



Scott Road Regional Lift Station Sewer Conveyance Project

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Lead Agency:

Eastern Municipal Water District

2270 Trumble Road

Perris, CA 92570

October 2026



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Prepared for:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Purpose of this Document	1
1.2 Scope of this Document	1
1.3 Impact Terminology.....	2
1.4 CEQA Process	2
2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION	5
2.1 Project Overview.....	5
2.2 Project Location	5
2.3 Project Background and Need	5
2.4 Proposed Project Description	6
2.5 EMWD Standard Construction Practices.....	10
2.6 Required Permits and Approvals	12
3.0 MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION.....	15
3.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected	15
3.2 Determination.....	15
4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.....	17
4.1 Aesthetics	17
4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources.....	21
4.3 Air Quality.....	24
4.4 Biological Resources.....	31
4.5 Cultural Resources.....	49
4.6 Energy.....	54
4.7 Geology and Soils.....	57
4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	64
4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials	67
4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality	73
4.11 Land Use and Planning.....	79
4.12 Mineral Resources	81
4.13 Noise	82
4.14 Population and Housing	89
4.15 Public Services	91
4.16 Recreation.....	94
4.17 Transportation.....	96
4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources.....	100
4.19 Utilities and Service Systems.....	102
4.20 Wildfire	107
4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance.....	110
5.0 PREPARERS.....	115
6.0 REFERENCES.....	117

FIGURES

Figure 1: Regional Location	6
Figure 2: Aerial Photograph.....	6
Figure 3: Conceptual Components	6
Figure 4: Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Land Use	22
Figure 5: Observed Aquatic Resources - USACE	46
Figure 6: Observed Aquatic Resources - RWQCB	46
Figure 7: Observed Aquatic Resources - CDFW.....	46
Figure 8: MSHCP Cores and Linkages.....	48
Figure 9: MHSCP Criteria Cells.....	48
Figure 10: Noise Sensitive Land Uses	86

TABLES

Table 1: Construction Equipment Fleet – Lift Stations.....	8
Table 2: Construction Equipment Fleet – Pipelines	9
Table 3: Required Permits and Approvals.....	12
Table 4: SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds.....	26
Table 5: Maximum Daily Construction Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)	27
Table 6: Maximum Localized Daily Construction Emissions (pounds per day).....	29
Table 7: Estimated Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....	65
Table 8: County of Riverside Sound Level Standards.....	84
Table 9: Construction Equipment Noise Levels.....	85

APPENDICES

Appendix A: CalEEMod Output Files
Appendix B: Biological Technical Report
Appendix C: Cultural Resources Survey
Appendix D: Phase 1 Paleontological Resources Assessment

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMP	best management practice
BTR	Biological Technical Report
BUOW	burrowing owl
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalFire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBB	Crotch's bumble bee
CBC	California Building Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDOC	California Department of Conservation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFG	California Fish and Game

CGS	California Geological Survey
CH ₄	methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CO ₂ e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DBESP	Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMWD	Eastern Municipal Water District
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GHG	greenhouse gas
gpm	gallons per minute
GWP	global warming potential
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HELIX	HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc.
I-	Interstate
in/sec	inches per second
IS	Initial Study
kW	kilowatts
L _{EQ}	noise equivalent level
LF	linear feet
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
LST	localized significance threshold
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MSHCP	Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
MT	metric tons

N ₂ O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO ₂	Nitrogen dioxide
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSLU	noise-sensitive land use
O ₃	ozone
O&M	Operations and Management
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OPR	California Governor's Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pb	lead
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter
PM ₁₀	particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter
PPV	peak particle velocity
Project	Scott Road Regional Lift Station (SRRLS) Sewer Conveyance Project
PSE	Participating Special Entity
PVC	polyvinyl chloride
QCB	Quino checkerspot butterfly
RCFC	Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
ROG	reactive organic gases
ROW	right-of-way
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RWQCB	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAB	South Coast Air Basin
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCE	Southern California Edison
SCIC	South Coastal Information Center
SKR	Stephens' kangaroo rat
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SR	State Route
SRA	Source Receptor Area
SRRLS	Scott Road Regional Lift Station
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCL	Tribal Cultural Landscape
TCP	Tribal Cultural Property

TCR	tribal cultural resource
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VCP	vittrified clay pipe
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WRLS	Wickerd Road Lift Station

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) has prepared this Initial Study (IS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts related to implementation of the Scott Road Regional Lift Station (SRRLS) Sewer Conveyance Project (the “proposed Project” or “Project”), which consists of the construction and operation of a new lift station, the decommissioning of an existing lift station, and the construction and operation of new sewer lines.

EMWD is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Project. CEQA requires that the lead agency prepare an IS to determine whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Negative Declaration (ND), or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is needed. EMWD has prepared this IS to evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed Project, and to disclose to the public and decision makers its potential environmental effects. Based on the analysis presented herein, an MND is the appropriate level of environmental documentation for the proposed Project.

1.2 Scope of this Document

This IS/MND has been prepared in accordance with CEQA (as amended) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. Seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et. Seq.), as updated on December 28, 2018. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 describes the requirements for an IS and Sections 15070–15075 describe the process for the preparation of an MND. Where appropriate, this document refers to either the CEQA Statute or State CEQA Guidelines (as amended in December 2018). This IS/MND contains all of the contents required by CEQA, which includes a project description, a description of the environmental setting, potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures for any significant effects, consistency with plans and policies, and names of preparers.

This IS/MND evaluates the potential for environmental impacts to resource areas identified in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines (as amended in December 2018). The environmental resource areas analyzed in this document include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

1.3 Impact Terminology

The level of significance for each resource area uses CEQA terminology as specified below:

No Impact. No adverse environmental consequences have been identified for the resource or the consequences are negligible or undetectable.

Less than Significant Impact. Potential adverse environmental consequences have been identified. However, they are not adverse enough to meet the significance threshold criteria for that resource. No mitigation measures are required.

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Adverse environmental consequences that have the potential to be significant but can be reduced to less than significant levels through the application of identified mitigation strategies that have not already been incorporated into the proposed project.

Potentially Significant. Adverse environmental consequences that have the potential to be significant according to the threshold criteria identified for the resource, even after mitigation strategies are applied and/or an adverse effect that could be significant and for which no mitigation has been identified. If any potentially significant impacts are identified, an EIR must be prepared to meet the requirements of CEQA.

1.4 CEQA Process

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15073, this Draft IS/MND will be circulated for a 30-day public review period (October 20, 2026 – November 19, 2026) to local and State agencies, and to interested organizations and individuals who may wish to review and comment on the report. EMWD will circulate the Draft IS/MND to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies. In addition, EMWD will circulate a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration to the Riverside County Clerk, responsible agencies, and interested entities. A copy of the Draft IS/MND will be available for review at: <https://www.emwd.org/public-notice>.

Written comments can be submitted to EMWD by 5:00 p.m. on November 19, 2026 and addressed to:

Martha Vilchis, Water Resources Specialist Associate
Eastern Municipal Water District
P.O. Box 8300
Perris, CA 92572-8300
vilchism@emwd.org

Following the 30-day public review period, EMWD will evaluate all comments received on the Draft IS/MND and incorporate any substantial evidence that the proposed Project could have an

impact on the environment into the Final IS/MND and prepare a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).

The IS/MND and MMRP will be considered for adoption by the EMWD Board of Directors in compliance with CEQA at a future publicly noticed hearing, which are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at EMWD's headquarters.

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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Overview

The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of a new expandable lift station (the SRRLS), the decommissioning of an existing lift station (the Wickerd Road Lift Station [WRLS]), and construction of approximately 12,775 linear feet (LF) and 9,000 LF of new gravity and force main sewers, respectively.

2.2 Project Location

The proposed Project is located in unincorporated Riverside County, east of the City of Menifee (**Figure 1**). The site is located east of Interstate 215 (I-215), south of State Route 74 (SR 74), and west of SR 79. The site encompasses a 1.76-acre parcel at the southeastern corner of Scott Road and Leon Road (Assessor's Parcel Number 472-060-001), where the proposed SRRLS would be constructed, a 0.23-acre parcel where the existing WRLS is located, as well as roadway right-of-way (ROW) on the following segments: Beeler Road north of Scott Road; Scott Road between Leon Road and Beeler Road; Leon Road between Scott Road and Wickerd Road; Wickerd Road between the existing WRLS and Eucalyptus Road; and Eucalyptus Road between Wickerd Road and Craig Avenue (**Figure 2**).

2.3 Project Background and Need

EMWD owns and operates the existing WRLS located on Wickerd Road approximately 1,400 feet west of the intersection of Wickerd Road and Leon Road. The WRLS currently serves the La Ventana Ranch Development and Liberty High School. Existing sewer flows from the WRLS are conveyed westerly initially within a 6-inch-diameter force main located in the Wickerd Road ROW that transitions to 15-inch-diameter gravity flow sewer main near Wickerd Road and Briggs Road.

The WRLS does not have adequate capacity to serve future planned growth in its service area. The proposed Project would provide a new expandable lift station (the SRRLS) to meet future demands. The existing WRLS would eventually be decommissioned, and existing flows would be conveyed south to the SRRLS via gravity sewer once the new SRRLS is operational. Sewer flows from planned and future residential developments would also be conveyed south along Beeler Road and west along Scott Road via gravity sewers to the new SRRLS. Flows from the new SRRLS would then be conveyed northwards via new dual 12-inch force mains to an existing high point where flows would transition to a 21-inch gravity sewer which would then tie into the existing 27-inch-diameter Holland Channel Gravity Sewer, located at the intersection of Craig Avenue and Eucalyptus Road.

2.4 Proposed Project Description

As mentioned above, the proposed Project would involve the construction and operation of a new expandable lift station (SRRLS), the decommissioning of an existing lift station (WRLS), and construction of gravity and force main sewers (**Figure 3**). Below are detailed descriptions of each Project component.

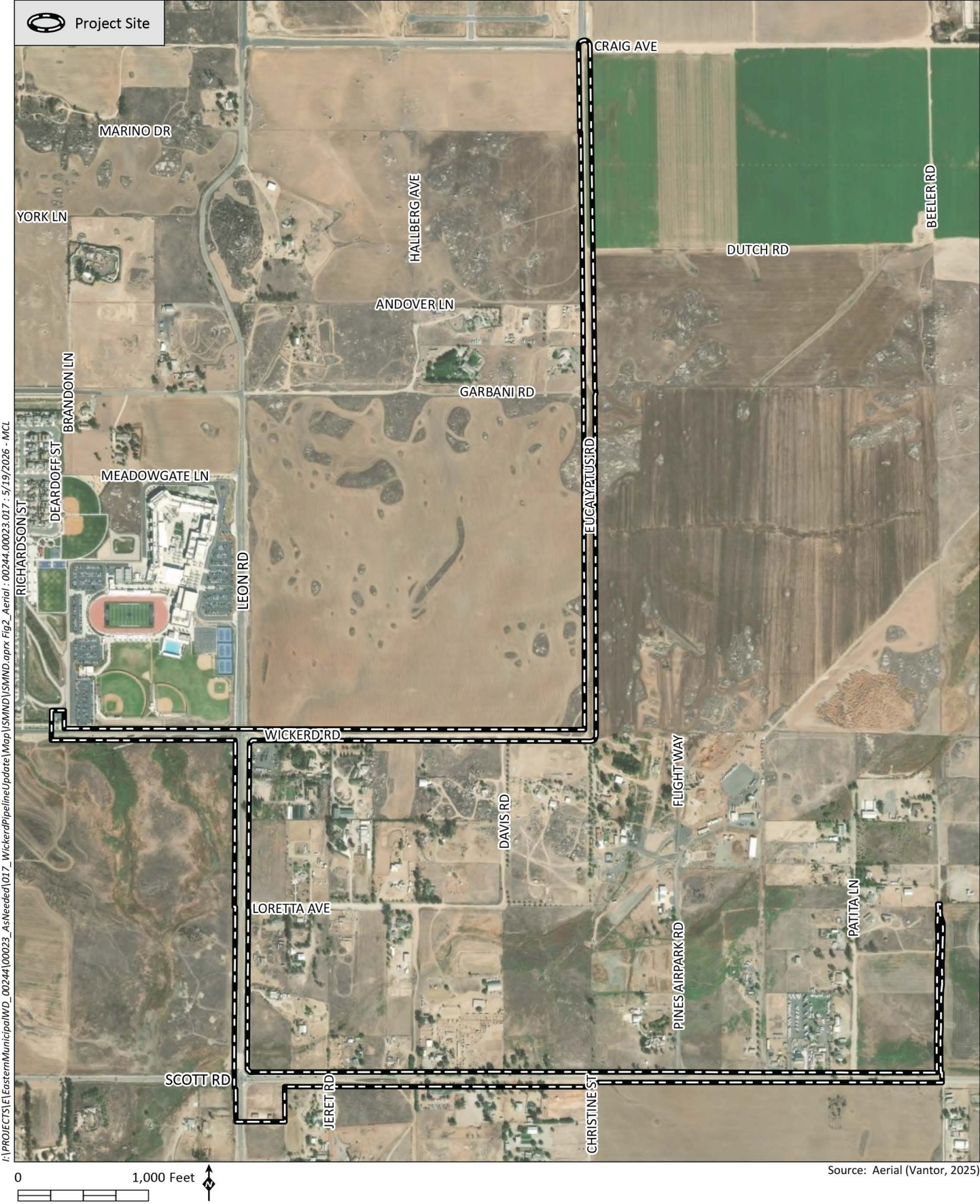
2.4.1 Lift Stations

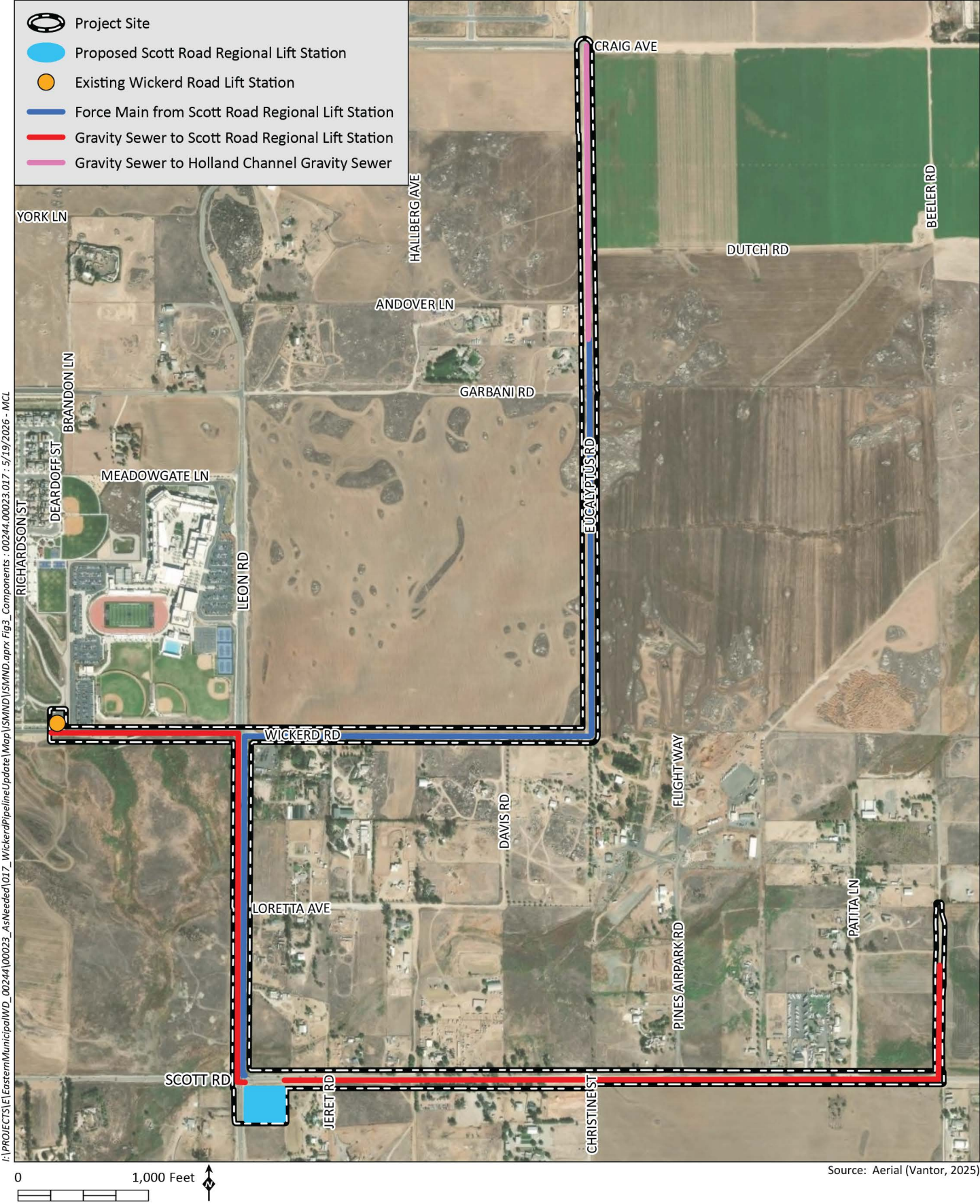
Scott Road Regional Lift Station

The new expandable SRRLS would be constructed on the 1.76-acre parcel located at the southeastern corner of Scott Road and Leon Road (**Figure 3**). The SRRLS would include wet wells that would accommodate influent flow from the new gravity line from the WRLS and the new gravity lines in Beeler Road and Scott Road associated with planned residential development. Electric-powered pumps would be located within the wet wells, which would be at a depth of 35 feet below grade, and would pump effluent flow out through new force mains north up Leon Road. Initially, the SRRLS would include one wet well with three pumps with a combined capacity of approximately 1,750 gallons per minute (gpm). As buildout progresses, the SRRLS would be expanded to two wet wells with six pumps with a total capacity of approximately 5,000 gpm.

Electricity would be provided on site via a new transformer that would tie into existing Southern California Edison (SCE) facilities located in Scott Road. An emergency backup generator would also be located on the site to provide power in the instance of electrical power failure. The generator would be sized for 500 kilowatts (kW) in the interim phase and 1,250 kW in the ultimate phase. An odor control system would be installed consisting of chemical addition components and vapor phase odor control. The chemical addition components would include a chemical storage tank and chemical feed pump, both of which would be located on a concrete pad. An electrical building and communications tower with an antenna height of 40 feet would also be located at the site. The overall site would be enclosed by an 8-foot-tall block wall on all sides. Access would be provided via two secured entrances, with the main entrance along Leon Road and a second egress along Scott Road. The site would include gravel-filled basins/trenches within the perimeter walls that would act to detain and off-set stormwater flows generated on site. In addition, space on the outside of the west and east perimeter walls would be provided to allow for the continuation of 100-year flood flows that route south to north through the site towards Warm Springs Creek in the existing condition. Wall pack lighting would be installed for security purposes at the site. Because the SRRLS site is within Zone B of the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy (see Section 4.1, *Aesthetics*, for additional discussion), security lighting would comply with the Zone B requirements. Specifically, the lighting would be less than 4,050 lumens. The lighting would also be shielded downward to avoid light spill onto neighboring properties.







Wickerd Road Lift Station

Once the new SRRLS is operational, the existing WRLS would be decommissioned. This would involve disconnecting utilities, removing equipment, and demolishing the lift station structure and surrounding pavements. The site would then be restored (i.e., graded).

2.4.2 Sewers

Gravity Sewers

Wickerd Road Lift Station to Scott Road Regional Lift Station Pipeline

A proposed gravity sewer would be constructed to allow flows to be conveyed south to the new SRRLS once the SRRLS is commissioned. The gravity line would route east from the WRLS site along Wickerd Road to Leon Road, south along Leon Road to Scott Road, and east on Scott Road to the SRRLS site (**Figure 3**). The gravity line would include 1,550 LF of 15-inch-diameter polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe in Wickerd Road, 1,300 LF of 21-inch-diameter vitrified clay pipe (VCP) in Leon Road, and 1,800 LF of 24-inch-diameter VCP in Leon Road and Scott Road up to the SRRLS, where it would tie into the SRRLS wet wells via a 36-inch-diameter VCP pipe.

Beeler Road Pipeline

Within Beeler Road, which is an unpaved road in the existing condition, a 675-LF, 12-inch-diameter PVC gravity line would be constructed from the proposed Ardis Ranch development located on the east side of Beeler Road to connect with the proposed gravity sewer in Scott Road south (discussed below), which would ultimately convey flows to the SRRLS. The pipeline would be constructed at a depth of 18 feet.

Scott Road Pipeline

Within the Scott Road ROW, a 5,200-LF gravity line would be constructed from Beeler Road to the SRRLS. The easternmost 1,380 LF would be 15-inch-diameter VCP pipe. The remaining 3,820 LF would be 18-inch-diameter VCP pipe. This would accommodate flows from the proposed Ardis Ranch development (mentioned above), the proposed Frederick's Ridge development located on the south side of Scott Road between Beeler Road and Christine Street, and other tributary flows from regional development.

Force Mains

Dual Force Mains from SRRLS to Holland Channel Gravity Sewer

Dual force mains, in addition to a segment of gravity sewer, would convey flows from the new SRRLS north to the existing 27-inch-diameter Holland Channel Gravity Sewer at the intersection of Craig Avenue and Eucalyptus Road. The force mains would be 12-inch-diameter PVC pipe and would route from the SRRLS north in Leon Road, east in Wickerd Road, and north in Eucalyptus Road to just north of Garbani Road for a total length of 9,000 LF. From the northern terminus of the force main alignment, a 2,250-LF, 21-inch-diameter gravity line would be constructed within

Eucalyptus Road to connect the force mains to the existing Holland Channel Gravity Sewer at the intersection of Craig Avenue and Eucalyptus Road (see **Figure 3**).

2.4.3 Construction

Lift Stations

The existing SRRLS parcel is vacant, containing ruderal vegetation. The site would be cleared of the vegetation and then graded. Grading is anticipated to require 5,500 cubic yards of fill to raise the site out of the floodplain. Following clearing and grading work, below-grade facilities, such as site piping and the wet wells, would be installed. The site, including access routes, would then be paved and above-grade facilities (such as the electrical building, transformer, odor control system, and perimeter wall) would be installed. Staging for construction of the SRRLS would occur at the site.

As mentioned above in Section 2.4.1, decommissioning of the existing WRLS would involve disconnecting utilities, removing equipment, demolishing the lift station structure and surrounding pavements, and restoring the site for future use. This work is expected to occur at up to a depth of five feet below ground surface. While the future use of the site is undetermined, it is anticipated that site restoration would entail backfilling and grading.

