Central Shaft Frequently Asked Questions

The following answers are intended to respond to questions regarding construction activities at the San Vicente Pipeline's Central Shaft, located within StoneBridge Estates on Stonebridge Parkway.

Q: What is the San Vicente Pipeline?
A: The San Vicente Pipeline is part of the San Diego County Water Authority's Emergency Storage Project, a system of reservoirs, interconnected pipelines, and pumping stations designed to make water available to the San Diego region in the event of an interruption in imported water deliveries. The 11-mile San Vicente Pipeline will connect San Vicente Reservoir in Lakeside to the Water Authority's Second Aqueduct west of Interstate 15 to provide future emergency water deliveries. The large-diameter pipeline is being built in a tunnel at a depth ranging from 50 to 550 feet underground and will not pass directly under any homes. Tunneling, rather than cut-and-cover trenching, has enabled the Water Authority to build the pipeline with fewer impacts to the surrounding communities. All work for the pipeline is scheduled to be complete in 2010.

Q: What is the Central Shaft and why is it needed?
A: The Central Shaft is one of four access points being used to dig the San Vicente Pipeline tunnel and install the pipe. A centrally located shaft enhances the safety of construction activity inside the tunnel and pipeline. Construction work at this site has included inserting and extracting a tunnel boring machine; removing excavated rock and soil from the tunnel; circulating air in the tunnel; and delivering equipment, liner segments, pipe sections, and concrete. Materials excavated from the Central Shaft will remain on site and will not be hauled off the property. After construction is complete, the Central Shaft will provide permanent access to inspect and maintain the pipeline.

Q: What are the hours of operation at the Central Shaft?
A: In late 2008, crews at the Central Shaft began installing large pipe segments in the tunnel to build the pipeline. During pipe installation, work hours were reduced to a single, daytime shift from 6 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The majority of the work takes place underground. The contractor plans to continue the single shift through project completion. However, the work hours could be extended again, if needed, to keep the project on schedule.

Q: What activities are required at the Central Shaft for pipe installation?
A: In fall 2008, trucks began delivering 50-foot-long sections of steel pipe to the Central Shaft site. Pipe deliveries will continue until mid-2009 and are restricted to Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The route for construction deliveries continues to be from Kirkham Way in Poway through the Vulcan Materials gravel operations, just north of the StoneBridge Estates community. From this point, delivery trucks drive on Stonebridge Parkway for about one-fourth of a mile to reach the site. Once on site, pipe segments are lowered into the tunnel and hauled toward the West Shaft for installation. When pipe installation is complete, the contractor will place concrete around the exterior of the pipe to secure it in the tunnel. More than 1,000 pipe sections will be used to build the pipeline.
Q: What are the anticipated noise and light issues?
A: The contractor uses a crane to lower pipe segments into the shaft. The Water Authority will continue to monitor noise on the site to ensure that construction does not exceed permissible noise levels. Night work is not anticipated during pipe installation, but if it is required again, activities outside the shaft will be reduced to minimize disruptions for StoneBridge Estates residents. Lights would be needed to ensure a safe nighttime working environment. The majority of the lights would be at the back end of the construction site, pointed towards the shaft and away from homes.

Q: How is the tunnel work progressing?
A: From 2005 to 2008, the construction team focused on tunneling through rock and earth. In mid-2008, over five miles of tunneling work was completed on the western half of the tunnel between the Central Shaft to the West Shaft. One tunneling machine is continuing to excavate the remaining section in the eastern portion of the tunnel. This machine has cut through very hard rock, which has delayed the completion of the tunnel.

Q: Is the access road connecting Stonebridge Parkway to Beeler Canyon a public road?
A: The access road is not a public road, and it should only be used for construction and emergency access. To ensure everyone’s safety, residents should not drive on it as a shortcut through the community. Large trucks use the road to deliver materials and pipe to the Central Shaft from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Beyond those hours and days, the gates on the access road are locked by the Water Authority’s contractor. To further discourage public access, the Water Authority posted three “Road Closed – Emergency and Construction Access Only” signs on the access road.

Q: What will happen to the site after construction?
A: At the end of construction, a riser pipe will be installed to allow access to the pipeline for inspection and maintenance. This permanent access will also vent air from the pipeline. The rest of the shaft will be filled and closed. A small structure will cover and secure the permanent access, and air release valves will be housed in a second small structure. The Water Authority will retain a small parcel of land for the permanent access and air ventilation structures, and for vehicle access to these structures. The remaining property will be sold. Since it is zoned for institutional use, the parcel could be used as a school or church.

Q: Who do I contact to ask more questions?
A: For more information about the San Vicente Pipeline project, please call our toll-free project information line at (877) 426-2010 or email ESPinfo@sdcwa.org. Project information can also be found on the Water Authority’s website at www.sdcwa.org. Click on “Infrastructure,” then “ESP,” and finally “San Vicente Pipeline.”

The Water Authority is a public agency serving the San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water. The Water Authority works through its 24 member agencies to provide a safe, reliable water supply to support the region’s $171 billion economy and the quality of life of 3 million residents.