



Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project

State Clearinghouse #2021090585

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Acronym List

Acronym	Definition
AB	Assembly Bill
AHPA	Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
Basin Plan	Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan
BMP	Best management practice
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
Cal Fire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
cBOD	carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFGC	California Fish and Game Commission
CFR	US Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH ₄	Methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon monoxide
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
CO _{2e}	Carbon dioxide equivalent
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources

Acronym	Definition
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan
CVWD	Coachella Valley Water District
CWSRF	Clean Water State Revolving Fund
DAC	Disadvantaged Community
dB	Decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRAP	Fire and Resource Assessment Program
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	Greenhouse gas
gpm	gallons per minute
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
GWP	Global Warming Potential
HDD	horizontal directional drilling
HP	horsepower
H ₂ S	Hydrogen sulfide
IID	Imperial Irrigation District
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Consultation
IS	Initial Study
L _{dn}	Day-Night Average Sound Level
L _{MAX}	Maximum Sound Level

Acronym	Definition
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
LST	Localized Significance Threshold
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
mgd	Million gallons per day
MHI	Median household income
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zones
MT	Metric tons
N ₂ O	Nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O&M	Operation and maintenance
O ₃	Ozone
OHW	Ordinary High Water
Pb	Lead
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PM	Particulate Matter
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
RCTC	Riverside County Transportation Commission

Acronym	Definition
ROG	Reactive organic gases
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SDAC	Severely Disadvantaged Community
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SRA	Source receptor area
SSAB	Salton Sea Air Basin
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	Toxic air contaminants
TSS	total suspended solids
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
U.S.C.	United States Code
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VCP	vitriified clay pipe
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	Vehicle miles traveled
VOC	Volatile organic compounds
WRP	water reclamation plant

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) has prepared this Initial Study (IS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts related to implementation of the Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project (the “proposed project” or “proposed action”), which consists of consolidation of 174 connections across 13 systems into CVWD’s sewer collection and treatment system. The proposed project will serve disadvantaged communities (DACs) in CVWD’s eastern service area that currently face threats from failing septic systems.

CVWD 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. CVWD has prepared this IS to evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with the Airport Boulevard Septic Consolidation Project, and to disclose to the public and decision makers the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. 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 §§21000 et. seq.), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, §§15000 et. seq.), as updated on December 28, 2018, and CVWD’s Local CEQA Guidelines (2021).

CEQA Guidelines §15063 describes the requirements for an IS and §§15070-15075 describe the process for the preparation of an MND. Where appropriate, this document makes reference to either the CEQA Statute or State CEQA Guidelines. 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

The proposed project may receive funding under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), which is administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) via funds from US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Project grant funding may also come from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Program. Therefore, to support compliance with the federal environmental review requirements of the funding programs, this document includes analysis pertinent to several federal regulations (also referred to as federal cross-cutters or CEQA-Plus). Guidelines for complying with cross-cutting federal authorities can be found in the USDA Environmental Policies and Procedures at 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1970.

The federal cross-cutters analyzed in this document include:

- Environmental Alternative Analysis
- Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (AHPA)
- Clean Air Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Environmental Justice
- Farmland Protection Policy Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- Floodplain Management: Executive Orders 11988, 12148, and 13690
- Invasive Species: Executive Order 13112
- Indian Sacred Sites: Executive Order 13007
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Executive Order 13168
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Protection of Wetlands: Executive Order 11990
- Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10
- Trails for America in the 21st Century: Executive Order 13195
- Safe Drinking Water Act, Sole Source Aquifer Protection
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Wilderness Act

1.3 CEQA Process

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15073, this IS/MND was available for a 30-day public review (September 29 – October 29, 2021). CVWD provided a copy of the IS/MND to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies. In addition, CVWD filed a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration with the Riverside County Clerk and Imperial Irrigation District (a responsible agency).

A copy of the Draft IS/MND was available for review at: www.cvwd.org

Written comments were to be submitted to CVWD by 5:00 pm by October 29, 2021, and addressed to:

William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor
Coachella Valley Water District
75515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, CA 92211

Or emailed to: WPatterson@cvwd.org

Following the mandated 30-day public review period, CVWD evaluated any written comments received on the IS/MND and incorporated any substantial evidence that the proposed project could have a significant impact on the environment into the Final IS/MND. CVWD also prepared a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) to be adopted along with the Final IS/MND. This MMRP has been included here as *Section 1.6*. As stated in *Section 1.4* no public comments were received.

CVWD's Board of Directors will consider adopting the Final IS/MND and MMRP in compliance with CEQA at a publicly noticed meeting, planned for December 7, 2021.

1.4 Public Comments

This IS/MND was available for public review from September 29 – October 29, 2021. No comments were received on the document. Therefore, no revisions have been made in response to comments.

1.5 Impact Terminology

The scope of the environmental resource areas is listed above in *Section 1.2*. The level of significance for each resources 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.

1.6 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that when a lead agency adopts a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), it shall prepare a monitoring or reporting program for all required mitigation measures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15097). This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) describes the monitoring and reporting program for mitigation measures adopted by Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) to avoid or substantially reduce impacts related to the *Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project* to less than significant levels. CVWD and its contractors are required to implement the adopted mitigation measures for the proposed project in accordance with the MND. This MMRP contains a checklist and description of all adopted mitigation measures, including the responsible parties, timing, and completion criteria.

Program Administration

The MMRP shall be administered by CVWD. Mitigation measures shall be incorporated into design and construction contracts, as appropriate, to ensure full implementation. The MMRP shall be maintained by the designated CVWD Project Manager and be available for inspection upon request at CVWD offices.

Mitigation Monitoring Requirements

Table 1-1 provides a summary of potential impacts and associated mitigation measures by resource area. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §§15097 and 15126.4, the following mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project design and would be implemented before or during construction in accordance with the project; thereby, reducing all identified potential environmental impacts to a less than significant level.

The table does not include impacts or criteria that were deemed No Impact or Less than Significant due to actions associated with the *Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project*; rather, the table focuses on potentially significant impacts and associated mitigation measures.

Table 1-1: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

<i>Mitigation Measure</i>	<i>Monitoring and Reporting Actions</i>	<i>Implementation Schedule</i>	<i>Monitoring Frequency</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials</i>
<p>AES-1: Low Illumination Security Lighting All permanent exterior lighting at the lift station shall be of the lowest illumination necessary for security and shielded and directed downward to avoid light spillage onto neighboring properties.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Confirm construction of permeant exterior lighting follows measure specifications. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. CVWD, Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____
<p>Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Nesting Birds Project-related activities should occur outside of the bird breeding season (typically January 1 to September 15 to account for both passerines and raptors) to the extent practicable. If construction must occur within the bird breeding season, then no more than three days prior to initiation of ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal, a nesting bird and raptor pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within the disturbance footprint plus a 100-foot buffer (500-foot for raptors), where feasible. If the proposed project is phased or construction activities stop for more than one week, a subsequent pre-construction nesting bird and raptor survey will be required prior to each phase of construction within the APE.</p> <p>Pre-construction nesting bird and raptor surveys shall be conducted during the time of day when birds are active and shall factor in sufficient time to perform this survey adequately and completely. A report of the nesting bird and raptor survey results, if applicable, shall be submitted to the lead agency for review and approval prior to ground and/or vegetation disturbance activities.</p> <p>If nests are found, their locations shall be flagged. An appropriate avoidance buffer ranging in size from 25 to 50 feet for passerines, and up to 500 feet for raptors depending upon the species and the proposed work activity, shall be determined and demarcated by a qualified biologist with bright orange construction fencing or other suitable flagging. Buffers will be determined based on CDFW guidance and the MBTA. Active nests shall be monitored as needed until it has been determined that the nest is no longer being used by either the young or adults. No ground disturbance shall occur within this buffer until the qualified biologist confirms that the breeding/nesting is completed and all the young have fledged. If project activities must occur within the buffer, they shall be conducted at the discretion of the qualified biologist. If no nesting birds are observed during pre-construction surveys, no further actions would be necessary.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Avoid construction activities between January 1 and September 15. <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Confirm a qualified biologist conducted pre-construction nesting bird and raptor surveys and established a no-work buffer zone, as appropriate. 4. Confirm construction is avoided in the no-work buffer zone until biologist determines that the nest is inactive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Construction <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Pre-construction 4. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Once, prior to construction, or if construction restarts 4. Throughout construction, if applicable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. Construction Contractor <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. CVWD, Construction Contractor 4. Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. _____ 4. _____

Mitigation Measure	Monitoring and Reporting Actions	Implementation Schedule	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Party	Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials
<p>Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Monitoring of Archaeological and Native American Resources CVWD shall ensure that project-related ground-disturbing activities shall be observed by an archaeological and/or Native American monitor as needed. The archaeological monitor shall be under the direction of a qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric archaeology (National Park Service 1983). Native American monitoring should be provided by a locally affiliated tribal member. Monitors will have the authority to halt and redirect work should any archaeological resources be identified during monitoring. If archaeological resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate area must halt and the find evaluated for listing in the CRHR and NRHP. Archaeological or Native American monitoring, or both, may be reduced or halted at the discretion of the monitors, in consultation with the lead agency, as warranted by conditions such as encountering bedrock, sediments being excavated are fill, or negative findings during the first 60 percent of ground disturbance. If monitoring is reduced to spot-checking, spot-checking shall occur when ground-disturbance moves to a new location within the APE and when ground disturbance will extend to depths not previously reached by past ground disturbance in that area (unless those depths are within bedrock). Both the project archeologist and Native American monitor will be invited to attend the pre-construction meeting. The project archeologist and Native American monitor will provide a brief orientation to construction crews on the first day of construction.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Confirm archaeological and Native American monitor provide brief orientation to construction crews on first day of construction. 3. Confirm archaeological and Native American monitor observe initial ground-disturbing activities. 4. If resources are encountered during construction, confirm work halted and qualified archaeologist was consulted on eligibility, if applicable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Construction 3. Construction 4. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once 3. Throughout initial ground-disturbing activities 4. Throughout construction, if applicable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. CVWD, Construction Contractor 3. CVWD, Construction Contractor 4. Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Mitigation Measure	Monitoring and Reporting Actions	Implementation Schedule	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Party	Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials
<p>Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, work within a 100-foot radius of the discovery must halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology (National Park Service 1983) should be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If the discovery proves to be significant under NHPA and/or CEQA, additional work such as data recovery excavation and Native American consultation may be warranted to mitigate any significant impacts.</p> <p>The professional archaeologist shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required. • If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify CVWD. The professional archaeologist shall make a finding of eligibility and CVWD shall implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or CRHR. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until CVWD, through consultation as appropriate, determines that the site either: 1) is not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to its satisfaction. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. If resources are unearthed during construction, confirm work halted, qualified archaeologist was consulted on eligibility, and appropriate treatment measures and no-work buffers were implemented. 3. Consult on finding and implement treatment measures, if applicable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Construction 3. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Throughout construction, if applicable 3. Once 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. CVWD, Construction Contractor 3. CVWD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Mitigation Measure	Monitoring and Reporting Actions	Implementation Schedule	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Party	Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials
<p>Mitigation Measure CUL-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains If human remains are found, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the county coroner makes a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the county coroner must be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant, who has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the most likely descendent does not make recommendations within 48 hours of being granted site access, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from subsequent disturbance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Suspend all earth disturbing work within 100 feet of discovery, if applicable. 3. Confirm notification of county coroner has occurred, if applicable. 4. Confirm adequate consultation with most likely descendent has occurred, if applicable. 5. Confirm reburial site has been appropriately recorded and human remains treated appropriately, if applicable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Construction 3. Construction 4. Construction 5. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Throughout construction, if applicable 3. Once 4. Once 5. Once 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. Construction Contractor 3. CVWD 4. CVWD 5. CVWD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

Mitigation Measure	Monitoring and Reporting Actions	Implementation Schedule	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Party	Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials
<p>Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan Prior to construction, the construction contractor is required to submit to CVWD a Hazardous Materials Management Spill Control Plan that includes a project-specific contingency plan for hazardous materials and waste operations. The Plan will be applicable to construction activities and will establish policies and procedures according to applicable codes and regulations, including but not limited to the California Building and Fire Codes, and federal and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations. Elements of the Plan will include, but not be limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion of hazardous materials management, including delineation of hazardous material storage areas, access and egress routes, waterways, emergency assembly areas, and temporary hazardous waste storage areas; • Notification and documentation of procedures; and • Spill control and countermeasures, including employee spill prevention/response training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Confirm construction contractor has prepared a Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan. 3. Confirm construction contractor follows procedures in the Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Pre-Construction 3. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once 3. Periodically throughout construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. Construction Contractor 3. CVWD, Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
<p>Mitigation Measure NOI-1: Noise and Vibration Control During Construction CVWD shall incorporate into the construction contract specifications the following noise and vibration control measures to be implemented by the construction contractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to construction, the Construction Contractor shall provide [CVWD-approved] written notification to residents within 500 feet of the proposed facilities undergoing construction shall be provided, identifying the type, duration, and frequency of construction activities. Notification materials shall be provided in English/Spanish translation and identify a mechanism for residents to contact CVWD's Project manager related to noise or vibration concerns. • During construction, the Construction Contractor shall use equipment (e.g., jack hammers, pavement breakers, and rock drills) which is hydraulically or electrically powered to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically powered tools. Where use of pneumatically powered tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust would be used. This muffler can lower noise levels from the exhaust by up to 10 dBA. External jackets on the tools themselves would be used where feasible, and this could achieve a reduction of 5 dBA. Quieter procedures will be used such as drilling rather than impact equipment. • During construction, the Construction Contractor shall comply with compaction standards for backfill. Vibration generated during soil compaction may be minimized by using a small compactor. • During sheetpile driving for trench excavation, the Construction Contractor shall use the following measures: pushing the sheetpile in as far as possible with non-vibratory equipment (e.g., excavator) before using the vibrator; using a small, hand-operated vibratory hammer or one with a different operational frequency to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Send approved notices. 3. Implement noise and vibration control measures. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Pre-Construction 3. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once 3. Throughout construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. Construction Contractor 3. Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

<i>Mitigation Measure</i>	<i>Monitoring and Reporting Actions</i>	<i>Implementation Schedule</i>	<i>Monitoring Frequency</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Verification: Status/ Date Completed/ Initials</i>
<p>further reduce the vibration potential; flooding the soils before tamping with the vibrator; and/or operating vibratory equipment with “throttling” when a vibrator must be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All equipment and trucks used by the Construction Contractor for project construction shall use the best available noise control techniques (including mufflers, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds) and be maintained in good operating condition to minimize construction noise impacts. All internal combustion engine-drive equipment shall be fitted with intake and exhaust mufflers which are in good condition. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall prohibit unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines by turning off equipment if it would not be used for five or more minutes. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall locate stationary noise-generating construction equipment, such as air compressors and generators, as far as possible from homes and businesses and at a minimum of 300 feet. 					
<p>Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Traffic Control Plan: Prior to construction, CVWD shall require its construction contractor to implement an approved Traffic Control Plan, to the satisfaction of the CVWD construction inspector and the County. The components of the Traffic Control Plan shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of construction staging site locations and potential road closures, Alternate routes of traffic detours, including emergency response contact information, Planned routes for construction-related vehicle traffic (haul routes), and Identification of alternative safe routes to maintain pedestrian safety during construction. <p>CVWD’s Project Manager shall coordinate with the police, fire, and other emergency services to alert these entities about potential construction delays, project alignment, and construction schedule. CVWD shall minimize the duration of disruptions/closures to roadways and critical access points for emergency services. The Traffic Control Plan shall provide for traffic control measures including flag persons, warning signs, lights, barricades, and cones to provide safe passage of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic and access by emergency responders. The Traffic Control Plan shall be submitted to CVWD’s Project Manager and construction inspector for review and approval prior to construction.</p> <p>CVWD’s construction inspector shall have the construction schedule and Traffic Control Plan reviewed by the County of Riverside to ensure construction of the proposed project does not conflict with construction activities associated with other construction projects that may be occurring at the same time in the vicinity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include measure in contract documents. 2. Submit Traffic Control Plan to CVWD and construction inspector 3. Route Traffic Control Plan to County of Riverside and emergency services for review and approval. 4. Implement traffic control measures consistent with plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contracting 2. Pre-Construction 3. Pre-Construction 4. Construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once 2. Once 3. Once 4. Throughout construction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CVWD 2. Construction Contractor 3. Construction Contractor 4. Construction Contractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Location

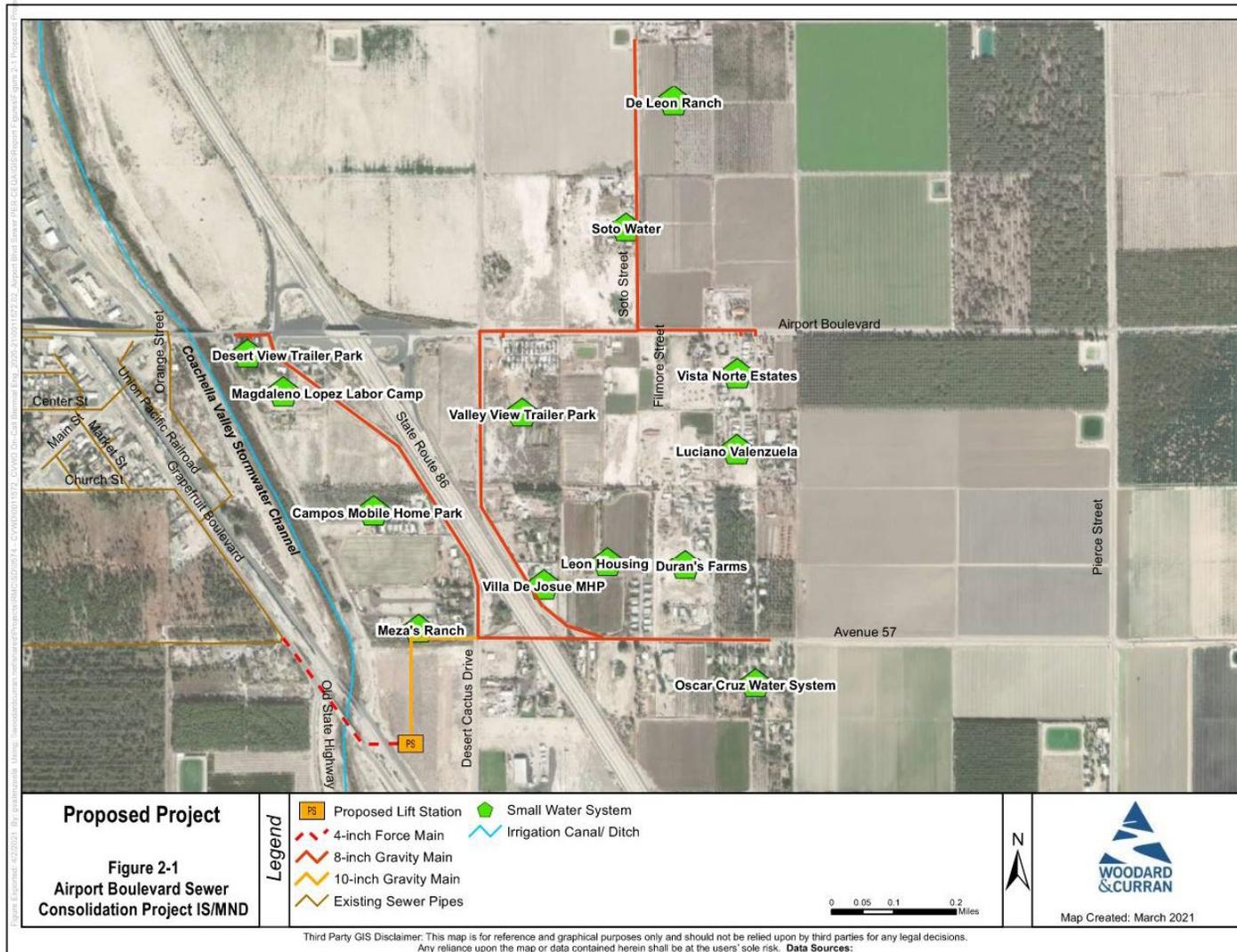
The proposed Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project (proposed project) is located in the unincorporated community of Thermal in Riverside County, California. The proposed project would connect 13 privately owned small water systems (SWS) currently reliant on septic systems to the CVWD sanitary sewer system:

Campos Mobile Home Park (MHP), De Leon Ranch, Desert View MHP, Durans Farms, Leon Housing, Luciano Valenzuela, Magdaleno Lopez MHP, Meza's Ranch, Oscar Cruz Water System, Soto Water, Valley View MHP, Villa de Josue MHP and Vista Norte Estates. The proposed project would consolidate a population of approximately 692 people, all of which are residing in an area designated as a DAC based on median household income per American Community Survey data for 2014-2018, as mapped on DWR's DAC mapping tool (DWR, n.d.). The proposed project is located along Desert Cactus Drive and Fillmore Street between Airport Boulevard and Avenue 57 as shown in **Figure 2-1**.

2.2 Project Overview

The proposed project involves construction and operation of a new sewer lift station and approximately 17,700 linear feet of new sewer mains, as well as sewer laterals and onsite service lines, to add 174 connections to CVWD's existing sanitary sewer system. Approximately 14,700 linear feet of 8-inch diameter gravity sewer pipeline would be constructed along portions of Avenue 57, Fillmore Street, Desert Cactus Drive, Airport Boulevard and Soto Street. These pipelines would convey sewage to approximately 1,450 linear feet of 10-inch diameter vitrified clay pipe (VCP) gravity sewer pipeline along Avenue 57. A new sewage lift station would be constructed east of State Route 111 and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, just south of Avenue 57. From there, 1,550 linear feet of 6-inch diameter force main would be constructed to connect to CVWD's existing sewer pipeline at the intersection of State Route 111 and Church Street. The proposed 6-inch force main would include an aerial crossing of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel via an existing bridge along Grapefruit Boulevard. The proposed 6-inch force main would include a trenchless crossing of the existing Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and State Route 111. Approximately 56 manholes would be installed along the sewer alignment. An additional 600 linear feet of 6-inch diameter sewer laterals would be installed to the property boundary of each SWS, with a further 12,150 linear feet of 6-inch service lines onsite to complete the connection to each of the 13 SWSs. Facilities that would be constructed by the proposed project are shown in **Figure 2-1**.

Figure 2-1: Proposed Project



A summary of the thirteen SWSs that are part of the Airport Boulevard Project is provided in **Table 2-1**. Documentation of the existing infrastructure for the SWSs was provided by the County of Riverside Department of Environmental Health. The location of these SWSs are shown in **Figure 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Airport Boulevard Project – SWS History

Small Water System	Number of Connections	Description of Septic System
Campos MHP	14	4x 2,750-gallon septic tanks 4x onsite leach fields – 100 ft long 3" ABS pipe
De Leon Ranch	12	<i>Details of existing system currently unavailable</i>
Desert View MHP	21	1x 300-gallon septic tank 1x 4,500-gallon septic tank 1x 7,500-gallon septic tank 4x onsite leach fields
Durans Farms	7	1x 1,000-gallon septic tank 3x 1,500-gallon septic tank 1x 2,250-gallon septic tank 1x onsite leach field – 55 ft long 3x onsite leach fields – 80 ft long 1x onsite leach field – 100 ft long 4" ABS pipe
Leon Housing	14	1x 1,500-gallon septic tank 2x 3,000-gallon septic tank 1x onsite leach field – 61 ft long 2x onsite leach fields – 98 ft long 4" PVC or ABS pipe
Luciano Valenzuela	13	6x 1,500-gallon septic tank 6x onsite leach fields – 100 ft long 3" ABS pipe
Magdaleno Lopez MHP	6	<i>Details of existing system currently unavailable</i>
Meza's Ranch	12	4x 2,750-gallon septic tank 4x onsite leach fields – 80 ft long 4" PVC or ABS pipe
Oscar Cruz Water System	8	6x 1,500-gallon septic tank 1x 2,500-gallon septic tank 6x onsite leach fields – 80 ft long 1x onsite leach field – 67 ft long 3" ABS pipe
Soto Water	8	<i>Details of existing system currently unavailable</i>

Small Water System	Number of Connections	Description of Septic System
Valley View MHP	37	Emergency Septic Effluent Overflow Lagoon – 100 ft x 100 ft x 3 ft
Villa de Josue MHP	9	1x 1,500-gallon septic tank 4x 2,000-gallon septic tank 1x onsite leach field – 65 ft long 4x onsite leach field – 87 ft long
Vista Norte Estates	13	4x 750-gallon septic tank – for greywater 4x 2,500-gallon septic tank 8x onsite leach field – 87 ft long 4" ABS pipe

The proposed project would convey wastewater to CVWD’s existing collection system, which has sufficient existing capacity to treat the additional flows from the proposed project. Operation of the proposed project would not require construction of new treatment or disposal/reuse infrastructure.

2.2.1 Project Purpose and Need

The proposed project is necessary to address public health concerns in local DACs associated with inadequate, failing, or aging SWSs. The existing septic systems pose a potential health threat due to the potential for human exposure to pathogens in surfacing sewage. The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health has received various complaints in the past 10 years for systems located in the proposed project area, namely the Desert View and Magdalena Lopez MHPs (CVWD 2019a). Many of these existing septic systems have known issues, being located in high groundwater areas with low percolation (CVWD 2019a). The project would remove existing septic tanks from perched groundwater. Water from the perched groundwater can enter the local subsurface agricultural drainage system which flows to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and ultimately to the Salton Sea. The project would reduce nitrate loading from the targeted systems by approximately 20 mg/L to the groundwater basin and Salton Sea (CVWD 2020). Wastewater that is currently discharged to the groundwater basin via septic systems would be collected and sent to CVWD’s nearby Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) 4 which would reduce the nitrogen content of the wastewater (MWH 2015).