Equipment expected to be utilized for construction of the SRRLS and decommissioning of the WRLS is shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1:
Construction Equipment Fleet – Lift Stations**

Equipment	Number
Backhoe/Loader	2
Excavator	1
Forklift	1
Concrete Pumper	1
Crane	1
Utility Truck	1
Water Truck	1
Welder	1
Compressor	1
Pump	1
Generator	1
Roller	1
Paver	1

Pipelines

The various pipelines would be constructed within paved and unpaved roadway ROW. Construction would entail open cut trenching, installing the pipe, backfilling the pipe, recompacting the surface, and repaving, where necessary. Trenchless construction methods, expected to be jack-and-bore, would be used to install the pipelines under select features, including culverts and pipelines. Jack-and-bore construction methods would require the excavation of jacking pits and receiving pits on either side of the trenchless segment. Jacking pits are expected to be approximately 40 feet long by 20 feet wide and receiving pits are expected to be approximately 20 feet long and 10 feet wide. Installation of the pipeline would average between 100 and 300 feet per day. Dewatering is not anticipated to be required during construction. Staging for construction of the pipelines would occur at the SRRLS site and potentially within the shoulders of the ROW adjacent to where the pipelines would be installed. Construction within roadways would involve implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan, as described in detail in Section 2.5, below.

Equipment expected to be utilized for construction of the various pipelines is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2:
Construction Equipment Fleet – Pipelines

Equipment	Number
Backhoe/loader	1
Hydraulic excavator	1
Crane	1
Drill Rig	1
Utility truck	1
Water truck	1
Dump trucks	2
Concrete saw	1
Pavement breaker	1
Sweeper	1
Paver	1

Construction Schedule

Construction is expected to occur over an 18-month duration for construction of the SRRLS, the gravity sewers in Beeler Road and Scott Road, and the force mains. Following completion of construction of the SRRLS, the gravity sewer from the WRLS to the SRRLS would be constructed and the WRLS would be decommissioned. Night-time work is not currently anticipated.

2.4.4 Operations

Scott Road Regional Lift Station

Regular operations at the SRRLS, which would primarily involve operation of the pumps, would be automated. EMWD staff would access the site occasionally for inspection, maintenance, and repair of facilities.

Pipelines

Operation of the pipelines would be passive; therefore, no operational activities would occur for the pipelines as part of the Project.

2.5 EMWD Standard Construction Practices

EMWD maintains standard construction specifications, practices and procedures for incorporation into the design and construction of all EMWD projects. The following standard construction specifications, practices, and procedures, would be implemented as part of the Project:

- The design and construction of the facilities would be based on a Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared for the Project (Converse Consultants 2025). Design and construction would also be in compliance with applicable standards the American Water Works Association, the Greenbook Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (Greenbook Committee of Public Works Standards, Inc. 2021).
- EMWD would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to hazardous materials, including Federal Code Title 40 and 49; Occupational Safety and Health Administration 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910; California Code of Regulations section 5001, 5401, 5701, and 25507; California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 6.5, Article 6.6, and Article 13; and Riverside County ordinance 651.5. Additionally, the contractor would be required to comply with EMWD Detailed Provisions Section 02201 – Construction Methods & Earthwork of the Standard Detailed Provisions for Flammable or Toxic Materials to prevent spontaneous combustion or dispersion.
- EMWD and its contractors would be required to adhere to EMWD's General Safety Requirements for Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste (Specification 1.15 of Section 01000-7) which require proper communication of hazardous substances on a project site, proper storage and disposal of hazardous substances on the site, and clean-up of any spills in accordance with manufacturers', and/or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requirements.
- EMWD would comply with federal hazardous materials transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.), and California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 6.5 which require precautionary measures be taken during the routine transport of hazardous materials, such as testing and preparation of a transportation safety plan. According to

California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 13, used oil that may be produced from construction or operation of the Project would be recycled.

- Prior to Project construction, EMWD would require its construction contractor to prepare a Traffic Control and Detour Plan in accordance with US Department of Transportation Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and Permit requirements, and local Riverside County traffic control requirements. At a minimum, the plan would:
 - Identify staging locations to be used during construction;
 - Identify safe ingress and egress points from staging areas;
 - Identify potential road closures;
 - Establish haul routes for construction-related vehicle traffic;
 - When work is not being performed, require trenches to be covered with an appropriate cover to restore normal traffic flow;
 - Include a detour plan that identifies alternative safe routes to maintain pedestrian and bicyclist safety during construction; and
 - Identify roadways and access points for emergency services; and require that disruptions to or closures of these lanes be minimized.
 - Include provisions for traffic control measures such as barricades, warning signs, cones, lights, and flag persons, to allow safe circulation of vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, and emergency response traffic.
- EMWD's construction contractor would provide the construction schedule and Traffic Control and Detour Plan to the County of Riverside for review and approval as part of the Encroachment Permit process to ensure that construction of the Project does not conflict with other construction projects that may be occurring simultaneously in the Project vicinity.
- All construction work would require the contractor to implement fire hazard reduction measures. In accordance with EMWD Specifications Detailed Provisions Section 02201 – Construction Methods & Earthwork of the Standard Detailed Provisions, the entire work and site, including storage areas, are inspected at frequent intervals to verify that fire prevention measures are constantly enforced; fully charged fire extinguishers of the appropriate type, supplemented with temporary fire hoses wherever an adequate water supply exists, are furnished and maintained; and flammable materials are stored in a manner that prevents spontaneous combustion or dispersion.
- Construction would comply with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 403 Fugitive Dust Control requirements as per EMWD's Dust Abatement procedures outlined in EMWD Specifications Detailed Provisions Section 02201 – Construction Methods & Earthwork of the Standard Detailed Provisions.

- EMWD's construction contractor would adhere to Engineering Special Provisions, Special Condition 09, which requires compliance with the California General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity Order No. 2022-0057 Division of Water Quality (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [NPDES] General Permit No. CAS000002), including preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Construction would implement best management practices (BMPs) to control water quality of stormwater discharges offsite, according to the SWPPP, such as site management "housekeeping," erosion control, sediment control, tracking control and wind erosion control.
- Staging areas selected by the Project contractor would be located on parcels that are previously disturbed, avoid adverse environmental impacts, and would be required to comply with EMWD's Standard Construction Practices.

2.6 Required Permits and Approvals

This IS/MND is intended to serve as the CEQA document for all actions associated with the proposed Project. In addition, this IS/MND is the reference document for the formulation and implementation of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the proposed Project.

The proposed Project may require approvals, permits, or authorization from other agencies, classified as "Responsible Agencies" under CEQA. According to Section 15381 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Responsible Agency is defined as a public agency other than the Lead Agency that will have discretionary approval power over the proposed Project or some component of the project, including mitigation. Section 15379 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a "public agency" as "...any state agency, board, or commission and any local or regional agency..." It goes on to state that the term public agency "...does not include agencies of the federal government." These agencies include, but are not limited to, the agencies identified in **Table 3**. No federal approvals are needed for the proposed Project.

**Table 3:
Required Permits and Approvals**

Permit/Approval	Permitting/Approving Agency	Permit/Approval Trigger
Encroachment Permit	County of Riverside	Construction in right-of-way
National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction Permit for Storm Water Discharges	State Water Resources Control Board	Construction site greater than one acre
Trenching/Shoring Permit	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration	Trenching/shoring for pipeline installation
South Coast Air Quality Management District	Emergency Generator Permit to Construct	Installation of emergency generator at SRRLS
	Emergency Generator Permit to Operate	Operation of emergency generator at SRRLS
Participating Special Entity*	Regional Conservation Authority	If take authorization is required

Permit/Approval	Permitting/Approving Agency	Permit/Approval Trigger
Federal Endangered Species Act Section 10(a) Incidental Take Permit*	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	If take authorization is required
California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit*	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	If take authorization is required
Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit*	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	If work would occur in waters of the U.S. regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404
Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification*	Regional Water Quality Control Board	If work/discharge would occur in waters of the U.S. and State regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and/or the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
Clean Water Act Section 401 Waste Discharge Requirements*	Regional Water Quality Control Board	If work/discharge would occur in waters of the U.S. and State regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and/or the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement*	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	If work would occur in streambed and riparian habitat regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Sections 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code

* If necessary.

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3.0 MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

3.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

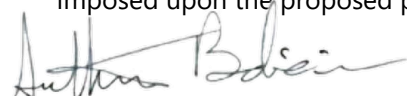
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Aesthetics | ☐ Agriculture/Forestry Resources | ☐ Air Quality |
| ☐ Biological Resources | ☐ Cultural Resources | ☐ Energy |
| ☐ Geology/Soils | ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions | ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality | ☐ Land Use/Planning | ☐ Mineral Resources |
| ☐ Noise | ☐ Population/Housing | ☐ Public Services |
| ☐ Recreation | ☐ Transportation | ☐ Tribal Cultural Resources |
| ☐ Utilities/Service Systems | ☐ Wildfire | ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance |

3.2 Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the Project have been made by or agreed to by the Project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed Project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Signature

Anthony Budicin
Printed Name

10/14/2026
Date

Director of Env. & Reg. Comp.
Title

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4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.1 Aesthetics

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Expect as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock, outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The proposed Project area is located in unincorporated Riverside County, east of the City of Menifee and west of SR 79. The policies of the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element (County 2024a) are intended to promote development that blends in with its surrounding environments and preserves view corridors and topographic vistas.

Caltrans manages the State Scenic Highway Program which was created by the State Legislature in 1963 with the purpose of protecting the natural scenic beauty of California's highways. State-designated scenic highways have locally adopted policies to preserve the scenic quality of the

corridor. The nearest State-designated scenic highway is a section of SR 74 beginning near the intersection with Blackburn Road, approximately 16 miles northeast of the Project area. The stretch of SR 74 through the City of Hemet is a State-eligible scenic highway, approximately 5.5 miles from the Project Area (Caltrans 2019).

Riverside County Ordinance Number 655 regulates light pollution by restricting the permitted use of certain outdoor light fixtures that emit light into the night sky which have a detrimental effect on astronomical observation and research. It defines two zones (Zone A and Zone B) relative to the distance between the light source and Palomar Observatory and sets requirements for lamp type and shielding for three classes of outdoor lighting: where color rendition is important (Class I); parking lots, walkways, security (Class II); and decorative (Class III; County 1988). Zone A is the circular area 15 miles in radius around Palomar Observatory. Zone B is the area between the Zone A perimeter and a 45-mile radius around Palomar Observatory. Requirements within Zone A are more stringent than within Zone B. For example, for Class I lighting, low pressure sodium lamps and other lamps 4,050 lumens and below are allowed in Zone A, whereas these two lamp types as well as other lamp types above 4,050 lumens, if fully shielded, are allowed in Zone B.

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

The most prominent scenic resources that can be viewed from the Project area are the San Jacinto Mountains located to the northeast. Such views could be temporarily affected during construction of the SRRLS and sewer pipelines and demolition of the WRLS due to the presence of construction equipment. Once construction is completed, however, visual impacts related to construction activities would cease. The sewer pipelines would be underground and the WRLS would be demolished. The only permanent aboveground Project component with the potential to result in long-term impacts on scenic vistas would be the SRRLS, which would include the following above-ground components: transformer, emergency generator, odor control system, electrical building, 8-foot-tall perimeter block wall, and 40-foot-tall communications tower (see Section 2.4.1, *Lift Stations*). The SRRLS facilities (other than the communications tower) and perimeter wall would be of similar height to nearby residential and agricultural buildings and vegetation. Similarly, the communications tower would be of similar height to existing transmission towers located adjacent to the site. In addition, much of the surrounding foothill ridges and open space areas are topographically higher and thus, the SRRLS would not substantially obstruct views of mountains and hillsides from the open space areas. Therefore, the Project would not substantially adversely impact local scenic vistas. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock, outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

As discussed above, the nearest State-designated scenic highway to the Project is a section of SR 74 beginning near the intersection with Blackburn Road, approximately 16 miles northeast of the Project area. The stretch of SR 74 through the City of Hemet is a State-eligible scenic highway, approximately 5.5 miles from the Project Area (Caltrans 2019). As such, none of the proposed Project's components are within the viewshed of an eligible or officially dedicated state scenic highway. No impacts associated with damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

The Project is located in unincorporated Riverside County and in an area considered to be nonurbanized by the State (State of California 2026). During construction, scenic views of surrounding hills and mountains near the Project site could be temporarily altered by construction equipment such as cranes and excavators. However, once construction is complete, all construction-related visual obstructions would be removed. The sewer pipelines would be located underground within existing roadway ROW and temporary areas of disturbance, such as roads and staging sites, would be restored to pre-construction conditions. The existing WRLS, including aboveground appurtenances, would be removed. The permanent aboveground structures at the SRRLS would be visible to the public from Leon Road and Scott Road. Such views would primarily occur via vehicle travel, and as such would be fleeting and only last a few seconds or minutes.

As described above, the Project area is under the jurisdiction of Riverside County and is subject to the policies established in the Riverside County General Plan. The Riverside County Land Use Element (County 2024a) policies are intended to promote development that blends in with its surrounding environments and preserves view corridors and topographic vistas. EMWD, as a public agency, is not subject to other jurisdictional agencies' established standards or ordinances. Nonetheless, the SRRLS, which would be constructed on a currently vacant site that has a County General Plan land use designation of Rural Community – Estate Density Residential, would be designed and constructed to blend in with the existing visual character of the surrounding in terms of building and wall height, color, and exterior architectural treatments.

The 40-foot-tall metal communications tower would be of similar height to existing metal transmission towers located adjacent to the site. As such, the Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Although construction of the proposed Project would be limited to the hours determined in the County encroachment permit, construction activities would occur during daytime hours. No nighttime work involving lighting that could affect nighttime views would be required. While this daytime construction could create a minor new source of light and glare from construction equipment, impacts are considered less than significant because construction would be temporary, and equipment would be removed once site restoration is complete.

Once construction is complete, wall pack lighting would be installed for security purposes at the SRRLS site and would be the only new permanent source of light. As discussed in Section 2.4, *Proposed Project Description*, the security lighting would conform to the Mount Palomar Nighttime Lighting Policy Zone B requirements because the Project area is within the 45-mile zone radius of the Palomar Observatory. Permanent exterior security lighting would be less than 4,050 lumens and would be shielded downward to avoid light spill onto neighboring properties. The Project would thus be in compliance with Riverside County Ordinance No. 655 and would not represent a substantial new source of light that would adversely affect nighttime view. Construction of the below-ground pipelines would not result in a new source of light and glare. The Project's impacts associated with the project pipelines would be limited to temporary construction activities and would not result in a new source of light or glare. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

The Project area is characterized by agricultural use. There are 7.1 acres of agricultural land within the Project site, consisting primarily of fallow land, with one field including active alfalfa (**Figure 4**). According to the California Department of Conservation's (CDOC's) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the SRRLS site is classified as Other Land and the WRLS site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land (CDOC 2022). The sewer alignments traverse land classified as Other Land, Farmland of Local Importance, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Land enrolled in a Williamson Act contract, including the six contiguous parcels bound by Leon Road to the west, Wickerd Road to the south, Garbani Road to the north, and Eucalyptus Road to the east (CDOC 2025), is located adjacent to the Project alignment. The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value (CDOC 2026a).

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

The portion of land traversed by the sewer alignments that is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance, which is located south of Craig Avenue and east of Eucalyptus Road, is currently utilized for agricultural purposes; however, once constructed, the pipelines would be located below ground and would not permanently convert agricultural use to non-agricultural use. In addition, the pipelines would be located within designated roadway ROW. It is likely that this portion of agricultural land that is within the Project boundary and ROW will not be utilized for agricultural purposes in the future as the area is developed and the roadway ROW is paved (see Section 4.21, *Mandatory Findings of Significance*, for discussion on planned development in the area). As such, the Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

As mentioned above, the proposed sewer alignment would be located adjacent to land enrolled in a Williamson Act contract, which includes the six contiguous parcels bound by Leon Road to the west, Wickerd Road to the south, Garbani Road to the north, and Eucalyptus Road to the



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east (CDOC 2025). The pipelines would be constructed within designated ROW (i.e., outside the designated Williamson Act parcels) and would be below ground. The Project would therefore not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract during construction or operations. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

The Project site is not designated or zoned for forest land, timber, or timberland production. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not conflict with existing zoning designations for such lands. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

No impact.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

As stated above in Item 2.c, the Project site is not located in an area designated as forest land. Accordingly, Project construction and operation would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

No impact.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

There are no timberland production operations within the Project area. Furthermore, the Project does not propose changes that could result in the permanent conversion of Farmland to non-

agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The majority of the Project site would be limited to temporary construction impacts, as the pipelines would be located below ground. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.3 Air Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The Project is located within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which is regulated by the SCAQMD. The SCAQMD develops and administers local regulations for stationary air pollutant sources within the SCAB, and also develops plans and programs to meet attainment requirements for both the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California

Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The NAAQS, which are required to be set by the USEPA under the Clean Air Act, provide public health protection, including protecting the health of sensitive populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Similarly, the CAAQS are established to protect the health of the most sensitive groups and are mandated by State law.

Air quality is defined by ambient air concentrations of six specific pollutants identified by the USEPA to be of concern with respect to health and welfare of the general public. These pollutants include ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (including both particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter [PM₁₀] and particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter [PM_{2.5}]), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb).

Depending on whether the NAAQS or CAAQS are attained or exceeded for each of the criteria pollutants, the SCAB is classified as being in “attainment” or “nonattainment” for that pollutant. The SCAB is currently in federal/state nonattainment area for ozone, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} (SCAQMD 2022). In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), the SCAQMD’s approach for assessing cumulative impacts is based on the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) forecasts of attainment of ambient air quality standards in accordance with the requirements of the federal and State Clean Air Acts.

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

The SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are responsible for formulating and implementing the AQMP for the Basin (SCAQMD 2022), which is the applicable air quality plan for the Project area. SCAG is the regional planning agency for Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial Counties, and addresses regional issues relating to transportation, economy, community development, and environment. With regard to air quality planning, SCAG has prepared the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), a long-range transportation plan that uses growth forecasts to project trends out over a 20-year period to identify regional transportation strategies to address mobility needs. These growth forecasts form the basis for the land use and transportation control portions of the AQMP. These documents are utilized in the preparation of the air quality forecasts and consistency analysis included in the AQMP. Both the RTP/SCS and AQMP are based, in part, on regional population and employment growth projections originating with County and City General Plans.

A project would conflict with or obstruct an applicable air quality plan if it would lead to population, housing, or employment growth that exceeds the forecasts used in the development of the applicable air quality plan. The overall objective of the Project is to provide the adequate sewer capacity necessary to serve the area’s future planned growth. Therefore, the Project would improve operational benefits to accommodate existing and planned demand for sewer conveyance in EMWD’s service area that would occur with or without the Project. Construction would not require personnel to relocate from outside the area; jobs would be filled by local workers. The Project would not lead to unplanned population, housing, or employment growth that exceeds the forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The Project would therefore not conflict with the applicable air quality plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

To determine whether a project would result in cumulatively considerable emissions that would violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, a project's emissions are evaluated based on the quantitative emission thresholds established by the SCAQMD. These thresholds are designed such that a project consistent with the thresholds would not have an individually or cumulatively significant impact on the SCAB's air quality. In addition to criteria air pollutants, thresholds have been set for nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), also referred to as reactive organic gases (ROGs), which are O₃ precursors. The thresholds are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4:
SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Pollutant	Mass Thresholds (lbs./day)	
	Construction	Operations
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)	75	55
Nitrogen Oxides (NO _x)	100	55
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	550	550
Sulfur Oxides (SO _x)	150	150
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	150	150
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	55	55

Source: SCAQMD 2023

An analysis of criteria pollutants and precursors generated during short-term construction and long-term operation is provided below.

Construction

The Project's construction emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). CalEEMod output files are included as Appendix A to this IS/MND. The CalEEMod emissions estimations were based on Project-specific information found in Section 2, *Project Description*. In instances where Project-specific information was not available (e.g., construction equipment horsepower, length of worker trips, soil moisture content), the analysis relied on CalEEMod default values. The results of the calculations for the Project's construction criteria pollutant and precursor emissions are shown in **Table 5**. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for comparison with the SCAQMD thresholds (SCAQMD 2023).

Table 5:
Maximum Daily Construction Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)

Phase	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
SRRLS						
Site Preparation	0.66	4.26	6.28	0.02	0.24	0.15
Grading	0.70	6.87	6.90	0.03	0.91	0.37
Construction	1.54	11.54	12.58	0.03	0.40	0.37
Paving	3.53	2.35	3.39	<0.01	0.17	0.11
Sewer Pipelines						
Trenching (2027)	0.91	6.21	8.81	0.02	0.35	0.21
Installation (2027)	1.04	7.73	10.10	0.03	0.40	0.28
Backfilling (2027)	0.73	4.74	6.82	0.02	0.29	0.17
Paving (2027)	0.32	2.56	3.76	<0.01	0.18	0.12
Trenching (2028)	0.89	5.94	8.73	0.02	0.33	0.19
Installation (2028)	1.02	7.26	10.05	0.03	0.38	0.26
Backfilling (2028)	0.72	4.51	6.76	0.02	0.27	0.16
Paving (2028)	0.30	2.48	3.74	<0.01	0.17	0.11
WRLS						
Demolition	0.65	4.05	6.35	0.02	0.24	0.14
Maximum Daily Emissions	6.53	32.78	42.07	0.10	2.12	1.15
<i>SCAQMD Thresholds</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>55</i>
Significant Impact?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A)

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

VOC = volatile organic compounds; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_x = sulfur oxides;

PM₁₀ = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

Maximum daily emissions are expected to occur when construction of the SRRLS (grading, construction, or paving) overlaps with construction of the sewer pipelines. It is conservatively assumed for this analysis that pipeline trenching, installation, backfilling, and paving would occur simultaneously to account for the possibility that four individual crews, each performing one of the activities, would be active concurrently along different parts of the pipeline alignment as installation progresses in a linear manner. The model also assumes compliance with SCAQMD's Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust) which requires construction projects to implement measures to suppress fugitive dust emissions, such as watering of exposed soils, limiting vehicle speeds on unpaved areas, and covering haul trucks. As shown in **Table 5**, construction period emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors would not exceed the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and impacts during construction would be less than significant.

Operation

Operational sources of criteria pollutant and precursor emissions associated with the Project would include the backup generator at the SRRLS site and occasional maintenance trips to/from the SRRLS. Use of the generator at the SRRLS, which would be limited to instances of electrical power failure and occasional testing, would not result in a substantial increase in emissions of criteria pollutants over existing conditions because the existing WRLS, which would be

decommissioned, includes a similar type of generator. Similarly, maintenance trips would be consistent with EMWD's existing operation and management (O&M) activities and would not require additional O&M activities. The decommissioned WRLS site would not result in criteria pollutant emissions. Operational impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved and are referred to as sensitive receptor locations. Examples of these sensitive receptor locations are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions that would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality (California Air Resources Board [CARB] 2018). Sensitive receptors within one-half mile of the proposed Project consist of single-family residences along Scott Road, Leon Road, Wickerd Road, and Garbani Road and Liberty High School along Leon Road.

