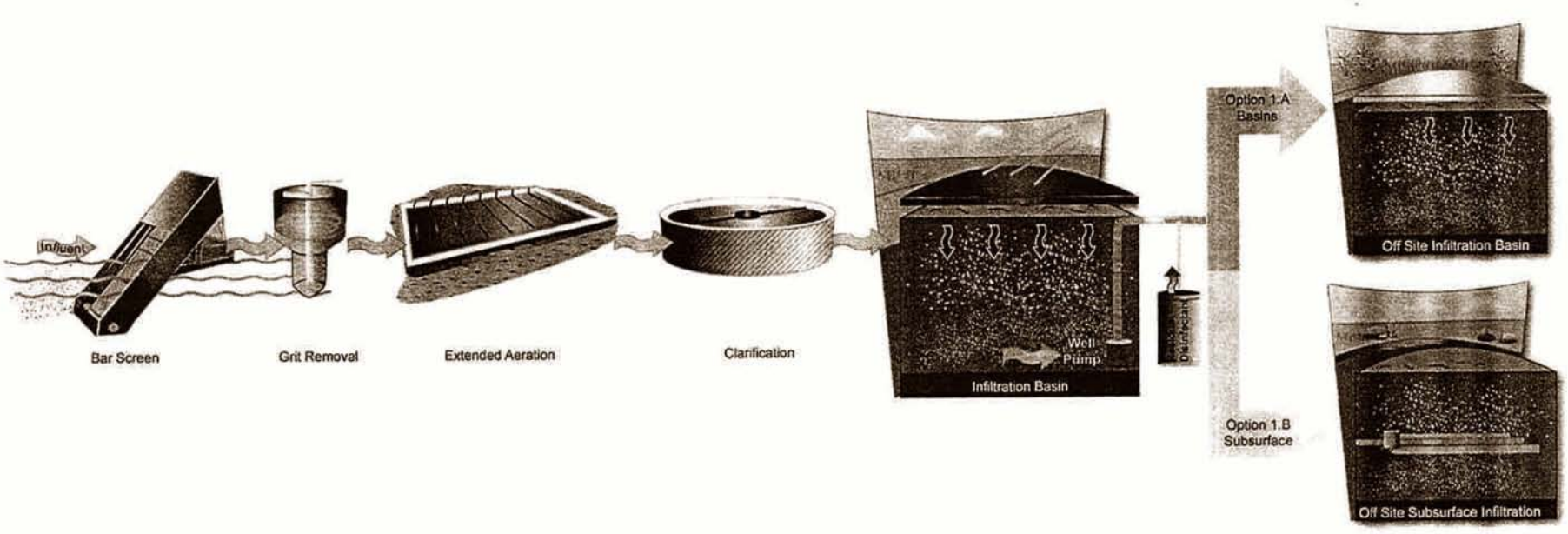
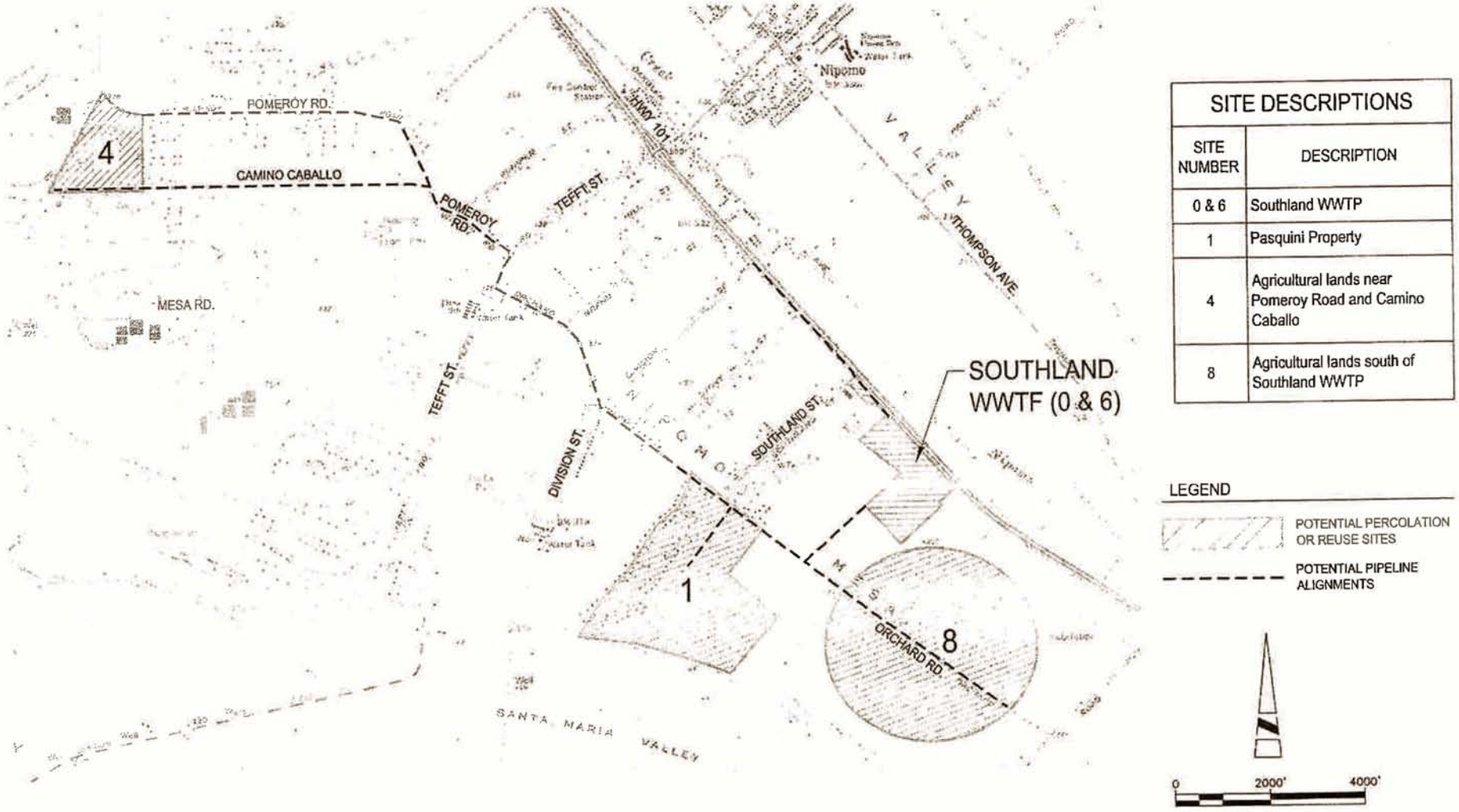


FIGURE 5
Southland WWTF Improvements



NCSD Southland Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements

FIGURE 6
Potential Effluent Disposal Sites



SITE DESCRIPTIONS	
SITE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
0 & 6	Southland WWTP
1	Pasquini Property
4	Agricultural lands near Pomeroy Road and Camino Caballo
8	Agricultural lands south of Southland WWTP

NCSD Southland Wastewater Treatment Facilities Improvements

FIGURE 3
Aerial Photograph