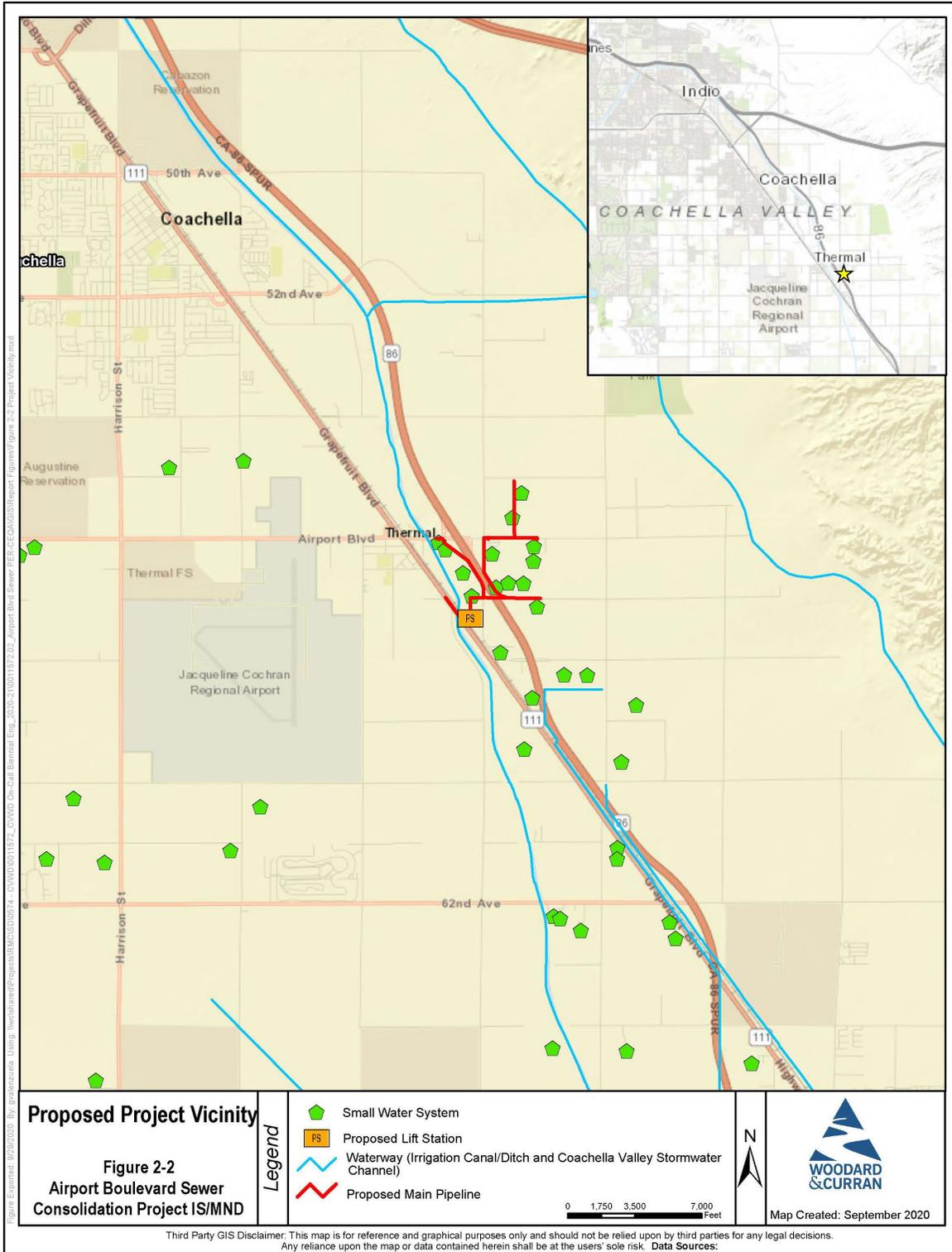
The majority of SWSs that would be served by the proposed project have septic systems that are nearing the end of their expected utility and need to be replaced. The DACs served by the proposed project are projected to have average daily wastewater flows of nearly 64,000 gallons per day, with peak flow capacity of just over 127,000 gallons per day by 2040 (CVWD 2020). By converting these septic systems to sewer, the proposed project would address issues associated with the age of the systems, while simultaneously providing more reliable and effective wastewater treatment than septic. The proposed project would address operational problems, efficiency and effectiveness.

Since 2017, the US EPA Office of Water has promoted regional projects, system consolidation, and/or shared service arrangements for wastewater management in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of small wastewater systems (CVWD 2020). EPA has identified small wastewater systems and high densities of septic systems as an inefficient and ineffective method of managing wastewater. Decentralized systems often result in operational problems due to low financial and managerial capacities of small utility programs, while regional systems are able to operate with an efficient economy of scale. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of wastewater management is another need for the project.

The overall objectives of the proposed project are:

1. Provide reliable and safe wastewater treatment for rural DACs that are not currently connected to the CVWD sanitary sewer system.
2. Provide adequate capacity to accommodate existing and anticipated future wastewater flows.
3. Improve regional groundwater quality by reducing nitrate loading through removal of wastewater percolation in the basin.

Figure 2-2: Project Vicinity



2.3 Environmental Setting

The proposed project is located in the eastern portion of the greater Coachella Valley within Riverside County, California near the community of Thermal, in the vicinity of the intersection of State Route 86 and Airport Boulevard (**Figure 2-2**). The project area is south of Avenue 55, west of Pierce Street, north of Avenue 58, and east of Orange Street, as shown on **Figure 2-1**. The County land use and zoning designations are summarized on page 3-1.

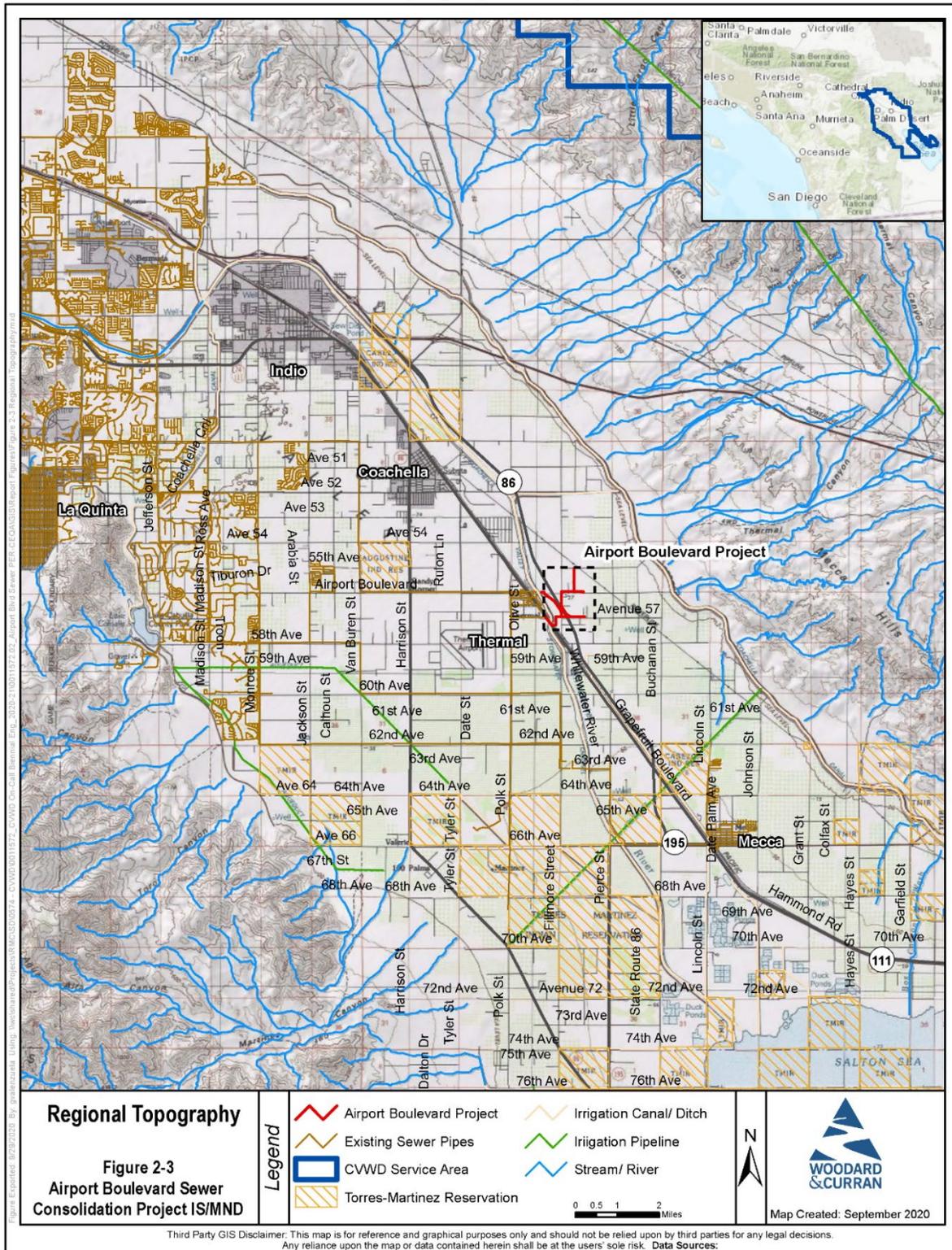
The eastern portion of the Coachella Valley is located at the northern end of the Salton Sea, California's largest lake. Physically, the eastern Coachella Valley is bounded by the Santa Rosa Mountains to the west, and the Mecca Hills and the edge of Joshua Tree National Park to the northeast (**Figure 2-3**). The project area is located in the Coachella Valley region of the Salton Sea Air Basin, and it is located in the Whitewater River Watershed. The area encompasses rural desert communities, agricultural production, and the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport. The Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Reservation occupies significant portions of the southwestern eastern Coachella Valley. This reservation is designated in a checkerboard pattern extending south from Avenue 62 on through to the Riverside County border into Imperial County (County of Riverside 2016).

The community of Thermal is located west of State Route 111, south of the City of Coachella, and contains light industrial uses as well as some residential and commercial uses. The Riverside County-owned Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located in the western part of Thermal and the airport's compatibility zones D and E overlay the proposed project sites. Historically, Thermal has been an important agricultural center, and remains so, with some of its more prominent crops including dates, table grapes, grapefruit, and assorted vegetables. In the core area of the community, to the north of Thermal Town Center, are two schools – John Kelley Elementary School and La Familia Continuation High School, a Riverside County Sheriff's station, and Riverside County Thermal Fire Station 39 (County of Riverside 2016).

State Route 111 and State Route 86 are the main north-south connector routes within the eastern Coachella Valley. The Southern Pacific Railroad runs adjacent to State Route 111 and the Salton Sea, to Riverside County's southern boundary. State Route 111, from Bombay Beach on the Salton Sea to State Route 195 near Mecca, approximately five miles south of the proposed project site, is a State-eligible Scenic Highway, providing views of the Salton Sea and the surrounding mountainous wilderness.

Interstate 10 from Chiriaco Summit to the intersection with State Route 86, approximately four miles north of the proposed project, is a County-eligible Scenic Highway. The CV-Link multi-modal transportation trail is planned to be built near the Airport Boulevard bridge where it crosses the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, at the western edge of the proposed project, and a CV-Link connector route would be provided to the core of Thermal, adjacent to the northern edge of Thermal Town Center.

Figure 2-3: Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project – Regional Topographic Map



Once constructed, the CV-Link would be located near Desert View MHP (County of Riverside 2016). This segment of CV-Link is scheduled for construction in 2021 (CVAG 2021). The project site is served by a Class I bike path on Avenue 66 and a regional trail located along the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, according to Figure 9 in the 2016 Riverside County Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016).

The *Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan* (CVMSHCP) is a comprehensive multiple species habitat conservation planning program that addresses multiple species needs, including habitat and the preservation of natural communities in the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County. The proposed project is not located within or adjacent to a conservation area associated with the CVMSHCP. The CVMSHCP was adopted by the plan participants in 2007 and 2008, and permits were issued by the wildlife agencies in late 2008 (County of Riverside 2016).

The eastern Coachella Valley is traversed by the San Andreas fault, an active fault with a significant probability of earthquake activity; the proposed project is located in an area of high liquefaction susceptibility. A large 100-year floodplain extends southerly from Thermal to the Salton Sea, approximately six miles southwest of the proposed project; another flood hazard area is located approximately three miles east of the proposed project. The desert and mountainous region in the northeastern area of the East Coachella Valley, roughly three miles east of the proposed project, has a high and very high wildfire susceptibility; however, the wildfire susceptibility is moderate to low in the valley (County of Riverside 2016).

In addition to CV-Link, described above, other future projects within the vicinity of the proposed project include the following:

- CVWD's Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Improvement Project - Avenue 54 to Thermal Drop Structure involves improvements to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel to address the risk of flooding during a 100-year storm event. The project extends from approximately 130 feet north of Avenue 54 to approximately 300 feet south of the Thermal Drop Structure, which is located between Avenue 57 and 58. It involves channel improvements to restore conveyance capacity, including slope protection, lowering the channel invert elevation, channel lining, and vegetation maintenance. Construction began in spring 2021 and is expected to last 24 months.
- Riverside County's Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project would widen Airport Boulevard overpass crossing of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. This project is in the early planning phases, with environmental study and preliminary design expected to be complete in fall of 2022 and a currently undetermined construction start date.
- The Coachella Airport Business Park Project, proposed by Hagen Company LLC, would develop parcels designated Light Industrial between the Coachella Valley

Stormwater Channel and Highway 86, immediately north of Airport Boulevard. The project requires approval by the City of Coachella and is currently in the preliminary planning stages.

2.4 Existing Facilities and Conditions

The Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project would construct a new sanitary sewer collections system which will connect 13 privately-owned SWSs that currently rely on septic systems to the CVWD sanitary sewer system. The 13 systems proposed for consolidation with CVWD's sanitary sewer system are shown in **Figure 2-4**.

The CVWD service area, shown in **Figure 2-5**, is approximately 130 miles east of Los Angeles and 140 miles northeast of San Diego. CVWD is responsible for wastewater service to a service area encompassing approximately 885 square miles of land, primarily designated as residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

CVWD collects and treats wastewater from all or some portion of the cities of Indian Wells, Cathedral City, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Coachella, Indio, and Rancho Mirage. CVWD also provides wastewater collection and treatment services to a large unincorporated area located within Riverside County including unincorporated communities of Thousand Palms, Vista Santa Rosa, Mecca, and Thermal, and within a small part of Imperial County on the north banks of the Salton Sea that includes the Bombay Beach and Desert Shores communities. To provide these services, CVWD owns and operates a large collection system and five WRPs: WRPs 1, 2, 4, 7 and 10. Since the 2009 Master Plan, CVWD has decommissioned WRP-9 and connected the tributary area to WRP-10. The CVWD sanitary collection sewer system includes more than 1,130 miles of sanitary sewer pipeline as shown in **Figure 2-5** (CVWD, 2020).

Figure 2-4: SWS Location Map

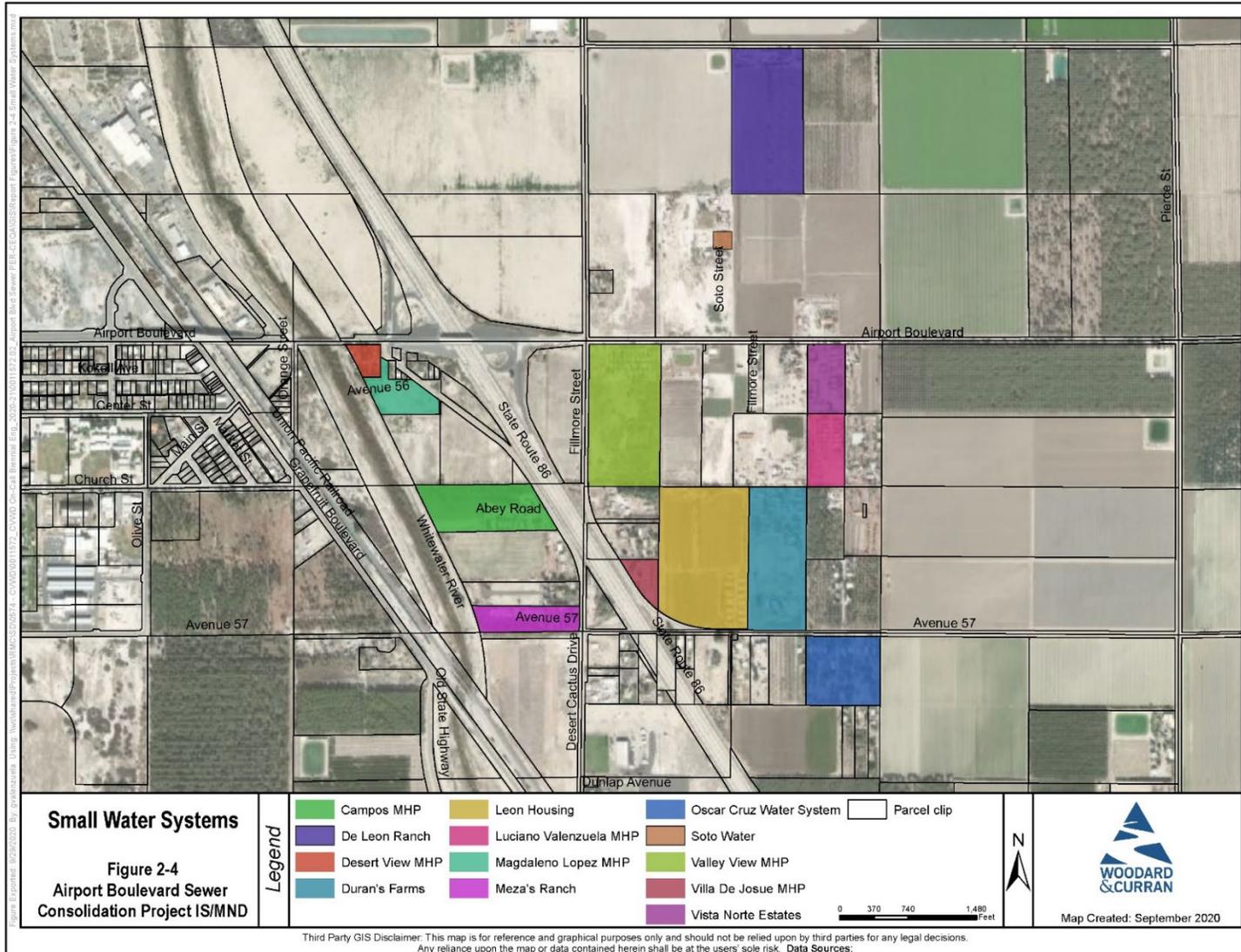
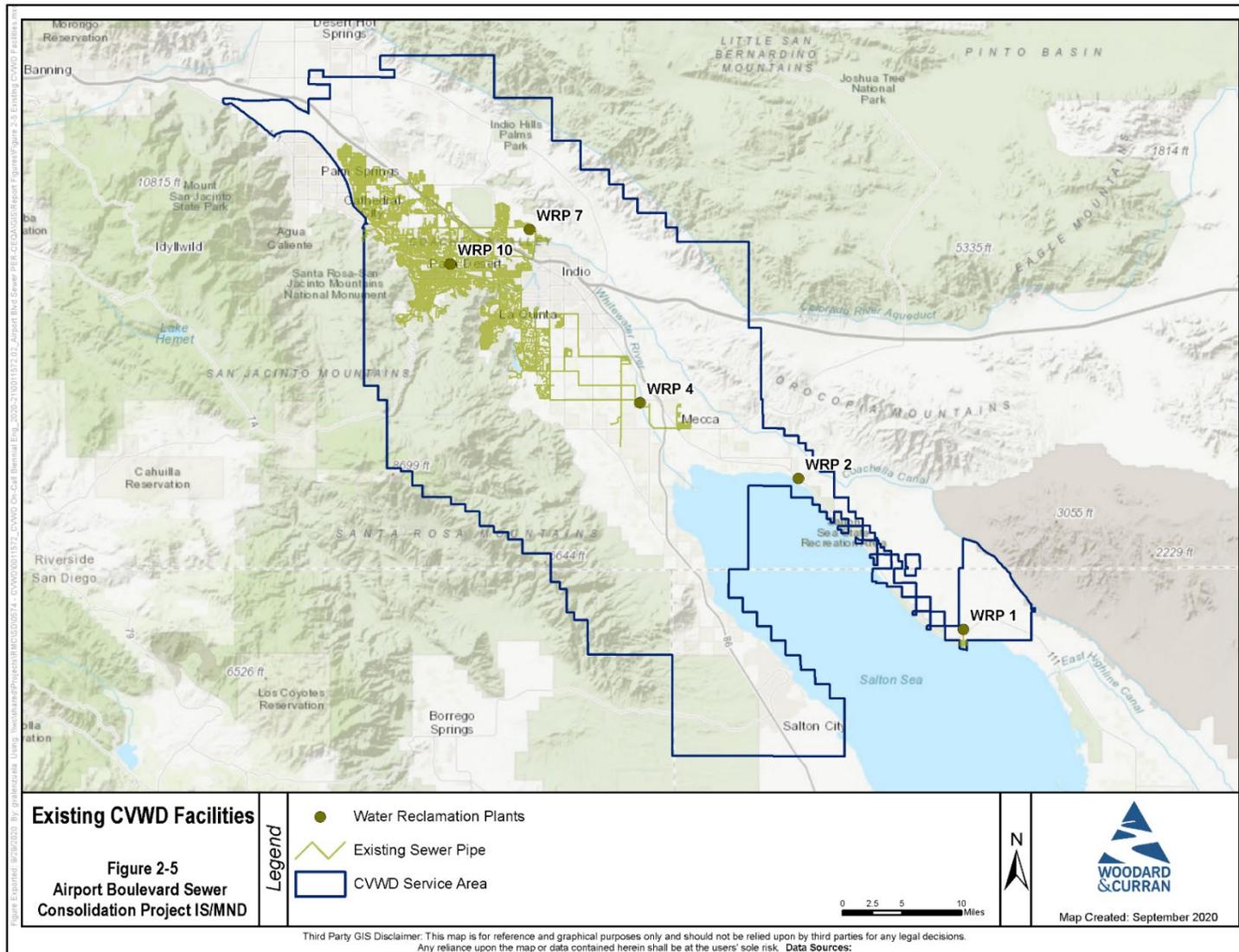


Figure 2-5: CVWD Service Area and Existing Sewer Facilities



2.4.1 CVWD Wastewater Treatment Facilities

CVWD operates five WRPs as shown in **Figure 2-5** and summarized in **Table 2-2**. WRP-1 and WRP-2 are smaller lagoon facilities providing service to the communities of Bombay Beach and North Shore, respectively. WRP-4 is located in Thermal and provides service to the lower portion of the sanitation system. WRP-4 discharges secondary effluent under a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. WRP-7 and WRP-10 provide service to the northern portions of the system and are located in Indio and Palm Desert, respectively. These facilities provide tertiary treatment, and the resulting recycled water is distributed to area golf courses and other large landscape customers (CVWD 2019a). The proposed project's wastewater flows will be conveyed to WRP-4, discussed in the subsection below.

Table 2-2: Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) & Non-Potable Water

Water Reclamation Plant	Treatment Capacity (mgd)	Tertiary Treatment Capacity (mgd)	Number of Non-Potable Water Customers
WRP-1	0.15	0.0	0
WRP-2	0.033	0.0	0
WRP-4	9.9	0.0	0
WRP-7	5.0	2.5	2
WRP-10	18.0	15.0	18
Total	33.083	17.5	20

Source: CVWD Development Design Manual (CVWD 2019b)

Water Reclamation Plant Number 4

WRP-4 is located in Thermal and is CVWD's second largest water reclamation plant. WRP-4 provides service to approximately 63,000 people in the Cities of La Quinta, Mecca, Palm Desert, and Thousand Palms. The facility is permitted under a NPDES permit to discharge a maximum month average daily (i.e., the average daily flow from the month with greatest flow volume) effluent flow of 9.9 million gallons per day (mgd) to the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel. WRP-4's annual average influent flows have remained relatively constant over the past few years, averaging 4.9 mgd (CVWD, 2020).

WRP-4 uses two secondary treatment systems operating in parallel to provide carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (cBOD) and total suspended solids (TSS) reduction: a lagoon treatment system with a permit capacity of 7.0 mgd and an activated sludge treatment system with a permit capacity of 2.9 mgd. In addition to the secondary treatment systems, WRP-4 also has a new headworks facility (constructed in 2015), a disinfection and dechlorination system, and solids handling facilities.

2.4.2 Pipelines

The CVWD wastewater collection system includes over 1,130 miles of sanitary sewer pipeline which include approximately 1,060 miles of gravity pipelines and 70 miles of force

mains. The 8-inch and 10-inch diameter gravity mains account for more than 75 percent of the total gravity sewer lengths. Smaller gravity sewer sizes such as 4-inch and 6-inch account for less than 1 percent of the total sewer pipes, while large gravity sewer sizes ranging from 24-inch to 42-inch account for less than 5 percent of the total gravity sewer lengths (CVWD, 2020). The nearest existing sewer main that the proposed project would connect to is located along State Route 111 at Avenue 57 (refer to **Figure 2-1**).

2.4.3 Pump Stations

As part of the sanitary sewer system, CVWD operates and maintains 27 lift stations, which convey flow by pressure to the gravity sewer systems or the Mid-Valley Force Main System (CVWD, 2020). **Table 2-3** summarizes the existing lift stations tributary to WRP-4.

Table 2-3: CVWD Lift Stations Tributary to WRP-4

Number	Site	Duty Pumps	Standby Pumps	Firm Capacity (gpm)	Total Capacity (gpm)
55-01	La Quinta	1 @ 2,000 gpm	1 @ 2,000 gpm	2,000	4,000
55-10	Citrus Course	1 @ 1,000 gpm	1 @ 1,000 gpm	1,000	2,000
55-11	Mecca	1 @ 850 gpm	1 @ 850 gpm	850	1,700
55-12	Jefferson Street	1 @ 1,000 gpm	1 @ 1,000 gpm	1,000	2,000
55-13 ¹	Avenue 58 West	1 @ 200 gpm	1 @ 200 gpm	200	400
55-14 ¹	Thermal	--	--	--	--
55-15 ¹	Avenue 58 East	1 @ 1,200 gpm	1 @ 1,200 gpm	1,200	2,400
55-19	Jackson Street Area	1 @ 150 gpm	1 @ 150 gpm	150	300
55-20 ¹	Shea Homes/ Coral	--	--	--	--
55-21	Kohl Ranch	1 @ 300 gpm	1 @ 600 gpm	300	900
55-24	Jackson Street	1 @ 400 gpm	1 @ 400 gpm	400	800
55-26	Avenue 62	1 @ 150 gpm	1 @ 150 gpm	150	300

Source: CVWD Sanitation System Master Plan Update (CVWD 2020 – underway).

Notes:

1. Lift station currently decommissioned or scheduled for decommissioning imminently.

2.5 Proposed Project Description

The proposed project includes construction of a new sewer lift station and new pipelines to connect properties to CVWD’s sanitary sewer system. The proposed project would construct sanitary sewer connections which would connect 13 SWS currently reliant on septic systems to the CVWD sanitary sewer system. Approximately 17,450 linear feet of new sewer mains, sewer laterals and a new sewer lift station would be constructed to consolidate an existing population of approximately 692 people. The project would consist of 8-inch and 10-inch VCP gravity sewers, 6-inch service laterals, 6-inch force main, a

new sewer lift station, and onsite sewer pipes and connections to complete service to the SWSs.

The 6-inch diameter force main would require trenchless crossing at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks that run parallel to State Route 111 and the 8-inch gravity sewer would require trenchless crossing at State Route 86. The highway and railroad tracks would be traversed using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) or jack and bore techniques. A trenchless method would be determined during final design based on geotechnical data and the geometry of the proposed pipeline. The 6-inch force main crossing of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel would be accomplished utilizing the existing State Route 111 bridge, avoiding the need to construct the pipe underneath the channel. The 6-inch force main would be suspended alongside the existing bridge or if space is available, inside the bridge cavity. **Table 2-4** identifies the proposed pipeline alignments and their anticipated construction method.

The lift station would include installation of at least two pumps with a total capacity of 150 gallons per minute (gpm). The lift station would be fully enclosed within a cement or cinderblock structure and have a footprint of up to 4,500 square feet. The lift station would be constructed on an undeveloped property bounded by Avenue 57 to the north, Desert Cactus Drive to the east, and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Union Pacific Railroad to the west and south. Approximately 22,500 square feet of this site would be disturbed during construction for equipment, staging, excavation activities, and the lift station itself. An emergency 10 horsepower (HP) diesel generator would also be installed at the lift station.

To provide electrical service to the lift station, CVWD will install a pole-mounted rise using 5-inch PVC, two short 90-degree elbows of 5-inch PVC, two 60-foot runs of 5-inch PVC underground conduit, one 75kVA transformer pad, two 50-foot runs of 4-inch PVC underground conduit, and one floor-mounted service panel. Imperial Irrigation District (IID) will separately install three new power poles with appurtenances, four 450-foot runs of aluminum overhead conductor, three runs of 130-foot aluminum conductor with concentric neutral and insulation, which would be installed within a 5-inch conduit, one 3-phase 75kVA, 12.47 kV primary to 120/240V secondary transformer, one 70-foot run of aluminum quadruplex conductor installed inside a 4-inch conduit, and one new meter.