Construction

The localized effects from the on-site portion of daily construction emissions were evaluated at sensitive receptor locations potentially impacted by the Project according to the SCAQMD's localized screening threshold (LST) methodology (SCAQMD 2026). The proposed Project is within Source Receptor Areas (SRAs) 24 (Perris Valley) and 26 (Temecula Valley). As most of the Project area is within SRA 24, its stricter thresholds were utilized as opposed to thresholds under SRA 26. LST guidelines state that when quantifying mass emissions for localized analysis, only emissions that occur on site should be considered. Emissions related to off-site delivery/haul truck activity and construction worker trips are not considered in the evaluation of construction-related localized impacts, as these do not contribute to emissions generated on a project site. However, to provide a conservative analysis, overall maximum construction daily emissions are considered herein. The closest sensitive receptors to a construction site would be single family homes along the roadways where pipeline alignments would be placed (Scott Road, Leon Road, Wickerd Road, and Garbani Road), which are typically setback at least 50 feet from the roadway ROW. Therefore, the LSTs in SRA 24 for receptors located less than 82 feet (25 meters) are used for project sites less than 1 acre. **Table 6** shows the localized construction emissions.

Table 6:
Maximum Localized Daily Construction Emissions (pounds per day)

Emissions Source	NO_x	CO	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
All sources	32.78	42.07	2.12	1.15
<i>Localized Significance Thresholds for SRA 24 (one-acre, 25 meters)</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>1,100</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7</i>
Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

NO_x = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; PM₁₀ = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; PM_{2.5} = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

As shown in **Table 6**, emissions for criteria pollutants would remain below their respective SCAQMD LSTs at 82 feet (25 meters). Therefore, construction of the Project would not result in exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial localized concentrations of criteria pollutants and precursors.

Construction of the project would result in the use of heavy-duty construction equipment, haul trucks, and construction worker vehicles. These vehicles and equipment could generate the toxic air contaminant (TAC) diesel particulate matter (DPM). Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a localized area (e.g., at the project site) for a short period of time. Because construction activities and subsequent emissions vary depending on the phase of construction (e.g., grading, paving), the construction-related emissions to which nearby receptors are exposed would also vary throughout the construction period.

The dose (of TAC) to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance in the environment and the extent of exposure a person has with the substance; a longer exposure period to a fixed quantity of emissions would result in higher health risks. Current models and methodologies for conducting cancer health risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods (typically 30 years for individual residents based on guidance from Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment [OEHHA]) and are best suited for evaluation of long duration TAC emissions with predictable schedules and locations. These assessment models and methodologies do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities. Cancer potency factors are based on animal lifetime studies or worker studies where there is consistent long-term exposure to the carcinogenic agent. There is considerable uncertainty in trying to evaluate the cancer risk from projects that will only last a small fraction of a lifetime (OEHHA 2015). Considering this information, the highly dispersive nature of DPM, and the fact that most of Project's construction activities would occur at various locations and varying intensities throughout the Project site, it is not anticipated that construction of the Project would expose sensitive receptors to substantial DPM concentrations. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

As mentioned above under Item b, the only operational sources of pollutant emissions associated with the Project would include the backup generator at the SRRLS site and occasional

maintenance trips to/from the SRRLS (the well pumps would be electrically powered). Use of the generator at the SRRLS would be limited to instances of electrical power failure and occasional testing and would therefore not represent a substantial source of emissions that could affect sensitive receptors. In addition, there are no sensitive receptors adjacent to the SRRLS site, with nearest sensitive receptor located approximately 240 feet to the east. Similarly, maintenance trips would be consistent with EMWD's existing O&M activities and would not require additional O&M activities that would generate substantial pollutant concentrations. Impacts to sensitive receptors during operations would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

The proposed Project would involve emissions of sulfur compounds from use of oil and diesel fuel during construction, which could potentially result in unpleasant odors. Construction would be temporary and odorous emissions from construction equipment tend to dissipate quickly within short distances from construction sites. Construction of the new sewer pipelines would be the closest Project activity to sensitive receptors but would progress at a rate of approximately 100 to 300 linear feet per day, so impacts would not occur in the same area over the entire construction period, further limiting the time a stationary receptor may experience odors. Construction of the SRRLS and decommissioning of the WRLS would occur within single locations, but there are no sensitive receptors located adjacent to the sites, with the closest residences located approximately 240 feet away. Once the Project is operational, the below-ground pipelines would not generate odors. The SRRLS would include an odor control system consisting of chemical addition components and vapor phase odor control, which would effectively limit odorous emissions being dispersed to off-site properties. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.4 Biological Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

A Biological Technical Report (BTR) was prepared for the proposed Project by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX; 2026a; Appendix B). The BTR involved a desktop review of existing information and field surveys. The desktop review included a thorough review of relevant maps, databases, and literature pertaining to biological resources known to occur within the Project site. Recent and historical aerial imagery, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps, soils maps (Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] 2019), and other maps of the Project site and vicinity were acquired and reviewed to obtain updated information on the natural environmental setting. In addition, a query of special-status species and habitats databases was conducted, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) plant database (CDFW 2025a), the Rarefind database (CDFW 2026), the Calflora database (Calflora 2025), and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2026). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS's) National Wetlands Inventory (USFWS 2025) and data pertaining to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP; 2026) were also reviewed. The following biological surveys were conducted as part of the BTR effort: general biological surveys (habitat assessment, vegetation mapping, and preliminary aquatic resource delineation); rare plant surveys; aquatic resource delineation; fairy shrimp surveys; burrowing owl (BUOW; *Athene cunicularia*) surveys; and Crotch's bumble bee (CBB; *Bombus crotchii*) surveys.

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Special-Status Plant Species

Special-status (sensitive) plant species have been afforded special status and/or recognition by the USFWS and/or CDFW. They may also be included in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants. Their status is often based on one or more of three distributional attributes: geographic range, habitat specificity, and/or population size. Sensitive species are those

considered unusual or limited in that they are: (1) only found in the region; (2) a local representative of a species or association of species not otherwise found in the region; or (3) severely depleted within their ranges or within the region.

Two plant species observed in the Project site during the rare plant and other surveys conducted for the Project are sensitive species: smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *laevis*) and paniculate tarplant (*Deinandra paniculata*). Neither species is federal or state listed. Smooth tarplant is a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1¹ species and is considered a sensitive species under CEQA. A total of 50 individuals were observed in the Project site in disturbed habitat along Beeler Road. Impacts to this species could occur as a result of ground-disturbing activities during Project construction. Impacts to smooth tarplant would therefore be potentially significant.

Paniculate tarplant is a CRPR List 4.2 species. CNPS List 4 species are considered a watch list species that more information is required to grant a higher rank to, or be removed from, the CNPS list. Watch list species (i.e., those with a CNPS ranking of 4) do not meet the CEQA definition of a rare plant and are therefore not a CEQA sensitive species. A total of 297 individuals of paniculate tarplant were observed scattered in the Project site in the non-native grassland, disturbed habitat, and fallow agricultural lands along Wickerd Road and Eucalyptus Road. Impacts to this species could occur as a result of ground-disturbing activities during Project construction. However, because paniculate tarplant is not considered a sensitive species under CEQA, impacts to paniculate tarplant would be considered less than significant.

Special-Status Animal Species

Special-status animal species include those that have been afforded special status and/or recognition by the USFWS and/or CDFW. In general, the principal reason an individual taxon (species or subspecies) is given such recognition is due to the documented or perceived decline or limitations of its population size or geographical extent and/or distribution, resulting in most cases from habitat loss.

No special-status animal species were observed within or adjacent to the Project site during biological surveys conducted for the Project. Sensitive animal species with a high potential to occur based on geographic range, elevation range, and/or suitable habitat in the Project site include orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*), and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennettii*). Species with a moderate potential to occur include western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*), BUOW, and Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR; *Dipodomys*

¹ Rank 1B indicates that the species is rare or endangered in California and elsewhere. The plants of Rank 1B are rare throughout their range with the majority of them endemic to California. Most of the plants that are ranked 1B have declined significantly over the last century. California Rare Plant Rank 1B plants constitute the majority of plant taxa tracked by the CNDDB, with more than 1,000 plants assigned to this category of rarity. Threat code extension .1 indicates that the species is seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat).

stephensi). Three of the species with high or moderate potential to occur are listed species, proposed for federal listing, or state candidate for listing: western spadefoot, BUOW, and SKR. Individual species are discussed further below. Due to negative CBB and fairy shrimp focused species surveys, CBB, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and Riverside fairy shrimp are presumed absent. The host plant (dwarf plantain [*Plantago erecta*]) for Quino checkerspot butterfly (QCB; *Euphydryas editha quino*) was not observed during the rare plant surveys conducted for the Project, so this species is also presumed absent. Despite negative BUOW surveys, this species has a moderate potential to occur because it known from the area, is very mobile, and could occupy the Project site in the future.

Construction of the Project, primarily ground-disturbing activities in undeveloped areas and vegetation removal, could result in impacts to special status animal species, as well as nesting birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game (CFG) Code, that are present at the time of construction. Such impacts would be considered significant.

Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot is a federally proposed threatened species. The species would likely have been observed during fairy shrimp surveys if present, but nighttime toad surveys were not conducted. The species could also use habitat associated with Warm Springs Creek and adjacent uplands. Direct impact could occur from habitat disturbance during construction. Indirect impacts could occur to suitable habitat as a result of construction dust or runoff in the immediate vicinity. Thus, the Project has potential to result in impacts to the western spadefoot. Impacts to this species are considered potentially significant.

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owl is a California candidate for listing as state endangered and as such is granted the same protection as a state listed endangered species. Burrowing owls are also a federal bird of conservation concern and state species of special concern. Suitable habitat and multiple historical records of BUOW occurrences exist in the Project site. Although current BUOW surveys are negative, this species has potential to move into areas in or adjacent to the Project site. Ground disturbance within 500 feet (150 meters) of an active burrow during the breeding season (February 1 through August 31) or within 165 feet (50 meters) of an active burrow outside the breeding season could result in take of BUOW in violation of the California Endangered Species Act, MBTA and CFG code. Direct impacts could occur from ground disturbance at a burrow. Indirect impacts could occur as a result of construction noise in the immediate vicinity as described above, such that the disturbance results in nest/burrow abandonment or nest failure. Impacts to this species are considered potentially significant.

Stephens' Kangaroo Rat

The Project has potential to result in impacts to the federally endangered and state threatened SKR. This species' habitat generally comprises annual and perennial grasslands, and it would also use open sage scrub. Portions of the Project site occur within non-native grasslands and

disturbed habitat (see **Figure 4**) that are similar in species composition to non-native grassland with potential to support SKR. The Project site also occurs within the SKR Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Area, though it is not mapped as occupied habitat or located within a SKR Core Reserve. Public and private land developers, including EMWD, are required to pay a SKR mitigation fee for land that is developed and removes habitat of SKR within the SKR Plan Area. Direct impacts from the Project could occur from habitat disturbance during construction. Indirect impacts could occur to suitable habitat as a result of construction dust or runoff in the immediate vicinity. Impacts to this species are considered potentially significant.

Coast Horned Lizard

Coast horned lizard is a state species of special concern. This species was not observed during biological surveys, but focused species for this species were not conducted. The species could use grassland on sandy soils within the Project site. Direct impact could occur from habitat disturbance during construction. Indirect impacts could occur to suitable habitat as a result of construction dust or runoff in the immediate vicinity. Thus, the Project has potential to result in impacts to coast horned lizard. Impacts to this species are considered potentially significant.

State Watch List Species

Orange-throated whiptail, ferruginous hawk, California horned lark, and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow are state watch list species. These species could use grassland and trees within the Project site. Direct impact could occur from habitat disturbance during construction. Indirect impacts could occur to suitable habitat as a result of construction dust or runoff in the immediate vicinity. Thus, the Project has potential to result in impacts to these species. Impacts to these species are considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1a **Rare Plant Avoidance.** To the extent feasible, EMWD shall avoid impacts to the smooth tarplant population (CRPR 1B.1) through Project-level design changes and/or construction methods (e.g., trenchless installation of pipelines, working on the other side of the road).

Prior to initiating construction activities, EMWD shall require that the smooth tarplant locations detected during focused rare plant surveys (**Figure 4**) are supplied to the contractor and that the locations are demarcated in the field by a qualified biologist. The smooth tarplant locations to be avoided shall be protected-in-place through the installation of temporary construction fencing or alternative means that are approved by the qualified biologist. The temporary construction fencing shall be installed by the contractor, with the initial installation monitored by a qualified biologist. Spot checks of temporary fencing shall be performed by EMWD. Temporary construction fencing shall be repaired or replaced within three days of any observations of damage, and before any forecast rain of 0.1 inch or more. Temporary construction fencing shall be removed upon completion of construction of the Project. The qualified biologist shall monitor construction activities, as appropriate, to help ensure

avoidance of the demarcated areas. A final compliance report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist and submitted to EMWD for their records, verifying that no impacts occurred to the species.

If avoidance is not feasible, mitigation measure **BIO-1b** shall be implemented.

BIO-1b **Sensitive Plant Mitigation.** If as part of implementation of **BIO-1a**, Project alignment or construction design cannot be modified to avoid impacts to smooth tarplant, mitigation for impacts to this species shall occur at a minimum of a ratio of 1:1, and shall consist of:

- a. Preparation and implementation of a smooth tarplant salvage and relocation plan, to include the following requirements, at a minimum:
 - i. Evaluation of options for smooth tarplant salvage and relocation, including smooth tarplant mulching, selective soil salvaging, application of plant materials on manufactured slopes, and application/relocation of resources within existing or proposed preserved lands;
 - ii. Seed collection and/or transplantation to a suitable receptor site based on the most reliable methods of successful relocation;
 - iii. Recommendation for the method of salvage and relocation/application based on feasibility of implementation and likelihood of success; and
 - iv. Implementation plan, maintenance and monitoring program, estimated completion time, and any relevant contingency measures.

BIO-2 **Avoidance of Nesting Birds and Raptors.** To prevent direct impacts to nesting birds, including raptors, protected under the MBTA and CFG Code, EMWD shall enforce the following:

Any Project activity that could affect nesting birds shall occur outside of the general bird breeding season of February 15 to August 31 to the extent feasible. If such activities cannot be conducted outside the general bird breeding season, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting bird breeding surveys shall be retained to conduct a pre-activity nesting bird survey within three days prior to the start of activities and for project areas that will be cleared within the next 7 days to confirm the presence or absence of active bird nests. If an active bird nest is found by the qualified biologist, the buffer should be demarcated by temporary fencing, flagging, and or staking as deemed appropriate to avoid impacts. Vegetation removal and/or trimming activities within the buffer shall not be allowed to occur until the qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active. Avoidance buffers shall be 300 feet for passerine birds and 500 feet for raptors and may be adjusted by the

qualified biologist in their professional opinion based on such factors as the avian species involved, ambient levels of human activity, and screening vegetation.

BIO-3 Western Spadefoot Avoidance. Construction shall occur outside of the western spadefoot breeding season of October 1 to April 30 to the extent feasible. If construction cannot be conducted outside of the western spadefoot breeding season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a three-day/three-night pre-construction western spadefoot survey within 30 days before the start of construction, for undeveloped Project areas near vernal pools, freshwater marsh, and Warm Springs Creek (**Figure 4**). For the remainder of the western spadefoot breeding season, a qualified biologist shall do a daytime and nighttime check for western spadefoot following each rain event of at least one inch within 24 hours. If western spadefoot adults, eggs, tadpoles, or juveniles are observed during the pre-construction survey or subsequent visits, then work shall be halted until western spadefoot are confirmed absent or until the Project proponent implements avoidance buffers and other measures such as toad exclusion fencing and relocation as determined by the qualified biologist in their professional opinion. Western spadefoot avoidance measures will be determined in consultation with either the USFWS or the RCA, if EMWD pursues the Participating Special Entity (PSE) process under the MSHCP. The details regarding the PSE option are discussed in mitigation measure **BIO-6b**.

BIO-4a Burrowing Owl Survey and Pre-Construction Burrowing Owl Survey. If required by the USFWS or CDFW, EMWD shall have a qualified biologist conduct a current BUOW survey in accordance with the current protocol at the time of the survey. At the time of this report, the survey would follow the CDFW 2012 staff report for BUOW mitigation unless the Project has elected to be a PSE under the MSHCP, then the survey would follow the 2006 BUOW instruction for the MSHCP. Both survey guidelines require a minimum of four surveys to occur. The CDFW 2012 guideline requires the first survey to occur between February 15 and April 15, and the final survey to occur between June 15 and July 15. The 2006 MSHCP instructions require the four surveys to occur between March 1 and August 31 and does not specify specific date periods for each survey.

Additionally, 14-day and a 24 hour pre-construction surveys for BUOW are required by the CDFW 2012 guidelines (or a single survey 30-days prior if Project is PSE) prior to initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g., vegetation clearing, clearing and grubbing, grading, tree removal, site watering, equipment staging) to ensure that no BUOW have colonized the site in the days or weeks preceding the ground-disturbing activities. If BUOW are not detected during the pre-construction survey, no further action is required. If BUOW are detected, EMWD shall follow mitigation measures **BIO-4b, 6a, and 8**.

BIO-4b Burrowing Owl Mitigation. If, as part of implementation of **BIO-4a**, BUOW is observed during the focused surveys or the pre-construction survey, active burrows shall be avoided by the Project in accordance with the CDFW's *Staff Report on BUOW*

Mitigation (2012) or CDFW's most recent guidelines. The current avoidance distance in the CDFW 2012 guidelines is 165 feet between October 16 to March 31 and 650 feet from April 1 to October 15. No work shall occur within the buffer zone unless approved by CDFW. The Project proponent shall inform the CDFW of BUOW observations. A Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan (plan) shall be prepared by a qualified biologist. The qualified biologist and Project proponent shall coordinate with EMWD, CDFW, and USFWS on the plan to be approved by EMWD, CDFW, and USFWS prior to commencing Project activities (including ground disturbance).

The Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites and details on proposed buffers, if avoiding the BUOWs, or information on the adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls for relocation. If no suitable habitat is available nearby for relocation, details regarding the creation and funding of artificial burrows (numbers, location, and type of burrows) and management activities for relocated BUOW shall also be included in the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan. Relocation, if necessary, shall only occur outside of the nesting season (September 1 through January 31).

The Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan shall describe proposed avoidance (setback), shelter in place, relocation, monitoring, minimization, and/or mitigation actions. EMWD shall implement the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan following CDFW and USFWS review and approval. Avoidance and minimization measures may include:

Setback: No construction activities shall occur within 500 feet of occupied burrows during the breeding season (February 1 to August 31) or within 250 feet of occupied burrows during the nonbreeding season (September 1 to January 31), or as specified in the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan. When setback distances are applied to occupied burrows, a monitoring program shall be implemented to ensure that the setback distance applied to the burrow is considered an effective buffer. Once a setback distance is applied to an occupied burrow, the biological monitor will be present during construction activities that occur adjacent to the setback distance to monitor the BUOW's behavior. A setback shall be implemented during the breeding season for occupied burrows located within the Project footprint and off-site occupied burrows located within 300 feet or less, and during the nonbreeding season for off-site occupied burrows located within 150 feet or less of the Project footprint.

The biological monitor will have the authority to increase the setback distance if the construction activities are affecting the BUOW. If the buffer is determined to be ineffective, the buffer shall be increased to the maximum recommended distances listed in the revised Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). Setback distances may be reduced through Shelter in Place methods described below, which would be determined by the biological monitor.

Shelter in Place: If the established buffer is determined to be ineffective or a reduced setback is needed to complete construction, shelter in place can be implemented to minimize impacts while allowing existing burrows to remain intact. The qualified biologist and Project proponent shall coordinate with EMWD, CDFW, and USFWS to approve any modifications to the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan for any shelter in place prior to commencing. Where appropriate, the setback buffers may be reduced by screening burrows (i.e., installing hay bales to create a visual and auditory barrier between construction and the burrow) to minimize disturbance. During the breeding season, hay bales (or other similar material) will be stacked up to three bales high and 25 feet on either side of the burrow for a total of 50 feet. During the non-breeding season, hay bales will be stacked up to two bales high and 25 feet on either side of the burrow for a total of 50 feet. Hay bales are generally three feet long and 18 inches tall. A minimum distance of five feet between the hay bales and the occupied burrow will be left, allowing for perches near the burrow to be maintained. The minimum distance may be increased depending on the slope and topography of the area adjacent to the burrows.

If shelter in place is determined feasible, the biological monitor will provide guidance to the construction contractor regarding the location of the hay bales. During and following installation of the hay bales, a biological monitor shall be present daily to evaluate the effectiveness of the hay bales, monitor BUOW behavior for signs of stress or disturbance due to construction, and make adjustments to the buffer and/or hay bales in order to minimize impacts on the BUOW. If the BUOW continues to appear distressed from construction, the biological monitor will have the authority to halt construction until EMWD and CDFW can be contacted to determine the best course of action. Following installation of the hay bales, the biological monitor shall provide a report to EMWD and CDFW describing the installation time frame; a map of the area; photographs of hay bales and construction activities; and a description of site conditions (e.g., surrounding vegetation, topography, observed species, BUOW line-of-sight conditions).

If BUOW are observed within survey area(s) during Project implementation and construction, EMWD shall notify CDFW immediately in writing within 48 hours of detection. A Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval within two weeks of detection and no Project activity shall continue within 500 feet of the active BUOW burrows during the breeding season of February 1 to August 31 or if young are present, or within 250 feet during the non-breeding season, until CDFW approves the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan. EMWD shall be responsible for implementing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, including burrow avoidance, setbacks, shelter in place, passive or active relocation, or other appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan and discussed above.

If ground-disturbing activities occur but the site is left undisturbed for more than 14 days (30 days if a PSE under MSHCP), a pre-construction survey for BUOW shall be conducted and reported to CDFW as described above. If a BUOW is found, the same coordination described above shall be necessary.

A final letter report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the passive relocation. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW prior to the start of Project activities.

BIO-5 **Stephens' Kangaroo Rat HCP Mitigation Fee.** The Project is within the limits of the SKR HCP Plan Area. Prior to issuance of a grading permit, EMWD shall pay the SKR Mitigation fee of \$500 per acre of impact to the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency.

BIO-6a **Special-Status Wildlife Species Surveys and Avoidance.** If special-status wildlife species are identified within a Project impact area as part of mitigation measures **BIO-2**, **BIO-3**, and **BIO-4a**, EMWD shall avoid impacts to species and their habitat through Project-level design changes and/or construction methods (e.g., trenchless installation of pipelines) per mitigation measures **BIO-2**, **BIO-3**, and **BIO-4a**. If impacts to the species and their habitat cannot be avoided, mitigation measure **BIO-6b** shall be implemented.

BIO-6b **Special-Status Wildlife Species Mitigation.** If, as determined as part of mitigation measure **BIO-6a**, impacts to special-status wildlife cannot be avoided, EMWD shall seek incidental take authorization by one of two methods:

(1) Participating Special Entity (PSE) process under the MSHCP. To obtain MSHCP coverage as a PSE, the Project is required to demonstrate MSHCP compliance through specific habitat assessments, applicable biological surveys, the provision of an MSHCP consistency analysis, and payment of impact fees. Additionally, impacts to certain species under the MSHCP will require a Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP). A DBESP will be prepared as appropriate and will be used to demonstrate avoidance and mitigation related to impacts.

