

June 24, 2009

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

Humboldt County Public Works Department – Union Street and Sea Avenue
Improvements Project
WDID No. 1B09038WNHU

Humboldt County

On April 2, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Public Works Department (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for proposed activities associated with road widening and drainage improvements near the intersection of Union Street and Sea Avenue in the community of Pine Hill on the south side of Eureka. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands and an unnamed tributary to Martin Slough in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

Union Street is a major traffic collector and Sea Avenue is a minor collector within the Eureka urban area. The proposed project consists of one work area running south to north along Union Street (0.66 miles) and one work area running east to west along Sea Avenue (0.34 miles) beginning at the Union Street intersection. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists by establishing paved or gravel shoulders, providing better line-of-sight distances, and improving roadside drainage and storm water runoff controls. The proposed project includes reconstructing sections of the roadway, road widening, new structural sections where required, and an overlay of the existing pavement.

At the southern end of the project, along Union Street between Higgins Street and Sea Avenue, the width of Union Street currently varies from approximately 24 to 36 feet. This section of Union Street runs downhill to the north until it reaches a low elevation area near the intersection of Sea Avenue where wetlands and an unnamed tributary to Martin Slough (Martin Slough tributary) are located. Proposed improvements to this section will establish a 40-foot wide to 48-foot wide roadway. The widest sections will generally consist of two 12-foot wide vehicle lanes, two 4-foot wide pedestrian/bike paths, and two 8-foot parking lanes. The remaining sections of the southern end will generally consist of two 14-foot wide vehicle lanes and two 6-foot wide pedestrian/bike paths.

Developed drainage facilities do not currently exist along most of the roadway in the southern end of the project area. Some areas in this section contain grass-lined roadside drainages with small culverts running under gravel driveways where they cross the ditches. Existing drainages will be filled and driveway culverts will be removed to accommodate the wider roadway. New storm drain inlets and a subsurface storm water collection system will be installed along the roadway. Storm water runoff will be collected along the roadway and conveyed northward along the east side of Union Street. A subsurface storm water retention/detention pipe will be installed within the

storm water collection system. Excess runoff will be discharged into a wetland area that will be constructed in an upland horse pasture area located on recently acquired County right-of-way that is adjacent to Union Street and the Martin Slough tributary. The wetland area will expand existing wetlands on the west side of Union Street that drain into the Martin Slough tributary.

Drainage from the existing wetland area is currently conveyed under Union Street through a 2-foot diameter concrete pipe. The existing pipe will be replaced by a 40-foot long, 16-foot wide, and 4.5-foot high corrugated metal arch culvert. The invert of the new arch culvert will be countersunk 1.5 feet and layered with river-run aggregate base to form a natural substrate bottom. The new arch culvert will be placed at a slight angle to the existing culvert and the outlet of the new arch culvert will be shifted a short distance away from the existing culvert outlet. A short section of low gradient channel will be constructed from the new culvert outlet to the Martin Slough tributary. A section of the Martin Slough tributary between the existing culvert outlet and the confluence of the new channel will be preserved as a backwater channel that will continue to provide wetland habitat.

At the north end of the project, from the Union Street and Sea Avenue intersection to the curve on Union Street between Bacchetti Drive and Silva Avenue, the width of Union Street currently varies from approximately 24 to 36 feet. This section of Union Street begins an uphill climb from Sea Avenue to the north end of the project. Proposed improvements to this section will establish a 40-foot wide to 54-foot wide roadway. The widest section will be at the northern end of the project and will consist of two 12-foot wide vehicle lanes, two 4-foot wide pedestrian/bike paths, two 8-foot parking lanes, and a 6-foot wide concrete sidewalk on the east side. The remaining improvements in this section will establish two 14-foot wide vehicle lanes and two 6-foot wide pedestrian/bike paths. A portion of the remaining section includes an existing 6-foot wide concrete sidewalk on the east side. Existing storm drainage facilities along this section of Union Street will be utilized. Additional drain inlets will be installed where needed to accommodate road widening. Storm water runoff from the northern end of the project area will be conveyed southward along the east side of Union Street and into a subsurface storm water retention/detention pipe that will be connected to the existing subsurface storm water collection system that runs down the east side of Union Street and discharges into an existing wetland area along the west side of Union Street and north side of Sea Avenue.

The Sea Avenue section of the project begins at Little Fairfield Street and extends east along Sea Avenue to the Union Street intersection. The width of Sea Avenue in this section currently varies from approximately 20 to 32 feet. Most of this section of Sea Avenue runs downhill toward Union Street. Proposed improvements to this section include asphalt overly in the widest section and widening of the narrow sections to establish a 28-foot wide to 32-foot wide roadway. The widest section will include two 12-foot wide vehicle lanes and two 4-foot wide gravel shoulders. The remaining sections will be widened to include two 10-foot wide vehicle lanes and two 4-foot wide gravel shoulders.

The east end of Sea Avenue is located in a low-lying area with wetland areas on both sides. Frequent flooding occurs during the winter and there are periods when the road is inundated with water. The wetland on the north side of Sea Avenue drains into the wetland on the south side through an existing 2-foot diameter culvert. The proposed project includes raising the roadbed elevation by up to 6 feet and replacing the culvert. The roadbed will be raised by installing earth retaining gabion basket walls along both shoulders of Sea Avenue, continuing around the south west corner of the Union Street intersection, and continuing south along the west side of Union Street. A new 30-foot long, 16-foot wide, and 4.5-foot high metal arch culvert will be installed to replace the existing culvert under Sea Avenue. The invert of this new arch culvert will also be countersunk approximately 1.5 feet and layered with river-run aggregate base to form a natural substrate bottom.

Installation of gabion basket walls will permanently impact an area approximately 4 feet wide and parallel to the road shoulder. Construction activities related to gabion wall installation will temporarily impact an additional 4-foot wide area adjacent and parallel to the proposed gabion walls. The footprint of the proposed gabion wall structures may not actually result in a permanent loss of wetlands; however, in order to expedite permitting, the Applicant has assumed that the grassy shoulder area between the existing pavement and high quality wetlands consists of low-quality wetland. Therefore, the Applicant assumes that the project will permanently impact 2,640 square feet of wetlands along the road shoulder. The proposed project will also result in temporary impacts to 2,640 square feet of wetland.

Compensatory mitigation is required for the proposed project. Proposed mitigation includes the creation of 3,000 square feet of wetland area near the outlet of the new arch culvert under Union Street and the outlet of the storm water collection system located under the southern end of the project. The wetland mitigation area will drain to the low gradient channel that will be created between the new arch culvert outlet and the Martin Slough tributary. Noncompensatory mitigation includes restoration of temporary wetland impact areas and the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control. Work within drainage ditches and wetland areas will be performed during dry conditions. Depending on the availability of project funding, proposed project activities are scheduled to begin in 2010. The proposed project is expected to take six months to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 14, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. On December 11, 2007, Humboldt County approved a Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2007102111) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road widening and drainage improvement activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.