Table 2-4: Proposed Pipelines

Location	SWS Served	Pipeline Size	Approx. Length (LF)	Construction Method
Soto Street from Avenue 55 to Airport Boulevard	De Leon Ranch, Soto Water	8-inch	2,600	Open Cut
Airport Boulevard east of Pierce Street to Fillmore Street	Vista Norte Estates, Luciana Valenzuela	8-inch	2,800	Open Cut
Fillmore Street from Airport Boulevard to Avenue 57	Valley View MHP, Villa de Josue MHP	8-inch	3,200	Open Cut
Avenue 57 west of Pierce Street to Desert Cactus Drive	Oscar Cruz Water System, Leon Housing, Durans Farms	8-inch	2,000	Open Cut (1,750 LF), HDD or jack and bore for State Route 86 crossing (250 LF)
Airport Boulevard from the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel to Desert Cactus Drive	Desert View MHP	8-inch	400	Open Cut
Desert Cactus Drive from Airport Boulevard to Avenue 57	Campos MHP, Magdaleno Lopez	8-inch	3,200	Open Cut
Avenue 57 from Desert Cactus Drive to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel	Meza's Ranch	10-inch	450	Open Cut
South from Avenue 57 to new lift station between Desert Cactus Drive and the Union Pacific Railroad line	N/A	10-inch	1,000	Open Cut
New lift station west across the Union Pacific Railroad line and the Coachella	N/A	6-inch	1,550	Open Cut (1,250 LF),

Location	SWS Served	Pipeline Size	Approx. Length (LF)	Construction Method
Valley Stormwater Channel, and north along State Route 111 to Church Street				HDD or jack and bore under the railroad (300 LF), aerial crossing of Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel
Service Laterals to Property Boundaries	All 13 SWSs	6-inch	600	Open Cut
Onsite laterals	All 13 SWSs	6-inch	12,150	Open Cut

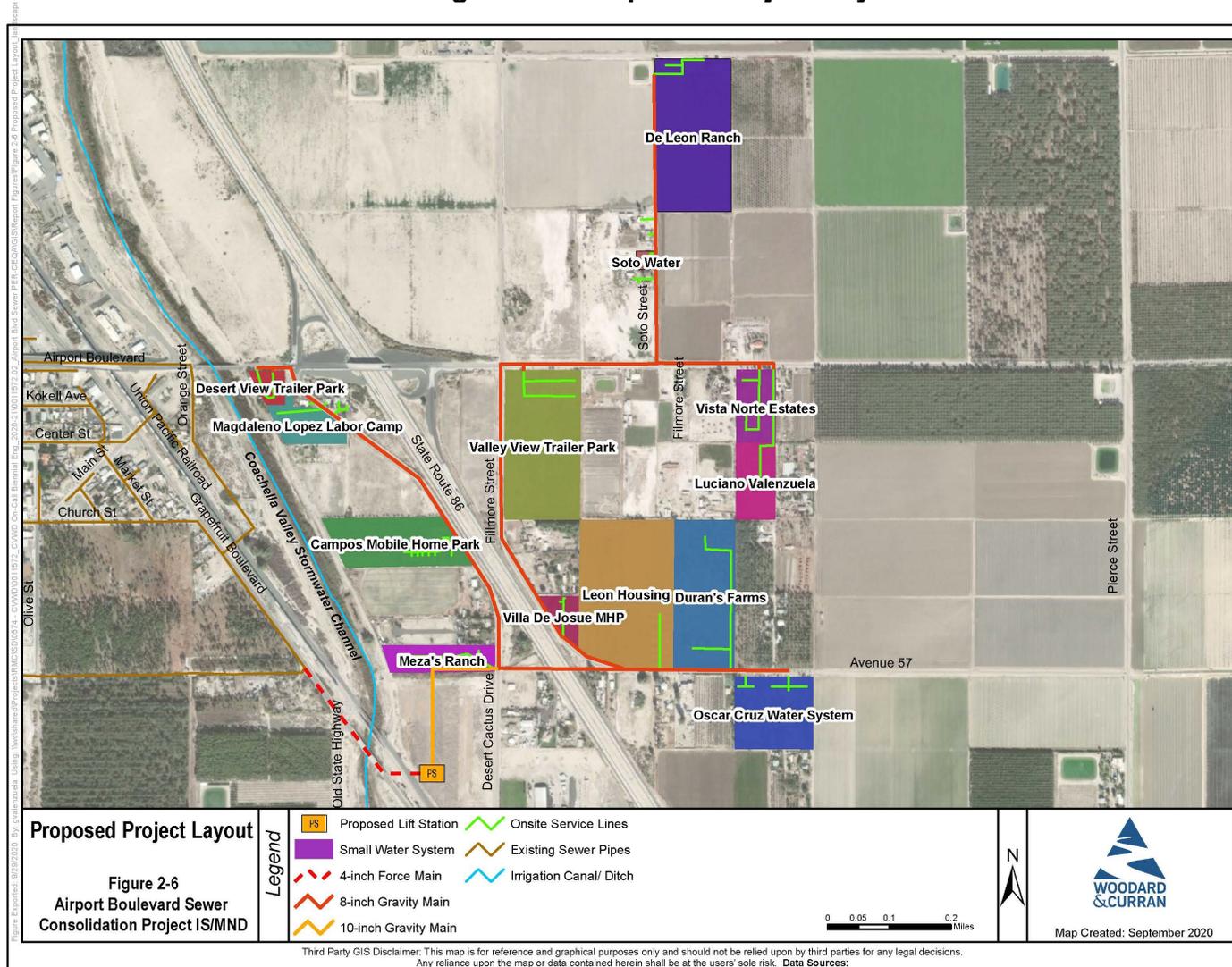
2.5.1 Project Layout

A layout map showing the location and major components of the proposed project is presented in **Figure 2-6**. New infrastructure consists of the following:

- New 150 gpm capacity sewage lift station east of State Route 111, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.
- Approximately 1,550 linear feet of 6-inch diameter force main crossing the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Union Pacific Railroad along State Route 111 to connect to the existing gravity sewer on Avenue 57.
- Approximately 1,450 linear feet of 10-inch diameter VCP gravity sewer pipeline along Avenue 57.
- Approximately 14,700 linear feet of 8-inch diameter VCP gravity sewer pipeline along portions of Avenue 57, Fillmore Street, Desert Cactus Drive, Airport Boulevard and Soto Street, with an underground crossing at State Route 86.
- Approximately 56 manholes along the new sewer alignment.
- Approximately 600 linear feet of 6-inch diameter sewer laterals to the property boundary of each SWS.
- Approximately 12,150 linear feet of 6-inch service lines onsite to complete the connection to each of the 13 SWSs.

The proposed project would convey wastewater to the existing CVWD collection system, which has sufficient capacity to treat the additional flows, and would not require new treatment or disposal/reuse infrastructure.

Figure 2-6: Proposed Project Layout



2.6 Construction Methods

2.6.1 Pipeline Installation – Open Cut

The sewer pipelines would be installed within existing County of Riverside roadway rights of way and SWS properties. Typical pipeline construction processes are described below:

- **Staging Area(s)** – At various locations along the construction route, staging areas would be required to store pipe, construction equipment, and other construction-related material. Potential staging areas include vacant private and public land, parking lots, and segments of closed traffic lanes.
- **Surface Preparation** – Surface preparation involves removing structures (such as fences or posts), pavement, and/or vegetation from the trenching. Equipment may include jack hammers, pavement saws, graders, bulldozers, loaders, and trucks.
- **Trench Excavation/Shoring** – A backhoe, excavator, or trencher would be used to dig trenches for pipe installation. In general, trenches would have vertical side walls to minimize the amount of soil excavated, and the area needed for the construction easement. Soils excavated from the trenches, if of suitable quality, would be stockpiled alongside the trench or in staging areas for later reuse in backfilling the trench. If not reusable, the soil would be hauled off site for disposal. Disposal options include use as cover material at sanitary landfills and use as “clean fill” at other sites. In general, pipe trenches would be three to five feet wide and a minimum of seven feet deep, though onsite sewer lines would be shallower. Deeper installations, up to 19 feet, may be required under special circumstances, such as large utility or channel crossings.

Pipeline trenches, in any given location, would be open for two to three days on average. During construction, vertical wall trenches would be temporarily “closed” at the end of each workday, by covering with steel plates or backfilled. Trenches would be backfilled with either the excavated soil or imported material. Dump trucks would be used to deliver imported, engineered backfill material to stockpiles near the trenching operation. Native soil would be reused for backfill to the greatest extent possible; however, the soil may not have the properties necessary for compactability and stability.

- **Surface Restoration** – After the pipe is installed, the ground surface of the pit areas would be restored. When pipe is installed on paved roadways, the asphalt would be patched and restored to pre-construction conditions. When the pipe is installed in dirt access roads, the dirt would be graded and compacted. In natural or vegetated areas, native plantings would be installed.

2.6.2 Pipeline Construction – Trenchless

For the crossings of the Union Pacific Railroad line and State Route 86, CVWD may use trenchless pipeline construction methods. These include HDD or jack and bore, both of

which allow a pipe to be installed under a surface feature without disturbing the feature or interfering with its use during construction. These trenchless methods are described here.

Horizontal Directional Drilling

HDD installs pipeline between an entry (launch) pit and exit (receiving) pit without the need for open-cut trench. HDD involves the use of a drill rig tilted at the top at an angle, typically in the range of 10 to 15 degrees from horizontal, placed at the entry pit. The entry and exit pits are typically approximately 50 to 100 feet square by approximately 5 feet deep, each.

A small diameter (4- to 8-inch diameter) pilot hole is drilled along a pre-determined horizontal and vertical alignment from the entry pit to the exit pit, guided using electromagnetic readings. Excavation takes place by introducing pressurized slurry (a thin mixture of water and clay) through a drill string to the bit. The slurry pressure in combination with a rotating drill bit excavates the material, which is then transported back to the entry pit along the outside of the drill string. In some cases, a larger diameter wash pipe may be rotated around the drill string to prevent sticking of the steerable string. The mixture of slurry and spoil that is collected in the entry pit is pumped to a slurry separation plant to separate the spoil from the fluid so that the fluid can be reused. The hole is then enlarged by pulling larger reamers from the exit pit back towards the drilling rig. The pipeline is then pulled into place behind the last reamer.

The entry side requires a work area of approximately 1,500 to 3,000 square feet for the drill rig, slurry separation plant, material storage and other support equipment. The exit side requires a work area of about 1,000 to 1,500 square feet for the pullback. In addition, a corridor about 15 feet wide by the length of the pipe is generally needed for the buildup and laydown of the pipe.

Pipes would be installed at varying depths depending on features being avoided, the existing underlying utilities, soil types, environmental constraints, entry and exit constraints, and bend radius of the installed product and drill pipe. The exact depths of the pits and drilling will be defined if HDD is selected and design begun. The maximum excavation depth would be 19 feet. Time required for drilling the pilot hole and reaming out the borehole varies depending on site-specific features such as depth, soil composition, and overlying surface features that may affect complexity of the drilling process. Once the borehole is reamed, pipe can generally be pulled through the borehole at a rate of approximately 1 to 2 feet per minute.

Jack and Bore

Jack and bore is a trenchless method that is often used for crossings that are generally less than 300 feet long and above the ground water level. As with HDD, a jack and bore requires two pits on either end of the pipeline to be installed. A boring machine is inserted into one pit to bore the soil using an auger to remove material. As material is removed a

casing is pushed forward until it reaches the receiving pit. After the casing is installed, the pipe is inserted in the casing. The jacking pit has typical dimensions of 8 to 12 feet wide and 25 to 35 feet long depending on the casing length selected. The depth would depend on the feature to be avoided, existing utilities, or separation requirements. The maximum depth for the purposes of this analysis is 40 feet. The exact depths of the pits and drilling will be defined if jack and bore is selected and design begun.

Shoring, appropriate to the pit depth, would be used to support the excavation. In addition, the back wall of the jacking pit would need to be constructed to withstand the reactive forces from the jacking frame. Generally, an additional 1,500 to 2,000 square feet would be needed around the pit for temporary storage of pipe sections and for loading material removed from the bore. The receiving pit at the other end of the crossing would be smaller, typically approximately 100 square feet.

Aerial Crossing

An aerial crossing is proposed for the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel via an existing bridge along Grapefruit Boulevard. An aerial crossing would involve using small cranes or excavators to raise and lower the pipe into place. The pipeline would need to be routed above grade before spanning the channel and would use pipe supports mounted to the bridge.

2.7 Construction Trip Generation

During construction, the proposed project would generate trips with construction crews and materials deliveries. Although the number of SWS or associated pipelines that would be under construction at any given time is not specified, construction would proceed at a rate of approximately 150 linear feet per day. Construction would generate up to 35 round-trip trips per day, including one round trip for off hauling of export material, and one round trip for delivery of materials. Construction would involve approximately 11,700 cubic yards of material export, assuming as much native fill is reused for backfill of trenches as possible.

2.8 Construction Schedule

Construction is anticipated to last 24 months. The project's maximum area of disturbance during the construction period would encompass about 127,000 square feet, or approximately 2.9 acres, not including staging areas. The pipelines would be installed at a minimum depth of seven feet below ground surface with a trench width of three to five feet. The maximum depth would be 19 feet. All construction activities would occur within the County of Riverside roadway rights-of-way, Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, and SWS properties. Disturbance activities would occur on existing dirt access roads and in vegetated areas adjacent to the access roads. Disturbed areas would be restored to original grade and vegetated areas would be replanted with appropriate native species.

Project construction activity is anticipated to occur continuously, between the hours of 7:00am and 6:00pm, Monday through Friday only and excluding federal holidays, which is compliant with the County of Riverside Ordinance Regulating Noise.

2.9 Construction Best Management Practices

CVWD would require implementation of the following construction best management practices (BMPs) with the project:

- **Drainage / Erosion Control** – During the construction, existing storm water facilities including catch basins, manholes, and ditches would be protected using erosion control measures. Design standards outlined in the *Riverside County Whitewater River Region Stormwater Quality Best Management Practice Design Handbook for Low Impact Development* (Riverside County Flood Control and Watershed Conservation District [FCWCD] 2014) would be implemented as applicable to the project site's stormwater drainage features. In addition, the project contractor would be required to obtain a Construction General Permit pursuant to NPDES, which would require development of a construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implementation of BMPs to prevent polluted runoff from leaving the construction site.
- **Groundwater Dewatering** – The proposed pipe would be installed at a depth of seven feet below ground surface, with the 10-inch pipeline installed at deeper depths of 19 feet. If encountered at this depth, groundwater would be controlled using standard methods including stone sumps wrapped in filter fabric and dewatering basins or baffled tanks if required.
- **Traffic Controls** – Construction of the proposed project may necessitate individual traffic lane closures. Traffic control requirements would require that emergency crews have access, as needed, and that the contractor coordinates the location of the work daily for routing of emergency vehicles. Traffic control would also require the contractor to make reasonable efforts, wherever possible, to provide landowners access to their property and patrons access to businesses during execution of the work. Refer to **Mitigation Measure TRA-1**.
- **Air Quality / Dust Suppression** – The construction contractor would be required to comply with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) rule 403.1 to control dust during construction, specific to the Coachella Valley. The contractor is required to have an approved Fugitive Dust Control Plan prior to grading or excavation. The contractor is required to comply with the California Air Resources Boards (CARB) In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations, which would 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, less fuel-efficient engines from the construction fleet.

2.10 Operation and Maintenance

CVWD would continue to operate its sewer system with no operational modifications. WRP-4 has sufficient existing capacity to treat additional flows from the proposed project.

2.11 Permits

The permits listed in **Table 2-5** may be required for project construction.

Table 2-5: Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit or Approval
Local	
County of Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encroachment, Road and Construction Permits
South Coast Air Quality Management District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit to Construct • Fugitive Dust Control Plan • Permit to Operate for Lift Station
Imperial Irrigation District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical Service for Lift Station
State	
State Water Resources Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges associated with Construction Activities
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encroachment Permit
Other	
Union Pacific Railroads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encroachment Permit

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

1. **Project title:** Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project
2. **Lead agency name and address:** Coachella Valley Water District
75515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, CA 92211
3. **Contact person and phone number:** William Patterson, Environmental Supervisor
Coachella Valley Water District
75515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, CA 92211
(760) 398-2651
4. **Project location:** The proposed project is located in the eastern Coachella Valley area of Riverside County, California near the unincorporated community of Thermal. State Route 86 passes through the project area, crossing the project alignment at Avenue 57. The project area is south of Avenue 55, west of Pierce Street, north of Avenue 58, and east of State Route 111. It consists of 16 parcels: Campos MHP (APN: 757-080-018), De Leon Ranch (APN: 763-370-026), Desert View MHP (APN: 757-070-022), Durans Farms (APN: 757-110-020), Leon Housing (APN: 757-110-025), Luciano Valenzuela (APN: 757-100-009), Magdaleno Lopez Water System (757-070-049; 757-070-034; 757-070-045; 757-070-041), Meza's Ranch (APN: 757-080-021), Oscar Cruz Water System (APN: 757-140-009), Soto Water (APN: 763-370-009), Valley View MHP (APN: 757-100-015), Villa de Josue MHP (APN: 757-110-023) and Vista Norte Estates (APN: 757-100-013).
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Same as Lead Agency
6. **County of Riverside General Plan designations:** Agriculture; Rural Community - Low Density Residential; Medium Density Residential; and Medium High Density Residential
7. **County of Riverside Zoning:** Agricultural Low Density (A-1-20); Agricultural (A-2-20); Residential Agricultural (R-A)-5; R-A-10; and R-A-20
8. **Description of project:** The Airport Boulevard Sewer Consolidation Project consists of consolidation of 13 privately owned small water systems, currently reliant on private septic systems. The proposed project would connect to CVWD's sanitary sewer system and convey an average of approximately 64,000 gallons per day. The proposed project would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of new sewer mains, a lift station, sewer laterals, and approximately 12,150 linear feet of onsite service lines.
9. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** The project area is bordered as follows: North: City of Coachella (residential, commercial, and light industrial land); East: agricultural

lands, the Coachella Canal, and Mecca Hills further east; South: land designated business park, light industrial, and agricultural lands; and West: Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, State Route 111, and land designated commercial retail and light industrial. John Kelley Elementary School and La Familia Continuing High School are located approximately one-half mile west of the proposed project site.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)

Local:

- Riverside County – Encroachment, Road and Construction Permits, Traffic Control Plan
- SCAQMD – Fugitive Dust Control Plan
- Imperial Irrigation District – Electrical Service

State:

- Caltrans – Encroachment Permit
- SWRCB – General Permit for Storm Water Discharges associated with Construction Activities

Federal:

- Union Pacific Railroad – Encroachment Permit
- USDA – funding under the Rural Development Program

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 2180.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

CVWD has received formal written notification requests from several local Native American tribes as a result of Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto 2014). Refer to *Section 3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources* for a complete discussion.

NAHC identified 18 Native American contacts who may have knowledge of cultural resources of Native American origin at the project site. Rincon prepared and mailed letters to each of these groups on behalf of CVWD on August 7, 2020. On August 12 and 17, 2020, Rincon followed up with the Native American contacts who had not replied. Five responses were received from this outreach effort. A summary of each response received as of September 2, 2020 can be found in *Section 3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources*.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. With adherence to the mitigation program identified within this IS/MND, the potentially significant impacts would be reduced or minimized to a less than significant level.

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

Determination: (To be completed by Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

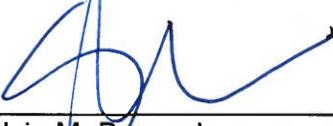
- I find that the proposed Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions 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.



Prepared by:  11/12/2021
Sally Johnson
Environmental Planner/Project Manager
Woodard & Curran
Date

Reviewed by:  1/21/22
William Patterson
Environmental Supervisor
Coachella Valley Water District
Date

Submitted by:  1/24/22
Steve Bigley
Director of Environmental Services
Coachella Valley Water District
Date

Approved by Board:  1/26/22
Sylvia M. Bermudez
Clerk of the Board
Coachella Valley Water District
Date

3.1 Aesthetics

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
c) In non-urbanized 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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	[]	[X]	[]	[]

Discussion

The proposed project area is relatively undeveloped and composed largely of low density residential and agricultural lands. The general visual character of the eastern Coachella Valley includes date groves and agricultural uses; desert oasis areas; cove-like communities at the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains; the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel; the Salton Sea State Recreation Area; and desert and mountain vistas (County of Riverside 2014).

There are no designated state scenic highways within the project area. State Route 111, from Bombay Beach on the Salton Sea to State Route 195 near Mecca, approximately five miles south of the proposed project, is a State-eligible Scenic Highway, providing views of the Salton Sea and the surrounding mountainous wilderness. Interstate 10 from Chiriaco Summit to the intersection with State Route 86, approximately four miles north of the proposed project, is a County-eligible Scenic Highway (County of Riverside 2016). The project area is located to the east of State Route 86, which is not recognized as a State or County designated or eligible scenic highway.

a, c) Less than Significant

The *Riverside County General Plan* (County of Riverside 2015a) defines scenic vistas as points accessible to the general public that provide a view of the countryside. The project area is located within the unincorporated community of Thermal in a predominantly undeveloped, agricultural area with residential units. The visual character of the project area, as shown in the photos below, is defined by the relatively level low density residential and agricultural lands and surrounding mountains which can be seen in the distance from the project area.



View looking east from Soto MHP



Valley View MHP and Mecca Hills in distance



The proposed project would construct approximately 17,500 linear feet of sewer mains, 12,000 linear feet of associated onsite piping, and a new lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sewer system. Construction of the proposed project would temporarily impact views and the visual character of the project area through placement of large-scale construction equipment along and adjacent to roadways. For the pipelines, construction impacts would be temporary in nature and located below grade. Ground surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions upon completion. For the lift station, a small structure would be installed at an undeveloped property. However, this structure would not be readily visible from existing roadways, would be relatively small (4,500 square foot footprint) and not located in an aesthetically sensitive area. It would therefore not impact scenic vistas or the visual character or quality of the project area upon completion of construction. Thus, impacts would be less than significant.

b) No Impact

The proposed project is not within an identified state scenic highway. The nearest eligible scenic highways are Interstate 10, which runs approximately four miles north of the project area, and State Route 111, which is located approximately five miles southeast of the proposed project. Construction would not be visible from those sections of Interstate 10 and State Route 111 that are eligible as a County or State scenic highway. The proposed project would be visible from State Route 86, which is not a designated or eligible State or County scenic highway. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway and no impacts would occur.

d) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction of the proposed project may create a temporary source of light from construction equipment and potential security lighting that may be required at staging areas or construction sites for the lift station and trenchless crossings. Because of the temporary nature of the lighting during construction, pipeline construction would not create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views. The only aboveground component that may include permanent lighting would be the lift station, which

may require security and safety lighting. This would introduce a new source of light, which could adversely affect nighttime views. The proposed lift station security lighting would be consistent with other security lighting in the vicinity, including at the existing developments on Desert Cactus Drive, and along State Routes 86 and 111. The proposed lift station would be located beyond the nighttime lighting zones of Palomar Observatory that are regulated by Riverside County Ordinance 655 Regulating Light Pollution. **Mitigation Measure AES-1** would require that all permanent lighting be directed downward and be the lowest illumination necessary. This would reduce the visibility of security lighting beyond the immediate vicinity of the lift station, reducing impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

AES-1: Low Illumination Security Lighting. All permanent exterior lighting at the lift station shall be of the lowest illumination necessary for security and shielded and directed downward to avoid light spillage onto neighboring properties.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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))?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

-
- 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 composed primarily of agricultural land, and includes major roadways, low-density residential developments, and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.

According to the California Department of Conservation (DOC 2017) and shown in **Figure 3-1**, the project area is almost entirely composed of important farmland, including prime farmland and farmland of local importance. Per DOC mapping of Williamson Act enrolled lands, shown in **Figure 3-2**, the project area is not located on lands protected by a Williamson Act contract, although parcels surrounding the project site are covered by a Williamson Act contract, including along State Route 111 (DOC 2016).

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) published maps which classify land cover throughout the state into eight major forest or range-related classes, including Forestland - Conifer Forest, Forestland - Hardwood Forest, Forest and Rangeland - Conifer Woodland, Forest and Rangeland - Hardwood Woodland, Rangeland - Shrub, Rangeland - Desert, Rangeland - Herbaceous, and Rangeland - Wetland. CalFire also classifies land cover throughout the state into four non-forest and rangeland classes including Urban, Barren/Other, Water, and Agriculture. The project area is primarily designated as Agriculture with small pockets of Urban and Desert Shrub land (CDFW 2020). There are no designated forest lands within the project area.