(2) Under the federal or state endangered species acts. EMWD may elect to seek incidental take authorization from USFWS pursuant to FESA Sections 7 or 10 and/or CDFW under CFG Code Sections 2080.1 and 2081(b), as applicable.

- a. Where species protected under Federal law may be impacted, EMWD shall either consult directly with the USFWS to develop and implement a habitat conservation plan and obtain an Incidental Take Permit pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 10(a) or, in the case of Projects with a federal action agency, EMWD shall adhere to the requirements of Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7, which requires the federal action agency to consult with the USFWS to obtain a Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement for the Project; and/or

- b. Where species protected under state law may be impacted, EMWD shall either consult with the CDFW pursuant to Sections 2081 or 2080.1 of the California Endangered Species Act. For projects with direct or indirect impacts to species that are only State-listed and not federally listed as endangered or threatened, EMWD shall obtain a California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit from CDFW. For projects with impacts to species that are both state and federally listed as endangered or threatened, EMWD shall obtain a California Endangered Species Act Section 2080.1 Consistency Determination from the CDFW, unless otherwise required by the CDFW.
- c. For non-listed species (i.e., special status species) that are protected under state and/or federal law, EMWD shall consult with the USFWS and CDFW as appropriate and implement appropriate avoidance and mitigation plans such as those discussed in measures **BIO-4a and b**.

EMWD shall compensate for the loss of occupied habitat through one or a combination of the following, at a minimum ratio of 1:1, as determined by EMWD in consultation with USFWS and/or CDFW, as applicable:

- a. Purchase of credits from a conservation bank approved by USFWS and/or CDFW; and/or
- b. Acquisition and preservation of off-site mitigation land containing occupied habitat.

BIO-7 **Construction Staging Areas.** If it is confirmed through the implementation of mitigation measures **BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4a, and/or BIO-6a** that the Project would occur adjacent to sensitive habitat areas and/or habitat potentially suitable for special-status species, EMWD shall design the final Project construction staging areas such that no staging areas shall be located within sensitive habitat areas. The construction contractor shall receive approval by EMWD prior to mobilization and staging of equipment outside of the Project boundaries.

BIO-8 **Biological Construction Monitoring and Temporary Construction Fencing.** If it is confirmed through the implementation of mitigation measures **BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4a, and/or BIO-6a** that the Project would occur immediately adjacent to sensitive habitat areas (including waters) and/or habitat potentially suitable for special-status species, then EMWD shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct occasional monitoring of identified sensitive habitat areas during construction activities and supervise the installation of temporary construction fencing, which clearly delineates the edge of the approved limits of grading and clearing, and the edges of environmentally sensitive areas that occur beyond the approved limits. This fencing shall be installed by the contractor prior to construction under guidance of a qualified biologist and maintained by the contractor for the duration of construction activity adjacent to the sensitive habitat. Fencing shall be installed in a manner that

does not impact habitats to be avoided, as determined by the qualified biologist. Once the fencing is installed, EMWD and the qualified biologist shall determine the need for additional inspections and monitoring activities throughout the duration of construction, not to be less than once per week. If determined necessary by EMWD and the qualified biologist, the monitoring shall include the inspection of construction work areas, including staging and storage areas, to confirm that activities are kept within the approved limits and that Best Management Practices are in place to prevent incidental animal entrapment and burrow and nest establishment within equipment and staged materials. If work occurs beyond the fenced or demarcated limits of impact, or if a trapped animal or burrow or nest is found, work in the affected areas shall cease until the problem has been remedied and mitigation identified by EMWD and qualified biologist. Temporary construction fencing shall be repaired or replaced within three days of any biologist observations of damage, and before any forecast rain of 0.1 inch or more. Temporary construction fencing shall be removed upon completion of construction of the Project. EMWD shall verify the implementation of this measure prior to and concurrently with construction.

BIO-9 Worker Environmental Awareness Program. If it is confirmed through the implementation of **BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4a, and/or BIO-6a** that the Project would occur adjacent to sensitive habitat areas and/or habitat potentially suitable for special-status species, EMWD shall retain a qualified biologist to prepare a presentation and attend pre-construction meetings to inform construction crews of the sensitive resources and associated avoidance and/or minimization requirements. Copies of this presentation shall be kept on site at all times and shared with new crews.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Seven plant alliances, associations, semi-natural stands, or land uses were identified within the Project site as follows: basin/pool, foxtail barley-brome grass (non-native grassland), non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, urban/developed, extensive agriculture (fallow agricultural lands), and extensive agriculture (agricultural lands [alfalfa]; **Figure 4**). These are described below.

Basin/Pool

Basins refer to features that may or may not hold water seasonally and are human-made for storm water retention or water quality purposes. Pools are depressions or features created by soil compaction or tire ruts. These are also often referred to as ephemeral pools. This habitat can have a wide variety of vegetation depending upon the landscape position and whether natural or artificial in nature. A pool within the Project site is located between Scott Road, a dirt road, and a gently sloped hill, and it is evident on aerial imagery as early as 2003. It is not known if

this pool was graded or bermed to promote ponding. This pool could be a man-made feature in that compaction of soil for the adjacent roadways may facilitate or extend its ponding. This pool is dominated by dock (*Rumex sp.*) and slender sunflower (*Helianthus gracilentus*), with non-native grass edging the pool. Other depressions were observed to pond during the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 wet seasons; however, vegetation in these (when present) was not distinctly different than adjacent areas (i.e., no vernal pool indicator species or special-status plants were focused in the basin/pool).

This Project has the potential to impact the pool located south of Scott Road and valley freshwater marsh located near the Project site; **Figure 4**. Impacts to these habitats would be considered significant. Pools have potential to be a jurisdictional resource to one or more agency, and this feature was assessed as Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and CDFW jurisdictional (HELIX 2025a). The off-site valley freshwater marsh was also assessed as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdictional (HELIX 2025b).

Foxtail Barley-Brome Grass (Non-Native Grassland)

Non-native grassland is a dense to sparse cover of annual grasses, often associated with numerous species of showy-flowered native annual forbs. Characteristic species include oats (*Avena spp.*), brome grasses (*Bromus spp.*), ryegrass (*Festuca spp.*), and mustards (*Brassica spp.*). Many of the grasses within the Project site did not have seed heads and were thus not identifiable at the time of the first biological assessment. Grass species observed included wild oat (*Avena spp.*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), rattail sixweeks grass (*Festuca myuros*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum*), Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*), and common wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). This habitat contained a variety of native and non-native herbs and scattered sparse shrubs including Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), dock, turkey-mullein (*Croton setiger*), and slender sunflower.

Non-native grassland within the Project site totals 4.8 acres. Non-native grassland is not a sensitive vegetation community. Impacts to non-native grassland would therefore be less than significant.

Non-native Vegetation

Non-native vegetation is a category describing stands of naturalized trees and shrubs (e.g., acacia [*Acacia sp.*], peppertree [*Schinus sp.*], oleander [*Nerium oleander*], olive [*Olea europaea*], and eucalyptus [*Eucalyptus sp.*]), many of which are also used in landscaping. Within the Project site, this category describes patches of trees (e.g., Peruvian pepper tree [*Schinus molle*], eucalyptus, olive, and Fremont cottonwood [*Populus fremontii*]) and oleander outside of larger developed areas.

Non-native vegetation within the Project site totals 0.5 acre. Non-native vegetation is not a sensitive vegetation community. Impacts to non-native vegetation would therefore be less than significant.

Disturbed Habitat

Disturbed habitat includes land cleared of vegetation (e.g., dirt roads), land containing a preponderance of non-native plant species such as ornamentals or ruderal exotic species that take advantage of disturbance (previously cleared or abandoned landscaping), or land showing signs of past or present animal usage that removes any capability of providing viable habitat.

Within the Project site, disturbed habitat consists of dirt roads, roadsides, disturbed lots, and open fields that are not dominated by grasses. Outside of unpaved roads, most disturbed habitat consists of bare ground with scattered non-native grasses and herbaceous weeds, including mustard, black mustard, stinknet (*Oncosiphon piluliferum*), and Russian thistle. A few trees (i.e., eucalyptus, Peruvian pepper tree, palo verde [*Parkinsonia* sp.], and small flower tamarisk [*Tamarix parviflora*]) were also present within these areas. An area at a culvert outfall and Warm Springs Creek were also mapped as this habitat, given their disturbance and/or abundance of non-native plants. These areas also had a variety of more hydrophytic plants, including alkali weed (*Cressa truxillensis*), alkali mallow (*Malvella leprosa*), salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*), salt heliotrope (*Heliotropium curassavicum*), and Italian ryegrass (*Festuca perennis*).

Disturbed habitat within the Project site totals 14.6 acres. Disturbed habitat is not a sensitive vegetation community. Impacts to disturbed habitat would therefore be less than significant.

Urban/Developed

Urban/developed land includes areas that have been constructed upon or otherwise covered with a permanent, unnatural surface and may include, for example, structures, pavement, irrigated landscaping, or hardscape to the extent that no natural land is evident. These areas no longer support native or naturalized vegetation. Developed portions of the Project site consist of paved and gravel roads, as well as residential or commercial development and associated landscaping.

Urban/developed land within the Project site totals 13.3 acres. Urban/developed land is not a sensitive vegetation community. Impacts to urban/developed land would therefore be less than significant.

Agricultural Lands (Extensive Agriculture)

Extensive agriculture is a subcategory of general agriculture (i.e., land used primarily for the production of food and fiber) that consists of fields, pastures, and row crops. Extensive agriculture indicates lands that show evidence of being used to farm an herbaceous crop or provide grazing areas for livestock. On satellite imagery, the chief indications of agricultural activity are distinctive geometric field and road patterns on the landscape and the traces produced by livestock or mechanized equipment. However, pasture and other lands where such equipment is used infrequently may not show as well-defined shapes as other areas. Within the Project site, this vegetation community retains evidence of disking, and in some places, plants in the field were identifiable as wheat or contained a sign indicating the property was agricultural.

Most of the extensive agriculture in the Project site was mapped as fallow, but one field had active alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) production.

Agricultural land within the Project site totals 7.1 acres. Impacts to agricultural land would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-7**, **BIO-8**, and **BIO-9**, listed above.

BIO-10a Acquire Permits for Impacts to Jurisdictional Features. Prior to construction or ground-disturbing activities occurring within jurisdictional aquatic resources for any component of the Project, EMWD shall apply for and obtain the following regulatory permits and approvals from the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW, as applicable:

- Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit;
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification;
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Waste Discharge Requirements; and/or
- California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement.

If EMWD elects to seek incidental take authorization through the MSHCP PSE process, EMWD shall also prepare for approval by the RCA, USFWS, and CDFW a DBESP for impacts to MSHCP Section 6.1.2 Riparian and Riverine Areas.

BIO-10b Mitigation for Jurisdictional Impacts. EMWD shall mitigate impacts to jurisdictional aquatic resources off-site at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Temporary impacts are to be restored in place and permanent impacts to include a minimum 1:1 establishment/re-establishment component, unless otherwise negotiated by EMWD with the regulatory agencies.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

In the context of this assessment, jurisdictional waters and wetlands include waters of the U.S., including wetlands regulated by USACE pursuant to Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404; waters of the U.S. and State regulated by the RWQCB pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and/or the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act; and/or streambed and riparian habitat regulated by the CDFW pursuant to Sections 1600 *et seq.* of the CFG Code.

Potential non-wetland waters of the U.S. regulated by USACE, non-wetland waters of the State regulated by the RWQCB, and CDFW-jurisdictional features are present within the Project site (**Figures 5, 6, and 7**). Jurisdictional features total 0.03 acre of non-wetland waters of the U.S., 0.17 acre of non-wetland waters of the State, and 0.23 acre of CDFW-jurisdictional non-wetland. Freshwater marsh habitat observed off-site is considered potentially jurisdictional wetland to the USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW.

The proposed Project may have potential indirect and direct impacts to jurisdictional aquatic resources that may represent a potentially significant impact.; however, the Project would be designed to avoid impacts to waters and riparian habitat under the jurisdiction of USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW to the extent feasible. It is expected that all or most direct impacts to jurisdictional aquatic resources would be avoided through construction methods such as jack and bore, micro-drilling, and/or the use of standard BMPs as part of the Project's SWPPP. Jack and bore is a method of digging a pit on both sides of a stream or riparian habitat and using a machine that drills under the resources and allows the pipe to be placed without surface impacts. This is a dry drill method that does not use water or mud that can spill (frack out) and pollute the resource. Micro-drilling is a trenchless boring method that involves drilling holes smaller than three millimeters in diameter using a remote-controlled tunnelling machine. This method provides a high degree of precision as it uses a laser-guided steerable remote-control system. Implementation of a SWPPP and associated BMPs are required under the statewide General Construction Permit (2009-0009-DWQ). BMPs to avoid direct impacts may include, but are not limited to, flagging the limits of the wetland resources, not operating equipment or staging within the limits of wetlands, and educating the workers on the location and significance of resources. Specific BMPs may also include, but would not necessarily be limited to: maintaining the Project work areas free of trash and debris; employing appropriate standard spill prevention practices and clean-up materials; installing and maintaining sediment and erosion control measures; maintaining effective control of fugitive dust; and properly storing, handling, and disposing of toxins and pollutants, including waste materials. However, because there is potential that direct impacts to features cannot be avoided, impacts are considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-7, BIO-8, BIO-9, BIO-10a, and BIO-10b**, listed above.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

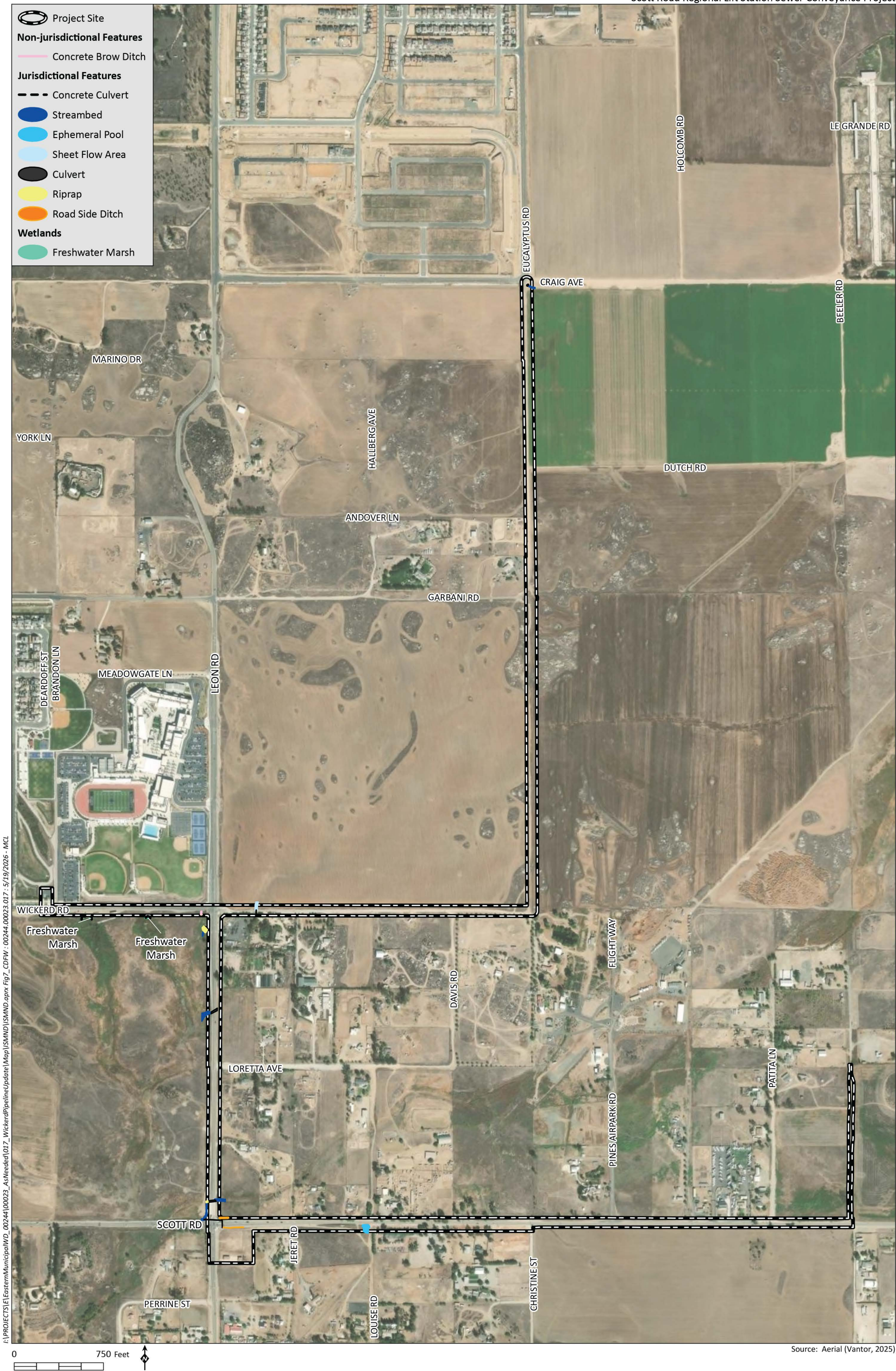
Wildlife corridors connect otherwise isolated pieces of habitat and allow movement or dispersal of plants and animals. Wildlife corridors can be local or regional and may function in different ways depending on species and time of year. Wildlife corridors represent areas where wildlife



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movement is concentrated due to natural or manufactured constraints. Local corridors provide access to resources such as food, water, and shelter. Animals can use these corridors, such as hillsides and tributaries, and main drainages, to travel among different habitats (i.e., riparian and upland habitats). Some animals require riparian habitat for breeding and upland habitat for burrowing. Regional corridors provide these functions and also link two or more large areas of open space. Regional corridors also provide avenues for wildlife dispersal, migration, and contact between otherwise distinct populations.

EMWD is not a signatory of the MSHCP and is not subject to compliance with the MSCHP; however, the cores and linkages of the MSHCP are used herein as a guide for wildlife movement. Proposed Constrained Linkage 17 (Linkage 17) abuts the southeastern end of the Project site at the intersection of Beeler Road and Scott Road, and is designed to allow for wildlife movement to the south of the Project (**Figure 8**). Linkage 17 is designed to connect conserved habitats to existing conservation at Diamond Valley Lake and Lake Skinner. Linkage 17 is planned as a corridor for QCB, coastal California gnatcatcher and bobcat. At this location, the sewer line proposed for the Project would occur primarily in disturbed and developed areas associated with Scott Road and would not pose permanent impacts. While wildlife movement would be able to occur outside the active construction location (within Linkage 17), there is potential for wildlife movement to be disrupted during Project construction based on the adjacency of the Project footprint to Linkage 17. Impacts on wildlife movement during construction are therefore considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-7**, **BIO-8**, and **BIO-9**, listed above.

BIO-11 **Night Lighting.** The Project shall avoid night construction next to undeveloped land if feasible. If working at night next to undeveloped land is unavoidable, lighting shall avoid illuminating habitat outside the work area to limit indirect impacts to nocturnal species.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

The Project impacts would primarily occur within the limits of existing roadway ROW. Where the impacts are proposed within undeveloped land, no native trees are proposed to be removed. No impacts associated with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

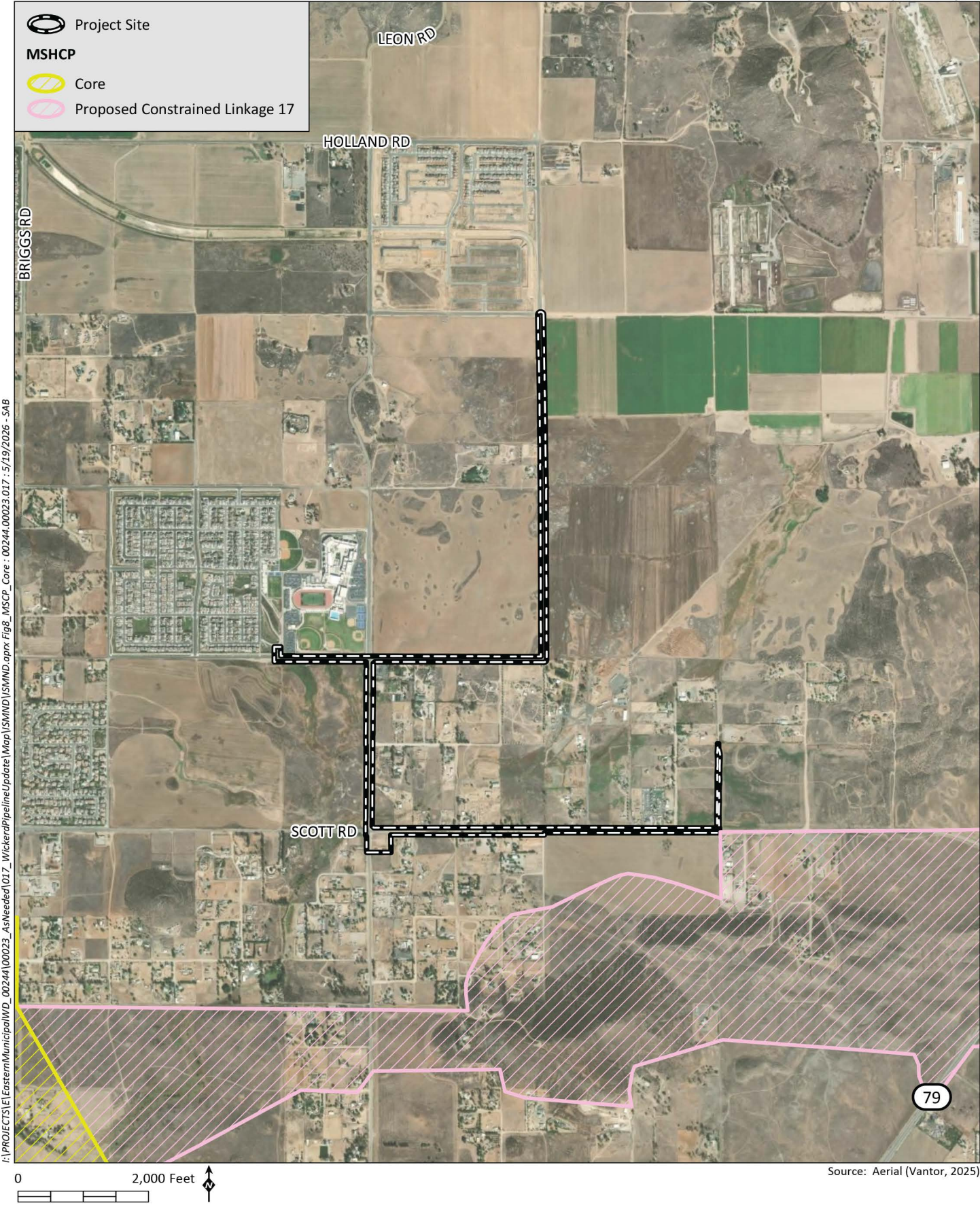
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

