THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Eric Symons
Supervising Public Information Officer
(858) 614-5795
ESymons@sandiego.gov

City Groundwater Test Well Could Lead To Increased Local Water Supply

Goal is to Improve Water Reliability by Developing Locally Controlled Water Supply Projects and Reduce Dependence on Increasingly Expensive Imported Water

SAN DIEGO – The slogan "Drill, Baby, Drill" takes on a whole new meaning as the City of San Diego today launched a new test well drilling project in the quest to develop new water sources and storage. Squeezed by increasing costs for imported water, and faced with the uncertainty of future water reliability by being at the "end" of the imported water pipeline, the City has been investigating the feasibility of increasing local water supplies with a number of projects, from water purification, recycled water and groundwater development. The test well could lead to a new water source that, combined with other local efforts, could provide San Diegans with a more sustainable, local water supply.

"It's no secret that we are far too reliant on imported water and we need to have more control over our future water supplies," said San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders. "We're exploring many avenues to incrementally decrease our need to purchase water that is subject to drought, periodic cutbacks and out-of-control price increases," added Sanders.

Dubbed the 32nd Street Test Well Project, the exploratory well will be located on undeveloped land in Golden Hill on 32nd Street between C Street and Highway 94. The well is being drilled into a deep coastal-plain aquifer system that underlies the southern metropolitan coastal area, known as the San Diego Formation. This groundwater basin roughly spans a distance from the City of San Diego downtown area to the U.S.-Mexico border and from the Pacific Ocean to the eastern foothills. When completed in approximately six weeks, the five-inch diameter well will be one of the deepest in the region at a depth of between 1,200 and 1,500 feet.

The monitoring or "test" well will evaluate the quality of the water. If determined feasible to advance to the next phase, the City will drill another well known as a 'pilot production well' to field test the aquifer over a period of one to two years by applying a regulated stress through pumping to determine aquifer performance and long-term sustainability while delivering the groundwater for beneficial use. The 'pilot production well' evaluations will determine the viability of proceding to the final phase and installing a permanent full-scale groundwater production well field in the San Diego Formation. The San Diego Formation may also be evaluated for Aquifer Storage and Recovery.

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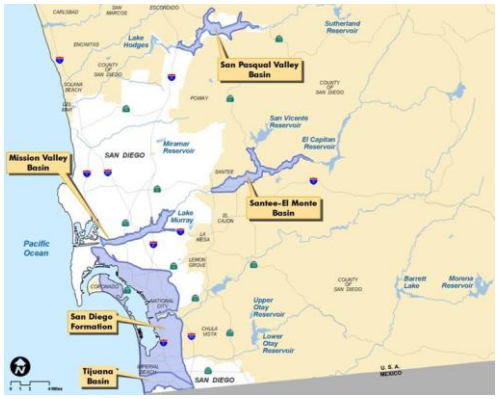
"We're very excited about the prospects of this test well," said Project Manager Gregory Cross with the City's Public Utilities Department. "The water quality could range from very high, which could ultimately be added directly to the City's water distribution system with disinfection, or it could require additional treatment with membranes to remove salts. Either way, we're hopeful that this first phase of exploration could lead to full-scale production of new water," added Cross.

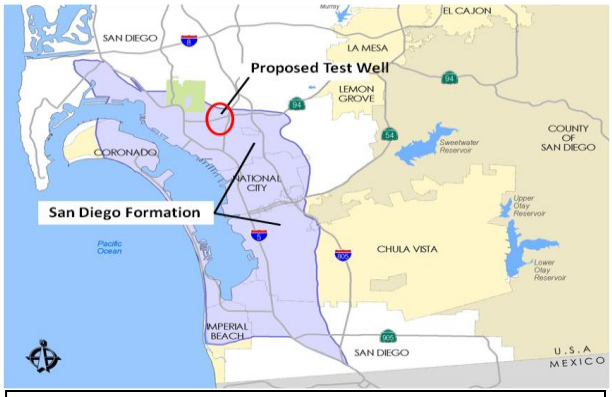
The 32nd Street Test Well Project is one of many projects the City is undertaking that explores the feasibility of developing groundwater resources. Other groundwater basins that are being explored in much the same way include the San Pasqual Basin, Mission Valley Basin, and the Tijuana Basin. The City is also exploring the feasibility of expanding groundwater production operations in the Santee-El Monte Basin where it currently has municipal supply wells.

The City has been working closely with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) for a over seven years and has established a monitoring well network in the San Diego Formation. The cooperative work between the City and the USGS has led to a better understanding of groundwater in the San Diego region. Valuable geological information obtained from this test well project will be shared and incorporated into a larger geological model of the coastal plain groundwater basin.

The City of San Diego Public Utilities Department provides safe, healthful drinking water to the 1.3 million residents of San Diego and regional wastewater treatment and disposal services for more than 2 million residents of San Diego County. For more information about the City's Public Utilities Department, visit sandiego.gov/publicutilities, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/SanDiegoPublicUtilities, follow us on Twitter @SDPubUtilities and watch us on YouTube at youtube.com/user/SDPublicUtilities or call (619) 515-3500.



Groundwater Basins in San Diego



San Diego Formation and location of 32nd Street Test Well Proiect

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