Figure 3-1: Important Farmland in the Project Area

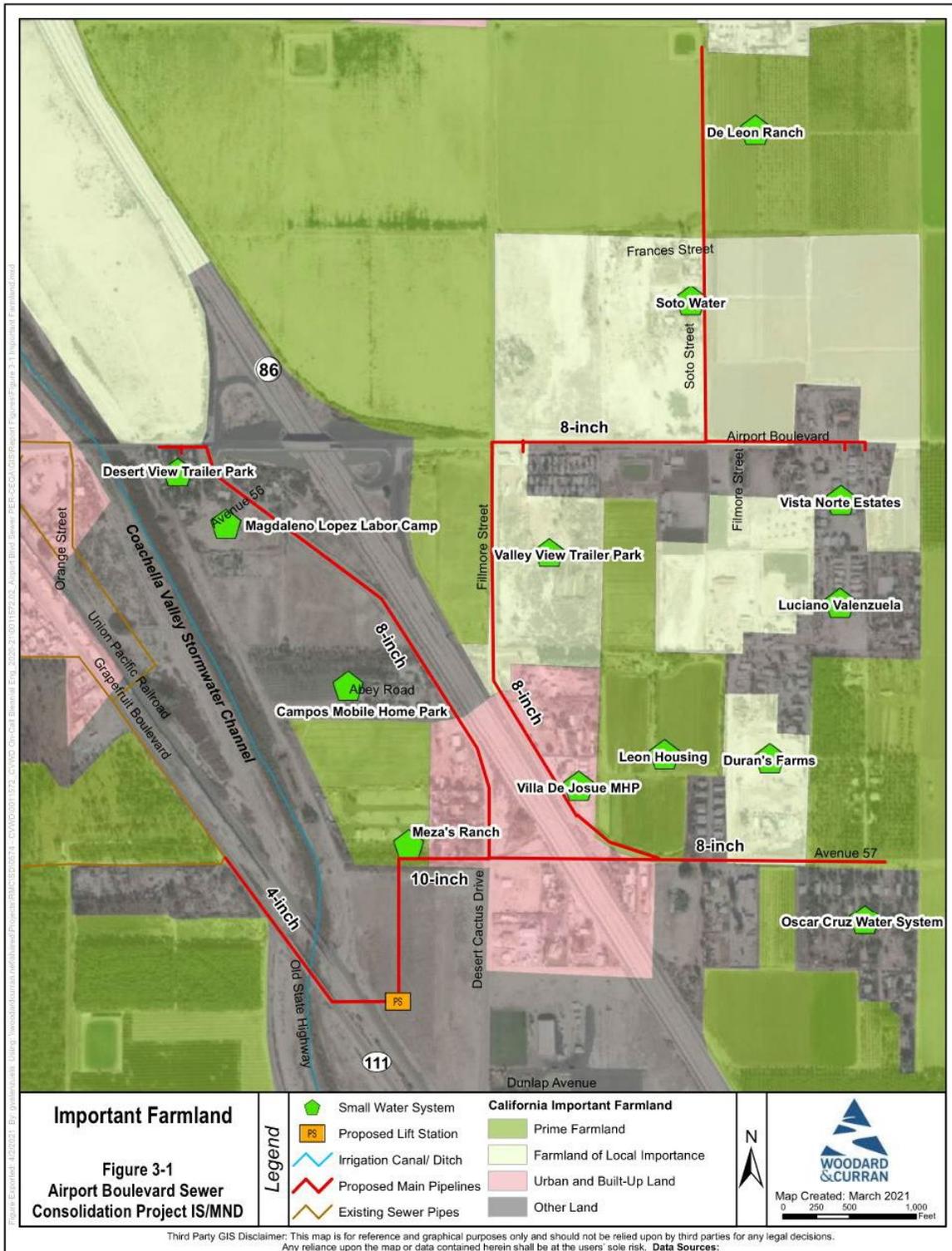
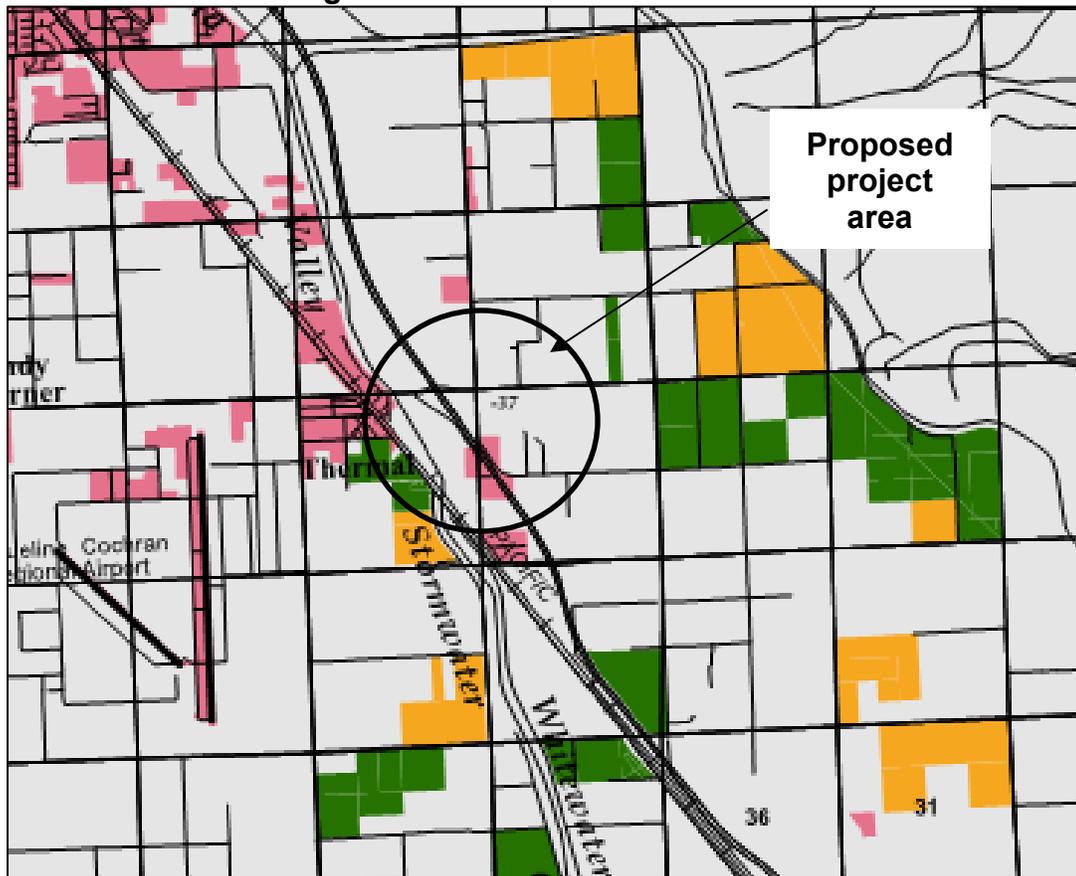


Figure 3-2: Williamson Act Lands



Notes: Green color indicates Williamson Act-Prime Agricultural land; yellow color indicates Williamson Act-nonrenewal land; pink color indicates urban and built up land.

Source: California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection Conservation Program Support, "Riverside County Williamson Act FY 2015/16 Sheet 2 of 3," 2016.

a, b, e) Less Than Significant

The project area is generally designated agricultural, with substantial areas classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance. Additionally, there are Williamson Act lands located in the western portion of the project area along State Route 111. The proposed project would install sewer pipelines within existing rights-of-way, along with some onsite sewer lines within the 13 SWS communities. Because these pipelines would generally be located within rights-of-ways and buried at a minimum depth of seven feet consistent with design criteria for the region, and disturbed surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions, pipelines would not interfere with existing agricultural operations. The lift station, with its small footprint (4,500 square feet) would be located in an undeveloped lot. This lot is designated as "other land use" by DOC's farmland mapping, as shown in **Figure 3-1**. Additionally, the proposed project will primarily serve existing and planned populations, and would not induce growth (refer to *Section 3.14, Population and Housing*). The proposed project would not result in land use changes and would, therefore, not convert important

farmland to a non-agricultural use, conflict with zoning regulations, or result in other changes that would indirectly result in conversion of nearby farmland to non-agricultural use. There are Williamson Act lands within the project area and adjacent to the proposed pipeline alignment; however, the proposed project would not directly impact Williamson Act contracted lands, because pipelines would be constructed within the existing right of way, and the land use and zoning of those lands would not be altered. Therefore, the proposed project would not have potential to convert or result in the conversion of important farmland or Williamson Act lands to non-agricultural uses, and impacts to important farmland and Williamson Act lands would be less than significant.

c, d) No Impact

There are no forest lands, timberlands, or timberland zoned Timberland Production within the project area. There would be no conflict with zoning or loss or conversion of forest land or timberland. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact to forest or timberlands and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.3 Air Quality

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors or adversely affecting a substantial number of people?)	[]	[]	[X]	[]

Discussion

The East Coachella Valley is bounded by the Santa Rosa Mountains to the west, and the Mecca Hills and the edge of Joshua Tree National Park to the northeast. The project area is located in the Coachella Valley region of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB). The Coachella Valley region is under the regulatory jurisdiction of the SCAQMD. The SCAQMD monitors air pollutant levels to ensure the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are met and, if they are not met, to develop strategies to meet the standards. Air pollution in the project area is monitored at stations located in Palm Springs and Indio.

The NAAQS, which are required under the Clean Air Act to be determined by the US EPA, provide public health protection, including protecting the health of sensitive populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly (US EPA 2019a). Similarly, the CAAQS are established to protect the health of the most sensitive groups and are mandated by State law. US EPA has set NAAQS criteria for six pollutants, which are called “criteria pollutants”: Carbon Monoxide (CO), Lead (Pb), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Ozone (O₃), Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), and Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂). California has added three additional criteria pollutants: Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S), Visibility Reducing Particles, and Vinyl Chloride. In addition, California regulates about 200 different chemicals, referred to as toxic air contaminants (TACs) (CARB 2019).

Depending on whether or not the NAAQS or CAAQS are met or exceeded, the SSAB is classified as being in “attainment” or “nonattainment.” The *2016 Air Quality Management Plan* (AQMP; SCAQMD 2017) assesses the attainment status of the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB. The NAAQS and CAAQS attainment statuses for the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB are listed in **Table 3-1**. As shown therein, the SSAB is in nonattainment for the State standards for 1-hour ozone, nonattainment for both the federal and State standards for 8-hour ozone, and nonattainment for respirable particulate matter, PM₁₀ (SCAQMD 2017). Thus, the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is required to implement strategies that would reduce pollutant levels to recognized standards. The AQMP provides a strategy for the attainment of State and federal air quality standards.

Table 3-1: Criteria Pollutant Attainment Status - Coachella Valley Portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin

Pollutant	State (CAAQS)	Federal (NAAQS)
O ₃ – 1-hour	Nonattainment (0.09 ppm)	Attainment (0.12 ppm)
O ₃ – 8-hour	Nonattainment (0.070 ppm)	Pending – Expect Nonattainment (Severe) (0.070 ppm)
PM ₁₀ – 24-hour	Nonattainment (50 µg/m ³)	Nonattainment (Serious) (150 µg/m ³)
PM ₁₀ – Annual	Nonattainment (20 µg/m ³)	--
PM _{2.5} – 24-hour	--	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (35.0 µg/m ³)
PM _{2.5} – Annual	Attainment (12.0 µg/m ³)	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (12.0 µg/m ³)
CO	Attainment (1-hour [20 ppm]; 8-hour [9 ppm])	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (1-hour [35 ppm]; 8-hour [9 ppm])
NO ₂	Attainment (1-hour [0.18 ppm]; annual [0.030 ppm])	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (1-hour [0.10 ppm]; annual [0.053 ppm])
SO ₂	Attainment (1-hour [0.25 ppm]; 24-hour [0.04 ppm])	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (1-hour [75 ppb]; 24-hour [0.14 ppm]; annual [0.03 ppm])
Lead	Attainment (30-day average [1.5 µg/m ³])	Unclassifiable/ Attainment (3-months rolling [0.15 µg/m ³])
Sulfates	Attainment (24-hour [25 µg/m ³])	--
H ₂ S	Unclassified (1-hour [0.03 ppm/42 µg/m ³])	--
Source: SCAQMD 2017; CARB 2016; SCAQMD 2016.		

The SCAQMD provides numerical thresholds to analyze the significance of a project's construction and operational emissions on regional air quality. These thresholds are designed such that a project consistent with the thresholds would not have an individually or cumulatively significant impact on the SSAB's air quality. These thresholds are included in **Table 3-2** with the proposed project's estimated emissions.

In addition, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) in response to concern regarding exposure of individuals to criteria pollutants in local communities. LSTs have been developed for nitrogen oxides (NO_x), CO, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that will not cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard at the nearest sensitive receptor, taking into consideration ambient concentrations

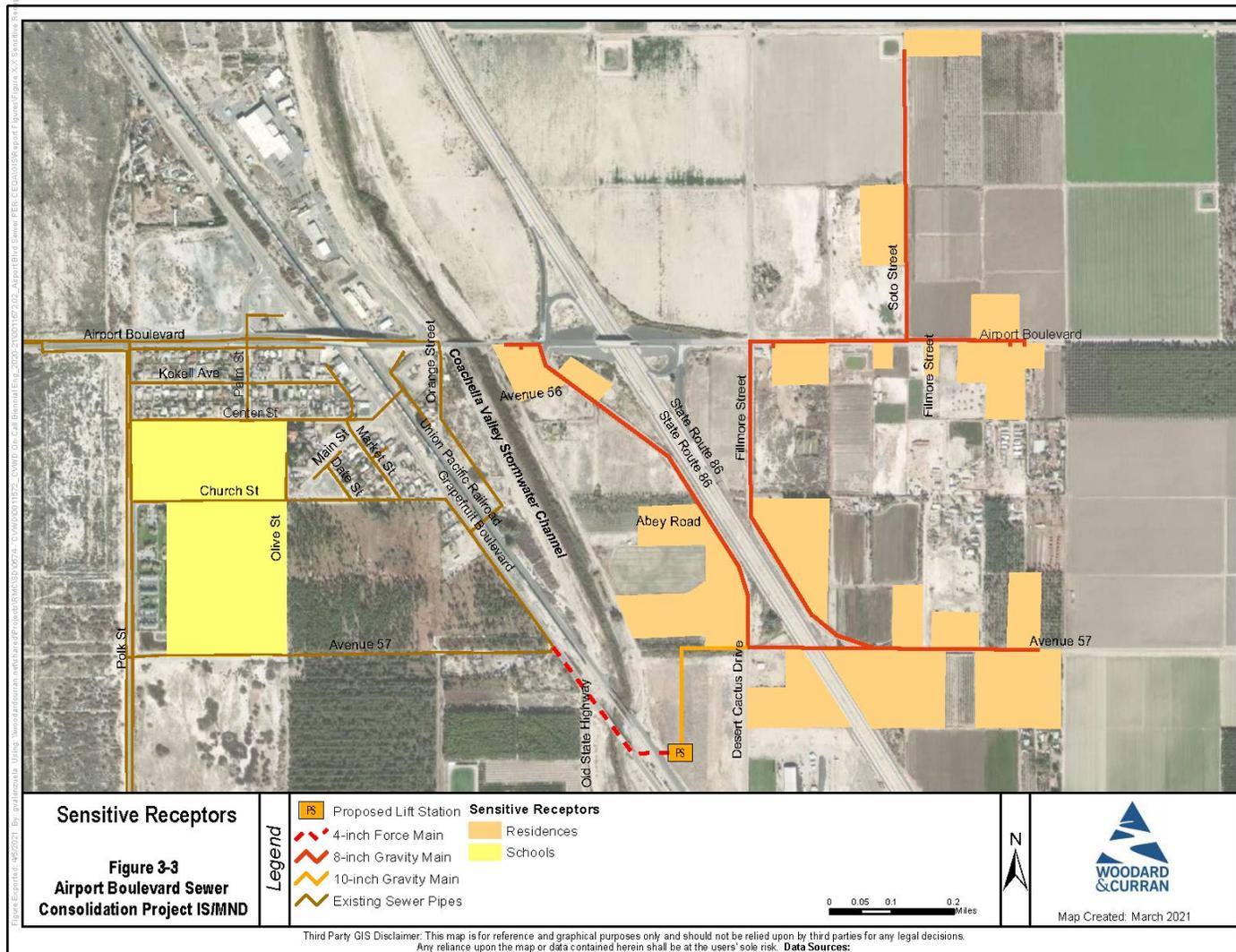
in each source receptor area (SRA), distance to the sensitive receptor, and project size. LSTs only apply to emissions within a fixed stationary location; they are not applicable to mobile sources. The use of LSTs is voluntary, to be implemented at the discretion of local agencies (SCAQMD 2008a).

The SCAQMD LSTs are defined for 37 SRAs. The project site is located in source receptor area 30 (SRA-30), Coachella Valley (SCAQMD 2008a). LSTs have been developed for emissions within construction areas up to five acres in size. The SCAQMD provides lookup tables for sites that measure up to one, two, or five acres. The footprint of the proposed project would be approximately three acres. However, construction of the pipelines would not occur over the entire three acres continuously. Instead, construction of the proposed project would proceed at a rate of approximately 150 linear feet of pipeline per day, which is equivalent to an active construction site less than 0.1 acre per day. Pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, LSTs for the one-acre site should be used for sites that are less than one acre in size. On occasion, ground disturbance for the proposed project may exceed the estimated rate of 150 LF/day and the equivalent 0.1 acre per day; however, in no case would the area under active construction at any given time exceed the one-acre limit set in the LST lookup table. LSTs for construction on a one-acre site in SRA-30 are shown in **Table 3-2** with the proposed project's estimated emissions. LSTs are provided for receptors at a distance of 25 meters (82 feet) from the project site boundary, which is the most conservative LST distance (LSTs range from 25 to 500 meters). Sensitive receptors are shown in **Figure 3-3**. The closest sensitive receptors to the project site are the residences located adjacent to the proposed pipelines.

General Conformity with state implementation plans is a national Clean Air Act regulation that applies to most federal actions. For CWSRF funded projects, a Clean Air Act General Conformity analysis applies only to projects in a nonattainment area or an attainment area subject to a maintenance plan. It is only required for criteria pollutants for which an area has been designated nonattainment or maintenance. The General Conformity Rule ensures that actions taken by federal agencies in nonattainment and maintenance areas do not interfere with the State's plans to meet NAAQS. 40 CFR Part 93.153 defines de minimis levels, which are the minimum threshold for which a conformity determination must be performed. If the proposed project's annual emissions from construction and/or operation are below the applicable de minimis levels, the project is not subject to a General Conformity determination.

Based on the federal attainment statuses for the SSAB, the de minimis levels that apply to the SSAB are summarized in **Table 3-4** with estimated emissions from the proposed project. These levels apply to all direct and indirect annual emissions generated during construction and operation of the project.

Figure 3-3: Sensitive Receptors in the Project Vicinity



a) Less than Significant Impact

The SCAQMD's 2016 AQMP, which assesses the attainment status of the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB and provides a strategy for attainment of State and federal air quality standards, is the applicable air quality plan. The AQMP strategies are developed based on population, housing, and employment growth forecasts anticipated under local city general plans and the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2016 *Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* (SCAG 2016).

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 proposed project would construct approximately 17,500 linear feet of pipelines and associated onsite piping, meters, hydrants and valves to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. The proposed project would expand CVWD's wastewater collection and conveyance infrastructure and would serve a pre-determined number of existing communities, which currently rely on SWSs, with reliable wastewater services. Therefore, the proposed project would not lead to population, housing or employment growth that exceeds the forecasts used in the development of the AQMD. Potential for conflicts with the AQMP would be less than significant.

b) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project would result in emissions of criteria pollutants from short-term construction activities and long-term operation and maintenance (O&M) activities. Construction emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod version 2016.3.2), which was developed by the SCAQMD and is used throughout California to quantify criteria pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).

The CalEEMod emissions scenarios 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 for construction activities.

SCAQMD's Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust) and Rule 403.1 (Supplemental Fugitive Dust Control Requirements for Coachella Valley Sources) require construction projects to implement measures to suppress fugitive dust emissions, such as watering of exposed soils and the preparation of a Fugitive Dust Control Plan. The construction contractor would be required to have a Fugitive Dust Control Plan approved by either the SCAQMD or Riverside County prior to grading or excavation activities (see *Section 2.9 Construction Best Management Practices*).

Construction Emissions

Air emissions of criteria pollutants during construction would result from the use of construction equipment with internal combustion engines, and offsite vehicles to transport workers, deliver materials to the site, and haul export material from the site. Project construction would also result in fugitive dust emissions, which would be lessened through the implementation of the fugitive dust control measures required by SCAQMD rules. **Table 3-2** summarizes the maximum daily pollutant emissions during construction of the project.

Table 3-2: Proposed Project Maximum Daily Construction Emissions (lbs/day)

Emissions Source	NO_x	ROG	CO	SO_x	PM_{2.5}	PM₁₀
Onsite emissions (e.g., construction equipment)	43	5	54	0.1	2.1	2.0
Offsite emissions (e.g., hauling trips)	2	<1	3	<0.1	1.2	0.3
Fugitive dust (with required fugitive dust controls)	--	--	--	--	<0.1	<0.1
Total Maximum Daily Project Emissions	45	5	58	0.1	3.3	2.3
<i>SCAQMD Regional Thresholds</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>150</i>
SCAQMD Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Localized Significance Threshold (LST) (applies to onsite stationary emissions only)</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>878</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
LST Threshold exceeded?	No	--	No	--	No	No

Notes: NO_x (oxides of nitrogen) and ROG (reactive organic gases)/VOC (volatile organic compounds) are ozone precursors, which chemically react in the presence of sunlight to form ground-level ozone. For Coachella Valley, the mass daily thresholds for operation are the same as the construction thresholds. Emissions presented are the highest of winter or summer modeled emissions. Values may not sum due to rounding. See Appendix A for CalEEMod output sheets. Figures are from mitigated emissions scenario to account for standard dust control measures. Source for Regional Thresholds: SCAQMD 2019. Source for LSTs: SCAQMD, Final LST Methodology Document, Appendix C – Mass Rate LST Look-up Tables, Revised October 2009.

As shown in **Table 3-2**, project construction emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds or LSTs. Therefore, impacts on regional air quality and local receptors due to construction-related air pollutant emissions would be less than significant.

Operational Emissions

Long-term, operational emissions of criteria pollutants would result from motor vehicle trips associated with O&M of the proposed pipelines, operation of pumps at the lift station, and occasional operation of the backup generator for the lift station. However, as explained in *Section 2 Project Description*, CVWD would continue to operate its wastewater collection,

conveyance, and treatment system with no operational modifications. New pipelines and pumps would be serviced per established CVWD schedules. Thus, the project would not result in a change in existing O&M activities. O&M emissions associated with the pipelines would be negligible, while some emissions would be attributable to the lift station and its emergency generator. Results of CalEEMod modeling for operational emissions of the proposed project are provided in **Table 3-3**. As shown in the table, operation of the proposed project would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds or LSTs. Therefore, the proposed project's operation would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant for which the SSAB is non-attainment. Operational increase in criteria pollutants would be less than significant.

Table 3-3: Proposed Project Maximum Daily Operation Emissions (lbs/day)

Emissions Source	NO_x	ROG	CO	SO_x	PM_{2.5}	PM₁₀
Area (excludes emergency generator)	<0.1	0.2	<0.1	0	<0.1	<0.1
Stationary Sources	2.1	0.4	2.3	<0.1	0.3	0.3
Total Maximum Daily Emissions for Operation	2.1	0.6	2.3	<0.1	0.3	0.3
<i>SCAQMD Regional Thresholds</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>150</i>
SCAQMD Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Localized Significance Threshold (LST) (applies to onsite stationary emissions only)</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>878</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
LST Threshold exceeded?	No	--	No	--	No	No
Notes: NO _x (oxides of nitrogen) and ROG (reactive organic gases)/VOC (volatile organic compounds) are ozone precursors, which chemically react in the presence of sunlight to form ground-level ozone. For Coachella Valley, the mass daily thresholds for operation are the same as the construction thresholds. Emissions presented are the highest of winter or summer modeled emissions. Values may not sum due to rounding. See Appendix A for CalEEMod output sheets. Source for Regional Thresholds: SCAQMD 2019. Source for LSTs: SCAQMD, Final LST Methodology Document, Appendix C – Mass Rate LST Look-up Tables, Revised October 2009.						

General Conformity Assessment

Table 3-4 summarizes the proposed project's total annual construction emissions and compares those to the applicable de minimis threshold for the SSAB region. As shown in **Table 3-4**, the project's criteria air pollutant emissions would not exceed the applicable de minimis thresholds. Therefore, the general conformity requirements do not apply to these emissions and the project is exempt from a conformity determination.

Table 3-4: Maximum Annual Project Emissions Compared to De Minimis Thresholds (tons/year)

Emissions Source	NO_x	VOC	PM₁₀
Maximum construction emissions	5	<1	<1
<i>De Minimis Threshold</i>	25	25	70
Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No
Notes: Notes: NO _x (oxides of nitrogen) and ROG (reactive organic gases)/VOC (volatile organic compounds) are ozone precursors, which chemically react in the presence of sunlight to form ground-level ozone. For the purposes of this analysis, the terms ROG and VOC are used interchangeably. Sources: US EPA 2020; SCAQMD 2017.			

c) Less than Significant Impact

Sensitive receptors are typically defined as schools (preschool – 12th grade), hospitals, resident care facilities, senior housing facilities, day care centers, or other facilities that may house individuals with health conditions that would be adversely impacted by changes in air quality. Land uses on the SWS sites include both mobile homes and single-family residences. John Kelley Elementary School and La Familia Continuation High School are both located approximately one-half mile west of the project area.

As discussed under “b” above, the project’s construction and operational emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD regional thresholds or LSTs, which are set at levels that protect public health. Furthermore, construction emissions would be temporary and would not be located in the same location for the entire 24-month construction period. Sensitive receptors would be exposed to temporary construction air pollution emissions while adjacent pipelines are being actively installed. However, emissions would be less than applicable thresholds and mitigation would not be required.

CO hotspots have the potential to occur in traffic-congested roadways and intersections with poor circulation. The proposed project would involve minimal O&M trips. Furthermore, construction-related CO emissions would be below SCAQMD regional and LST thresholds (see **Table 3-2**). Therefore, the project would not have the potential to cause a CO hotspot on roadways adjacent to sensitive receptors. Project impacts on sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

d) Less than Significant Impact

The project would involve emissions of sulfur compounds from use of oil and diesel fuel during construction, and diesel fuel during temporary occasional operation of the backup generator at the lift station. These emissions would potentially result in unpleasant odors. Construction would be temporary and would not be located in a single location for the duration of the 12-month construction period. Odorous emissions from construction equipment tend to dissipate quickly within short distances from the construction site. Once the project is operational, the underground sewer pipelines would not be associated with odors. If the emergency generator is used at the lift station, there is potential for odors to

occur. The generator would be located approximately 100 yards from the nearest residence, operated only occasionally and temporarily, would not result in long-term or on-going odor nuisance. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.4 Biological Resources

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	[]	[X]	[]	[]
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]

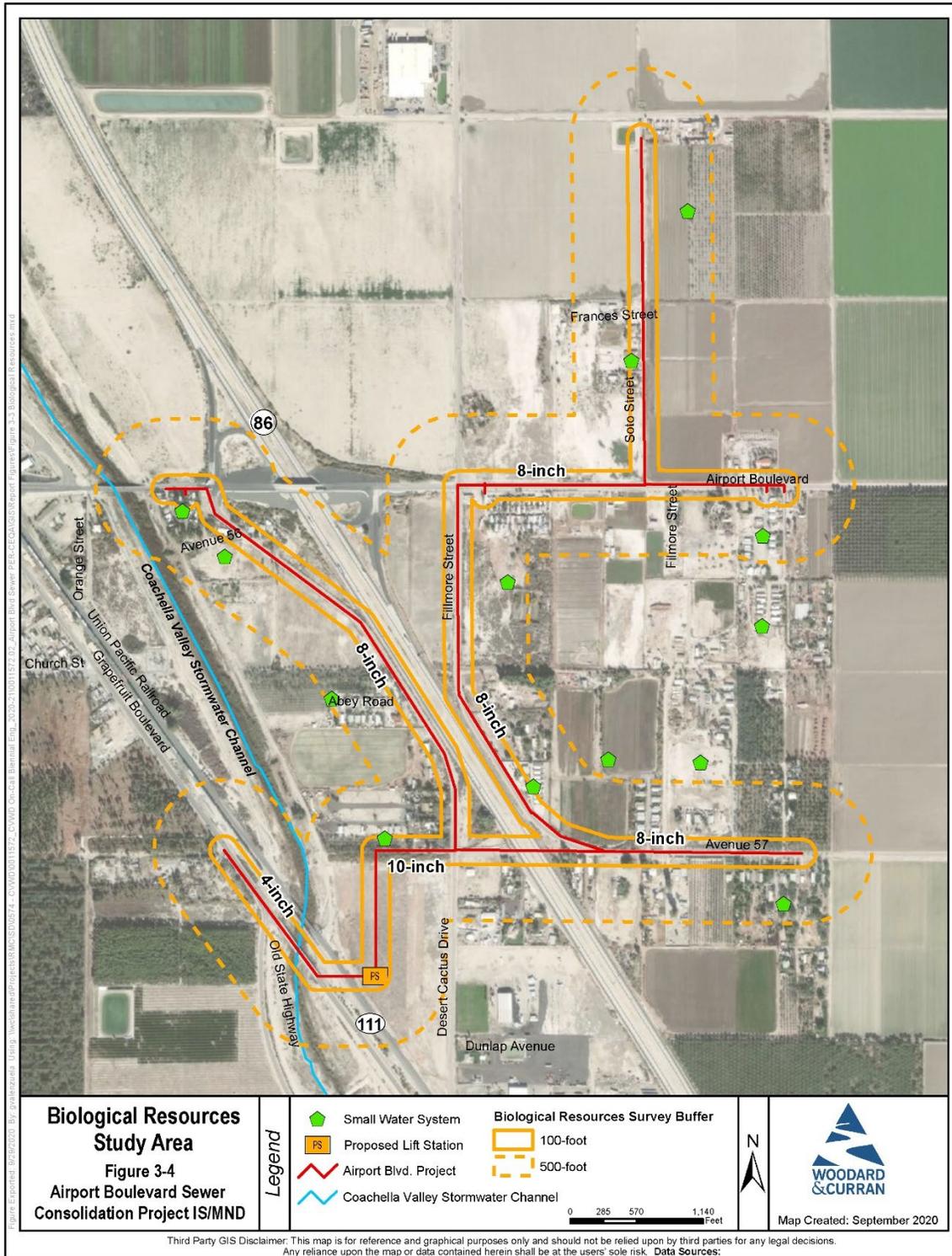
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|--|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | [] | [] | [X] | [] |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | [] | [] | [] | [X] |
| 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? | [] | [] | [] | [X] |

Discussion

A Biological Resources Technical Study was prepared in April 2021 by Rincon Consultants, Inc. for the proposed project. A field survey of the project area and associated biological resources was conducted by Rincon biologists on August 13, 2020. The complete Biological Resources Technical Study is provided in **Appendix B**. The study area covered by the Biological Resources Technical Study is shown in **Figure 3-3**.