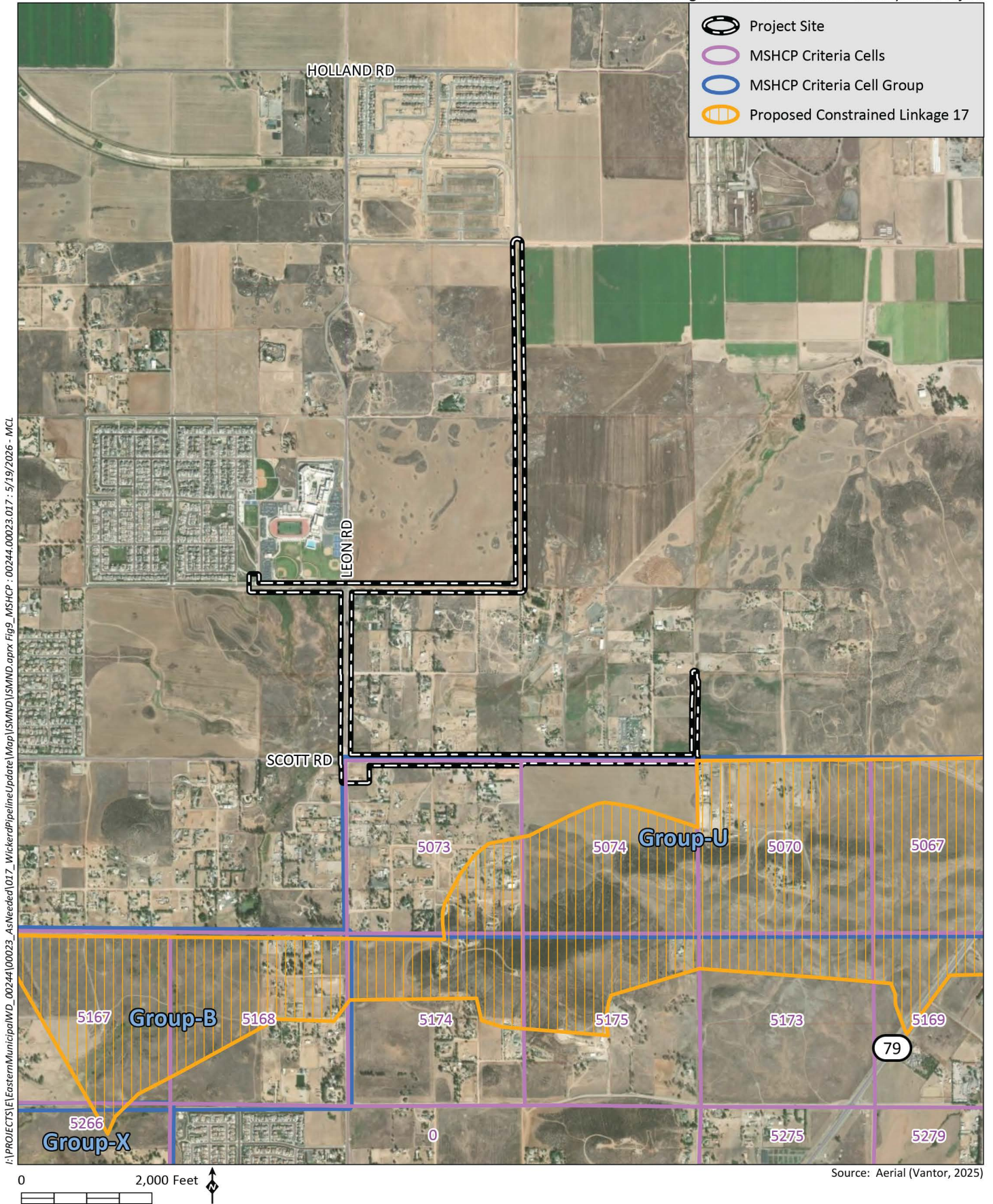
As mentioned above, EMWD is not a signatory of the MSHCP and as such not subject to compliance with MSCHP. However, for informational purposes, the following discussion describes whether the Project would conflict with the goals of the MSCHP. The Project occurs within the limits of the MSHCP. More specifically, the south side of Scott Road and the proposed SRRLS overlap the northern edge of criteria cells 5073 and 5074 in Cell Group U (**Figure 9**).

The conservation goals within Cell Group U (criteria cells 5067, 5070, 5073, and 5074) call for the conservation of 65 to 75 percent of the Cell Group, focusing on the eastern portion of the Cell Group (i.e., cell 5067, to the east of the Project). Conservation within this Cell Group focuses on chaparral, grassland, and coastal sage scrub habitat and agricultural land. Areas conserved within this Cell Group would be connected to chaparral habitat proposed for conservation in cell 5174 to the south, to chaparral and grassland habitat proposed for conservation in cell 5169 and cell 5175 both also to the south (and cell 5169 not adjacent to cells in the Project), to chaparral habitat and agricultural land proposed for conservation in cell 5173 also to the south, and to grassland habitat proposed for conservation in Cell Group S to the east (via cell 5067 not in the Project).

The Project occurs along the northern edge of criteria cells 5073 and 5074. Sewer pipeline would be located within ROW for Scott Road, primarily in disturbed and developed areas. While Cell Group conservation goals include agricultural land and non-native grassland, little of these habitat types occur within the Project site in the ROW along Scott Road. Additionally, Project impacts for the sewer line would be temporary. The proposed SRRLS is located entirely within disturbed and developed land, which is not targeted for conservation, on part of a developed lot. Additionally, the proposed SRRLS would be located in the northwestern corner of the Cell Group, at the farthest part of the Cell Group from the stated conservation goals. Thus, the Project is not expected to have an adverse effect on conservation goals. The Project would not adversely affect this Cell Group's goal of focusing conservation on the eastern side of the Cell Group, or goals for focusing conservation on chaparral, grassland, and coastal sage scrub habitat and agricultural land.

Within the Cell Group, criteria cell 5073 is primarily developed as rural residential, with the exception of a few infill lots. The adjacent criteria cell 5074 is undeveloped. Criteria cell 5070 has some rural development but is mostly undeveloped. The eastern criteria cell 5067 is undeveloped except for Scott Road/Washington Street and State Route 79, which cross the criteria cell.





Linkage 17, discussed under item d, touches the southeastern corner of the Project site at the intersection of Scott Road and Beeler Road. As discussed above for criteria cells, the sewer line proposed in this area would not pose permanent impacts except where access is required for inspection and maintenance of the pipeline, because the pipeline would be located below ground and disturbed areas would be restored following the completion of construction. The Project alignment would occur primarily in disturbed and developed areas associated with Scott Road. Thus, the Project is not expected to have an adverse effect on the proposed linkage.

The MSHCP requires projects with potential direct or indirect impact to riparian and riverine resources (such as pools and valley freshwater marsh) to avoid or mitigate for impacts. The Project occurs adjacent to riparian and riverine habitats and would implement mitigation measures **BIO-7**, **BIO-8**, **BIO-9**, **BIO-10a**, and **BIO-10b**.

The MSHCP also includes measures to protect sensitive plants and animals, such as BUOW, which occur within the MSHCP limits. The Project would implement mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-9** and **BIO-11** to address potential impacts to sensitive plant and animal species.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-11**, listed above.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

4.5 Cultural Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

A Cultural Resources Survey report was prepared for the proposed Project by HELIX (2026b; Appendix C). The report included a records search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC), Sacred Lands File search with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), Native American outreach, a review of historic aerial photographs and maps, and a pedestrian survey.

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and/or scientific importance. Cultural resources can be broadly defined as anything made, modified, or moved by a human in the past. Archaeological resources are composed of the remnants of past human activity and may include, but are not limited to, surface or subsurface artifact scatters, midden deposits, cultural features, and human remains associated with any culture. Historic resources are those greater than 45 years in age, with the historic period generally beginning with European and Mexican contact in California. Historic-era resources can include built environment (architectural) resources, such as buildings, structures, objects, and features, as well as historic-aged archaeological resources, such as ranching complexes, historic trash deposits, root cellars, privy pits, etc. There is often overlap between historic built environment resources and historic archaeological resources. Precontact archaeological resources are sites, cultural features, and artifacts of Native American origin that pre-date Spanish or Mexican contact.

Under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), “historic properties” are those resources that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Per CEQA, “historical resources” are resources that are listed on or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

The records search conducted for the Project indicated that 188 cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-mile radius of the Project site, one of which is within the Project site: P-33-002305 (CA-RIV-2305). P-33-002305 (CA-RIV-2305) was originally recorded in 1980 as “two rocks side by side with a total of five slicks” (Baldwin 1980). A 1999 update described the site as four slicks on a single, broken boulder (Johnson 1999). Five milling slicks were noted at this site during the 2025 archaeological survey conducted for the Project.

Several resources have recently been recorded in proximity to the Project site that are not yet on file at the SCIC, one of which is within the Project site: GRD-S-008. GRD-S-008 consists of a single milling slick on a boulder within a large group of boulders.

The field survey conducted for the Project resulted in the identification of the two resources previously recorded within the Project site (P-33-002305 [CA-RIV-2305] and GRD-S-008), as well as two newly recorded resources (BMF-Wickerd 1 and BMF Wickerd 2). BMF-Wickerd 1 consists of a bedrock milling feature on a small granitic boulder containing high spot remnants of a single milling slick. BMF-Wickerd 2 consists is a single milling slick on a low boulder.

These four archaeological resources have not been evaluated for CRHR eligibility. The Pechanga Band of Indians (Pechanga) and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (Soboba) indicated they consider the resources significant/CRHR eligible, as all are considered part of a larger village complex. The Project has been designed to avoid impacts to these four resources by routing the pipeline alignments at least 10 meters (32.8 feet) from the edge of each resource. Because the resources would be avoided through project design, no impacts to the resources would occur.

The San Diego Aqueduct and Canal (P-33-015734 [CA-RIV-8195]) crosses beneath a segment of the Project in Scott Road, east of Leon Road. The Aqueduct and Canal were built in the mid-twentieth century to bring water from the Colorado River Aqueduct to San Diego County and consist of two separate conveyance features: the First San Diego Aqueduct, built in 1947 and 1951, consists of two precast concrete pipes and travels from the Colorado River Aqueduct near San Jacinto to San Diego's San Vicente Reservoir; the Second San Diego Aqueduct, built in 1958 and 1959, consists of an underground pipeline and an above-ground canal, and runs from the Colorado River Aqueduct near Hemet to San Diego's Lower Otay Reservoir. The San Diego Aqueduct has previously been evaluated as eligible for the NRHP and the CRHR; however, the Project would not affect this pipeline, and no impacts to the resource would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?*

As discussed above for Item a, the Project has been designed to avoid impacts to known archaeological cultural resources; however, numerous cultural resources are known in proximity to the Project site, and Pechanga and Soboba have identified the area as part of a larger village site. Thus, the general area is sensitive for archaeological resources. As such, there is potential for the Project to encounter archaeological resources during ground-disturbing construction activities, in which case the Project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource. Impacts are therefore considered potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-1 Tribal Monitoring.

Tribal Monitoring Agreement: At least 30 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, EMWD shall contact the Consulting Tribe to develop a Cultural Resources Treatment Monitoring Agreement (Agreement). The Agreement shall address the treatment of archaeological resources inadvertently discovered within the Project Area; project grading; ground disturbance and development scheduling; the designation, responsibilities, and participation of tribal monitor(s) during grading,

excavation, and ground-disturbing activities; and compensation for the tribal monitors, including overtime, weekend rates, and mileage reimbursement.

Tribal Monitoring: A tribal monitor shall be present for ground-disturbing activities associated with the project, including but not limited to, vegetation removal, grading, and excavation. At least seven business days prior to ground-disturbing activities, EMWD shall notify the Tribe(s) of the grading/excavation and monitoring program/schedule, to coordinate the tribal monitoring schedule. The tribal monitor shall have the authority to stop and redirect grading activities to evaluate the nature and significance of any archaeological resources discovered within the project limits. Such evaluation shall include culturally appropriate temporary and permanent treatment pursuant to the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement, which may include avoidance of cultural resources, in-place preservation, data recovery, and/or reburial so the resources are not subject to further disturbance in perpetuity. Any reburial shall occur at a location determined between EMWD and the Consulting Tribes, details of which shall be addressed in the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement. Treatment may also include curation of the cultural resources at a tribal curation facility, as determined in discussion among EMWD, the project archaeologist and tribal representatives as addressed in the Cultural Resources Treatment and Monitoring Agreement.

CUL-2 **Establish ESA for Tribal Cultural Resources.** An Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) shall be established for the known boundaries of GRD-S-008, CA-RIV-2305, BMF-Wickerd 1, and BMF-Wickerd 2, including an additional 15-foot buffer, by contractor under direct guidance of Tribal Monitor[s] and qualified archaeologist. This ESA shall be flagged with stakes and flagging tape prior to the start of permitted construction activities. The ESA demarcation shall prevent encroachment or disturbance in the protected areas. Repairs to the ESA demarcation shall be made by the contractor under direct supervision of the Tribal Monitor and qualified archaeologist.

If a potentially significant cultural resource(s) is discovered, work shall stop within a 15-foot perimeter of the discovery and an ESA physical demarcation/barrier shall be established. All work shall be diverted away from the vicinity of the find(s), so that it/they can be evaluated by the qualified archaeologist and Tribal Monitor[s] in accordance with mitigation measures **CUL-5** and **CUL-6**.

CUL-3 **Controlled Grading.** Controlled grading shall be implemented within 100 feet of known resources. The controlled grading would consist of trenching using an excavator with a small bucket, with speed and depth of each removal directed by the monitors, providing the monitors adequate time to examine excavated soil and trench sidewalls.

- CUL-4 Worker Environmental Awareness Program.** A qualified archaeologist and Consulting Tribe(s) tribal monitor shall attend a pre-grade meeting with EMWD staff, the contractor, and appropriate subcontractors to discuss the monitoring program, including protocols to be followed if cultural material is encountered.
- CUL-5 Evaluation of Discovered Artifacts.** Artifacts discovered during monitoring shall be inventoried and analyzed by the project archaeologist and tribal monitor. A monitoring report will be prepared detailing the methods and results of monitoring, as well as the disposition of cultural material encountered. If no cultural material is encountered, a brief letter report will be sufficient to document monitoring activities.
- CUL-6 Disposition of Inadvertent Discoveries.** If Native American cultural resources are recovered during the course of grading (inadvertent discoveries), the following procedures shall be carried out for final disposition of the discoveries with the tribe(s). EMWD shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources, including sacred items, burial goods, and all archaeological artifacts and non-human remains as part of the required mitigation for impacts to cultural resources, and adhere to the following:
- 1) Preservation-in-place is the preferred option; preservation-in-place means avoiding the resources and leaving them in the place where they were found with no development affecting the integrity of the resource.
 - 2) If preservation-in-place is not feasible, on-site reburial of the discovered items as detailed in the plan required pursuant to mitigation measure **CUL-1** is the next preferable treatment measure. This shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from further impacts in perpetuity. Reburial shall not occur until all legally required cataloging and basic recordation have been completed. No recordation of sacred items shall be permitted without the written consent of all Consulting Native American Tribal Governments.
 - 3) In the event that on-site reburial is not feasible, EMWD will enter into a curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800 Part 79 and therefore would be curated and made available to other archaeologists/researchers for further study. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility within Riverside County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.
- CUL-7 Non-Disclosure of Reburial Locations.** It is understood by all parties that unless otherwise required by law, the site of any reburial of culturally sensitive resources shall not be disclosed and shall not be governed by public disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act. The coroner, pursuant to the specific exemption set forth in California Government Code 6254(r), parties, and Lead Agencies will be asked to withhold public disclosure information related to such reburial.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- c) ***Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?***

No formal cemeteries are known to occur in the immediate vicinity of the Project and no human remains were observed or identified during the survey conducted for the Project. Although not anticipated, the potential exists to encounter human remains during the Project's ground-disturbing activities, such as clearing, trenching, and grading. The inadvertent disturbance of any human remains, if it were to occur, would be considered a significant impact, regardless of archaeological significance or association.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-8 Procedure for Discovery of Human Remains. If Native American human remains are encountered, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 will be followed. If human remains are encountered, no further disturbance shall occur until the Riverside County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin. Further, pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(b), the remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and disposition has been made. If the Riverside County Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. Subsequently, the Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the "most likely descendant." The most likely descendant shall then make recommendations and engage in consultations concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

4.6 Energy

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of	☐	☐	☒	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
energy resources, during project construction or operation?				
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Electrical service for the proposed Project area is provided by SCE. SCE is one of the nation's largest electric utilities, serving 15 million people over 50,000 square miles across central, coastal and Southern California, excluding the City of Los Angeles and some other cities. The SCE service areas include more than 180 incorporated cities, and 15 counties (SCE 2026). According to SCE's power content label for 2022, its electricity comes from approximately 33.2 percent renewables, 3.4 percent large hydroelectric, 24.7 percent natural gas, 8.3 percent nuclear, and 30.4 percent from other unspecified power sources through transactions (SCE 2022). Natural gas service for the entire proposed Project area is provided by the Southern California Gas Company.

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Construction of the proposed Project would involve standard construction activities such as excavation, grading, and repaving and would require fossil fuel consumption that is typically associated with the operation of diesel-powered construction equipment and vehicles used to transport workers and haul and deliver materials. The anticipated fleets for demolition of the existing WRLS, construction of the SRRLS, and construction of the new sewer pipelines are specified in Section 2.4.3, *Construction*. Estimates of the number of workers, hauling, and vendor trips, as well as the construction vehicle fleet were based on CalEEMod model defaults, which are based on construction activities for similar projects. Further details can be found in Appendix A.

The Project would not require unusual or excessive construction equipment or practices that would result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy compared to projects of similar type and size. In addition, the construction fleet contracted for the Project would be required to comply with the CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations (CARB 2011), which would limit vehicle idling time to five minutes, restrict adding vehicles to construction fleets with older-tier engines, and establish a schedule for retiring older, less fuel-efficient engines from the construction fleet.

Operation of the Project, primarily the use of pumps at the SRRLS, would involve consumption of electricity via a new transformer that would tie into existing SCE facilities located in Scott Road to power the new SRRLS. Since the SRRLS, though larger, would replace the existing WRLS, it is anticipated that the change to EMWD's existing annual energy consumption would not be substantial given that the new pumps at the SRRLS would be more energy efficient based on improved technologies and stricter codes. Use of the Project's proposed back-up generator (500 kW in the interim phase and 1,250 kW in the ultimate phase) would be limited to emergencies and during testing/maintenance once per month. Additionally, routine O&M activities for the Project would be similar to the existing O&M activities associated with the WRLS. No additional vehicle trips or employees would be needed for O&M of the SRRLS beyond existing conditions.

Overall, the Project would not require unusual or excessive construction equipment or practices that would result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy compared to projects of similar type and size. As such, construction and operation of the Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

The Riverside County Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines the specific activities that the County will undertake to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The 2019 CAP Update focuses on those activities that can achieve the greatest emission reductions in the most cost effective manner (County 2019). GHG emissions reduction programs and regulations identified in the CAP Update that are applicable to the Project include those related to energy efficiency. Specifically, measure R2-EE10 calls for energy efficiency and enhancement of existing and new infrastructure.

As explained under Item a, above, operation of the Project would not involve wasteful or inefficient energy consumption. It is expected that the new pumps at the SRRLS would be more energy efficient than the existing pumps at the WRLS based on improved technologies and stricter codes. Since the proposed SRRLS, though larger, would replace the WRLS, it is anticipated that there would be no significant overall change to EMWD's existing O&M schedule. No substantial number of additional vehicle trips or employees would be needed for O&M of the SRRLS. The Project would not involve land use changes that would indirectly result in an increase in vehicle trips or vehicle miles travelled. The Project would therefore not conflict or obstruct the Riverside County CAP and local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.7 Geology and Soils

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The following information is based on the Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared for the Project by Converse Consultants (Converse Consultants 2025).

The Project site is located within the northern Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province of Southern California. The Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province consists of a series of northwest-trending mountain ranges and valleys bounded on the north by the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains, on the west by the Los Angeles Basin, on the southwest by the Pacific Ocean and on the east by the Colorado Desert.

The province is a seismically active region characterized by a series of northwest-trending strike-slip faults. The most prominent of the nearby fault zones include the San Jacinto, Elsinore, and San Andreas fault zones, all of which have been known to be active during Quaternary time.

Topography within the province is generally characterized by broad alluvial valleys separated by linear mountain ranges. This northwest-trending linear fabric is created by the regional faulting within the granitic basement rock of the Southern California Batholith. Broad, linear, alluvial valleys have been formed by erosion of these principally granitic mountain ranges.

The Project is located within the south-central portion of the Perris Block region of the Peninsular Ranges province. The Perris Block is a relatively stable structural block bounded by the active Elsinore and San Jacinto fault zones to the west and east respectively, and the Chino and Temecula basins to the north and south, respectively. The Perris Block has low relief and is roughly rectangular in shape.

a) *Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*

i) *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.*

The Project site is located in the highly seismic southern California region within the influence of several fault systems that are considered to be active or potentially active. According to the California Geological Survey (CGS), the Project site is not located within a state-designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The closest fault to the Project site would be the Elsinore Fault, located approximately 8.3 miles to the west. The Elsinore Fault is a 150-mile-long strike slip fault with a maximum magnitude of 7.85 (Converse Consultants 2025). Based on the distance between the Elsinore Fault and the Project site, the potential for surface rupture resulting from the movement of a fault is considered very low as a result. The Project would also not have the potential to cause rupture of an earthquake fault as it does not entail deep drilling methods or similar activities that could cause seismic-related disturbance. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

ii) *Strong seismic ground shaking?*

As noted above, the Project site is located in a seismically active region despite not being within a designated earthquake fault zone. During the life of the Project, seismic activity associated with active faults can be expected to generate moderate to strong ground shaking at the Project site. The intensity of ground shaking would depend upon the magnitude of the earthquake, distance to the epicenter, and the geology of the area between the epicenter and the Project area. While the Project site and proposed facilities could potentially be subject to moderate or

severe ground shaking effects from earthquakes, they would be designed and constructed based on the Geotechnical Investigation Report prepared for the Project (Converse Consultants 2025), per EMWD's standard construction practices. Design and construction would also be in compliance with applicable standards of the American Water Works Association, the Greenbook Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, and the California Building Code (CBC). Specifically, these standards typically involve incorporating seismic factors into facility design, through efforts such as remedial grading (e.g., removal and/or reconditioning unsuitable soils), appropriate slope design and drainage, and use of properly engineered fill. Compliance with these standards would reduce the potential effects of seismic ground shaking on the proposed facilities. The Project would not have the potential to cause strong seismic ground shaking as it does not entail deep drilling methods or similar activities that could cause seismic-related disturbance. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Liquefaction is the process by which clay-free soil, such as sands and silts, temporarily lose cohesion and strength and turn into a fluid state during a severe ground shaking event. This primarily occurs in areas saturated with high groundwater levels and recent deposits of sand and silts. No portion of the Project is within area assessed for liquefaction or subsidence according to the CGS. Yet, some portions of the Project site are located in Riverside County designated zones of liquefaction and subsidence. Specifically, these portions include the northern end of the Project site on Eucalyptus Road near the proposed tie-in to the existing gravity sewer at Craig Road, and along Wickerd Road and Leon Road. However, due to the lack of shallow groundwater and the presence of bedrock, the risk of liquefaction is considered low (Converse Consultants 2025).

In addition, a site-specific liquefaction and seismic settlement analysis was conducted for the SRRLS site as part of the Geotechnical Investigation Report. This analysis concluded that liquefaction at the SRRLS site is expected to be negligible. Regardless, the Project would be designed and constructed in conformance with associated regulatory and industry standards as previously mentioned. The Project would not have the potential to cause seismic-related ground failure as it does not entail deep drilling methods or similar activities that could cause seismic-related disturbance. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

iv) Landslides?

Landslides can occur when strong ground movement such as an earthquake shakes loose soil and causes land and debris to lose stability and slide. Areas considered most susceptible to earthquake-induced landslide are typically associated with slopes and unstable soils. Steep topography, fractured and unconsolidated bedrock conditions, and expansive soils make hillside areas unstable. The Project site is located within an area characterized by flat topography. As a result, the potential for seismically induced landslides is considered to be very low (Converse Consultants 2025). Regardless, the Project would be designed and constructed in conformance with associated regulatory and industry standards as previously mentioned. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

The proposed Project could result in minor erosion of soil or loss of topsoil during construction, due to the presence of soil stockpiles which are susceptible to erosion during wind, rain, or other storm events. Construction of the new sewer pipelines would require trenching and construction of the SRRLS would require 5,500 cubic yards of fill. Project construction would disturb more than one acre of land in total and would require a State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) NPDES Construction General Permit and preparation of a SWPPP. BMPs would be identified in the SWPPP to control and reduce pollutant discharges associated with construction activities and erosion of soil. In accordance with EMWD's Standard Construction Practices (see Section 2.5), potential BMPs include site management "housekeeping," erosion control, sediment control, tracking control and wind erosion control. With implementation of the standard construction BMPs, the potential for soil erosion or the loss of topsoil during construction of the Project would be less than significant.

Once construction is completed, disturbed surfaces would either be stabilized through paving (at the SRRLS) or restored to pre-construction conditions (along the pipeline alignments), which would reduce further soil erosion. The increase in impervious surfaces at the SRRLS site would have the potential to result in increased runoff compared to existing conditions. However, the site would include detention basins/trenches within its perimeter walls that would capture, detain, and infiltrate runoff such that substantial erosion and loss of topsoil would not occur on or off site as a result of runoff. Because areas disturbed for pipeline construction would be restored to pre-construction conditions after pipeline installation, pipeline construction would

not result in an increase in total impervious surface area nor increased volumes of storm water runoff. Impacts during operations would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*

As discussed in Items *a.iii* and *a.iv* above, the Project's potential to result in unstable soils from liquefaction (and thus lateral spreading which is induced by liquefaction) and landslides was determined to be low. The Project would also adhere to applicable requirements and seismic design parameter recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation Report, which would reduce the potential effects of collapse on the proposed facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

Expansive soils are characterized by their ability to undergo significant volume changes (shrink or swell) due to variations in moisture content. Changes in soil moisture content can result from precipitation, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, roof drainage, perched groundwater, drought, or other factors and may result in unacceptable settlement or heave of structures or concrete slabs supported on grade. Depending on the extent and location below finish subgrade, expansive soils can have a detrimental effect on structures. The Project's Geotechnical Investigation Report included soil samples testing, which determined that soils in the Project area have very low to moderate soil expansion potential. The Project would also adhere to applicable requirements and seismic design parameter recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation Report, which would reduce the potential effects of expansive soils on the proposed facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

- e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?***

The Project does not propose the construction or use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

- f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?***

A Phase I Paleontological Resource Assessment was prepared for the Project by Material Culture Consulting, Inc. (Material Culture Consulting 2025) and is attached to this document as Appendix D. The assessment indicated that no significant paleontological resources were identified within the Project area during the locality search. The Riverside County Land Information System GIS data reveals that the Project area lies within an area mapped as low paleontological sensitivity as well as a small portion of undetermined sensitivity. Low sensitivity indicates that it is not likely for the presence of geologic formations or mappable rock units that have the potential to contain fossilized body elements and/or trace fossils, such as tracks, nests, and eggs, which can occur at or below the surface. Undetermined sensitivity sediments reflect that the rock units and/or mapped area have been insufficiently studied or recorded to classify their sensitivity. However, surficial sediments within the Project area consist of recently disturbed weathering products of the underlying igneous and metamorphic units, and recent alluvium, which are unlikely to contain significant fossil resources (Material Culture Consulting 2025). Therefore, excavations in the proposed Project area are not anticipated to encounter recognizable or significant fossils. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

GHGs are pollutants that are known to increase the greenhouse effect in the Earth's atmosphere, thereby adding to global climate change impacts. Several pollutants have been identified as GHGs, with the most common anthropogenic GHGs being carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). A measurement called global warming potential (GWP) is used to measure how much heat the emissions of one ton of a gas will absorb over a given period of time, relative to the emissions of one ton of CO₂. CO₂ has a 100-year GWP of 1; CH₄ has a 100-year GWP of 25; and N₂O has a 100-year GWP of 298 (CARB 2026). The amount of a GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP equals its carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

The County adopted a CAP Update in 2019 with new goals and supporting measures proposed to reflect and ensure compliance with changes in the local and State policies and regulations which set a 2030 goal of reducing emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, and to make it possible to reach the ultimate goal of reducing emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The County's CAP has set a threshold of 3,000 metric tons CO₂e per year to be used to identify projects that, when combined with the modest efficiency measures (e.g., energy efficiency matching or exceeding the Title 24 requirements in effect as of January 2017; water conservation measures that match the California Green Building Standards Code in effect as of January 2017) are considered less than significant (County 2019).

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Construction

The Project's construction emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. CalEEMod output files are included as Appendix A. The CalEEMod emissions estimations were based on Project-specific information, found in Section 2, *Project Description*. In instances where Project-specific information was not available (e.g., construction equipment horsepower, length of worker trips), the analysis relied on CalEEMod default values. The results of the calculations for Project's GHG construction emissions are shown in **Table 7**. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for comparison with the County CAP.

Table 7:
Estimated Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Year	Emissions (MT CO₂e)
2027	1,084.80
2028	483.78
TOTAL¹	1,568.58
Amortized Construction Emissions ²	52.29
<i>County of Riverside CAP Threshold</i>	<i>3,000</i>
Threshold exceeded?	No

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A)

¹ Totals may not sum due to rounding.

² Construction emissions are amortized over 30 years in accordance with Riverside County guidance.

MT = metric tons; CO₂e = carbon dioxide equivalent

Based on the results of CalEEMod, construction of the proposed Project would emit a total of 1,568.58 metric tons (MT) of CO₂e. Amortized over a 30-year period, construction of the Project would generate approximately 52.29 MT CO₂e per year. In addition to the low per-year generation of MT CO₂e, the Project would adhere to existing energy efficiency requirements during construction, including CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations that limit vehicle idling time to five minutes restrict adding vehicles to construction fleets that have lower than Tier 3 engines, and establish a schedule for retiring older and less fuel-efficient engines (CARB 2011).

Operation

The Project's operational GHG emissions would result from the use of electricity for pumping effluent at the SRRLS, and the use of electricity for security lighting at the SRRLS site, the use of diesel for the back-up generator, and the use of fuels for occasional O&M trips. Since the SRRLS, though larger, would replace the existing WRLS, it is anticipated that the change to EMWD's existing annual electricity consumption, and subsequent GHG emissions, would not be substantial given that the new electric pumps at the SRRLS would be more energy efficient based on improved technologies and stricter codes. Use of the Project's proposed back-up

generator (500 kW in the interim phase and 1,250 kW in the ultimate phase) would be limited to emergencies and during testing/maintenance once per month. Routine O&M activities for the Project would be similar to existing O&M activities associated with the WRLS. No additional vehicle trips or employees would be needed for O&M of the SRRLS beyond existing conditions. The resulting net increase in emissions in combination with the Project's amortized construction emissions of 52.29 MT CO₂e emissions per year would be substantially below the County's CAP GHG screening threshold of 3,000 MT CO₂e per year. The Project's GHG emission impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

California's 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (CARB 2022) lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045. The Project would not involve a considerable increase in new vehicle trips or land use changes that would result in an increase in vehicle trips, such as urban sprawl. The Project is designed to meet existing and anticipated demand that would occur with or without the Project and would not conflict with any of the CARB's 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan GHG emission reduction strategies or climate change policies or measures. Furthermore, O&M activities for the Project would be conducted using EMWD's existing vehicle fleet, which is continually being improved with regard to efficiency and fuel type, consistent with the County 2019 CAP Update. Similarly, the electric pumps at the SRRLS would comply with the most up-to-date applicable codes regarding energy efficiency. In addition, the Project would consume electricity provided by SCE and, because SCE would achieve net-zero GHG emissions in accordance with Senate Bill 100, would therefore consume carbon-free electricity by 2045. The Project would thus comply with Policy R1-W1 of the County 2019 CAP Update, which aims to reduce GHG emissions related to the production of electricity used for water conveyance through an improved renewable energy portfolio. The Project would not interfere with existing city, county, or regional programs intended to reduce energy and improve water use efficiency. It would not result in GHG emissions higher than the County 2019 Climate Action Plan MT CO₂e/year threshold. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for reducing emissions of GHGs. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

EMWD has General Safety Requirements for Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste, which include requirements to address proper communication of hazardous substances on a project site, proper storage and disposal of hazardous substances on the site, and clean-up of spills in accordance with manufacturer and/or USEPA requirements.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database (DTSC 2026) and the SWRCB GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2026a) are database management systems that track cleanup, permitting, enforcement and investigation efforts at hazardous waste facilities and sites with known contamination or sites where there may be reasons to investigate further.

The County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP; County 2024b) serves as the foundation for response and recovery operations for the County, as it establishes roles and responsibilities, assigns tasks, and specifies policies and general procedures. The County Operational Area Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP; County 2023) aims to reduce the impact of a disaster by identifying hazards and developing ways to decrease their impact. The purpose of the LHMP is to identify the County's hazards, review and assess past disaster occurrences, estimate the probability of future occurrences, and set goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and human-caused hazards.

The California Public Resources Code 4201-4204 directs the California Department of Fire and Forestry Protection (CalFire) to map fire hazard within state responsibility areas based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors present, including areas where winds have been identified by the department as a major cause of wildfire spread. The majority of the proposed Project area, including the SRRLS site, would be located within land designated as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CalFire. Portions of the Project's sewer alignment within Beeler Road and portions of Wickerd Road and Eucalyptus Road would be within land designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CalFire 2026).

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Typical hazardous materials that may be used during construction and routine O&M activities include gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, solvents, and lubricants. The use of these materials for their intended purposes would not result in a significant risk to the public or environment. Chemicals used for odor control at the new SRRLS site during operations would be stored in a chemical storage tank in accordance with applicable regulations.

To minimize the risks of exposure to hazardous materials from routine use or accidents, federal, state, and local regulations have been put into place to regulate hazardous material use, storage, transportation, and handling. As specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*, EMWD and its contractors would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to hazardous materials (Federal Code Title 40 and 49; Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910; California code section 5001, 5401, 5701, and 25507; California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 6.5, Article 6.6, and Article 13; and Riverside County ordinance 651.5). Conformance with the above regulations would require implementation of a SWPPP to address the potential storm water discharge of contaminants (including construction-related hazardous materials) through appropriate BMPs. While specific BMPs would be determined during SWPPP development based on project and site-specific characteristics they would include standard industry measures and guidelines contained in the NPDES Construction General Permit and standard industry BMP manuals.

In addition, EMWD and its contractors would be required to comply with EMWD's General Safety Requirements for Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste. Through compliance with these regulations and requirements, impacts associated with the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

The proposed Project has the potential to expose the public and the environment to hazards through the accidental release of hazardous materials including gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, solvents, and lubricants during construction and O&M activities. As discussed in Item a, above, hazardous materials would be used, transported, handled, and stored in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local laws and regulations as well as EMWD's General Safety

Requirements and construction specifications noted in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*. Implementation of these regulations would minimize the risk of hazardous material exposure through material use and accidents. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

The proposed Project would be within a quarter mile of Liberty High School, at the intersection of Wickerd Road and Leon Road, where the Project pipeline alignment is proposed. Construction activities would therefore handle typical hazardous materials within one quarter mile of a school. However, these materials would not be acutely hazardous. In addition, typical hazardous materials would be used, transported, handled, and stored in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local laws and regulations as well as EMWD's General Safety Requirements and construction specifications noted in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*. Implementation of these regulations would minimize the risk of hazardous material exposure. Operationally, the Project's sewer pipelines within one quarter mile of the school would be located underground and would not have a significant potential to release hazardous materials. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

A regulatory records search of the DTSC EnviroStor database (DTSC 2026) and SWRCB GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2026a) was performed for the proposed Project area on January 5, 2026. Results of the search concluded there are no active hazardous materials cleanup sites within one mile of the Project site. Additionally, none of the Project components are located on a site that is included on a list of recent or currently active clean-up or hazardous materials sites per Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, construction and O&M associated with the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the release of existing materials related to a listed hazardous materials site. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?***

The closest airport to the Project is the French Valley Airport, located approximately four miles south of the Project site. The Project site is not within the Airport Influence Area of the French Valley Airport (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission 2004). Therefore, the Project would not result in personnel being exposed to safety hazards or excessive noise from aircraft associated with French Valley Airport. In addition, following the completion of Project construction, the Project would not involve the regular presence of personnel. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?***

The proposed Project would construct sewer pipelines within the ROW, and as a result could temporarily block access such that construction activities may conflict with the adopted emergency response plan and emergency evacuation plan (the EOP and LHMP). Implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan (as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*) would be required prior to the issuance of an encroachment permit from the County. The Traffic Control and Detour Plan would require the construction contractor to coordinate with emergency responders on the location of construction and make a reasonable effort to preserve access to adjacent sites and surrounding areas for emergency response crews. Once constructed, the pipelines would be below ground and would not have the potential to affect emergency access. Operations and maintenance required during long-term operation of the Project would be incorporated into EMWD's existing O&M routine and would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

As mentioned above, the majority of the proposed Project area, including the SRRLS site, would be located within land designated as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CalFire. However, portions of the Project's sewer alignment within Beeler Road and portions of Wickerd Road and Eucalyptus Road would be within land designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CalFire 2026). The use of construction equipment that could potentially spark or otherwise ignite a fire during normal construction activities poses a risk of fire in these High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Implementation of EMWD's standard fire hazard reduction measures as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*, and equipping construction equipment with spark arrestors, per industry standards, would ensure the Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose people in the Project area to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

Operationally, the Project components that would be located within land designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (sewer pipelines) would be located below ground. The SRRLS would be located within land designated as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Project would therefore not introduce new structures within a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone that would exacerbate wildfire risk or be susceptible to wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None recommended or required.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The majority of the Project alignment is within the boundaries of the San Diego RWQCB, Region 9 (the northernmost approximately 1,300 feet of the Project alignment along Eucalyptus Road are within the boundaries of the Santa Ana RWQCB, Region 8). The RWQCB prepares and maintains the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan sets water quality standards in the San Diego Basin by establishing beneficial uses for specific water bodies and designating numerical and narrative water quality objectives (RWQCB 2021).

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Potential water quality impacts from the Project would be limited primarily to construction-related concerns, including erosion/sedimentation and the release of hazardous substances such as vehicle fuels and lubricants. Construction of the proposed Project would disturb an area greater than one acre in size and would therefore be required to obtain coverage under the SWRCB's NPDES Construction General Permit during Project construction. As part of the Construction General Permit conditions, EMWD would be required to prepare a SWPPP, which would identify BMPs to control sediment and other construction-related pollutants in stormwater discharges. Typical BMPs include housekeeping practices such as proper waste disposal, covering stockpiles with tarps, containment of building materials, and inspection of construction vehicles to prevent leaks or spills. Contractors would be required to comply with the Construction General Permit throughout the entirety of the Project's construction activities. Construction dewatering is not anticipated. Compliance with the Construction General Permit, including implementation of BMPs would ensure construction of the Project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, nor significantly degrade surface water or groundwater quality.

Operation of the proposed Project would not be expected to impact surface or groundwater quality through proper implementation of BMPs and state and local water quality control

requirements. The relocated SRRLS would be designed with BMPs to control storm water runoff and water quality. This would include features such as drainage swales that can help slow runoff and control potential pollutants in storm water discharges from the developed site. Impacts related to surface and groundwater quality would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

The proposed Project involves the replacement of the existing WRLS and construction of new sewer pipelines in order to adequately address the area's anticipated sewer service demand. As discussed in Section 4.14, *Population and Housing*, the Project would serve existing demand and planned future growth and would not induce unplanned population growth. The Project does not involve the extraction, recharge, or use of groundwater, and the Project site is not located within the boundaries of a groundwater basin subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SWRCB 2026b). The Project would also not involve a substantial increase in impervious surfaces that could interfere with groundwater recharge. Therefore, the Project would not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge efforts and would not impede sustainable groundwater management. No impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

The proposed Project would construct the SRRLS at a currently undeveloped site and construct new gravity and force main sewers within both paved and unpaved roadway ROW. Project construction may result in disturbance or exposure of soil that could be subjected to erosion and sedimentation during a rain event. However, implementation of BMPs as required by the NPDES Construction General Permit and SWPPP would limit erosion and sedimentation. With

implementation of BMPs, the proposed Project would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the Project area in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

The proposed Project would increase the amount of impervious surfaces at the SRRLS site, which is undeveloped in the existing condition, due to the installation of facilities and pavements. As a result, the proposed SRRLS would result in additional stormwater runoff compared to existing conditions. The site would include detention basins/trenches within its perimeter walls that would capture, detain, and infiltrate runoff such that substantial erosion and siltation would not occur on or off site. Areas disturbed for pipeline construction would be restored to pre-construction conditions after pipeline installation. Thus, pipeline construction would not result in an increase in total impervious surface area nor increased volumes of storm water runoff. Crossings of drainage culverts beneath existing roadways would be protected in place and would not result in alteration of drainages or increases in erosion or siltation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

As discussed in Item c.i, the Project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces at the SRRLS site that would increase surface runoff; however, the site would include detention basins/trenches within its perimeter walls that would capture, detain, and infiltrate runoff such that the site would not result in flooding on or off site. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

As discussed in Items c.i and cii, the Project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces at the SRRLS site that would increase surface runoff; however, the site would include detention basins/trenches within its perimeter walls that would capture, detain, and infiltrate runoff such that the site would not result in runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted

runoff. Construction activities would be conducted in accordance with BMPs specified in the construction SWPPP to reduce pollutants in storm water discharges. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

iv) impede or redirect flood flows?

The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFC) provides flood zone mapping that includes Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones, California Department of Water Resources (DWR) flood zones, and RCFC flood zones. According to RCFC's flood zone mapping, portions of the sewer alignments along Scott Road and Leon Road near the intersection of Scott Road and Leon Road and portions of the SRRLS site are mapped within designated flood zones (RCFC 2026). These flood zones are associated with Warm Springs Creek, which runs in a northeast-to-southwest direction and crosses under Leon Road approximately 170 feet north of Scott Road. The sewer pipelines would be located below ground and would not have the potential to impede or redirect flood flows. The SRRLS would be elevated (by up to three feet) over existing conditions and would include aboveground structures and facilities; however, while portions of the SRRLS parcel are designated as an "area subject to flooding" by RCFC, no portions of the parcel are designated as a FEMA flood zone or DWR flood zone. This indicates that flood flows are concentrated more towards the Warm Springs Creek channel, north of the SRRLS site, which is consistent with the mapped FEMA and DWR flood zones. Additional potential flood flows that route south to north through the SRRLS site towards Warm Springs Creek in the existing condition would be accommodated by space on the outside of the west and east SRRLS site perimeter walls, such that those flows would be able to continue consistent with existing conditions. As such, while the SRRLS site may be subject to flooding, it is not expected that structures at the site would substantially impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

As mentioned above in Item c.iv, the SRRLS site and portions of the sewer alignments along Scott Road and Leon Road near the intersection of Scott Road and Leon Road are mapped

within a designated RCFC flood zone (RCFC 2026). During construction, as described above in Item a, the proposed Project would be required to comply with EMWD's storm water pollution prevention requirements as well as applicable construction storm water permits, thereby reducing the risk of the release of pollutants during an inundation event. During operations, the pipelines would be below ground and would not be subject to flood hazards or risk release of pollutants. Chemicals used for odor control at the new SRRLS site during operations would be stored in a chemical storage tank in accordance with applicable regulations and would not present a substantial risk for release of pollutants.

Regarding other inundation hazards, a tsunami is a large ocean wave, caused by earthquakes or major ground movement. The Project site is also located approximately 30 miles from the Pacific Ocean; at this distance, a tsunami would not impact the Project vicinity. A seiche is a large wave generated in an enclosed body of water such as a lake, which is also typically caused by an earthquake. Diamond Valley Lake (located 2.6 miles east of the Project) and Skinner Reservoir (located 3.7 miles southeast of the Project) may be at risk to generate flooding during a seismic event; however, due to the distance between the reservoirs and the Project site, the potential for inundation at the Project site is low and thus risk of release of pollutants is also low. Impacts related to the risk of releasing pollutants due to Project inundation would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

As noted previously, the Basin Plan sets beneficial uses and water quality objectives for surface water and groundwater in the Project area. The water quality objectives are intended to reduce pollutant discharge and ensure that water bodies are of sufficient quality to meet their designated beneficial uses. The Project would convey wastewater in EMWD's service area and would not discharge water or be a source of pollutants for downstream water bodies (e.g., Warm Springs Creek).

As discussed in Item a, pollutant discharges to offsite receiving waters during construction would be avoided via compliance with the Construction General Permit and implementation of BMPs specified in the SWPPP. Once operational, the SRRLS site drainage design would be in compliance with Riverside County drainage and water quality control requirements, which would minimize pollutant discharges to local receiving waters and help maintain water quality standards. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with the Basin Plan or worsen water quality conditions in any 303(d)-listed water body.

The Project area is located just outside of the boundaries of the adjudicated Hemet-San Jacinto Basin of the San Jacinto Groundwater Basin and is also outside the boundaries of the portion of the San Jacinto Groundwater Basin under management of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan. The Project does not involve the extraction of groundwater that could affect groundwater levels or quality, nor would result in a significant increase in impervious surface area that could affect groundwater recharge. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with applicable water quality control plans or groundwater management plans. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.11 Land Use and Planning

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The Project is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the County and would occur in designated ROW (pipelines), on a 1.76-acre EMWD-owned parcel with a land use designation of Rural Community – Estate Density Residential and an established zoning of Rural Residential that is currently vacant (SRRLS), and on a 0.23-acre EMWD-owned parcel with a land use designation of Medium Density Residential and an established zoning of Planned Residential that is currently developed with the EMWD's WRLS (Riverside County 2026a).

a) Physically divide an established community?