Biological conditions in the project area were evaluated by confirming applicable biological regulations, policies, and standards; reviewing biological literature pertinent to the site and vicinity; and conducting a reconnaissance-level biological survey of the site. Rincon conducted a literature review to obtain baseline information about the biological resources with potential to occur at the project site and surrounding areas. As part of the literature review, Rincon reviewed the latest versions of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) and Biogeographic Information and Observation System, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitat Portal and Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), USFWS National Wetland Inventory, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, and California Native Plant Society’s (CNPS) Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (Rincon 2020). A complete list of special status species previously documented within a five-mile radius of the project site was compiled from the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC queries, shown in Appendix A of the Biological Resources Technical Study, which is included as **Appendix B** to this IS/MND.

Figure 3-4: Biological Resources Study Area



The project site, as well as a 100-foot buffer (500-foot for raptors) around the project site, was surveyed on foot by biologists familiar with the biological resources located in the regional vicinity of the property (see **Figure 3-3**). Inaccessible or private property was surveyed using binoculars. An inventory of all plant and animal species observed was compiled, the existing vegetation communities were further classified, and the general site and habitat conditions were documented and are provided in Appendix C of the Biological Resources Technical Study, which is included as **Appendix B** to this IS/MND.

The project is located within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP. The CVMSHCP, which was approved in 2008, is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on the conservation of species and their associated habitats in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County. The overall goal of the CVMSHCP is to maintain and enhance biological diversity and ecosystem processes within the region while allowing for future economic growth (CVAG 2016).

The CVMSHCP covers 27 sensitive plant and wildlife species as well as 27 natural communities and includes 21 conservation areas. Covered species include both listed and non-listed species that are conserved by the CVMSHCP. The overall provisions for the plan are subdivided according to specific resource conservation goals that have been organized according to geographic areas, or conservation areas. These are identified as core, essential, or other conserved habitat for sensitive plant, invertebrate, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species, essential ecological process areas, and biological corridors and linkages.

The project is located within the planning boundary of the CVMSHCP but is not a part of or adjacent to any specific Conservation Area. The closest Conservation Area is called the *Mecca Hills/Orocopia Mountains Conservation Area*, which occurs east of State Route 86 and south of Highway 10, 2.5 miles east of the project area.

Habitat/Vegetation Communities

The proposed project alignment occurs within a rural setting consisting of a mix of agricultural, rural residential, and vacant lands. While the project site is generally within developed land, vegetation communities within the project area include developed, disturbed, quailbush scrub, Goodding's willow – red willow riparian woodlands and tamarisk thickets:

- Developed land consists of areas that have been physically altered or significantly modified and are no longer recognizable as a native or naturalized vegetation association but continue to retain a soil substrate. Developed habitat includes irrigated residential lots, paved roads, and buildings. Vegetative species present include ornamental trees and shrubs such as fan palm (*Washingtonia* sp.), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), and palo verde (*Parkinsonia* sp.).

- Disturbed habitat is mostly devoid of vegetation and is generally located along road shoulders within the project area. Vegetative species present include Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), tumbleweed (*Amaranthus albus*) and common puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*).
- Quailbush scrub habitat corresponds to natural schrubland. Vegetation is dominated by quailbush (*Atriplex lentiformis*), but other species present include saltbush and honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa* var. *torreyana*).
- Goodding's willow – red willow riparian woodland habitat corresponds to natural woodlands. Vegetation is dominated by Goodding's willow (*Salix gooddingii*), but other species present include cattail (*Typha* sp.), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) and common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*).
- Tamarisk thickets habitat corresponds to semi-natural stands. Vegetation is dominated by tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), but other species present include arrow-weed, honey mesquite and quailbush.

Wildlife

The project site and surrounding areas provide habitat suitable for some wildlife species that can be found in the rural and suburban areas in the region. Wildlife observed on or adjacent to the site included bird species such as house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), rock pigeon (*Columbia livia*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), and black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).

Special Status Plants

While four special status plant species have been previously documented within a five-mile radius of the project area by the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC, special status plant species were determined to have little to no potential to occur within the project area based on the existing developed and disturbed nature of the project site, lack of suitable soils, inappropriate hydrologic conditions, and absence of appropriate vegetation communities. In addition, no special status plant species were observed within the project area during the survey.

Plant communities are considered sensitive biological resources if they have limited distributions, have high wildlife value, include sensitive species, or are particularly susceptible to disturbance. USFWS-IPaC includes federally listed plant species and (if designated) critical habitat. According to the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC, no sensitive plant species or communities have been tracked within a five-mile radius of the project area. However, Goodding's willow – red willow riparian woodland, has a G4S3 ranking (indicating

it may be a vulnerable habitat at moderate risk of extirpation), occurs within a small portion of the area of potential effect (APE) located in the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.

Special Status Wildlife

Twenty-two special status wildlife species were evaluated that have been previously documented within a five-mile radius of the project area by the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC resource list. The assessment of the potential for these species to occur is based upon the presence of suitable habitat as identified during field surveys and existing knowledge of species occurrences and distributions in the region. Special status wildlife species were determined to have little to no potential to occur within the project area based on habitat quality in the developed and disturbed areas, lack of suitable vegetation that would support special-status wildlife species, and regular maintenance of the grounds or other disturbance from frequent human activity. No special status wildlife species were observed within the project area during the field survey.

While not all birds are designated as special-status species, destruction of their eggs, nests, and nestlings is prohibited by federal and state law. The project area provides suitable habitat for nesting or migratory bird species, which are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the California Fish and Game Commission (CFG) (FGC 3503 and 3503.5). The project area provides suitable habitat for numerous species of birds common in the area and nesting birds are likely to be present within the project area during the nesting season (January 1 through July 1 for raptors, February 1 through August 31 for burrowing owl [*Athene cunicularia*], and March 1 through September 15 for passerines). While the project area may provide suitable habitat, nesting habitat within the proposed project sites is considered low quality due to existing disturbances and proximity to heavily travelled roadways.

Jurisdictional Resources

Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill materials into “waters of the United States.” Section 404 permits are administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Section 401 of the Clean Water Act further regulates the discharge of dredged or fill materials and is administered in California by the SWRCB and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). CDFW’s Lake and Streambed Alteration Program (Fish & Game Code Section 1600) is focused on protection and conservation of fish and wildlife resources within the bed, channel, and bank of “waters of the State”. Areas potentially subject to USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdiction, including a small portion of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and a dry drainage ditch, were assessed during the literature review and field survey.

The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is a previously developed downstream extension of the Whitewater River constructed as a drainageway for subsurface drains on irrigated agricultural lands, treated wastewater, and stormwater runoff. CVWD routinely maintains the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel in order for it to function. The Coachella Valley

Stormwater Channel is a direct tributary to the Salton Sea, which is considered a Traditionally Navigable Water by the USACE. As such, the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is considered jurisdictional for all three regulatory agencies, USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW. The proposed 6-inch force main would cross the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel using the existing State Route 111 bridge (Grapefruit Boulevard). The 6-inch force main would be suspended alongside the existing bridge or if space is available, inside the bridge cavity. The proposed project would not require construction activities in the areas of the channel that would be considered waters of the United States or waters of the state under the Clean Water Act. Therefore, the proposed project would not require regulatory permitting under Section 404 (USACE) and Section 401 (RWQCB) of the federal Clean Water Act. The proposed project would not impact resources within the channel; therefore, a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement under Fish & Game Code Section 1600 (CDFW) also would not be required. Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires that regulated activities conducted below the Ordinary High Water (OHW) elevation of navigable waters of the United States be permitted by USACE. The existing State Route 111 bridge is not below the OHW elevation; therefore, the proposed project would not be required to obtain a Section 10 permit.

The man-made drainage ditch is located south of the project site and east of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and west of Desert Cactus Drive. Design of the drainage appears to contribute to managing stormwater runoff from surrounding residential properties. The drainage ditch was determined to not be considered waters of the US under USACE jurisdiction but could potentially be subject to CDFW jurisdiction given the presence of bed and bank. However, the drainage feature is not within the project area, and no impacts from the project are anticipated.

Wildlife Corridors, Linkages, and Preserves

Wildlife movement and habitat fragmentation are important issues in assessing impacts to wildlife. Habitat fragmentation occurs when a proposed action results in a single, unified habitat area being divided into two or more areas in such a way that the division isolates the two new areas from each other. Isolation of habitat occurs when wildlife cannot move freely from one portion of the habitat to another or from one habitat type to another, as in the fragmentation of habitats within and around “checkerboard” residential development. Habitat fragmentation also can occur when a portion of one or more habitats is converted into another habitat, as when annual burning converts scrub habitats to grasslands habitat. The project area is not located within or adjacent to a natural landscape block or an essential habitat connectivity corridor. The project area is located within previously disturbed and routinely managed areas that offer little to no value to wildlife movement. These areas are subject to frequent human disturbance that do not provide linkage to wildlife habitat.

a) Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

A project-level *Biological Resources Technical Study* (**Appendix B**) was prepared to identify potential impacts to special-status species that would result from the proposed project.

Although, four special status plant species have been previously documented within a five-mile radius of the project area by the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC, the field survey determined that there is little to no potential for any special status species to occur within the project site. The project site does not contain suitable habitat for special status species. It was determined that the project site does not contain suitable habitat to support special status plant species because of the site's disturbance history, lack of suitable soils, inappropriate hydrologic conditions, or absence of appropriate vegetation communities. Due to the absence of special status plant species within the project impact area, impacts to special status plant species are not anticipated to result from the proposed project. No special status plant species were observed during the field survey.

Special-status wildlife were evaluated for their potential to occur within the project area, which includes the area of ground disturbance for construction of the pipelines and a 50-foot buffer on either side of the pipeline (See **Figure 3-3**) to address both potential direct and indirect project effects. Twenty-two special-status wildlife species were previously recorded within a five-mile radius of the project area and were evaluated for their potential to occur within the project site based upon presence of suitable habitat as identified during the field surveys and existing knowledge of the project area. The site was determined to contain suitable habitat for wildlife species that commonly occur in suburban areas of southern California, which include the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), rock pigeon (*Columba livia*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), and black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*). Although no special status wildlife species were observed during the field survey, **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** would be implemented to reduce potential indirect impacts of construction to special status wildlife species to less than significant.

There is habitat within and adjacent to the project area that is suitable for nesting birds, which are protected by the MBTA and the CFGC (FGC 3503 and 3503.5). Therefore, the proposed project has the potential to result in impacts to nesting birds through increased injury or mortality, or disruption of normal adult behaviors resulting in the abandonment or harm to eggs and nestlings if construction activities would be required during the nesting season (January 1 through July 1 for raptors, February 1 through August 31 for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and March 1 through September 15 for passerines). Construction occurring within the vicinity of nesting birds may also result in indirect impacts resulting from noise and dust. Therefore, **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** would be implemented to reduce potential direct and indirect impacts to special status wildlife species and nesting birds to less than significant levels.

b) Less than Significant Impact

Land cover within the project alignment is primarily developed urban and agricultural areas. According to the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC search, no sensitive plant communities have been recorded within a five-mile radius of the project area. Although Goodding's willow – red willow riparian woodland (which has a G4S3 ranking) occurs within a small portion of

project area located in the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, project impacts would be limited to previously disturbed areas, such as within roadway rights-of-way and on private, developed properties, with high human activity. Therefore, potential impacts to sensitive vegetation communities would be less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

c) Less than Significant Impact

The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is a direct tributary to the Salton Sea and the portion of the channel that intersects the project area is comprised of Goodding's willow – red willow riparian woodland with dense cattail as a codominant. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is subject to USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdiction; however, the project is not located with the jurisdictional features and no jurisdictional permits would be required.

As part of project design and described in *Section 2.9 Construction Best Management Practices*, a SWPPP requiring associated BMPs, would be developed to ensure the proposed project would not directly impact the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel. Therefore, impacts to state or federally protected wetlands or other potentially jurisdictional features would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

d) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project is located within previously developed and routinely managed areas that offer little to no value to wildlife movement. As a result, the proposed project is not anticipated to have an effect on localized, regional, or urban-adapted wildlife movement. Additionally, ground surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions and the project area would retain the existing contiguity and would therefore not result in habitat fragmentation in the region. The proposed project would not include additional lighting and construction activities would occur during the day and would not indirectly impact potential nocturnal wildlife movement through nighttime lighting or noise generation. Therefore, direct and indirect impacts to wildlife movement would be less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

e) No Impact

Riverside County Ordinance 559 protects oak woodlands and requires a permit for removal of any native trees on parcels greater than one-half acre in size and above 5,000 feet in elevation (Riverside County 2000). No protected trees would be removed as part of the proposed project, as no trees within the project area meet these criteria. The proposed project would not conflict with any local policy or ordinance. No mitigation would be required.

f) No Impact

The proposed project is within the CVMSHCP plan area; however, it is not within any of the designated Conservation Areas. As such, the proposed project would avoid direct impacts

to the Conservation Areas and would not conflict with the CVMSHCP conservation objectives. There would be no impact and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Nesting Birds

Project-related activities should occur outside of the bird breeding season (typically January 1 to September 15 to account for both passerines and raptors) to the extent practicable. If construction must occur within the bird breeding season, then no more than three days prior to initiation of ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal, a nesting bird and raptor pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within the disturbance footprint plus a 100-foot buffer (500-foot for raptors), where feasible. If the proposed project is phased or construction activities stop for more than one week, a subsequent pre-construction nesting bird and raptor survey will be required prior to each phase of construction within the APE.

Pre-construction nesting bird and raptor surveys shall be conducted during the time of day when birds are active and shall factor in sufficient time to perform this survey adequately and completely. A report of the nesting bird and raptor survey results, if applicable, shall be submitted to the lead agency for review and approval prior to ground and/or vegetation disturbance activities.

If nests are found, their locations shall be flagged. An appropriate avoidance buffer ranging in size from 25 to 50 feet for passerines, and up to 500 feet for raptors depending upon the species and the proposed work activity, shall be determined and demarcated by a qualified biologist with bright orange construction fencing or other suitable flagging. Active nests shall be monitored as needed until it has been determined that the nest is no longer being used by either the young or adults. No ground disturbance shall occur within this buffer until the qualified biologist confirms that the breeding/nesting is completed and all the young have fledged. If no nesting birds are observed during pre-construction surveys, no further actions would be necessary.

3.5 Cultural Resources

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
--	---------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	------------------

Would the Project:

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a | [] | [X] | [] | [] |
|--|-----|-------|-----|-----|

historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?
- c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Discussion

A *Cultural Resources Assessment Report* was prepared in April 2021 by Rincon Consultants, Inc. for the proposed project. An intensive pedestrian field survey of the proposed pipeline alignments was conducted on July 31, 2020. *The Cultural Resources Assessment Report* was prepared to satisfy CEQA; AB52 Tribal Cultural Resources; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and Section 106 of the NHPA. The complete *Cultural Resources Assessment Report* is provided in **Appendix C**; and is summarized within this IS/MND. Although results of the field investigation confirm no historic-age buildings or structures are located within the project area, the project area is considered sensitive for archaeological resources. The Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians have raised concern about the project based on the presence of a village site. Although the village is located outside of the project area, the use-area of the village is likely to span several square miles.

On January 17, 2019 a cultural resource records search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) was conducted at the Eastern Information Center at the University of California, Riverside, and a search of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Historic Bridge Inventory, and the California State Historic Resources Inventory list was conducted. The records search was conducted to identify any previously recorded cultural resources and previously conducted cultural resources studies within the project area and a one-half-mile radius surrounding it.

The CHRIS records search indicates that 15 previous cultural resources studies have been conducted within a one-half-mile search radius of the project area. Six of these previous studies overlapped with the project area. A total of 26 cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-half-mile radius of the proposed project. These include 10 historic period buildings located in the community of Thermal, eight historic period structures (Union Pacific Railway, Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, transmission lines, a road segment, and four asphalt driveways), one historic period archaeological site (road remnant), four prehistoric isolated artifacts (single ceramic sherds), and three historic period isolated artifacts (single glass bottle fragments). Of the known cultural resources, four

resources (P-33-009498 [a historic railroad segment], P-33-017259 [a historic stormwater channel], P-33-019860 [remnant of a historic road], P-33-0207064 [historic-period transmission line]) have been recorded to intersect the project APE and three resources (P-33-024735 and P-33-024736 [two historic period isolated artifacts], P-33-024737 [prehistoric isolated ceramic sherd]) have been recorded less than 500 feet from the project area. Additionally, the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory identify one historic bridge in the APE – the Whitewater River Bridge (56C0578). The field survey identified no new archaeological resources or historic-age buildings or structures in the project area.

In addition, consultation with the Historical Society of Palm Desert, the Coachella Valley Historical Society, and the Riverside County Planning Department occurred on July 31, 2020 to request information regarding historical resources in the proposed project area. One response from the Coachella Valley Historical Society stated they did not have any concerns regarding cultural resources related to the project.

A Sacred Lands File search request for the project site was made to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on July 24, 2020. As part of this request, NAHC provided a list of Native American groups and/or individuals culturally affiliated with the area who may have knowledge of cultural resources at the project site. The NAHC emailed a response on July 28, 2020, stating the Sacred Lands File search returned negative results. Letters were sent on August 7, 2020 to the Native American contacts the NAHC provided to request information regarding their knowledge of cultural resources in the vicinity that may be impacted by the project; due to COVID-19 considerations, letters were sent via email. Follow up phone calls were made on August 12, 2020 and August 17, 2020. *Cultural Resources Assessment Report Section 4.5 Native American Outreach* provides an overview of the tribal outreach and consultation regarding the proposed project.

a-c) Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

According to a CHRIS records search, 26 cultural resources have been recorded within one-half-mile of the project area. Although no previously recorded cultural resources are located within the project area, one crosses over the project area but does not include any physical elements in the project area (P-33-0207064). No cultural or historic resources were found within the project area during the field survey conducted on July 31, 2020.

However, the project area is considered archaeologically sensitive based on concerns raised by the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians based on the presence of a village site in the vicinity of the project and the potential for exposure of previously unrecorded cultural resources during ground-disturbing activities. **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** would require the initial ground-disturbing activities be observed by an archaeological and Native American monitor. **Mitigation Measure CUL-2** would require that all earth disturbing work be temporarily suspended if cultural resources are discovered during construction.

The discovery of human remains is a possibility during ground disturbing activities associated with construction projects. **Mitigation Measure CUL-3** would be implemented to ensure proper procedure would be in place if human remains were unearthed during construction activities. With implementation of **Mitigation Measure CUL-3**, potential impacts resulting in a substantial adverse change to the significance of historical and/or archeological resources would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Monitoring of Archaeological and Native American Resources

CVWD shall ensure that project-related ground-disturbing activities shall be observed by an archaeological and/or Native American monitor as needed. The archaeological monitor shall be under the direction of a qualified archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for prehistoric archaeology (National Park Service 1983). Native American monitoring shall be provided by a locally affiliated tribal member. Monitors will have the authority to halt and redirect work should any archaeological resources be identified during monitoring. If archaeological resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate area must halt and the find evaluated for listing in the CRHR and NRHP. Archaeological or Native American monitoring, or both, may be reduced or halted at the discretion of the monitors, in consultation with the lead agency, as warranted by conditions such as encountering bedrock, sediments being excavated are fill, or negative findings during the first 60 percent of ground disturbance. If monitoring is reduced to spot-checking, spot-checking shall occur when ground-disturbance moves to a new location within the APE and when ground disturbance will extend to depths not previously reached by past ground disturbance in that area (unless those depths are within bedrock). Both the project archeologist and Native American monitor will be invited to attend the pre-construction meeting. The project archeologist and Native American monitor will provide a brief orientation to construction crews on the first day of construction.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources

In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, work within a 100-foot radius of the discovery must halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology (National Park Service 1983) should be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If the discovery proves to be significant under NHPA and/or CEQA, additional work such as data recovery excavation and Native American consultation may be warranted to mitigate any significant impacts.

The professional archaeologist shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately, and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify CVWD. The professional archaeologist shall make a finding of eligibility and CVWD shall implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or CRHR. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until CVWD, through consultation as appropriate, determines that the site either: 1) is not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR; or 2) that the treatment measures have been completed to its satisfaction.

Mitigation Measure CUL-3: Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

If human remains are found, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the county coroner makes a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the county coroner shall be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant, who has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the most likely descendent does not make recommendations within 48 hours of being granted site access, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from subsequent disturbance.

3.6 Energy

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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Would the Project:

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

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

Discussion

The project area is served by Imperial Irrigation District (IID) for electricity, a public utility company with a 6,471 square mile service area. IID’s energy service territory covers all of Imperial County, along with parts of Riverside and San Diego Counties. The project area is served by the Southern California Gas Company for natural gas. CVWD’s facilities are powered by electricity supplied by IID in the east valley, and Southern California Edison in the remaining service area.

- a) Less Than Significant Impact

Construction of the proposed project would involve construction-related consumption of fossil fuels from operation of diesel-powered construction equipment and from material hauling, delivery, and worker vehicle trips. To provide electrical service to the lift station, CVWD and IID will install power poles and appurtenances, as described in *Section 2.5 Proposed Project Description*.

Table 3-5 summarizes the anticipated construction fleet for the proposed project. **Table 3-6** summarizes the estimated material delivery and hauling truck trips, and worker vehicle trips for each type of construction activity.

Table 3-5: Construction Fleet Summary

Construction Phase	Duration (days)	Anticipated Fleet	Usage (hours/day)
Grading	520 days	2 Excavator	8
		2 Forklift	8
		6 Tractor/Loader/Backhoes	7
		1 Trencher	8
		1 Bore/Drill Rig	8
Re-paving	520 days	2 Cement and Mortar Mixer	8
		1 Paver	8
		2 Paving Equipment	8
		2 Rollers	8
		1 Tractor/Loader/Backhoes	8
Lift Station Construction	186	1 Cement and Mortar Mixer	8
		1 Crane	8
		2 Forklifts	8
		1 Generator Set	8
		1 Tractor/Loader/Backhoes	8

Sources: Project-specific information provided by design engineers and duration based on total construction timeframe of two years see *Section 2 Project Description*. CalEEMod defaults used for building construction equipment. CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2; see Appendix A for model output.

Table 3-6: Construction Trip Summary

Construction Phase	Duration (days)	Daily Worker Vehicle Trips (14.6 miles each)	Daily Vendor Trips (6.2 miles each)	Daily Hauling Truck Trips (20 miles each)
Grading	520 days	35	4	1
Re-paving	520 days	35	4	1

Sources: Project-specific information provided by design engineers; see *Section 2 Project Description*. CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2; see Appendix A for model output.

The proposed project would implement typical construction practices such as trenching and repaving. As shown in **Table 3-5** and **Table 3-6**, the project would not require any 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 proposed project would be required to comply with the CARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulations, which would limit vehicle idling time to 5 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. As such, construction of the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during construction.

The proposed project would have minimal daily operational energy demand associated with fossil fuels consumed for maintenance activities, including regular inspection trips for the pipelines and lift station. Although the proposed project would result in additional energy demands due to operations of a new lift station and increased flows to WRP-4 for treatment, it would implement typical operational practices compared to projects of similar type and size. The estimated amount of energy that would be consumed by the pumps at the new lift station would be 24,000 kWh per year. The backup generator, which was assumed to have a 10 hp engine, was assumed to operate approximately 7 days per year for 24 hours per day, for a total amount of 8,400 kWh energy consumed per year. Finally, the energy consumption of the proposed project is necessary to provide safe and reliable wastewater treatment services to each of the 13 SWSs. As such, operation of the project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

The *2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan* (CARB 2017) focuses on reducing energy demand, and GHG emissions, that result from mobile sources and land use development. The proposed project would not involve a considerable increase in emissions from new vehicle trips, nor would it induce land use changes that would result in an increase in vehicle trips, such as urban sprawl. It would not substantially increase energy demands in the region. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the Scoping Plan.

The proposed project would not interfere with existing County or regional programs intended to reduce energy. It would not result in emissions higher than the SCAQMD significance screening thresholds (see further analysis is *Section 3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions* of this document). The proposed project would not, therefore, conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.7 Geology and Soils

	<i>Less Than Significant</i>	<i>Less than Significant</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Impact</i>	

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.	[]	[]	[X]	[]
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
iv) Landslides?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of top soil?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

- f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? [] [] [X] []

Discussion

The Coachella Valley is located within California’s Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province, bordered to the west by the Peninsular Ranges, to the north by the Transverse Ranges, and to the east by the Mojave Desert. The Colorado Desert is a low-lying barren desert basin, portions of which are about 245 feet below sea level.

The majority of Southern California, including the Coachella Valley, is considered a seismically active region and is subject to risk from earthquakes and other geologic effects that are triggered by earthquakes such as ground shaking, fault rupture, landslides, liquefaction, subsidence, and seiches. Two of California’s most active faults, the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults, are located within 15 miles proximity to the project area. The San Andreas and San Jacinto have been designated by the California Geological Survey (CGS) as Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. The San Andreas Fault runs through the Coachella Valley and is located approximately one and one-half miles east of the project area. The San Jacinto Fault is a major strike-slip fault zone located approximately 15 miles southwest of the project area (USGS 2020).

a, c) Less than Significant Impact

The primary seismic hazard to the proposed project is strong ground shaking from earthquakes produced by local and regional faults. 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 site. Seismically induced ground rupture would occur with the physical displacement of surface deposits in response to an earthquake’s seismic waves. Ground rupture is most likely to occur along active faults, and typically occurs during earthquakes of magnitude five or higher. Ground rupture only affects the area immediately adjacent to a fault.

The proposed project is located approximately one and one-half miles from the San Andreas fault and approximately 15 miles from the San Jacinto fault, which are two of California’s most active faults. Both the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults are designated by the CGS as Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. According to the CGS’s on-line *Earthquake Hazard Zone Application* (DOC 2020), the proposed project is not located within a fault zone. Due to the distance between the proposed project and the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults, impacts related to ground rupture would be less than significant.

However, due to the 1.5 mile and 15 mile proximity of the proposed project to two active fault zones, the project area is subject to seismic ground shaking. Although impacts related to strong seismic ground shaking would potentially be significant in the project area, the proposed project would not include any land use components that would induce growth or

otherwise bring additional people to the area or structures the people would occupy. The pipelines and lift station would be designed in conformance with state seismic engineering standards to reduce potential damage in the event of ground shaking. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly result in substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death due to seismic ground shaking and impacts would be less than significant.

The Riverside County General Plan's Safety Element identifies the project area's liquefaction susceptibility as "high" for shallow groundwater susceptible sediments, indicating it is susceptible to liquefaction. However, the pipelines and lift station would be designed in conformance with seismic engineering standards to reduce potential damage from liquefaction, and the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction (County of Riverside 2016).