The proposed Project's SRRLS would be constructed on a vacant EMWD-owned parcel, while the proposed pipelines would be installed within the ROW of Beeler Road, Scott Road, Leon Road,

Wickard Road, Eucalyptus Road, and potentially Garbani Road (for alignment Option 2). Staging for construction of the SRRLS would occur at on-site, while staging for construction of the pipelines would occur at the SRRLS site and potentially within the shoulders of the ROW adjacent to where the pipelines would be installed.

Construction of the Project's sewer pipelines within roadway ROW could temporarily reduce access to adjacent land uses. Temporary lane closures would be addressed in a Traffic Control and Detour Plan (see Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*). This impact would be temporary and thus would not physically divide established communities. Upon the completion of construction, the Project's sewer pipelines would be located below-grade and disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction conditions. Demolition of the existing WRLS would occur outside roadways and be restored for future use, while the SRRLS would be constructed on a vacant parcel, outside an established residential neighborhood. Therefore, while the Project could temporarily limit access on local roads due to lane closures during construction, it would not permanently divide an established community. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The proposed Project would demolish the existing WRLS and replace it with the new SRRLS in order to supply the adequate sewer capacity necessary to serve future planned growth in the Project area. The SRRLS would be constructed on an EMWD-owned vacant parcel while new sewer lines would be constructed within the ROW. As noted above, the SRRLS site has a land use designation of Rural Community – Estate Density Residential and an established zoning of Rural Residential. This zoning is typically reserved for single-family homes and agricultural uses. However, under the Riverside County General Plan, government facilities (such as the proposed lift station) would be permitted at the site. In addition, per Riverside County's municipal code section 17.16.010, land zoned under Rural Residential allows for public utility uses. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with the land use policies of the County's General Plan or its municipal code.

As discussed above in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, the Project occurs within the limits of the MSHCP. Specifically, the south side of Scott Road and the proposed SRRLS overlap the northern edge of criteria cells 5073 and 5074 in Cell Group U (**Figure 9**). EMWD is not a signatory of the MSHCP and as such not subject to compliance with MSHCP. Regardless, the Project would not conflict with the MSHCP, as described in Section 4.4. Therefore, the Project would not conflict

with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations intended to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.12 Mineral Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 mandates a process for classification and designation of lands containing potentially important mineral deposits. Classification is conducted by the CGS State Geologist and designation is a function of the CGS State Mining and Geology Board. The relative importance of potential mineral resources sites is indicated through classification into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs). These MRZs are based on geological appraisals which include the use of literature, geological maps, and publications and data from the CDOC Division of Mines and Geology, U.S. Geological Survey, the former U.S. Bureau of Mines, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. It also includes site investigations that determine the chemical and physical components of the area. An area can be classified as:

MRZ 1: no mineral resources

MRZ 2: significant resource area (quality and quantity known)

MRZ 3: significant resource area (quality and quantity unknown)

MRZ 4: no information (applies primarily to high-value ores)

The entirety of the proposed Project area is designated as “Unstudied” (no Mineral Resource Zone designation issued) per Figure 3-17, Riverside County General Plan - Mineral Resource General Zones, of the Riverside County’s General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element (Riverside County 2015a).

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?**
- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?**

As noted above, the entirety of the proposed Project area is designated as “Unstudied” (no MRZ designation issued). In addition, the Project area is not within the boundaries of a Mineral Land Classification Report (CDOC 2026b). The Project is a relatively small infrastructure improvement within the Project area, requiring construction within existing ROW, on a 1.76-acre parcel zoned as Rural Residential, and on a site zoned Residential that contains the existing WRLS. The Project area is not currently used as a mineral resource recovery site and would not involve mining or the production of mineral resources. As such, the Project would not affect the availability of a valuable mineral resource in the region. No impact on the availability of a known mineral resource or the availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site would occur as a result of construction or operation of the Project.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.13 Noise

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

Noise can be defined as unwanted sound. Sound (and therefore noise) consists of energy waves that people receive and interpret, while noise consists of any sound that may produce physiological or psychological damage and/or interfere with communication, work, rest, recreation, or sleep. Sound intensity or acoustic energy is measured in decibel (dB) that are A-weighted to correct for the relative frequency response of the human ear (dBA). Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, with a 3-dBA change in sound generally considered the minimum level that is "barely perceptible" to humans, and a 5-dBA change generally considered "readily perceptible."

The predominant rating scales for human communities are the Noise Equivalent (L_{EQ}), and the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), both of which are based on dBA. The L_{EQ} is the total sound energy of time-varying noise over a sample period. The CNEL is the average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 5 decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and after addition of 10 dBA to sound levels in the night from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. CNEL is utilized for describing ambient noise levels because they account for all noise sources over an extended period of time and account for the heightened sensitivity of people to noise during the night.

Certain land uses are considered noise sensitive. These land uses require a serene environment as part of the overall facility or residential experience. Many of these facilities depend on low levels of sound to promote the wellbeing of the occupants. These uses include, but are not necessarily limited to schools, hospitals, rest homes, long term care facilities, mental care facilities, residential uses, places of worship, libraries, and passive recreation areas (County 2015b).

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

The Project site is within the unincorporated County. County Ordinance No. 847 establishes countywide standards for regulating noise, including general standards for exterior noise levels based on land use type. **Table 8** presents exterior noise limits for land uses adjacent to the Project site.

**Table 8:
County of Riverside Sound Level Standards**

General Plan Land Use Designation	Maximum Decibel Level	
	7am-10pm	10pm-7am
Estate Density Residential	55	45
Rural Residential	45	45
Medium Density Residential	55	45
Commercial Retail	65	55

Source: Riverside County Ordinance No. 847

Section 2 of Ordinance No. 847 provides exemptions from the established exterior noise level standards. For projects located within one-quarter of a mile from an inhabited dwelling, construction noise is exempt as long as construction occurs outside the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. from June to September and 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. from October to May. Projects located one-quarter of a mile or more from an inhabited dwelling are exempt with no hour restrictions. In addition, facilities owned and operated by or for a governmental agency² and capital improvement projects undertaken by a governmental agency are exempt from the exterior noise level standards.

The Project has the potential to expose people to increased noise levels during construction and operations, as discussed below.

Construction

Project construction would involve three primary components: construction of the SRRLS; construction of the pipelines; and demolition of the WRLS. Noise generating equipment expected to be used during construction of these components is listed in **Tables 1 and 2** in Section 2.4.3, *Construction*. Construction noise levels would fluctuate depending on the Project component, construction phase, equipment type, duration of use, distance between noise source and receptor, and presence or absence of existing barriers between noise source and receptor. The typical noise levels at 50 feet for each piece of anticipated equipment are listed in **Table 9**.

² Per County of Riverside Ordinance No. 847, a governmental agency is defined as the United States, the State of California, Riverside County, any city within Riverside County, any special district within Riverside County or any combination of these agencies. EMWD is a special district within Riverside County.

**Table 9:
Construction Equipment Noise Levels**

Equipment	Noise Level at 50 Feet (dBA L_{EQ})
Breaker	80.0
Compressor	73.7
Concrete Pumper	74.4
Concrete Saw	82.6
Crane	72.6
Drill Rig	77.4
Dump Truck/Water Truck	72.5
Excavator	76.7
Forklift	67.7
Generator	77.6
Paver	74.2
Pump	77.9
Roller	73.0
Sweeper	71.6
Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	73.6
Utility Truck	70.3
Welder	70.0

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation 2008

dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{EQ} = time-averaged sound level

Construction of the SRRLS would occur within an EMWD-owned parcel and is anticipated to last approximately six months. Construction activities would include clearing/site preparation, grading, facility installation, and paving. The closest noise-sensitive land use (NSLU) would be a single-family residence located approximately 240 feet east of the SRRLS site along Scott Road (**Figure 10**). Noise levels at this residence from construction of the SRRLS are expected to range from 54.1 dBA L_{EQ} (forklift) to 64.0 dBA L_{EQ} (generator).

Construction of the pipelines would occur within the roadway ROW and is expected to last approximately 18 months. Construction activities would include open cut trenching, installing the pipe, backfilling, and recompact/repaving. Pipeline construction would occur linearly; therefore, construction noise exposure at any one receptor would be of short duration as construction would continuously move along the pipeline alignment. NSLUs (single family homes) along the pipeline alignments are typically set back at least 50 feet from the roadway ROW (**Figure 10**). Noise levels at residences along the alignments from construction of the pipelines are expected to range from 70.3 dBA L_{EQ} (utility truck) to 82.6 dBA L_{EQ} (concrete saw).

Demolition of the existing WRLS would occur within an EMWD-owned parcel and is anticipated to last approximately one month. The closest NSLU to the WRLS would be single-family residences located approximately 250 feet west of the WRLS site along Wickerd Road (**Figure 10**). Though the Liberty High School property is located 30 feet to the east, the closest portions of the property are developed with parking lots and athletic fields, which are not

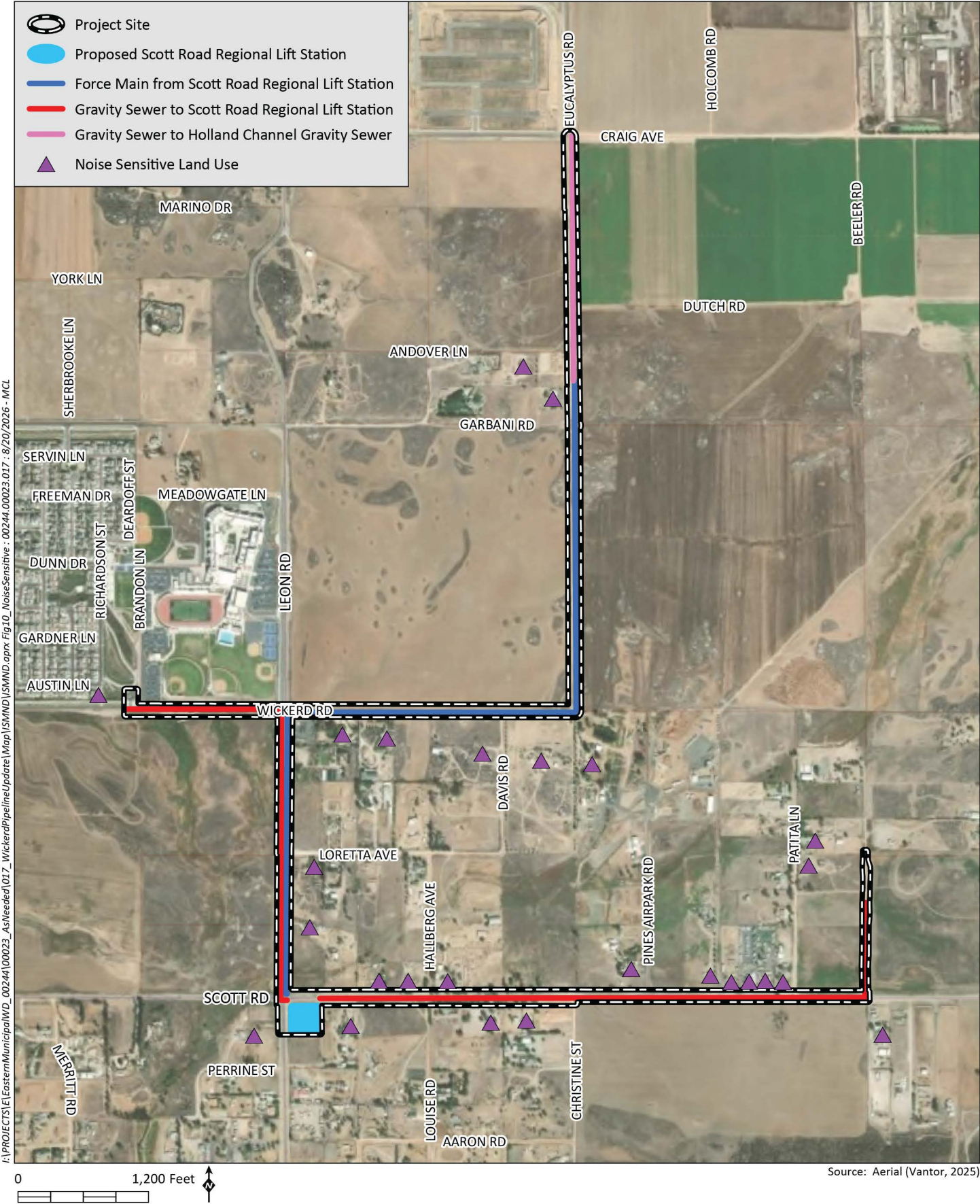
considered noise sensitive. Noise levels at this residence from demolition of the WRLS are expected to range from 53.7 dBA L_{EQ} (forklift) to 63.6 dBA L_{EQ} (generator).

In addition to the generation of on-site equipment noise, truck trips associated with the transportation of workers, equipment, and materials would generate noise along local streets; however, Project construction is not anticipated to involve sustained levels of high roadway traffic that could significantly impact adjacent and nearby residences. The highest vehicle activity would occur during the grading phase of construction at the SRRLS site. Grading is anticipated to occur over 20 days and require 5,500 cubic yards of import, which would result in approximately 17 trucks (34 one-way trips) per day traveling to and from the site (assuming a standard 16-cubic yard haul truck capacity). A perceptible increase in noise levels (3-dBA increase) occurs with a doubling of sound energy, which here would correspond to a doubling of traffic. Thirty-four one-way trucks trips are approximately equivalent to 102 one-way passenger car trips. Scott Road east of Leon Road had an average daily traffic volume of 8,243 trips based on counts conducted in 2020 (Riverside County Transportation Department 2020). An increase of 102 passenger-car-equivalent trips would be well below a doubling of traffic, and would generate negligible increases in average daily noise levels at nearby NSLUs. Noise impacts associated with on-road construction vehicles are therefore considered less than significant.

The Project has the potential to generate elevated noise levels at residential properties adjacent to the Project site. Project construction would occur during daytime hours and would therefore be exempt from the noise level limits set forth in the County Ordinance. However, given the rural setting of the Project and the resulting relatively low ambient noise levels in the area, the Project's on-site construction would have the potential to result in a 10-dBA increase over ambient noise levels, which represents a doubling of sounds and is considered a substantial increase in noise. Impacts from on-site construction activities are therefore considered potentially significant.

Operation

Once operational, the below-ground pipelines and decommissioned WRLS would not generate noise. As such, the Project's potential for operational noise impacts would be limited to operation of the SRRLS. The potential noise sources at the SRRLS site would include sewage pumps, emergency backup generator, and the chemical feed pump. The sewage pumps would be submerged within the wet wells, which would extend to a depth of 28 feet below grade. Stainless steel access hatches would cover the top of the wet wells. The combination of the below-grade location of the pumps and stainless steel access hatches would effectively attenuate noise generated by the pumps. Use of the emergency backup generator would be limited to emergency situations involving normal power failure and monthly short-duration (up to 30 minutes per day) testing, which would occur during daytime hours. Based on its infrequent use, the generator would not represent a substantial source of noise at the SRRLS site. Similarly, the chemical feed pump would not represent a substantial source of noise. In addition, the SRRLS site would be surrounded by a 8-foot-tall block wall, which would attenuate noise to surrounding properties, including to the nearest NLSU located approximately 240 feet to the



east. As such, operation of the SRRLS is not anticipated to generate substantial increases in ambient noise levels during operations. Furthermore, because the SRRLS would be a facility owned and operated by a governmental agency, it would be exempt from the noise level limits set forth in the County Ordinance. As such, operational noise impacts are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

NOI-1 Construction Noise Control Plan. A Noise Control Plan shall be prepared to reduce noise at noise-sensitive land uses (NSLUs) from Project construction. The Plan shall involve conducting noise measurements prior to the initiation of construction activities to establish ambient noise levels at NSLUs. The Plan shall identify noise control measures to ensure that noise levels from Project construction do not result in an exceedance of 10-dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) over ambient noise levels at NSLUs. Noise control measures in the Plans could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing barriers at least two feet higher than equipment's exhaust pipes and engines to block the line-of-sight between construction activities and nearby NSLUs. Barriers shall be solid and constructed of materials such as masonry, wood, plastic, fiberglass, steel, acoustic blankets or a combination of those materials, with no pronounced cracks or gaps through or below the barrier.
- Physically shielding stationary noise-generating equipment, such as generators and compressors, from direct line-of-sight to NSLUs.
- Reducing construction hours within a given 12-hour period.
- Using electrically powered equipment instead of pneumatic or internal combustion powered equipment.
- Using noise-producing signals, including horns, whistles, alarms, and bells for safety warning purposes only.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Groundborne vibration may occur when heavy equipment or vehicles create vibrations in the ground, which can then propagate through the ground to buildings, creating a low frequency sound. Groundborne vibration can be described by both its amplitude and frequency. Amplitude may be characterized by peak particle velocity (PPV), which is typically measured in inches per second (in/sec). Vibration can be felt outdoors, but the perceived intensity of vibration impacts is much greater indoors, due to the shaking of the structure. Groundborne vibrations can be a

source of annoyance to humans due to a “rumbling” effect, and such vibrations may also cause damage to buildings. Groundborne vibration is therefore discussed in terms of these impacts on humans and structures. For this analysis, groundborne vibration would be considered excessive if it exceeds the 0.1-in/sec PPV “strongly perceptible” criterion for human annoyance, the 0.3-in/sec PPV criterion for damage to older residential structures, or the 0.5-in/sec PPV criterion for damage to new residential structures, as specified by Caltrans (2020) for continuous/frequent intermittent sources.

The most prominent vibration-generating piece of equipment anticipated to be used for construction of the Project would be a vibratory roller, which would be used to compact soil, aggregate, and asphalt. Caltrans provides a reference PPV for a vibratory roller of 0.21 in/sec at 25 feet. Based on this reference PPV, a vibratory roller would generate vibration levels above the “strongly perceptible” human annoyance criterion of 0.1 in/sec PPV within a distance of approximately 45 feet, above the structural damage criterion for older residential structures of 0.3 in/sec PPV within a distance of approximately 18 feet, and above the structural damage criterion for newer residential structures of 0.5 in/sec PPV within a distance of approximately 11 feet.³ Residential structures adjacent to the Project site are not located within these distances. The closest residential structure is 50 feet from the north side of the Project site along Scott Road. At a distance of 50 feet, a vibratory roller would generate a PPV of 0.098 in/sec, which would be below the 0.1-inch per second PPV “strongly perceptible” criterion for human annoyance, the 0.3-in/sec PPV criterion for damage to older residential structures, or the 0.5-in/sec PPV criterion for damage to new residential structures. In addition, a vibratory roller would be mobile and would not operate adjacent to a given residence for an extended period of time that could result in excessive vibration at that residence. Therefore, construction-period vibration impacts are considered less than significant.

The Project does not involve components that would generate substantial vibration during Project operations. As such, no operation-period vibration impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

³ Equipment PPV = Reference PPV * (25/D)ⁿ (in/sec), where Reference PPV is PPV at 25 feet, D is distance from equipment to the receiver in feet, and n = 1.1 (the value related to the attenuation rate through the ground); formula from Caltrans 2020.

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

The closest airport to the Project is the French Valley Airport, located approximately four miles south of the Project site. The Project site is not within the Airport Influence Area of the French Valley Airport (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission 2004). Therefore, Project personnel would not be exposed to excessive noise levels from aircraft associated with French Valley Airport. In addition, following the completion of Project construction, the Project would not involve the regular presence of personnel. As such, no impacts related to aircraft noise would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.14 Population and Housing

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

In 2020, EMWD served an estimated retail population of 603,950 through approximately 155,561 single family, multi-family, and other commercial, industrial, institutional, landscape, and irrigation accounts. EMWD's service area is currently 40 percent developed, making it one of the

few regions in Southern California that may see significant population growth in the coming decades (EMWD 2021). Ultimate demand estimates indicate that before EMWD reaches full build out, the population would more than double compared to the current size. As planned in the EMWD 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), EMWD's retail service area population would increase to approximately 807,200 in 2045 (EMWD 2021).

a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

The proposed Project would not directly induce unplanned population growth as no new housing or permanent employment are proposed. The Project involves the construction and operation of a new lift station and associated pipelines to address the WRLS's lack of adequate capacity to serve future planned growth in the Project area. Operation of the Project would supply existing and projected sewer demand and is consistent with the planned growth anticipated in the EMWD's 2020 UWMP (EMWD 2021), which has an anticipated retail service population of 807,200 for 2045. Inspection and repair of the Project's components, if necessary, would be incorporated into EMWD's existing O&M activities; no unplanned new staff would be required to serve the Project. Therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Construction and operation of the Project would occur within EMWD-owned parcels and within the existing ROW of Beeler Road, Scott Road, Leon Road, Wickerd Road, Garbani Road, and Eucalyptus Road. Potential construction staging areas would occur within EMWD-owned parcels or other disturbed parcels. As such, the Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or houses or require the construction of replacement housing. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.15 Public Services

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

Fire Protection

The Riverside County Fire Department and CalFire provide public safety services, including fire protection, medical aid, rescue, hazardous materials response, and educational safety programs in Riverside County. Riverside County Fire Station 76, located at 29950 Menifee Road, is the closest fire station to the Project site, at a distance of approximately three miles to the northwest.

Police Protection

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department provides police protection and crime prevention services within the Project area. The station located at 30755 Auld Road is the closest station to the Project site, at a distance of approximately four miles to the south.

Schools

The closest schools to the Project are Liberty High School, located at 32255 Leon Road and adjacent to the Project, and Sally Buselt Elementary School, located at 29810 Wickerd Road and approximately 0.9 mile to the west. Liberty High School is part of Perris Union High School District, which operates five high schools, a military institute, an online academy, two adult schools, and a middle school. Sally Buselt High School is part of Menifee Union School District, which operates a preschool, 10 elementary schools, a K-8 STEAM academy, a 1-8 Virtual School, 4 middle schools, and an independent study program.

Parks

The closest parks to the Project are Centennial Park, located at 31166 Shire Horse Way in the City of Menifee, and Abelia Sports Park, located at 34619 Abelia Street in the French Valley community of unincorporated Riverside County. The parks are 1.5 miles northwest and 1.5 miles south of the Project, respectively. Centennial Park is 1 of 22 parks owned and operated by the City of Menifee (City of Menifee 2025). Abelia Sports Park is 1 of 84 parks/recreation facilities owned and operated by Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District, which serves the cities of Hemet, San Jacinto, and Menifee, as well as the unincorporated areas of Winchester, Murrieta, French Valley, Homeland, Romoland, Valle Vista, Sage, and Aguanga (Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District 2026).