The project area is relatively level and is not located in an area noted as at risk of landslides by the County of Riverside's General Plan Safety Element (County of Riverside 2016). Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

b) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project would result in minor erosion of soils or loss of topsoil onsite during project construction due to the presence of soil piles, particularly during excavation activities. However, construction of the proposed project would include BMPs as specified in the SWPPP to control wind or water erosion of exposed soils. Some BMPs included in the SWPPP may include use of silt fences to prevent erosion and sedimentation into water bodies, covering of stockpiles, use of desilting basins, limitations on work during high-wind events, and post-construction revegetation and drainage requirements. These BMPs would reduce topsoil erosion, and potential impacts associated with erosion of topsoil would be less than significant. With implementation of the standard construction BMPs, the potential for soil erosion during proposed project construction would be considered less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

d) Less than Significant Impact

Expansive soils are generally high in clays or silts that shrink or swell with variation in soil moisture content and can adversely affect the structural integrity of underground facilities including pipelines. According to the University of California, Davis on-line *SoilWeb Tool* (UC Davis 2020), the project area is underlain primarily by a variety of sandy loam soils. Design of the proposed pipelines would adhere to CVWD's professional engineering standards to avoid adverse effects of potential expansive soils. Therefore, impacts related to expansive soils would be less than significant.

e) No Impact

The proposed project would construct sewer lines in an area, removing the need for and use of septic tanks, open leach fields, surface disposal, or other alternative wastewater disposal systems for the 13 SWSs. As such, no impact would occur related to septic tanks or other alternative wastewater disposal systems.

f) Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Significant paleontological resources are fossils or assemblages of fossils that are unique, unusual, rare, uncommon, diagnostically or stratigraphically important, and those that add to an existing body of knowledge in specific areas, stratigraphically, taxonomically, or regionally. They include fossil remains of large to very small aquatic and terrestrial vertebrates, remains of plants and animals previously not represented in certain portions of the stratigraphy, and assemblages of fossils that might aid stratigraphic correlations, particularly those offering data for the interpretation of tectonic events, geomorphologic evolution, paleoclimatology, and the relationships of aquatic and terrestrial species (County of Riverside 2015b).

The proposed project area is located in the Salton Trough, a large tectonic depression that includes the Coachella and Imperial Valleys of southern California, and the western half of the Mexicali Valley and the Colorado River delta in Mexico (Alles 2011). Over the past 4.5 million years, the Salton Trough has been periodically inundated with fresh and brackish waters, influenced by the Gulf of California, the Colorado River, and ancient Lake Cahuilla. Lake Cahuilla was a former freshwater lake that periodically occupied a major portion of the Salton Trough during the Holocene, approximately 10,000 to 240 years ago (Demere 2002).

According to the Geologic Map of the Palm Desert & Coachella 15-minute quadrangles (Dibblee and Minch 2008), the project site is underlain by alluvial sand and clay of valley areas. These relatively young sedimentary deposits are generally too young to contain fossilized material. Although project excavation is expected to reach a maximum depth of 40 feet below the ground surface at the trenchless State Route 86 and railroad crossings, it is not expected to reach depths where sensitive paleontological resources would be expected to occur, which leaves low potential for encountering fossils and impacts on paleontological resources are not anticipated.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	[]	[]	[X]	[]

Discussion

Pollutants that are known to increase the greenhouse effect in the earth’s atmosphere, thereby adding to global climate change impacts, are referred to as greenhouse gases (GHG). A number of pollutants have been identified as GHGs. The State of California definition of GHGs in the Health & Safety Code, Section 38505(g) includes carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Some GHGs, such as CO₂, occur naturally and are emitted to the atmosphere through natural processes. Water vapor is a GHG; however, it is short lived in the atmosphere and its atmospheric concentrations are largely determined by natural processes, such as oceanic evaporation. Other GHGs (e.g., fluorinated gases) are created and emitted solely through human activities. The most common GHGs that result from human activity are carbon dioxide, followed by methane and nitrous oxide.

The Global Warming Potential (GWP) measures how much energy 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. “Carbon dioxide equivalent” (CO₂e) is the amount of GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP. CO₂ has a 100-year GWP of one; CH₄ has a GWP of 25; and N₂O has a GWP of 298.

Executive Order S-3-05 in 2005 set GHG emission reduction targets: reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels by 2010; reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020; and reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Senate Bill 32, passed in 2016, required that CARB, in its next update to the Assembly Bill (AB) 32 Scoping Plan, “ensure that statewide GHG emissions are reduced to at least 40 percent below the statewide GHG emissions limit no later than December 31, 2030.” Executive Order B-55 set a GHG emission reduction target for California to be carbon neutral by 2045.

CARB adopted the *Scoping Plan* in December 2008 and a *Scoping Plan Update* in December 2017. The *Scoping Plan* contains the strategies California will implement to achieve reduction of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. In the *Scoping Plan*, “CARB recommends that lead agencies prioritize onsite design features that reduce emissions, especially from vehicle miles travelled (VMT), and direct investments in GHG reductions within the project’s region that contribute potential air quality, health, and economic co-benefits locally.”

In 2015, the County of Riverside adopted a *Climate Action Plan* (CAP) to establish goals and policies that incorporate sustainability and GHG reduction targets into its management processes. The County set a goal to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, which is in line with the State’s AB 32 GHG reduction targets. The CAP was updated in 2018 (County of Riverside 2019) to contain further guidance on Riverside County’s GHG Inventory reduction goals, thresholds, policies, guidelines, and implementation programs. In particular, the CAP elaborates on General Plan goals and policies relative to GHG emissions and provides a specific implementation tool to guide future decisions of the County. The County’s CAP is qualified for CEQA tiering and streamlining of individual projects’ CEQA review. The County’s CAP has set a threshold of 3,000 metric tons (MT) CO_{2e} 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.

On December 5, 2008, the SCAQMD Board approved interim CEQA GHG significance thresholds for stationary sources, rules, and plans using a tiered approach for determining significance. Tier 3, the primary tier the SCAQMD board uses for determining significance, set a screening significance threshold of 10,000 MTCO_{2e}/year for determining whether a project would have a less than significant cumulative GHG impact (SCAQMD 2008b).

Climate change is a cumulative issue. Most projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to directly influence climate change by any noticeable degree; however, a project can contribute incrementally to cumulative effects that are significant. “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064[h][1]).

a) Less Than Significant Impact

The project would generate GHG emissions through the burning of fossil fuels or other emissions of GHGs, as a result of both construction and operations activities. Direct emissions would result from fuels burned to power construction equipment and worker and heavy construction equipment trips to and from the site. Construction is anticipated to last approximately 24 months. Once operational, the project pipelines would require routine maintenance, which would result in travel-related GHG emissions. The estimated amount of energy that would be consumed by the pumps at the new lift station would be 24,000 kWh

per year. Additionally, whenever the backup generator at the lift station is used, it would release GHG emissions. The backup generator, which was assumed to have a 10 hp engine, was assumed to operate approximately 7 days per year for 24 hours per day, for a total amount of 8,400 kWh energy consumed per year. However, as explained in *Section 2 Project Description*, CVWD would continue to operate its wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment system with no operational modifications. Project maintenance would occur per established CVWD schedules. Once the project is installed, the lift station would have a continuous demand for electricity to convey wastewater flows from the SWSs to the existing sanitary sewer system. This would result in indirect GHG emissions from the lift station’s power demands. The proposed project may be associated with occasional GHG emissions from ‘area’ sources, including operation of landscaping equipment or recoating pipelines.

GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod version 2016.3.2, consistent with the methodology and project-specific assumptions used to quantify air pollutant emissions (see *Section 3.3*). The GHG emissions analyzed herein do not account for emissions from existing energy consumption associated with the current SWS operations. Consistent with SCAQMD guidance, construction emissions were amortized over the life of the project, defined as 30 years and added to the operational emissions. (SCAQMD 2008b). Annualized GHG emissions are summarized in **Table 3-7** and compared to the screening threshold from the County CAP.

Table 3-7: Proposed Project GHG Emissions (MTCO_{2e}/year)

Source	MTCO _{2e}
Energy	18.7
Mobile	<i>Negligible</i>
Area	<0.1
Stationary (Emergency Generator)	0.6
Amortized Construction Emissions	62.6
Total	81.9
<i>Threshold</i>	<i>3,000</i>
Significant?	No

The results of the inventory for construction and operational emissions, as shown in the CalEEMod output tables in **Appendix A**, are presented in **Table 3-7**. GHG emissions from the project would be below the threshold of significance. The project would not generate GHG emissions, directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment and no mitigation would be necessary.

b) Less than Significant Impact

The estimated GHG emissions of the proposed project are 81.9 MTCO_{2e} per year, below the 3,000 MTCO_{2e} per year screening threshold in the Riverside County CAP. It would also not result in emissions higher than the SCAQMD significance screening thresholds. The

proposed project would not, therefore, conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[X]	[]	[]
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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	[]	[]	[X]	[]

use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | [] | [X] | [] | [] |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | [] | [] | [X] | [] |

Discussion

Hazardous materials are currently used throughout the project area for agricultural, residential, transportation, construction, and other similar land uses. Through natural events, system failures, and accidents (spills), hazardous materials can become a risk to the environment and human health. Numerous local, state and federal laws exist to regulate the storage, use, handling and transportation of hazardous materials. To increase public safety and awareness of hazardous materials exposure risk, businesses and entities that handle, store, transport, or use hazardous materials are required to file reports with appropriate authorities and maintain emergency response plans in the event of a hazardous materials release.

A regulatory records search was performed for the project area using the SWRCB GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2020) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database (DTSC 2020), both accessed 9/13/2020. These lists are a compilation of information from various sources listing potential and confirmed hazardous waste and hazardous substances sites in California. There are no active hazardous materials cleanup sites listed on the SWRCB’s GeoTracker database within proximity to the proposed project; however, there are seven closed leaking underground storage tank Cleanup Sites within one mile of the proposed project. There is one Cleanup Program Site at the Thermal Fire station adjacent to the Thermal Airport that is undergoing verification monitoring approximately 0.85 miles southwest of the proposed project. The next closest active cleanup site listed on the GeoTracker database is located approximately one mile to the west on Airport Boulevard. There are no hazardous sites listed on the EnviroStor database within one mile of the proposed project. The closest active cleanup site listed on the EnviroStor database is located approximately 1.2 miles to the southwest of the project – the Thermal Landfill.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (Cal Fire) Fire Resources Assessment Program (FRAP) assesses the amount and extent of California’s forests and

rangelands, analyzes their conditions, and identifies alternative management and policy guidelines. Through the FRAP, CalFire produces maps designating very high fire hazard severity zones (VHFHSZ) within State and Local Responsibility Areas. The project is located within the Western Riverside County's Local Responsibility Area (LRA). The Western Riverside LRA map designates the project area as a non-VHFHSZ (Cal Fire 2007).

The Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located approximately 0.75 miles west of the project area. The proposed project does not overlap the airport's forecasted noise contours (County of Riverside 2015a, Appendix I-1, Figure 43). The airport's Compatibility Zones D and E overlay the proposed project area. Compatibility zones are established around airports for assessing land use compatibility within an airport influence area. For Zone D, airspace review would be required for proposed development taller than 70 feet; children's schools, hospitals, nursing homes are discouraged; 10 percent of proposed development must be open land; and highly-noise sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses are prohibited. In Zone E, airspace review would be required for proposed development taller than 100 feet; there are no prohibited uses other than hazards to flight and no requirements for open space (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission [ALUC] 2004).

a) Less than Significant Impact

Construction of the proposed project would temporarily increase the routine transport and use of hazardous materials commonly used in construction activities. Limited quantities of miscellaneous hazardous substances, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic fluids, paint, and other similar materials, would be brought into the project area, used, and stored during construction of the proposed project. The construction contractor would be required to comply with applicable standards, including Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 6.5, Article 6.6, and Article 13 of the California Health and Safety Code and Title 40 CFR Part 263, that regulate the transport, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Upon completion of construction, the proposed project would include periodic inspection of pipelines and the lift station. The treatment of wastewater flows to WRP-4 would necessitate the use of hazardous materials in the form of chemicals used for the treatment process, however, such chemicals are already being transported for use at WRP-4 and the proposed project would not increase the transport and use of such hazardous materials for wastewater treatment processes. There may be occasional transportation and use of hazardous materials to perform routine maintenance at the lift station, though this would not represent a significant hazard to the public or environment due to compliance with existing standards; and therefore, the impact would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

b) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction of the proposed project would create a hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials used in construction, which include diesel fuel and minor amounts of paints, fuels, solvents and glues. The potential exists for accidents to occur during

construction activities, which would result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment. **Mitigation Measure HAZ-1** requires that the construction contractor develop and implement a Hazardous Materials Management Spill Prevention and Control Plan that includes project-specific contingencies. The risk of spills related to hazardous materials that may be transported or used during routine maintenance at the lift station would be minimized through following existing CVWD protocols for maintenance activities at its existing lift stations. With **Mitigation Measure HAZ-1**, impacts resulting from potential hazardous materials-related accidents would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

c) No Impact

There are no schools located less than one-quarter mile from the proposed project. The nearest school is La Familia High School and John Kelly Elementary School, both of which are approximately one-half mile west of the proposed project. As such, the proposed project would not have the potential to emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant Impact

As noted above, the GeoTracker and EnviroStor databases do not indicate the presence of active hazardous materials cleanup sites within the proposed project area. Therefore, construction and operation associated with the proposed 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, and no mitigation would be required.

e) Less Than Significant Impact

The Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport is located approximately 0.75 miles west of the project area. However, the proposed project would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of pipeline and associated sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping, and a lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWS into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. Upon completion of construction, none of the project components would create an aircraft safety hazard or expose workers or residents in the area to excessive aircraft noise. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

f) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction of the proposed project would involve installation of approximately 17,700 linear feet of pipeline and associated sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping and a lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWS into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. Construction activities would take place within public rights-of-way as well as on private and public land and potential staging areas include vacant private and public land, parking lots, and segments of closed traffic lanes. Project construction would temporarily

block access to some roadways and driveways that are currently used by emergency response vehicles or in emergency evacuations. *Section 3.17 Transportation* addresses how CVWD would communicate with emergency response agencies to develop emergency access strategies under **Mitigation Measure TRA-1**. Long term, the proposed project would not physically impair or otherwise interfere with emergency response or evacuation in the project vicinity as the majority of the project components would be located below-grade and ground surfaces would be returned to pre-construction conditions. Thus, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

g) Less than Significant Impact

Cal Fire has identified wildfire risk areas through the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps. The Western Riverside County LRA map designates the project area as a non-VHFHSZ. The project would be constructed within roadway rights-of-way and developed and disturbed areas; the project area does not contain and is not adjacent to wildlands. Riverside County Fire Department Station 39 is located at 86-911 Avenue 58 at the intersection of Polk Street, approximately 0.85 miles to the southwest of the project area. The project area has a low risk of wildfire. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan

Prior to construction, the construction contractor is required to submit to CVWD a Hazardous Materials Management Spill Control Plan that includes a project-specific contingency plan for hazardous materials and waste operations. The Plan will be applicable to construction activities and will establish policies and procedures according to applicable codes and regulations, including but not limited to the California Building and Fire Codes, and federal and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations. Elements of the Plan will include, but not be limited to the following:

- A discussion of hazardous materials management, including delineation of hazardous material storage areas, access and egress routes, waterways, emergency assembly areas, and temporary hazardous waste storage areas;
- Notification and documentation of procedures; and
- Spill control and countermeasures, including employee spill prevention/response training.

Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Traffic Control Plan (see *Section 3.17*)

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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 substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	[]	[]	[X]	[]
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	[]	[]	[X]	[]

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| 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 | [] | [] | [X] | [] |
| iv) impede or redirect flood flows? | [] | [] | [X] | [] |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation? | [] | [] | [X] | [] |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | [] | [] | [X] | [] |

Discussion

Surface Water

The proposed project is located within the Whitewater River Watershed, which encompasses the entirety of the Coachella Valley. The drainage area of the Whitewater River Watershed is approximately 57.5 square miles and includes four sub-watersheds: Morongo, Shavers, San Gorgonio, and Coachella. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, which is the primary drainage course in the watershed, runs southeast through the Coachella Valley and drains to the Salton Sea. Water sheet flows southeasterly to the Salton Sea. The principal tributaries of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel include the San Gorgonio River, Snow Creek, Falls Creek, Chino Creek, Mission Creek, Morongo Creek, Tahquitz Creek, Andreas Creek, Palm Canyon Wash, Deep Canyon Creek, and the Palm Valley Channel.

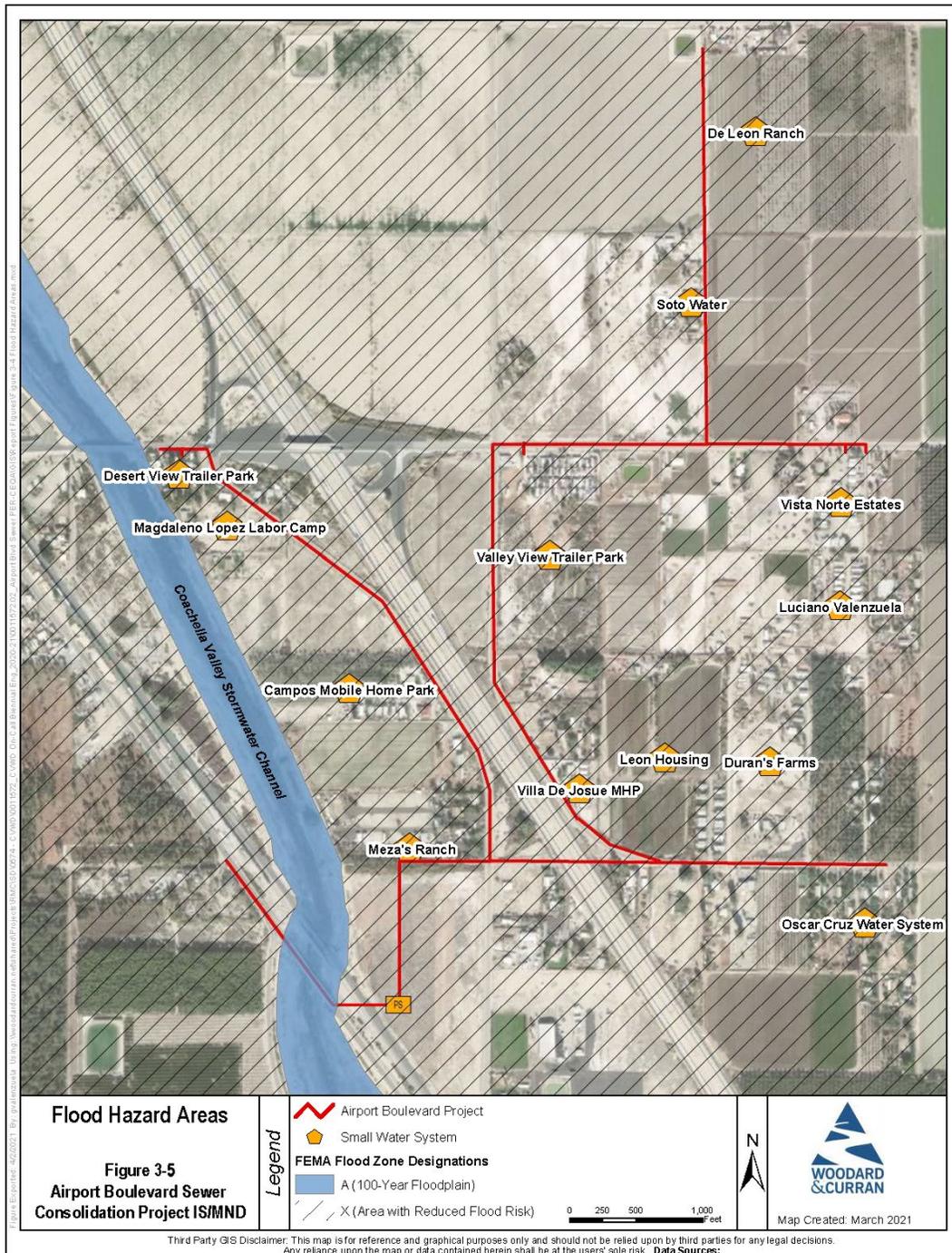
The Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan; SWRCB 2019) designates water quality standards for the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel in the form of beneficial uses and numeric and narrative water quality objectives. Beneficial uses of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel include Freshwater Replenishment (FRSH), Contact Water Recreation (REC I; unauthorized use), Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC II; unauthorized use), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), and Preservation of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE).

Currently, within the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel the 17 mile stretch from Dillon Road to the Salton Sea is listed on the State’s 303 (d) List of Impaired Water Bodies for Indicator Bacteria. In the 2 mile stretch from Lincoln Street to the Salton Sea, the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is listed for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and the pesticides

Toxaphene, Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, and Dieldrin. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is also listed for Nitrogen/Ammonia, Toxicity. The Colorado River Basin RWQCB develops and implements total maximum daily loads to address these impairments and help achieve water quality standards. Water quality is also addressed through compliance with the NPDES stormwater discharge permits issued to municipalities, construction sites and industrial facilities to control pollutants in storm water discharges to local surface waters.

The United States Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program provides Flood Insurance Rate Maps that identify flood hazard areas, called Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). SFHAs are defined as areas that will be inundated by the flood event having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The one percent chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood. SFHAs are labeled as Zone A, Zone AO, Zone AH, Zones A1-30, Zone AE, Zone A99, Zone AR, Zone AR/AE, Zone AR/AO, Zone AR/A1-A30, Zone AR/A, Zone V, Zone VE, and Zones V1-V30. Moderate flood hazard areas, labeled Zone B or Zone X (shaded) are also shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and are areas between the limits of base flood and the 0.2 percent annual chance (or 500 year) flood. The areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2 percent annual chance flood, are labeled Zone C or Zone X (unshaded) (FEMA 2020). **Figure 3-4** shows the flood hazard areas for the proposed project area.

Figure 3-5: Flood Hazard Areas



Groundwater

The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin (DWR Basin No. 7-21) underlies the Whitewater River Watershed. The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin has an estimated storage capacity of approximately 39.2 million acre-feet (AF) of water within the upper 1,000 feet (CVWD 2016). The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is divided into four subbasins: Indio (DWR Basin No. 7-21.01), Mission Creek (No. 7-21.02), Desert Hot Springs (No. 7-21.03), and San Geronio (No. 7-21.04). The Indio Subbasin underlies the project area.

Natural recharge is attributed to surface runoff and subsurface inflow; however, the Indio Subbasin is primarily recharged through groundwater replenishment efforts by CVWD and Desert Water Agency. CVWD operates and maintains three replenishment facilities within the Indio Subbasin: the Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Facility, Palm Desert Groundwater Replenishment Facility, and the Thomas E. Levy Groundwater Replenishment Facility. These facilities recharge imported water.

The Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin is designated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as a medium priority basin and is subject to the provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). CVWD is the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the majority of the eastern portion of the Indio Subbasin, including the area that underlies the project area.

The RWQCB's designated beneficial uses of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin include Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN), Industrial Service Supply (IND), and Agriculture Supply (AGR). Groundwater supply used for potable uses is generally of high quality; however, CVWD treats delivered groundwater with free chlorine as a precautionary measure prior to distribution for potable use. Some areas of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin naturally contain elevated levels of salinity and groundwater quality issues for naturally occurring substances such as uranium, arsenic, chromium, and fluoride have occurred in isolated areas. Additionally, some localized areas have seen elevated nitrate levels, which can occur from improperly sited and designed, inadequate, or failing onsite wastewater treatment facilities.

a) Less than Significant Impact

Potential water quality impacts associated with construction of the proposed project would be limited to short-term erosion/sedimentation that would occur during construction of the pipeline alignments. This short-term erosion/sedimentation could occur as a result of excavation activity and use of heavy equipment, which would generate dust and disturb soil that could shift due to wind, rain, or construction activities. The temporary disturbance area, including construction and staging areas, would total approximately 127,000 square feet, or approximately three acres. Construction of the proposed project would require coverage under the SWRCB's NPDES General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water

Associated with Construction Activity - Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ). The Construction General Permit requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP containing BMPs to control sediment and other construction-related pollutants in storm water discharges. Such BMPs would include, but are not limited to, general housekeeping practices such as avoiding work during precipitation events, sweeping up of site debris, proper waste disposal procedures, use of tarps on any stockpiles, containment of building materials, and inspection for leaks and spills from construction vehicles and equipment. With implementation of the SWPPP, storm water discharges from the proposed project site during construction are not expected to violate existing water quality standards or waste discharge requirements set by the RWQCB.

No surface water or groundwater quality impacts would occur during operation of the proposed project because it would not result in disturbed areas or production of material that could enter waterways. Further, all wastewater flows collected and conveyed by the proposed project would be treated at WRP-4 to all applicable RWQCB permits prior to discharge.

Therefore, the proposed project would not be expected to violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade surface or groundwater quality because it would comply with all existing regulations and permits. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures would be required.

b) Less than Significant Impact

As discussed in *Section 3.14 Population and Housing*, the proposed project would consolidate 13 existing SWSs and would not induce population growth or result in an increase in water demands that would require additional groundwater pumping. Sanitation water inflows are expected to be minimal, and have a less than significant impact on groundwater levels. In addition, operation of the project does not require potable or non-potable water, meaning the use of water would be limited to temporary construction activities such as dust control. The proposed project would reduce wastewater and septic flows that may currently be entering the groundwater basin. However, these are minimal inputs to the basin and may be contributing to water quality issues in the basin. Therefore, the proposed project would not be expected to substantially change groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge efforts. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

c) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project would not result in a change in the local drainage patterns of the project area. The pipelines would be installed below ground and surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions. Construction of the above-ground lift station would result in conversion of 4,500 square feet of pervious surface to impervious surface; however, it would not alter the overall drainage patterns of the approximately 865,000 square foot lift station site, the remainder of which would continue to be covered by

pervious surfaces. The lift station would be located away from the site boundary and would not result in an increase in runoff from the site due to its distance from the edge of the site. All construction activities would be conducted in accordance with BMPs specified in the construction SWPPP to prevent erosion and siltation, as well as measures to address other construction-related pollutants such as potential leaks from construction equipment.

FEMA flood hazard zones within the project area are shown in **Figure 3-4**. The portion of the project that overlies the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is located within FEMA SFHA Zone A – 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2018). The rest of the project area is designated Zone X (unshaded), which means it is not in an area prone to flooding. Construction of the project would include installation of underground sewer distribution pipelines and a new lift station that would not impede or redirect flood flows. The crossing of the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel would occur via an existing bridge and would not require changes to the channel. Thus, potential impacts to drainage patterns resulting in erosion, flooding, or water quality issues would be less than significant and no mitigation measures would be required.

d) Less than Significant Impact

A tsunami is a large ocean wave, caused by earthquakes or major ground movement. The proposed project site is located approximately 80 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. Approximately 10 miles south of the project area lies the Salton Sea; however, only two waterbodies in the County of Riverside, Lake Perris and Lake Elsinore, are considered to have potential for a damaging seiche to be seismically generated (County of Riverside 2014). The Salton Sea's risk of a seismically-generated seiche is considered to be low, and coupled with the distance between the Salton Sea and the project the risk of seiche is less than significant. As noted in 3.10(c), the only portion of the proposed project located in a flood hazard zone is the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel crossing, which would be installed on an existing bridge. Bridges are required to provide a minimum height above flood levels for safety purposes; therefore, the crossing would not be subject to flooding. For these reasons risk of pollutant release from flood, tsunami, or seiche is low and impacts are less than significant.

e) Less than Significant Impact

As noted previously, the Basin Plan sets water quality objectives for the project area. Water quality thresholds identified in the Basin Plan are intended to reduce pollutant discharge and ensure that water bodies are of sufficient quality to meet their designated beneficial uses. The proposed project would not conflict with the water quality standards outlined in the Basin Plan or worsen water quality conditions in any 303(d)-listed water body. As discussed above, pollutant discharge during construction would be avoided via compliance with the Construction General Permit and SWPPP and NPDES permits for

construction dewatering and well test water discharges. Once operational, the proposed project would convey sewer from the 13 SWSs to CVWD's WRP-4 wastewater treatment plant, which is designed and operated to treat wastewater to applicable standards prior to discharging to receiving waters. The installation of a centralized sanitation system and construction/operation of a lift station would not impact water bodies. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the Basin Plan.

Under SGMA, a groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) must be prepared for the Indio Groundwater Subbasin. In 2016, CVWD submitted an Alternative GSP for the Indio Subbasin, and in 2019 the Department of Water Resources determined that the Alternative GSP satisfies the objectives of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. CVWD is working collaboratively with the Desert Water Agency, Coachella Water Authority, and Indio Water Authority for development and implementation of an update to this Alternative Plan for the Indio Subbasin, which will be submitted to DWR by January 2022. Because the proposed project would remove failing septic systems from operation, it would reduce pollutant loading to the groundwater basin. As such, the proposed project would reduce water quality concerns in the basin and therefore, benefit the basin. It would also be consistent with the Alternative GSP because it would improve water quality in the basin. The proposed project would not conflict with applicable water quality control plans or groundwater management plans, and therefore its impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
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?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

Discussion

The project area is located in the unincorporated community of Thermal in Riverside County. According to Riverside County's Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016), the project area includes commercial retail, low density residential, and agriculture land use designations.

a) No Impact

The proposed project would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of new sewer mains, sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping and a new sewer lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sewer system. Construction of the proposed pipelines would temporarily affect adjacent land uses through increased noise and traffic, but impacts would be less than significant with mitigation or construction BMPs and would cease upon completion of construction and would not permanently affect the existing surrounding land uses. Temporary construction activities, and associated impacts, would not affect a substantial number of people nor would they divide an established community. The majority of project features (other than the lift station) would be located underground and would not result in a physical barrier within the existing community. No impacts would occur related to physical division of an established community, and no mitigation would be required.

b) No Impact

The proposed project would construct sewer pipelines to consolidate 13 privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sewer system and would not conflict with land use plans, policies, or regulations. The pipelines would be installed below-grade within roadway rights-of-way and on public and private lands and would comply with Riverside County's land use policies and regulations. All surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions upon completion of construction. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with all applicable land use plans, policies and regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.12 Mineral Resources

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Would the Project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
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?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

Discussion

Mineral resource extraction is an important component of Riverside County’s economy. Riverside County has extensive deposits of clay, limestone, iron, sand, and aggregates (County of Riverside 2015a). However, as identified in the Riverside County General Plan Open Space Element (County of Riverside 2015a) and on the DOC CGS Mineral Land Classification online mapping tool (CGS 2015), the CGS classifies the project area as Mineral Resource Zone 1 (MRZ-1). MRZ-1 indicates that there are no significant mineral deposits or there is little likelihood of their presence (NRA 2015).

a, b) No Impact

The project area is classified as MRZ-1, indicating that there are no significant mineral resources or there is low probability of the presences of mineral resources. The proposed project would construct sewer conveyance pipelines within roadway rights-of-way and on previously developed or disturbed land. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value locally or to the region and the residents of the state and no impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.13 Noise

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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?	[]	[X]	[]	[]
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]

Discussion

Potential noise levels are compared to local ambient noise standards, within the context of the existing ambient noise setting. The term, “ambient noise” refers to the composite of noise from all perceptible sources. It constitutes the existing level of environmental noise at a given location (County of Riverside 2015a). A decibel (dB) is a unit for measuring the relative amplitude of a sound equal approximately to the smallest difference normally detectable by the human ear, the range of which includes approximately one hundred thirty (130) decibels on a scale beginning with zero decibels for the faintest detectable sound. A-weighting (dBA) means the standard A-weighted frequency response of a sound level meter, which de-emphasizes low and high frequencies of sound in a manner similar to the human ear for moderate sounds.

Maximum sound level (L_{MAX}) means the maximum sound level measured on a sound level meter (County of Riverside 2007). Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is the average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm and after the addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am. Day-Night Average Level (L_{dn}) is the average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am. CNEL and L_{dn} both represent daily levels of noise exposure averaged on an annual or daily basis (County of Riverside 2015a).

A series of land uses have been deemed noise sensitive land uses by the State of California. 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 of Riverside 2015a).

Groundborne vibration can be described by both its amplitude and frequency. Amplitude may be characterized by particle velocity, which is measured in inches or millimeters per second. Vibration can be felt outdoors, but the perceived intensity of vibration impacts is much greater indoors, due to the shaking of the structure. Some of the most common sources of vibration come from trains, transit vehicles, construction equipment, airplanes, and large vehicles. Several land uses are especially sensitive to vibration, and therefore have a lower vibration threshold. These uses include, but are not limited to, concert halls, hospitals, libraries, vibration-sensitive research operations, residential areas, schools, and offices (County of Riverside 2015a).

The Riverside County General Plan Noise Element (County of Riverside 2015a) provides a systematic approach to identifying and appraising noise problems in the community; quantifying existing and projected noise levels; addressing excessive noise exposure; and community planning for the regulation of noise. The element includes policies, standards, criteria, programs, diagrams, a reference to action items, and maps related to protecting public health and welfare from noise (see **Table 3-8** and **Table 3-9**). Noise and vibration levels generated by construction equipment is shown in **Table 3-12**, below.

Table 3-8: County of Riverside Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure

Land Use Category	Range of “Normally Acceptable” Community Noise Exposure Level (L _{dn} or CNEL, dBA)					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential-low density single family, duplex, mobile homes						
Residential-multiple family						
Transient lodging-motels, hotels						
Schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes						
Playgrounds, neighborhood parks						
Golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, cemeteries						
Office buildings, businesses, commercial, and professional						
Industrial, manufacturing, utilities, agriculture						

Source: County of Riverside General Plan Noise Element 2015.

Table 3-9: Reaction to Typical Vibration Levels

Vibration Level Peak Particle Velocity (inches/second)	Human Reaction
0.0059-0.0188	Threshold of perception, possibility of intrusion
0.0787	Vibrations readily perceptible
0.0984	Continuous vibration begins to annoy people
0.1968	Vibrations annoying to people in buildings
0.3937-0.5905	Vibrations considered unpleasant when continuously subjected and unacceptable by some walking on bridges

Source: County of Riverside General Plan Noise Element 2015.

Riverside County Ordinance No. 847 Regulating Noise establishes countywide standards regulating noise and regulates noise in order to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of Riverside County residents. According to Ordinance 847, sound emanating from capital improvement projects of a government agency are exempt from the provisions of the ordinance. Therefore, the sound levels set in the County of Riverside Noise Ordinance would not apply to the proposed project. However, they can be used to understand acceptable sound levels in the region. The ordinance stipulates that sound levels shall not exceed the exterior sound level standards at neighboring property lines shown in **Table 3-10**.

Table 3-10: County of Riverside Sound Level Standards

General Plan Component	General Plan Land Use Designation	Maximum Decibel Level (dB L _{MAX})	
		7:00 am – 10:00 pm	10:00 pm – 7:00 am
Community Development	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	55	45
	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	55	45
Rural Community	Low Density Residential (LDR)	55	45
Agriculture	Agriculture (AG)	45	45

Source: Riverside County Ordinance 847 Noise (2007).

Existing Conditions

The existing noise setting in the project area consists of residential activities and traffic noise from State Route 86 and other surrounding roadways. Base year noise levels were assessed for the County of Riverside General Plan (County of Riverside 2015a). **Table 3-11** summarizes the existing traffic noise levels around the project area.

Table 3-11: County of Riverside Base Year Condition (2007) Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment	Average Daily Trips (ADT)	L _{dn} (dBA) 50 feet from centerline of outermost lane	Centerline to 60 L _{dn} (feet)
State Route 86 between southern city limits of Coachella and Avenue 66 (adjacent to the proposed project)	37,900	78.6	1,144
Airport Boulevard between Van Buren Street and Frederick Street (approximately four miles west of the proposed project)	6,200	64.4	110

Source: County of Riverside General Plan Appendix I-1 (2015).

The closest airport to the project area is the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, located in the westerly part of Thermal. The proposed project does not overlap the airport's forecasted noise contours (County of Riverside 2015a, Appendix I-1, Figure 43). The airport's Compatibility Zones D and E overlay the proposed project area. Compatibility zones are established around airports for assessing land use compatibility within an airport influence area. For Zone D, airspace review would be required for proposed development taller than 70 feet; children's schools, hospitals, nursing homes are discouraged; 10 percent of proposed development must be open land; and highly-noise sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses are prohibited. In Zone E, airspace review would

be required for proposed development taller than 100 feet; there are no prohibited uses other than hazards to flight and no requirements for open space (Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission [ALUC] 2004).

a) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The project has the potential to expose persons to noise resulting from construction activities and operations. Noise within the County of Riverside is regulated under the County’s Noise Ordinance and acceptable noise levels are established in the County’s *General Plan* (see discussion above).

Construction is anticipated to last 24 months and construction activities would result in temporary noise increases. In general, project construction would be temporary and sporadic and would vary depending on the type of component being constructed. Construction along the pipeline alignments would continuously move from one location to another, as pipeline installation proceeds from one segment to the next. Thus, noise levels would affect any one receptor for a short duration of time.

However, construction noise levels would fluctuate depending on the construction phase, equipment type, and duration of use; distance between noise source and receptor; and presence or absence of existing barriers between noise source and receptor. The typical noise level of each piece of construction equipment that would be used for the project is shown in **Table 3-12**.

Table 3-12: Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment	Typical Noise Levels (dBA, at 50 feet)
Excavators	81
Backhoe	78
Dump truck	76
Front end loader	79
Water trucks	84 ¹
Pavers	77
Roller	80
Flat-bed delivery trucks	74
Forklifts	75 ¹
Concrete mixer truck	79
Jack hammer	89
Auger Drill Rig	85
Horizontal Boring Hydraulic Jack	80
Soil Mix Drill Rig	80
Crane	81
Generator	81
Welder	74

Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2006.

1. Water truck noise level was assumed to be comparable to a tractor. Forklift noise level was assumed to be comparable to a man lift.

Lift station construction is expected to require approximately 76 working days. The lift station would be located on an undeveloped property. The nearest sensitive receptors (residences) would be located approximately 600 feet from the lift station site. Construction noise would attenuate over this distance and would not expose residents to a substantial noise increase.

During construction, truck traffic would generate noise levels along haul routes. Construction would involve approximately four round-trip material delivery and/or soil export truck trips per day. Noise-sensitive land uses located adjacent to proposed project construction areas and along haul routes would be subject to truck noise during construction. Truck noise depends upon vehicle speed, load, terrain, and other factors. The effects of construction-related truck traffic would depend on the level of background noise already occurring at a particular receptor site, and the existing ambient noise levels. In quieter environments, truck noise would be more noticeable than where the existing ambient noise level is high.

According to the Riverside County Noise Ordinance, Ordinance 847, sound emanating from capital improvement projects of a government agency are exempt from the provisions of the ordinance. Therefore, impacts related to construction noise associated with the proposed project would be exempt from Riverside County Noise Ordinance standards. Furthermore, construction would occur during daytime hours, consistent with the limits on private construction activities in the Noise Ordinance. In addition, the existing conditions in the project area are not quiet; the area is already subject to elevated ambient noise levels due to prominent traffic noise from State Route 86, Airport Boulevard, and other surrounding roadways. Nonetheless, due to the close proximity of construction activities to residences (see **Figure 3-3**), impacts from construction noise would be potentially significant. With implementation of **Mitigation Measure NOI-1**, which requires the construction contractor to implement the best available noise control techniques and equipment, construction-related noise levels would be reduced to less than significant.

Once operational, the proposed below-ground conveyance pipelines are not expected to result in a permanent increase in noise, other than noise associated with occasional vehicle maintenance trips. The lift station would generate intermittent operational noise via the pumps. The lift station would be fully enclosed within a cement or cinderblock structure, which would suppress noise. Therefore, operational noise from the lift station would not substantially increase ambient noise levels. Operational vehicle maintenance trips would occur during daytime hours, between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm, consistent with the Riverside County Noise Ordinance. Therefore, the project would have less-than-significant long-term noise impacts.

b) Less Than Significant Impact

Construction also has the potential to cause groundborne vibration and groundborne noise. Generally, a project would result in a significant impact if it produced groundborne vibration levels equal to or in excess of 0.1968 inches/second peak particle velocity (PPV) (see **Table 3-9**). Typical vibration levels for construction equipment are shown in **Table 3-13**.

Table 3-13: Typical Construction Equipment Vibration Levels

Equipment	Typical Vibration Source Levels PPV at 25 feet (inches/second)
Vibratory roller	0.210
Caisson drilling	0.089
Loaded trucks	0.076
Jack hammer	0.035
Small bulldozer	0.003

Source: FTA 2018.

As shown in **Table 3-13**, if a vibratory roller is used for construction of the proposed project, for example to replace roadways, it would result in groundborne vibration at levels that would cause annoyance to people in buildings at distances of 25 feet. According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* (FTA 2018), groundborne vibration from construction attenuates based on peak particle velocity of the equipment and distance from the equipment to the receiver. Groundborne vibration from construction of the project is expected to attenuate to reach a less than significant level at a distance of 40 feet.

Once operational, the proposed below-ground conveyance pipelines are not expected to result in a permanent source of groundborne vibration, other than vehicles associated with occasional maintenance trips. Similarly, the lift station would not generate groundborne vibration other than that associated with intermittent O&M vehicle trips. Operational vehicle maintenance trips would occur during daytime hours, between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm, consistent with the Riverside County Noise Ordinance. Therefore, the project would have less-than-significant long-term vibration impacts.

Potential impacts from construction-related groundborne vibration would be potentially significant. However, with implementation of **Mitigation Measure NOI-1**, construction-related vibration levels would be reduced to less than significant.

c) Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project is located in the vicinity of the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport and would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of sewer mains, sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping, and a new sewer lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD’s sanitary sewer system. Although the

proposed project would include expansion of CVWD's sanitary sewer infrastructure, it would serve existing communities and does not propose new housing or businesses that would be exposed to excessive noise levels. Thus, impacts related to aircraft noise would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

To lessen possible noise and vibration impacts, the project shall implement practical noise control measures **Mitigation Measure NOI-1** for construction. Impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure NOI-1: Noise and Vibration Control During Construction

CVWD shall incorporate into the construction contract specifications the following noise and vibration control measures to be implemented by the construction contractor:

- Prior to construction, the Construction Contractor shall provide [CVWD-approved] written notification to residents within 500 feet of the proposed facilities undergoing construction shall be provided, identifying the type, duration, and frequency of construction activities. Notification materials shall be provided in English/Spanish translation and identify a mechanism for residents to contact CVWD's Project manager related to noise or vibration concerns.
- During construction, the Construction Contractor shall use equipment (e.g., jack hammers, pavement breakers, and rock drills) which is hydraulically or electrically powered to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically powered tools. Where use of pneumatically powered tools is unavoidable, an exhaust muffler on the compressed air exhaust would be used. This muffler can lower noise levels from the exhaust by up to 10 dBA. External jackets on the tools themselves would be used where feasible, and this could achieve a reduction of 5 dBA. Quieter procedures will be used such as drilling rather than impact equipment.
- During construction, the Construction Contractor shall comply with compaction standards for backfill. Vibration generated during soil compaction may be minimized by using a small compactor.
- During sheetpile driving for trench excavation, the Construction Contractor shall use the following measures: pushing the sheetpile in as far as possible with non-vibratory equipment (e.g., excavator) before using the vibrator; using a small, hand-operated vibratory hammer or one with a different operational frequency to further reduce the vibration potential; flooding the soils before tamping with the vibrator; and/or operating vibratory equipment with "throttling" when a vibrator must be used.

- All equipment and trucks used by the Construction Contractor for project construction shall use the best available noise control techniques (including mufflers, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds) and be maintained in good operating condition to minimize construction noise impacts. All internal combustion engine-drive equipment shall be fitted with intake and exhaust mufflers which are in good condition.
- During construction, the Construction Contractor shall prohibit unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines by turning off equipment if it would not be used for five or more minutes.
- During construction, the Construction Contractor shall locate stationary noise-generating construction equipment, such as air compressors and generators, as far as possible from homes and businesses and at a minimum of 300 feet.

3.14 Population and Housing

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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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)?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

Discussion

According to the US Census 2013-2017 American Communities Survey 5-Year Estimates, the population of Thermal is approximately 2,166 and there are approximately 839 housing units, of which approximately 35 percent (292) are mobile homes. As shown in **Table 2-2**, the proposed project would consolidate 13 SWSs that serve mobile homes

through 174 new service connections and an estimated population of approximately 692 with CVWD’s existing sanitary sewer system.

a) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project involves expansion of CVWD’s sanitary sewer infrastructure within its service area; the direct use would serve specific existing communities that currently rely on private, onsite wastewater systems such as septic. Because the proposed project would serve existing communities, it would not result in unplanned growth. The Riverside County General Plan Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016) expected the Eastern Coachella Valley region to double its population between 2010 and 2020, and as such planned for substantial population growth in the region. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, directly or indirectly, in the project area. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

b) No Impact

The proposed project would construct sewer conveyance pipelines to consolidate 13 privately owned SWSs into CVWD’s sanitary sewer system and would not displace existing people or housing. Therefore, no impacts related to displacement of people or housing would occur and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.15 Public Services

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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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	[]	[]	[]	[X]
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other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i) Fire protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ii) Police protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) Schools? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iv) Parks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| v) Other public facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Discussion

Riverside County Fire Department, in cooperation with Cal Fire, provides fire protection and emergency services to unincorporated areas of Riverside County. Station 39 is located at 86911 Avenue 58 at the intersection of Polk Street, approximately 1.2 miles to the southwest of the project area.

The Riverside County Sheriff’s Department provides law enforcement services, and the California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement services within the project area. The Riverside County Sheriff’s Thermal Station is located at 86625 Airport Boulevard approximately one mile to the west of the project area.

There are no schools located within the project area. John Kelley Elementary School and La Familia Continuing High School is located approximately one-half mile to the west of the project area.

There are no parks located within the project area. The Canal Regional Park is located approximately 1.5 miles to the northeast of the project area.

ai- av) No Impact

The proposed project would not change existing demand for public services (e.g., fire and police protection, schools, parks, libraries, or health clinics) because population growth would not result from construction of the proposed project as it would serve existing communities (see Section 3.13 Population and Housing). In addition, the operation and management requirements for the proposed project would be minimal, and therefore would not result in an increase in the need for new staff from public protection services entities. As implementation of the proposed project would not change the demand for any of the public services, it would not require additional equipment or resources for those public service providers. The proposed project would have no impact on public services, and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.16 Recreation

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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Would the Project:

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 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? | [] | [] | [] | [X] |
| 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? | [] | [] | [] | [X] |

Discussion

According to Riverside County’s Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016), the project area includes commercial retail, low density residential, and agriculture land use designations. There are no parks located within the project area. The Canal Regional Park is located approximately 1.5 miles to the northeast of the project area and HITS Desert Horse Park is located approximately two miles to the west of the project area. Riverside County contains bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails. Within the project area, Airport Boulevard, Fillmore Street and Desert Cactus Drive are designated as a Class I bicycle paths (County of Riverside 2016).

a, b) No Impact

There are no parks within the project area. Consolidation of SWSs into CVWD’s sanitary sewer system would not increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated because the proposed project would not affect access to existing parks or induce population growth. Similarly, the proposed project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an

adverse physical effect on the environment. Thus, no impacts would occur, and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures: None required or recommended.

3.17 Transportation

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

Discussion

Transportation in the Coachella Valley is planned through the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) in a regional effort. The RCTC plans and implements transportation and transit improvements and assists local governments with funding for local streets and roads to promote accessible transportation throughout Riverside County. RCTC's current Congestion Management Program (RCTC 2011) was adopted in December 2011 and was incorporated in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP, finalized in December 2019, takes a comprehensive review of projects on the state highway, regional arterials, rail and bus, freight network, and active transportation.

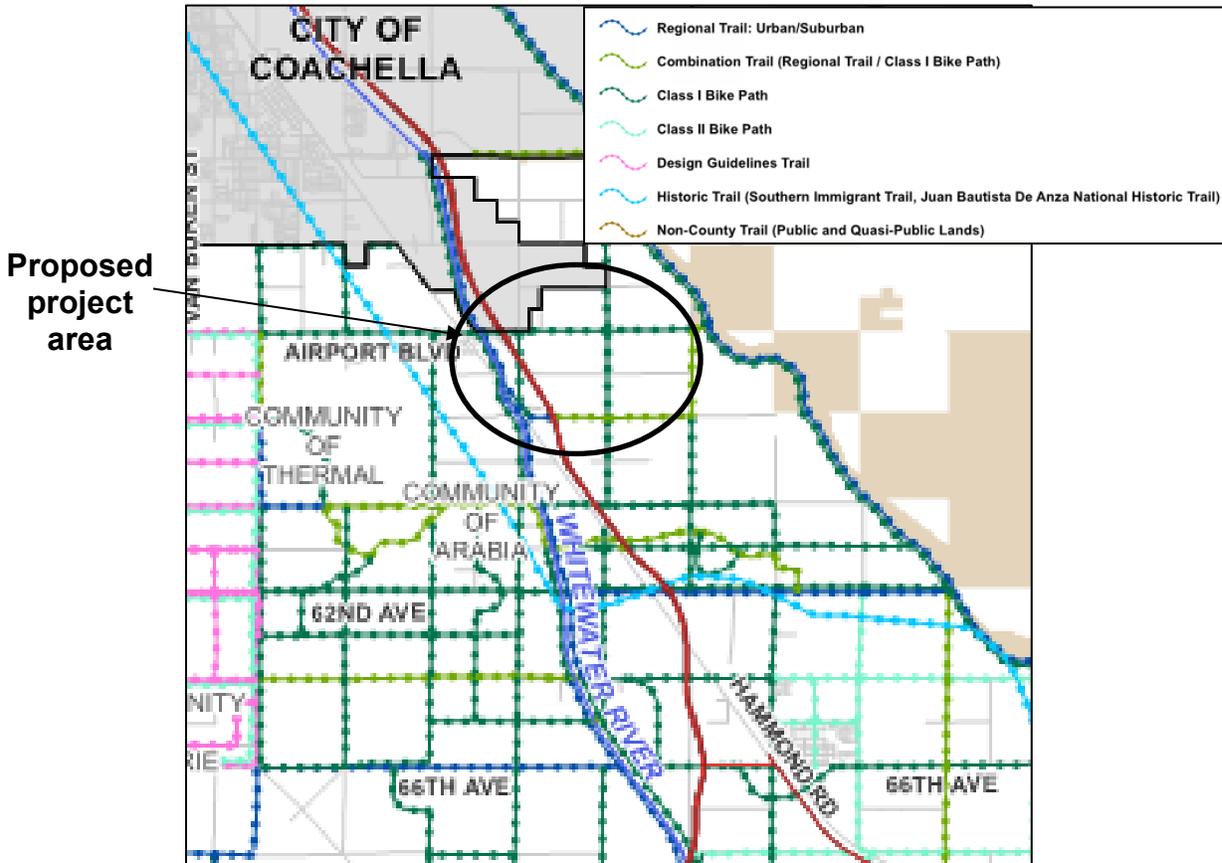
According to this plan, SunLine provides an intercity bus in Thermal. According to the LRTP, roadways in Coachella Valley are mostly non-congested (RCTC 2019).

The CVAG Transportation Prioritization Study (CVAG 2017b) was developed for the evaluation of the regional transportation system needs within the Coachella Valley and to assist CVAG in making funding decisions. The CVAG Active Transportation Plan (CVAG 2017a) provides goals and objectives related to alternative transportation within the Coachella Valley, and was prepared in conjunction with the Transportation Prioritization Study. The Transportation Prioritization Study includes a multipurpose path along Airport Boulevard between Polk Street and the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVAG 2017b).

The SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCAG 2016) identifies strategies to meet mobility of all modes, legislative, financial and air quality requirements in the six-county area of Southern California. It is updated every four years, most recently in June 2016. Most of the projects identified in the Coachella Valley focus on expanding the Sunline Transit Agency facilities (SCAG 2016).

The project site is served by a Class I bike paths on Airport Boulevard, Fillmore Street and Desert Cactus Drive and a regional trail located along the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (County of Riverside 2016). These existing facilities are shown in **Figure 3-5**.

Figure 3-6: Trails and Bikeway System



Source: Riverside County Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2016)

Existing circulation around the SWSs typically consists of two-lane roads with no bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The image to the right shows access at the Magdaleno Lopez SWS site, which is typical of the other SWSs in the project area.

As shown in **Table 3-11**, State Route 86 where it runs adjacent to the proposed project area (between southern city limits of Coachella and Avenue 66) had a measured average daily number of vehicle trips of 37,900 in 2007.



a) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction is anticipated to last 24 months and occur on weekdays between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. During construction, the project would generate trips associated with construction crews and materials deliveries. Assuming a rate of construction of 150 LF per day, construction would generate up to 80 total trips (40 round-trip trips) per day, including trips for off hauling of export material, delivery of materials, and construction worker commuting. Construction would involve approximately 11,725 cubic yards of material export which is accounted for in this truck trip count. All construction activities would occur within the County of Riverside roadway rights-of-way and SWS properties. Disturbance activities would occur on existing paved and dirt access roads and in vegetated areas adjacent to the access roads.

Construction would be temporary, and potential traffic-related impacts would not occur in the same location for the duration of the 24-month construction period but instead would move along the pipeline alignment. All disturbed areas would be restored to original grade. As such, temporary construction impacts are not expected to have a significant impact related to the RCTC Congestion Management Program, the CVAG studies, or the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, which focus on long-term, regional circulation projects.

Once operational, the project would not conflict with these regional transportation plans because it would install below-ground pipelines and associated manholes. The lift station would not have a permanent impact on circulation as it would not generate more than occasional service visits from standard vehicles. CVWD would continue to operate its sanitary sewer system with no operational modifications using standard vehicles. Long-term impacts on the circulation system plans would be less than significant.

Although construction impacts would not be significant, construction of the proposed project may necessitate individual traffic lane closures; as such, the project is required to comply with a County-approved Traffic Control Plan. To ensure the appropriate traffic controls are implemented and potential traffic impacts related to lane closures are less than significant, the proposed project shall implement **Mitigation Measure TRA-1**. Project coordination with emergency responders and development of an approved Traffic Control Plan would result in potential traffic impacts related to road closures and detours would be less than significant.

b) No Impact

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) stipulates criteria for analyzing transportation impacts in terms of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for land use projects and transportation projects. VMT refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. According to the Office of Planning and Research 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.

As noted in **Table 3-6**, above, worker vehicle trips would be a total of 70 trips per day, each 14.6 miles, for a total VMT of 1,022 miles per day during construction. These worker trips would be conducted in cars or light-duty trucks; vendor and hauling trips would be conducted in medium- or heavy-duty trucks and are not included in the estimation of VMT for the proposed project. Environmental impacts associated with used of medium- and heavy-duty truck trips are addressed in the Air Quality, Energy, and Greenhouse Gas sections of this document.