Other Public Facilities

The Menifee Library, located at 28798 La Piedra Road in the City of Menifee, and the French Valley Library, located at 31526 Skyview Road in the French Valley community of unincorporated Riverside County, are 2.7 miles northwest and 2.2 miles south of the Project, respectively. Both libraries are part of the Riverside County Library System, which includes 34 locations across the County (Riverside County Library System 2026). The closest hospital to the Project is the Loma Linda University Medical Center, located at 28062 Baxter Road in the City of Murrieta, approximately 3.4 miles southwest of the Project.

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i) Fire protection?

The proposed Project would not construct new fire protection facilities or physically alter existing fire protection facilities, nor would it substantially change response times or service ratios for fire protection service and stations. The Project's fire protection requirements during construction activities would be short-term, with the existing fire protection services provided by the Riverside County Fire Department/CalFire sufficient enough to provide fire protection or emergency services to the Project. In addition, operation of the Project would not directly or

indirectly induce unplanned population growth that would require the construction of new fire protection facilities or the expansion of the existing fire department. As the Project's new SRRLS would replace the decommissioned WRLS to serve the existing and planned population, no additional or increased fire protection facilities to maintain response times, service ratios, or other measures of performance would be required. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

ii) Police protection?

The proposed Project would not construct new police protection facilities or physically alter existing police protection facilities, nor would it substantially change response times or service ratios for police services and stations. In the event of an emergency, existing police services provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department would be sufficient. In addition, operation of the Project would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth that would require the construction of new police protection facilities or the expansion of the existing police department. As the Project's new SRRLS would replace the decommissioned WRLS to serve the existing and planned population, no additional or increased fire protection facilities to maintain response times, service ratios, or other measures of performance would be required. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

iii) Schools?

The proposed Project would not change existing demand for schools because the Project would serve existing and planned communities. Construction of the Project does not include housing, and its operation would not result in substantial new employment or unplanned population growth that would result in an influx of students requiring school services. No new school facilities would need to be built to maintain class size ratios or other performance objectives. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

iv) Parks?

The proposed Project would not change existing demand for parks because the Project does not propose new housing units, nor would it directly or indirectly induce unplanned population or employment within the area. Construction and operation of the Project would not require the expansion of existing or construction of new parks to maintain the current park ratio standard. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

v) Other public facilities?

The proposed Project would not change existing demand for other public facilities as the Project does not propose new housing units, nor would it directly or indirectly induce unplanned population or permanent employment within the area. Construction and operation of the Project would not necessitate expansion of existing or construction of new public facilities such as libraries or hospitals. Therefore, no impact on other public facilities would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.16 Recreation

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

As discussed in Section 4.15, Public Services, the closest parks to the Project are Centennial Park, located at 31166 Shire Horse Way in the City of Menifee, and Abelia Sports Park, located at 34619 Abelia Street in the French Valley community of unincorporated Riverside County. The parks are 1.5 miles northwest and 1.5 miles south of the Project, respectively. The Project site encompasses ROWs that include designations for proposed trails by the County General Plan, including Leon Road (Regional Trail: Urban/Suburban), Wickerd Road (Combination Trail: Regional Trail/ Class I Bike Path), and Eucalyptus Road (Regional Trail: Urban/Suburban) (County 2021). However, these trails are currently not built out.

a) Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

The proposed Project would be built to serve existing and planned communities. It does not include residential housing and would not induce unplanned employment or population growth that would permanently increase the use of recreational facilities. Construction of the Project's sewer lines may require temporary closure of a small portion of bike lane along Wickerd Road that fronts the WRLS site; however, potential impacts related to this closure would be minimized through the implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*. Implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan would ensure potential temporary impacts related to closures of pedestrian and bicycle access routes are less than significant. In addition, the affected bicycle lane would be restored to its existing condition upon the completion of construction activities. The Project would not increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Does the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

The proposed Project would construct a replacement lift station and associated sewer pipelines to adequately serve existing and planned future development. The Project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could have an adverse physical impact on the environment. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

No impact.

4.17 Transportation

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The Project area's regional transportation network consists of I-215 (to the west of the Project site), SR 79 (to the east of the Project site), Domenigoni Parkway (to the north of the Project site), and SR 74 (to the north of the Project site). Local access in the Project area consists of Beeler Road, Scott Road, Leon Road, Wickerd Road, Garbani Road, and Eucalyptus Road. In addition to these roadways, other connections to the region include the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway line, which is a freight line used for goods transportation, the Riverside Transit Agency bus system, and bikeways. There are no existing or potential bus routes or commuter rail lines within the Project area.

The County General Plan Circulation Element (County 2020) designates future road improvements and extensions, addresses non-motorized transportation alternatives, and identifies funding options. The Circulation Element also establishes standards for the movement of people, goods, and services throughout the planning area.

SCAG is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. In April 2024, SCAG's Regional Council adopted its 2024-2050 RTP/SCS, which presents the transportation vision for the SCAG region through the year 2050 and provides a long-term investment framework for addressing the region's transportation and related challenges. The RTP/SCS focuses on expanding land use and transportation strategies to increase mobility options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern.

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Construction of the Project, specifically construction of the proposed sewer pipelines, would have temporary impacts on local roadways, including Beeler Road, Scott Road, Leon Road, Wickerd Road, Garbani Road, and Eucalyptus Road. Construction of the pipelines is estimated to last 18 months; however, given the linear nature of the pipelines, construction would continuously progress along the alignments and would not affect a given portion of roadway for the entire 18-month construction duration.

The Project site encompasses ROWs that include designations for proposed trails by the County General Plan, including Leon Road (Regional Trail: Urban/Suburban), Wickerd Road (Combination Trail: Regional Trail/ Class I Bike Path), and Eucalyptus Road (Regional Trail: Urban/Suburban) (County 2021). However, these trails are currently not built out.

Although construction of the pipelines within the ROW would be temporary and have limited footprints, it may require temporary closures of lanes or roadways. Potential impacts related to these closures would be minimized through the implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan, as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*, which would ensure that appropriate traffic controls are implemented to minimize impacts to the local roadways during construction. Construction activities associated with demolition of the existing WRLS and construction of the new SRRLS would occur entirely within the Project sites and would not

impede traffic circulation. As such, with implementation of a Traffic Control and Detour Plan, Project construction would not conflict with plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system, and construction-period impacts would be less than significant.

Operation of the proposed sewer pipelines and SRRLS would not conflict with regional transportation plans or the County General Plan. The proposed pipelines would be located below ground, the SRRLS would be located on a parcel outside the ROW, and the O&M of the SRRLS would be incorporated into EMWD's existing O&M activities. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 subdivision (b) sets forth specific criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts. Subdivision (b)(1) pertains to land use projects and describes factors that may indicate whether the amount of a land use project's vehicle miles traveled (VMT) may be significant or not. According to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (OPR 2018), the term "automobile" refers to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light-duty trucks. In the case of the proposed Project, worker trips would be conducted in cars and light-duty trucks. Vendor and hauling trips associated with construction of the proposed Project would be conducted in medium- or heavy-duty trucks and are therefore not considered in the evaluation of VMT. Based on the size of the Project and the associated construction required, Project-generated passenger vehicle trips during construction are anticipated to be well below the 110-trips-per-day threshold specified in OPR's Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA to consider a Project's VMT impact less than significant.

Operation of the Project is expected to require occasional worker trips for inspection and testing of the sewer pipelines and SRRLS; however, these trips would be incorporated into EMWD's existing O&M activities and would not increase VMT in the Project area. Based on OPR guidance, the proposed Project would not create a significant impact related to VMT and the Project would be consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Project construction would require incompatible along roadways (i.e., use of heavy construction equipment), which could temporarily increase hazards in the ROW. The Traffic Control and Detour Plan (as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*) would be required prior to the issuance of an encroachment permit from the County and would include measures to ensure that vehicle ingress and egress from construction sites and the staging area(s) and use of heavy construction equipment in the Project area would occur safely.

Following the completion of construction, roadways would be restored to their existing condition. Driveways and the access road at the SRRLS site would be designed according to EMWD standard specifications such that they would not impact circulation. The Project would not construct new roadways or introduce design features that are incompatible with existing roads. Therefore, after construction, the Project would not result in roadway hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Construction of the proposed Project's sewer pipelines within existing roadway ROW may require lane closures and would generate trips associated with construction (worker travel and delivery and hauling of materials and equipment). These necessary lane closures have the potential to hinder access for emergency vehicles within the Project area. To prevent the Project's construction activities from interfering with emergency response time, a Traffic Control and Detour Plan (as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*) would be implemented. The traffic control measures would require that emergency crews be able to access sites and surrounding areas. The contractor would coordinate to ensure that emergency responders, such as the fire and police department, are informed of construction locations and would make a reasonable effort to preserve access to adjacent residences during construction. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	☐	☒	☐	☐
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

Public Resources Code Sections 21074(a)(1) and (2) define tribal cultural resources (TCRs) as "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California

Native American tribe". Thus, a resource that is considered sacred, religious, spiritual, or an object of cultural value to Native American tribes, regardless of time period, is a "tribal cultural resource"; TCRs can include geographically defined sites, places, or landscapes of spiritual or cultural value, including Native American tribal burial grounds. TCRs can also be archaeological sites, but they may be gathering areas, landscapes, or areas associated with sacred songs and stories, with no archaeological evidence.

Enacted in 2014, Assembly Bill (AB) 52 amended CEQA to require tribal cultural resources to be considered as potentially significant cultural resources under the CEQA environmental review process. The procedures under AB 52 offer tribes an opportunity to take an active role in the CEQA process in order to protect tribal cultural resources.

- a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:***
- i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or***
 - ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.***

Per AB 52, EMWD initiated consultation with Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed Project to identify resources of cultural or spiritual value to affected tribes. On December 23, 2025, EMWD sent consultation notification letters via certified mail to Native American Tribal representatives on the EMWD's Master List pursuant to the requirements of AB 52 pertaining to government-to-government consultation. The Tribes that were notified included the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Pechanga, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, Soboba, and the Yuhaaviatam of San Manual Nation. To date, EMWD has received three responses: Pechanga and Soboba requested tribal consultation under AB 52 while the Yuhaaviatam of San Manual Nation declined consultation. Prior to the consultation meetings, EMWD forwarded the Tribes the following deliverables for review: preliminary design reports for the SRRLS and associated pipelines, geotechnical report, and a variety of figures depicting the Project site, and the results of the records search.

EMWD conducted consultation with Soboba on February 5, 2026. Soboba shared information about a Tribal Cultural Property (TCP) and Tribal Cultural Landscape (TCL) that are both located in the vicinity of the Project site. Soboba also stated that there are recorded TCRs in close proximity to all sides of the Project site, highlighting the significance of this area to the Soboba Tribe.

EMWD conducted consultation with Pechanga on March 11, 2026. During the consultation meeting, Pechanga shared that this area was rich with TCRs, as there are a variety of recorded resources surrounding the Project site.

As a result of the individual consultation meetings, both Soboba and Pechanga requested that a joint information meeting be conducted between the two consulting Tribes and EMWD in order to share additional confidential knowledge. A joint site visit was also requested and conducted on June 2, 2026, where the consulting Tribes, EMWD, and HELIX representative walked through the Project location.

Both the Pechanga and Soboba Tribes expressed concerns with the potential unearthing of unknown tribal cultural artifacts and potential impacts to the four archaeological resources that were identified within the Project site during the excavation for the SRRLS and associated pipelines due to the area's tribal cultural significance and the ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project. While they have not been evaluated for CRHR eligibility, Pechanga and Soboba indicated they consider the four recorded resources significant/CRHR eligible. The Project has been designed to avoid impacts to these resources and mitigation measure **CUL-2** would also be implemented to create a buffer between the resources and construction activities. A Native American monitoring program would be implemented, as outlined in mitigation measure **CUL-1** through **CUL-7**, so that potential impacts to known and unknown TCRs are reduced to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation measure **CUL-8** would also be implemented to avoid impacts to Native American human remains in the event that they are discovered.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-1 through **CUL-8**.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

4.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Water Service

EMWD provides potable water and agricultural water services for the proposed Project area. The majority of EMWD's supply is imported from The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California via the State Water Project and the Colorado River Aqueduct for potable and non-potable use and groundwater recharge. Groundwater is also pumped from the Hemet/San Jacinto and West San Jacinto areas of the San Jacinto Groundwater Basin to offset imported water supplies.

Wastewater Treatment

EMWD provides wastewater collection and treatment in the proposed Project area. EMWD has four operational regional water reclamation facilities throughout its service area and interconnections between the local collection systems serving each treatment plant allow for

operational flexibility and improved reliability. For wastewater treatment in the Project area, EMWD uses its Perris Valley Regional Water Reclamation Facility and Temecula Valley Regional Water Reclamation Facility.

Stormwater Drainage

Stormwater drainage infrastructure within the Project area consists of a network of natural and improved streams, storm channels, storm drains, and catch basins intended to manage stormwater that flows to tributary receiving waters.

Electrical, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications Utilities

Southern California Gas Company, a division of Sempra Energy, supplies natural gas to businesses and residences in the Project area. Natural gas is provided through a network of gas transmission pipelines and distributed through existing mains. Electricity is provided by SCE. Telecommunication services are provided by utilities that operate independently), which include but are not limited to AT&T, Spectrum, Frontier Communications, and T-Mobile.

Landfills

Landfills serving the Project area include the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill, El Sobrante Landfill, and the Badlands Sanitary Landfill.

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

The proposed Project would demolish and replace the existing WRLS with the new SRRLS and construct new sewer pipelines. The environmental impacts of Project construction are analyzed throughout this IS. Electricity for the SRRLS would be provided on site via a new transformer that would tie into existing SCE facilities located in Scott Road. Similarly, new drainage facilities at the SRRLS would tie into existing stormwater facilities in Scott Road. Work for the new electrical and drainage facilities would be within the Project footprint considered in this IS.

As discussed in Section 4.14, *Population and Housing*, the Project would serve existing and planned development and would not induce unplanned population or employment growth that would require or result in the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electrical power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities or additional water infrastructure beyond what is considered for the Project. As such, no additional off-site construction or relocation of facilities is anticipated. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Construction of the proposed Project would require a minimal water supply for dust control and construction activities such as concrete. As no substantial water is required, existing sources provided by the EMWD would be sufficient, and no new or expanded supply would be required for construction. Operation of the Project would not induce unplanned population growth that would require additional water supplies. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

The proposed Project would replace and demolish the existing WRLS with the new SRRLS and construct new sewer pipelines to adequately handle the projected increase in wastewater that would result from future planned growth in the area. The Project would not induce unplanned population or employment growth that would require or result in the construction of new or expanded facilities such as wastewater collection infrastructure or treatment services. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Construction of the proposed Project would generate construction waste during the construction of the SRRLS, demolition of the WRLS, and installation of underground sewer pipelines. This generated waste would be disposed of at a permitted landfill in accordance with local and state solid waste disposal requirements. There are two state regulations that set

standards for solid waste generation: AB 939 mandates 50 percent diversion of solid waste; and AB 341 mandates recycling programs to help reduce GHG emissions. Waste material may be hauled to the Lamb Canyon Landfill (16411 Lamb Canyon Road), which is the closest landfill to the Project area, at a distance of approximately 18 miles to the northeast. The Lamb Canyon Landfill has a remaining capacity of 14,540,000 cubic yards with a maximum capacity of 39,681,513 cubic yards and is expected to remain operational until April 1, 2032 (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery 2026). Therefore, the existing landfill would have sufficient capacity to accommodate construction debris from the Project. Construction debris is anticipated to be within the permitted capacity of the local landfill and would adhere to mandatory construction waste diversion requirements.

Operation of the Project is not anticipated to generate solid waste in the long-term. Therefore, operation of the Project would not affect available solid waste disposal capacity in the region. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Construction and operation of the proposed Project would comply with local, state, and federal regulations related to solid waste. While operation of the proposed Project is not anticipated to generate long-term solid waste, construction activities would create debris association with construction and demolition. Construction contractor(s) would be required to dispose of excess construction debris in accordance with existing reduction statutes (AB 939 and AB 341) and regulations. These regulations would determine the landfill to be used for disposal of construction debris, mandatory 50 percent diversion of solid waste (AB 939), and mandatory recycling programs to reduce GHG emissions (AB 341). Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.20 Wildfire

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The California Public Resources Code 4201-4204 directs CalFire to map fire hazard within state responsibility areas based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors present, including areas where winds have been identified by the department as a major cause of wildfire spread. The majority of the proposed Project area, including the SRRLS site, would be located within land designated as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CalFire. Portions of the Project's sewer alignment within Beeler Road and portions of Wickerd Road and Eucalyptus Road would be within land designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CalFire 2026).

The County EOP (County 2024b) serves as the foundation for response and recovery operations for the County, as it establishes roles and responsibilities, assigns tasks, and specifies policies and general procedures. The County LHMP (County 2023) aims to reduce the impact of a disaster by identifying hazards and developing ways to decrease their impact. The purpose of the LHMP is to identify the County's hazards, review and assess past disaster occurrences, estimate the probability of future occurrences, and set goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and human-caused hazards.

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Project construction activities would be located within the public ROW and EMWD-owned land. Staging for construction of the SRRLS would occur on site, while staging for construction of the pipelines would occur at the SRRLS site and potentially within the shoulders of the ROW adjacent to where the pipelines would be installed. Temporary lane closures during construction may restrict access for use by vehicles during an emergency response or evacuation and could impair implementation of or physically interfere with the County's adopted LHMP. EMWD would develop a Traffic Control and Detour Plan (see Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*) which would reduce conflict between temporary construction activities and the EOP and LHMP by requiring coordination with emergency services (police, fire, and others); requiring identification of roadways and access points for emergency services; and requiring that disruptions to or closures of these locations be minimized. Impacts of construction on the adopted EOP and LHMP would be less than significant.

Upon completion of the Project's sewer pipeline installation, roadways would be restored to pre-construction conditions, and the operation and maintenance of the SRRLS would be incorporated into EMWD's existing O&M activities. Therefore, operation of the Project would not physically impair or otherwise interfere with adopted emergency response or evacuation plans in the Project area. No impacts would occur during operations.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

As mentioned above, portions of the Project's sewer alignment within Beeler Road and portions of Wickerd Road and Eucalyptus Road would be within land designated as a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The use of construction equipment that could potentially spark or otherwise ignite a fire during normal construction activities poses a risk of fire in these High Fire

Hazard Severity Zones. Implementation of EMWD's standard fire hazard reduction measures as specified in Section 2.5, *EMWD Standard Construction Practices*, and equipping construction equipment with spark arrestors, per industry standards, would ensure the Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose people in the Project area to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire.

Operationally, the Project's sewer pipelines would be located below ground in existing public ROW and operate as such. The SRRLS and associated above-grade structures would be located within land designated as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Therefore, the Project would not introduce new structures that would exacerbate wildfire risk or be susceptible to wildfires. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

- c) *Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?***

The proposed Project would not involve the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that is typically associated with fire risk such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, or power lines. The SRRLS would require infrastructure installation related to electricity and would be located in an area served by existing infrastructure. Though some of the existing infrastructure would be expanded for the Project, this expansion would not be substantial and would not exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. In addition, the SRRLS is not located within High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

- d) *Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?***

Based on its location in a flat area, the SRRLS would not be exposed to downslope landslides or downstream flooding as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Pipelines would be located below ground and would not be subject to landslides or flooding. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

- a) Does the Project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?***

As described in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*, and Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, the proposed Project has the potential to impact wildlife and California prehistory; however, impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Per the instructions for evaluating environmental impacts in this Initial Study, the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory were considered in the response to each question in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of this form. As a result of this evaluation, the Project was determined to have potential significant direct effects related to biological resources (sensitive species, sensitive habitats, wetlands, wildlife movement, conservation plans), cultural resources (archaeological resources and human remains), and tribal cultural resources. Mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-11**, and **CUL-1** through **CUL-8** would reduce potential impacts to less-than-significant levels for these issue areas.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-11** and **CUL-1** through **CUL-8**.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

- b) Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)***

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) provides two approaches to discussing cumulative project impacts. These are: (1) the list-of-projects method, which involves a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the lead agency; and (2) the summary-of-projections method, which involves a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document or in a prior environmental document that has been adopted or certified and which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact. Any such planning document shall be referenced and made available to the

public at a location specified by the lead agency. The list-of-projects method is utilized herein for purposes of this analysis.

As mentioned in Section 2.4, *Project Description*, the proposed Project would accommodate flows from two proposed residential projects, the Ardis Ranch project and the Frederick's Ridge project, as well as other future regional development. Both the Ardis Ranch project and Frederick's Ridge project sites are adjacent to the proposed Project. The Ardis Ranch project is located north of Scott Road between Beeler Road and Ashford Land. The Frederick's Ridge project is located south of Scott Road between Christine Street and Beeler Road. An additional proposed residential project, the Hallberg Ranch project, which is located south of Craig Avenue between Leon Road and Eucalyptus Road, is also adjacent to the proposed Project.

The proposed Project and three cumulative projects considered for this analysis would occur in a relatively undeveloped area that contains the potential for sensitive biological and cultural resources. The proposed Project, however, would not result in individually limited but cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources because the majority of the Project site, which includes the currently developed WRLS site, the SRRLS site, and both paved and unpaved ROW, is classified as either developed or disturbed habitat. The Project would also implement mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to biological resources. Similarly, the Project would implement mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources.

In addition, the majority of Project-related impacts would be localized, short-term impacts. Specifically, the Project's potentially significant impacts related to biological resources, cultural resources, and noise would be limited to the construction period. Other impacts, though determined to be less than significant, such as traffic-related impacts associated with lane closures, would also be limited to the construction period. While there is potential for the proposed Project to be constructed concurrently with one of more of the cumulative projects identified above, Project construction adjacent to the cumulative projects would be for installation of sewer pipelines. Such installation would continuously progress along the linear alignments and would not be located adjacent to any one of the cumulative projects for an extended period of time. The Project would also implement mitigation measure **NOI-1** to reduce noise-related impacts during construction. Thus, the potential for the proposed Project's construction-related impacts, such as noise generation, to combine with impacts of the cumulative projects would be limited. Following completion of construction, the sewer pipelines would be located below ground and would not have the potential to result in impacts that could combine with potential impacts associated with operation of the cumulative projects.

Furthermore, the Project is consistent with local and regional plans, including the AQMP. The Project adheres to other land use plans and policies with jurisdiction in the Project area. The Project is not considered growth-inducing as defined by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d), as it would not induce, either directly or indirectly, population and housing growth. It would not increase traffic volumes in the Project area over existing conditions. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in impacts that are individually limited,

but cumulatively considerable. The potential for cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

See mitigation measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-11**, **CUL-1** through **CUL-8**, and **NOI-1**.

Significance Determination

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

c) Does the Project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

With adherence to regulatory codes, ordinances, regulations, standards, and guidelines, in conjunction with the discussed mitigation measures, construction and operation of the proposed Project would not present a substantial adverse effect on human beings either directly or indirectly. In addition, all resource topics associated with the Project have been analyzed in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines and found to pose no impact, less than significant impact, or less than significant impact with mitigation. Further environmental analysis is not required. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

None required or recommended.

Significance Determination

Less than significant impact.

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