Construction of the proposed project would involve 70 temporary trips per day associated with workers traveling to and from the site. These trips would not result in a perceivable increase in VMT. Generally, projects that generate fewer than 110 trips per day may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact (OPR 2018). Light-duty truck trips associated with O&M would be limited and incorporated into CVWD's existing O&M program. The VMT generated during operation of the proposed project would be minimal because trips to the project site for maintenance would be periodic trips to the pump station, which would conservatively generate up to four 14.6-mile trips once per month. Therefore, the project would not be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) and impacts would be less than significant.

c) No Impact

The project would install below-ground pipelines and associated manholes and lift station which would not have a permanent impact on geometric roadway design. All disturbed areas would be restored to original grade. CVWD would continue to operate its sanitary sewer system with no operational modifications using standard vehicles, which would not introduce incompatible uses to roadways. The project would not result in transportation hazards.

d) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

As explained under Impact a), above, construction of the project would generate trips associated with construction crews and materials deliveries and may necessitate individual traffic lane closures. Lane closures and other construction activities have the potential to temporarily result in inadequate access for emergency vehicles. Traffic control requirements would require that emergency crews have access, as needed, and that the contractor coordinates the location of the work daily for routing of emergency vehicles. Traffic control would also require the contractor to make reasonable efforts, wherever possible, to provide landowners access to their property and patrons access to businesses during execution of the work. To ensure that project construction would not interfere with emergency response times, the proposed project would develop and comply with a County-approved Traffic Control Plan, that is coordinated with the appropriate emergency services. Additionally, emergency services would be notified of the project's schedule and temporary changes to access for emergency vehicles. With the incorporation of traffic control measures identified in **Mitigation Measure TRA-1** impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: To lessen possible circulation and emergency access impacts during construction, the project shall implement practical transportation control measure **Mitigation Measure TRA-1**. Impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated. **Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Traffic Control Plan**

Prior to construction, CVWD shall require its construction contractor to implement an approved Traffic Control Plan, to the satisfaction of the CVWD construction inspector and the County. The components of the Traffic Control Plan shall include:

- Identification of construction staging site locations and potential road closures,
- Alternate routes of traffic detours, including emergency response contact information,
- Planned routes for construction-related vehicle traffic (haul routes), and
- Identification of alternative safe routes to maintain pedestrian safety during construction.

CVWD's Project Manager shall coordinate with the police, fire, and other emergency services to alert these entities about potential construction delays, project alignment, and construction schedule. CVWD shall minimize the duration of disruptions/closures to roadways and critical access points for emergency services. The Traffic Control Plan shall provide for traffic control measures including flag persons, warning signs, lights, barricades, and cones to provide safe passage of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic and access by emergency responders. The Traffic Control Plan shall be submitted to CVWD's Project Manager and construction inspector for review and approval prior to construction.

CVWD's construction inspector shall have the construction schedule and Traffic Control Plan reviewed by the County of Riverside to ensure construction of the proposed project does not conflict with construction activities associated with other construction projects that may be occurring at the same time in the vicinity.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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Would the Project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 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 | [] | [X] | [] | [] |
| 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | [] | [X] | [] | [] |

Discussion

A Cultural Resources Assessment Report was prepared in April 2021 for the proposed project. A field survey of the project area was conducted on July 31, 2020. The Cultural Resources Assessment Report is provided in **Appendix C**.

On January 17, 2019, a search of the cultural records at the Eastern Information Center at the University of California, Riverside was conducted to identify any previously recorded cultural resources and previously conducted cultural resources studies within a one-half-mile radius of the proposed project. *Section 3.5 Cultural Resources* provides an overview of the Eastern Information Center and other database searches that were conducted for the project. According to the search, 15 previous cultural resources studies have been conducted within a one-half-mile radius of the project area. Six of these previous studies overlapped with the project area. A total of 26 cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-half-mile radius of the proposed project. However, none of these known cultural resources are in the project area. One resource, P-33-020764, is a historic period transmission line that crosses over the project area but does not include any physical elements in the project area.

A Sacred Lands File search of the project site was requested from the NAHC on July 24, 2020. Results of the Sacred Lands File Search by the NAHC did not indicate the presence of Native American sacred lands within the vicinity of the project area. In addition to the search of the Sacred Lands File, Section 106 consultation letters were sent on August 7, 2020 to the Native American contacts the NAHC provided to request information regarding their knowledge of tribal cultural resources in the vicinity that may be impacted by the project; due to the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, consultation letters were sent via email rather than hard copies. Follow up phone calls were made on August 12, 2020 and August 17, 2020.

A summary of each written or verbal response received as of the date of the report is as follows.

- The Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation responded on August 10, 2020 via email, stating they did not wish to comment on the project and deferred to more local tribes, supporting the decision of the local tribes regarding the project.
- The Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians responded on August 12, 2020 via a follow up phone call that they did not wish to comment on the project as it was outside of their tribal areas.
- On August 12, 2020 during a follow up phone call, Mr. Joseph Ontiveros of the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians stated the tribe defers to local tribes regarding the project, specifically the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians and suggested speaking to Mr. Michael Mirelez.

Mr. Michael Mirelez, during a follow up phone call on August 12, 2020, stated the project lies within a known village site and he has concerns regarding the project. An emailed response to the phone conversation was made to Mr. Mirelez to ensure correct data. Mr. Mirelez restated that the project lies within a known village site and requested cultural resources and environmental studies regarding the project, project conditions of approval, formal government to government consultation, and tribal monitoring for initial ground-disturbing activities. On September 2, 2020 the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians was informed of CVWD's preference to provide reports and records search results to those who request them.

- On August 19, 2020, Judy Stapp of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians responded via email stating the tribe does not have archival information to indicate that the site is in sacred or ceremonial ground, nor does it possess other Native American traditional cultural value.
- Ms. Patricia Garcia-Plotkin of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians responded via phone call on August 20, 2020, stating the project area is sensitive for resources and is within the immediate vicinity of the recorded Panatakiktum, Cahuilla village of the Wild Cat moiety. Additionally, Ms. Garcia-Plotkin requested records search results, the cultural resources report. On August 21, 2020, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians was informed of CVWD's preference to provide reports and records search results to those who request them.

On August 26, 2020, Rincon received a formal letter from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians requesting a copy of the records search results, a cultural resources inventory of the project area by a qualified archaeologist prior to development activities, copies of cultural resources documentation generated in connection to the project, and the presence of an approved Agua Caliente Native American Cultural Resources monitor during any ground disturbing activities as the project site is within the tribe's traditional use area.

Assembly Bill 52 Consultation

AB 52 (Gatto 2014) establishes a formal consultation process between a lead agency and all California Native American Tribes regarding tribal cultural resource evaluation. AB 52 mandates that a lead agency shall provide formal written notification to the designated contact of, or a tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have previously requested notice. The AB 52 consultation is initiated early in the project review phase by written notification including a brief description of the proposed project and its location, a map, and the lead agency contact information. The Native American tribal government has 30 days to request project-specific consultation pursuant to this section (Public Resources Code §21080.1).

As a part of the consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, the parties may propose mitigation measures, including, but not limited to, those

recommended in Section 21084.3, capable of avoiding or substantially lessening potential significant impacts to a tribal cultural resource or alternatives that would avoid significant impacts to a tribal cultural resource. If the California Native American tribe requests consultation regarding alternatives to the project, recommended mitigation measures, or significant effects, the consultation shall include those topics. The consultation may include discussion concerning the type of environmental review necessary, the significance of tribal cultural resources, the significance of the project's impacts on the tribal cultural resources, and, if necessary, project alternatives or the appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation that the California Native American tribe may recommend to the lead agency. Further, consultation shall be considered concluded when either of the following occurs: (1) The parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a tribal cultural resource, or (2) A party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached.

In March 2021, CVWD provided *Notice of Opportunity to Consult* under Assembly Bill 52 letters to the local Native American tribal governments which have previously requested to consult with CVWD. As of August 2021, no formal requests for consultation have been received, and CVWD assumes consultation to be closed. (Please refer to Appendix C for a copy of the *Notice of Opportunity to Consult* letter).

ai-aii) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

A project-level *Cultural Resources Assessment Report (Appendix C)* was prepared to identify potential impacts to cultural resources, including tribal cultural resources that would result from the proposed project. The report concluded that no recorded tribal cultural resources have been identified within the project area. However, as part of the report preparation, two tribes expressed concern about the presence of a village site in the vicinity, located approximately 1.25 miles west of the APE (CA-RIV-148). Although the village site is outside of the project area, the use-area of the village likely spans several square miles. As such, the project area is sensitive for archaeological resources, and **Mitigation Measures CUL-1** and **CUL-2** would be implemented, which require Native American monitoring and temporary halting of work if cultural resources are encountered.

For construction projects that require excavation, such as the proposed project, there is potential for ground-disturbing activities to expose previously unrecorded tribal cultural resources. Tribal responses indicated the potential for tribal cultural resources within the project area, and mitigation is required to reduce the risk of impacts to these resources if encountered. **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** would require the initial ground-disturbing activities be observed by an archaeological and Native American monitor. **Mitigation Measure CUL-2** would require that all earth disturbing work be temporarily suspended if cultural resources, including tribal cultural resources, are discovered during construction.

The discovery of human remains is a possibility during ground disturbing activities. **Mitigation Measure CUL-3** would be implemented to ensure proper procedure would be in place if human remains were unearthed during construction activities. The implementation of this measure would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

With implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2 and CUL-3** potential impacts resulting in a substantial adverse change to the significance of tribal cultural resources would be reduced to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2 and CUL-3** in *Section 3.5 Cultural Resources*.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to	[]	[]	[X]	[]

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? [] [] [X] []

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

Discussion

Water Supply

Water supply services for the project area are provided by CVWD. CVWD delivers irrigation and potable water, collects and recycles wastewater, provides regional storm water protection, and replenishes the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin and is the largest water supplier in the Coachella Valley. CVWD's pressurized pipeline domestic water distribution systems have 64 pressure zones and consist of approximately 97 groundwater production wells, 2,000 miles of pipeline, and 133 million gallons of storage in 65 enclosed reservoirs. In 2020, CVWD provided 99,843 acre-feet of water to 221,791 permanent residents through 110,093 active meters. CVWD's irrigation system consists of 485 miles of buried pipelines, 16 pumping plants, and 1,300 AF of storage and provides approximately 344,000 acre-feet per year of Colorado River water, and blended recycled water, to over 1,300 customers covering approximately 77,100 acres (CVWD et al. 2021, CVWD 2021).

CVWD's water supplies come from groundwater, recycled water, imported water from the State Water Project (via exchange from the Colorado River Aqueduct [Colorado River water]) and the Colorado River via the Coachella Canal, a branch of the All-American Canal. All potable water served by CVWD is pumped from the groundwater basin. Imported and recycled water supplies are used to meet non-urban water demands and for groundwater replenishment.

Wastewater and Recycled Water

CVWD provides wastewater collection and treatment services in the project area. CVWD's wastewater collection system consists of approximately 1,100 miles of 6-inch through 36-inch diameter sewers and includes 35 sewage lift stations and associated force mains. The system contains trunk sewers, generally 10-inches in diameter and

larger, that convey the collected wastewater flows to CVWD's treatment facilities. CVWD operates five WRPs, two of which (WRP-7 and WRP-10) generate recycled water for irrigation of golf courses and large landscaped areas. WRP-4 became operational in 1986 and serves communities from La Quinta to Mecca. WRP-4 effluent is not currently recycled; however, CVWD has applied for an approved wastewater change petition and has initiated design and environmental assessment work needed to consider the construction of a tertiary treatment facility and distribution system. The other two WRPs serve isolated communities near the Salton Sea.

Stormwater

CVWD provides regional flood protection for its stormwater unit within the Coachella Valley. CVWD's stormwater unit extends from the Whitewater River Spreading Area to Salton City, encompassing approximately 378,000 acres. CVWD's regional flood control system consists of a series of debris basins, levees, and stormwater channels that divert floodwaters from the canyons and alluvial fans surrounding the Coachella Valley to the 50-mile Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel that flows to the Salton Sea.

Solid Waste

Waste collection in the project area is provided by Burrtec. The Mecca II landfill is located in Mecca, California approximately eight miles to the southeast of the proposed project. The Coachella Transfer Station is located approximately six miles to the north of the proposed project.

Utilities

IID provides electricity services and Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas services within the project area.

a) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of sewer mains, sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping, and a new sewer lift station to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. Power for the lift station would be provided by existing power lines in the project area. The proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities beyond the expansion of CVWD's sanitary sewer pipeline system included in the proposed project. As discussed in *Section 3.15 Population and Housing*, the proposed project would serve existing communities and would not induce population growth that would require new or expanded utilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

b) No Impact

The proposed project would construct sewer pipelines to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sanitary sewer system and would not involve or increase water supplies and demands. Therefore, no impacts would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

c) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project would construct sewer pipelines to consolidate 13 independent, privately owned SWSs into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. CVWD has been extensively involved in water and sewer consolidation projects, primarily for small DACs and mobile home parks in the eastern Coachella Valley. Consolidation of small water systems, particularly in the eastern Coachella Valley, is a priority for CVWD and the region as many of these systems are on septic systems and are not reliable. As plans to consolidate these small communities into the sanitary sewer system have been ongoing, the increase in wastewater demands from these consolidations are anticipated in future demand projections. Additionally, many of these communities are fairly small and would not substantially increase wastewater treatment demands compared to CVWD's total demands.

Additionally, the proposed project would add 174 new service connections and an estimated population of 692 to CVWD's sanitary sewer system. The proposed project would result in a maximum day demand of 64,000 gallons per day. The proposed project would be served by WRP-4. As shown in **Table 2-2**, WRP-4 has a capacity of 9.9 mgd, and as noted in *Section 2 Project Description*, it currently treats an average of only 4.9 mgd. Operating permits for the facility issued by the SWRCB stipulate operational inflows must not exceed 80% of capacity. Therefore, there is sufficient existing capacity at WRP-4 to accommodate wastewater flows from the proposed project and impacts would be less than significant.

d, e) Less than Significant Impact

Construction and implementation of the proposed project is not anticipated to generate a significant amount of solid waste. To the extent feasible, excavated soil would be reused on site. The construction contractor(s) would be required to dispose of exported soil and solid wastes in accordance with local solid waste disposal requirements. Waste material may be hauled to the Mecca II landfill or the Coachella Transfer Station.

Solid waste generation would be limited to construction-related activities and would not affect available solid waste disposal capacity in the region. No long-term solid waste generation would be associated with the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: No additional mitigation measures required or recommended.

3.20 Wildfire

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
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?	[]	[X]	[]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[X]	[]
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?	[]	[]	[]	[X]
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	[]	[]	[]	[X]

Discussion

The CalFire FRAP assesses the amount and extent of California's forests and rangelands, analyzes their conditions, and identifies alternative management and policy guidelines. Through the FRAP, Cal Fire produces maps designating VHFHSZ within State and Local Responsibility Areas. The project is located within the Western Riverside County's LRA, which designates the project area as a non-VHFHSZ (Cal Fire, 2009).

a) Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Construction of the proposed project would include installation of approximately 17,700 linear feet of new sewer mains, sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping, and a new sewer lift station to connect 13 SWS's into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. Construction activities would take place within public rights-of-way as well as on private and public land. Potential staging areas include vacant private and public land, parking lots, and segments of closed traffic lanes. Therefore, project construction would temporarily block access to some roadways and driveways that are currently used by emergency response vehicles or in emergency evacuations. **Mitigation Measure TRA-1** addresses how CVWD would communicate with emergency response agencies to develop emergency access strategies (see *Section 3.17 Transportation*). Long-term, the proposed project would not physically impair or otherwise interfere with emergency response or evacuation in the project vicinity as the majority of the project components would be located below-grade and ground surfaces would be returned to pre-construction conditions. Thus, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

b) Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project is located within a local responsibility area designated as non-VHFHSZ. Therefore, the proposed project would not exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose proposed project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

c) No Impact

The proposed project would construct approximately 17,700 linear feet of new sewer mains, sewer laterals, 12,150 linear feet of onsite piping, and a new sewer lift station to connect 13 SWS's into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. The proposed project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. O&M activities associated with the proposed project would minimally increase and may include reading and maintaining new water meters at the nine communities, which would not require activities that would exacerbate fire risk. Therefore, no impacts would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

d) No Impact

The project area is primarily level, low density residential and agricultural lands, and there are no slopes or hills within the project area. The majority of project components would be located below-grade, surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions, and implementation of the proposed project would not impact site drainage. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risks as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to **Mitigation Measure TRA-1** in *Section 3.17 Transportation*.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated</i>	<i>Less than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
Does the Project:				
a) 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?	[]	[X]	[]	[]
b) 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	[]	[X]	[]	[]

current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

- c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? [] [X] [] []

Discussion

a) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The proposed project would construct underground sewer pipelines to consolidate 13 SWSs with CVWD’s sanitary sewer system and one lift station. The majority of the proposed project would be located within roadway rights-of-way and previously developed or disturbed areas. With implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed project would not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, reduce wildlife habitat, result in adverse impacts to wildlife populations or communities, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory.

As discussed in *Section 3.4 Biological Resources*, the proposed project site does not contain suitable habitat to support special status wildlife or plant species or sensitive plant or animal communities because of the disturbance history of the site, lack of suitable soils, inappropriate hydrologic conditions, or absence of appropriate vegetation communities. However, proposed project construction has the potential to impact nesting birds, which are protected under the MBTA and CFGC. **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** would require a qualified biologist to conduct surveys for nesting birds and appropriate mitigation to be implemented to reduce potential direct and indirect impacts if construction activities must occur within the nesting season. A SWPPP requiring associated BMPs, would be developed to ensure the proposed project would reduce impacts to jurisdictional waters which serve as habitat to various species. With implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** and BMPs, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

Additionally, there is potential for ground-disturbing activities to uncover previously unrecorded cultural resources. **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** would require ground-disturbing activities be observed by an archaeological and Native American monitor. **Mitigation Measure CUL-2** would require that all ground disturbing work be temporarily suspended if cultural resources are discovered during construction. **Mitigation Measure CUL-3** would be implemented to ensure proper procedure would be in place if human remains were unearthed during construction activities. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2 and CUL-3**, potential impacts resulting in a substantial adverse change to the significance of tribal, historical and/or archeological resources would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

b) Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in individually limited, but cumulatively considerable significant impacts. According to the CEQA Guidelines, 15065(a)(3), “cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects. As described in *Section 3.1* through *Section 3.20*, all resource topics associated with the proposed project have been analyzed in accordance with CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and CVWD’s Local CEQA Guidelines and were found to pose no impact, less than significant impact, or less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. No potentially significant impact would occur from project implementation. Impacts related to air quality were evaluated against thresholds designed to gauge an individual project’s cumulative impacts and were determined to be less than significant. Potential biological impacts on special status and protected species, including migratory birds, would be less than significant with mitigation. Likewise, the project’s potential impacts on unrecorded cultural resources and human remains would be less than significant with mitigation. Temporary impacts of construction related to handling hazardous materials, noise and vibration, and transportation circulation systems would also be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Related projects in the area consist primarily of other pipeline projects associated with the consolidation of the Saint Anthony MHP SWS and the Valley View MHP SWS into CVWD’s potable water system, as well as future MHP consolidation projects in the region, which includes those MHPs evaluated by CVWD as part of the MHP consolidation prioritization process for both domestic water and sewer services. The incremental impact of the proposed project, which is relatively small in scale, together with impacts of these other short and long-term related projects in the area would be considered less than significant due to the large geographical area of the projects and the extended timeframe for development of the projects (e.g., most projects would not occur simultaneously). Additionally, the related projects would be required to comply with the same or similar regulations and mitigation measures that would reduce potential impacts. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project along with current and future projects would not result cumulatively considerable significant impacts.

c) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

With implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed project would not have the potential to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Security lighting at the proposed lift station has the potential to affect nighttime views at surrounding properties. **Mitigation Measure AES-1** would require that all permanent lighting be directed downward and be the lowest illumination necessary, which would reduce the amount of light spillage onto adjacent land uses to a less-than-significant level. The potential exists for accidents to occur during construction activities and routine O&M, which would result

in the release of hazardous materials into the environment. **Mitigation Measure HAZ-1**, which requires development of a Hazardous Materials Management Spill Control Plan, would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level. The potential also exists for temporary construction activities to cause noise and groundborne vibration that would annoy nearby residents. **Mitigation Measure NOI-1**, which requires standard construction noise control measures, would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level. Finally, construction-related vehicle trips and potential lane closures would result in temporary impacts to the surrounding transportation circulation system and emergency access. **Mitigation Measure TRA-1** would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

All resource topics associated with the proposed project have been analyzed in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines and were found to pose no impacts, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated. Consequently, the proposed project would not result in any environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings directly or indirectly.

Mitigation Measures: See **Mitigation Measures AES-1, BIO-1, CUL-1, CUL-2, CUL-3, HAZ-1, NOI-1, and TRA-1.**

4. FEDERAL CROSS-CUTTING ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION EVALUATION

The proposed project may receive funding under a state program that also has a federal funding component and/or from a federal program. Therefore, to assist in compliance with the federal environmental requirements, for the funding program, this document includes analysis pertinent to several federal cross-cutting regulations (also referred to as federal cross-cutters or CEQA-Plus). The basic rules for complying with cross-cutting federal authorities are set-out in the CWSRF regulations at 40 CFR §35.3145 and the USDA Environmental Policies and Procedures at 7 CFR §1970.

This section describes the status of compliance with relevant federal laws, executive orders, and policies, and the consultation that has occurred or will occur in the near future. The topics are based on the USDA environmental policies and procedures and the SWRCB's CWSRF Program Federal Cross-cutting Environmental Regulations Evaluation Form for Environmental Review and Federal Coordination. The CWSRF Program is partially funded by the US EPA. Therefore, the SRWCB must document that projects meet the federal cross-cutters requirements.

4.1 Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal ESA establishes a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and the habitats in which they depend. Section 7 (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 1531 *et seq.*) requires federal agencies to ensure their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. If a project could result in an incidental (unintentional but not unexpected) take of a threatened or endangered (listed) species, federal agencies must undergo consultation with USFWS and/or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, to obtain a Biological Opinion. If the federal agency finds that the project is not likely to adversely affect listed species, the federal agency can consult informally, and if USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service agree with that finding, a concurrence letter can be issued. If the Biological Opinion finds that the project could jeopardize the existence or habitat of a listed species ("jeopardy" opinion), the agency cannot authorize the project until it is modified to obtain a "nonjeopardy" opinion.

For the purpose of the proposed project, the SWRCB and/or USDA would act as the federal lead or responsible agency. The information contained within the IS/MND and the Biological Resources Technical Study (Appendix B) may be used to support project compliance with the Federal ESA and MBTA.

Section 3.4 Biological Resources describes that the project site does not contain suitable habitat for any special status plant or wildlife species. While four special status plant species have been previously documented within a five-mile radius of the project area by

the CNDDDB and USFWS-IPaC, these species were determined to have little to no potential to occur within the project area based on the existing developed and disturbed nature of the project site, lack of suitable soils, inappropriate hydrologic conditions, and absence of appropriate vegetation communities. In addition, no special status plant species were observed within the project area during the survey.

Special-status wildlife were evaluated for their potential to occur within the project area, including an additional buffer area, where direct or indirect impacts could occur. While 22 special-status wildlife species have been previously recorded within a five-mile radius of the project area, these species were determined to have little to no potential to occur within the project area based on habitat quality in the developed and disturbed areas, lack of suitable vegetation that would support special-status wildlife species, and regular maintenance of the grounds or other disturbance from frequent human activity.

No special status wildlife species were observed within the project area during the field survey. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to result in direct or indirect impacts to this special-status plant or wildlife species and the proposed project would not jeopardize any listed species and the lead agency would be in compliance with the Federal ESA.

4.2 National Historic Preservation Act

The NHPA (16 U.S.C. § 470) establishes a program to protect, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore significant historical, archaeological, and cultural resources. Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account effects on historic properties and involves a step-by-step procedure described in detail in the implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800).

As described in *Section 3.5 Cultural Resources*, a cultural resource assessment for the proposed project was conducted and provided in **Appendix C**. The analysis includes a Section 106 evaluation for the proposed project and can be submitted as part of the consultation process with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Concurrence by SHPO would ensure compliance with the NHPA.

A total of 26 cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-half-mile radius of the proposed project. Of the known cultural resources, four resources (P-33-009498 [a historic railroad segment], P-33-017259 [a historic stormwater channel], P-33-019860 [remnant of a historic road], P-33-0207064 [historic bridge]) have been recorded to intersect the project APE and three resources (P-33-024735 and P-33-024736 [two historic period isolated artifacts], P-33-024737 [prehistoric isolated ceramic sherd]) have been recorded adjacent to the project area (i.e., less than 500 feet). The field survey identified no new archaeological resources or historic-age buildings or structures in the project area. **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** would require ground-disturbing activities be observed by an archaeological and Native American monitor. **Mitigation Measure CUL-2** would require that all earth disturbing work be temporarily suspended if cultural resources are discovered during construction until the discovery can be evaluated, and

appropriate notification measures can be taken. **Mitigation Measure CUL-3** would be implemented to ensure proper procedure would be in place if human remains were unearthed during construction activities. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2 and CUL-3**, impacts to historical resources under CEQA would be less than significant and no effects to historic properties under the NHPA for the proposed project are expected.

4.3 Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (AHPA)

The AHPA of 1960 seeks to preserve scientific, prehistoric, historic and archaeological materials and data that might be lost or destroyed as a result of flooding, the construction of access roads, relocation of railroads and highways, or any other federally funded activity that is associated with the construction of a dam or reservoir. AHPA would also apply to federal construction projects or federally licensed projects or programs not involving a dam or reservoir.

As described in *Section 3.5 Cultural Resources*, a cultural resource assessment for the proposed project was conducted and provided in **Appendix C**. This assessment evaluated the potential for the proposed project to impact prehistoric, historic, and archaeological resources. Scientific resources in the proposed project area would include such prehistoric, historic, and archaeological resources. As summarized in *Section 3.5 Cultural Resources*, and *Section 4.2 National Historic Preservation Act*, 26 cultural resources have been previously recorded within a one-half-mile radius of the proposed project. Of the known cultural resources, four resources (P-33-009498 [a historic railroad segment], P-33-017259 [a historic stormwater channel], P-33-019860 [remnant of a historic road], P-33-0207064 [historic bridge]) have been recorded to intersect the project APE and three resources (P-33-024735 and P-33-024736 [two historic period isolated artifacts], P-33-024737 [prehistoric isolated ceramic sherd]) have been recorded adjacent to the project area (i.e., less than 500 feet). No new archaeological resources or historic-age buildings or structures were identified during the field survey of the project area (including scientific, prehistoric, historic and archaeological materials and data). The proposed project would include ground-disturbing activities which could impact buried materials. In order to mitigate this impact, and ensure preservation of any materials or data discovered, several mitigation measures would be implemented. **Mitigation Measure CUL-1** would require ground-disturbing activities be observed by an archaeological and Native American monitor. **Mitigation Measure CUL-2** would require that all earth disturbing work be temporarily suspended if cultural resources are discovered during construction until the discovery can be evaluated, and appropriate notification measures can be taken. **Mitigation Measure CUL-3** would be implemented to ensure proper procedure would be in place if human remains were unearthed during construction activities. With implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2 and CUL-3**, scientific, prehistoric, historic and archaeological materials and data would be preserved. The proposed project is expected to have no effects to scientific, prehistoric, historic and archaeological materials and data under the AHPA.

4.4 Clean Air Act

US Congress adopted general conformity requirements as part of the Clean Air Act Amendments in 1990 and the US EPA implemented those requirements in 1993 (Sec. 176 of the FCAA (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 7506) and 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B). General conformity requires that all federal actions “conform” with the State Implementation Plan as approved or promulgated by US EPA. The purpose of the general conformity program is to ensure that actions taken by the federal government do not undermine State or local efforts to achieve and maintain the NAAQS. Before a federal action is taken, it must be evaluated for conformity with the State Implementation Plan. All “reasonably foreseeable” emissions predicted to result from the action are taken into consideration. These include direct and indirect emissions and must be identified as to location and quantity. If it is found that the action would create emissions above de minimis threshold levels specified in US EPA regulations (40 CFR § 93.153(b)), or if the activity is considered “regionally significant” because its emissions exceed 10 percent of an area’s total emissions, the action cannot proceed unless mitigation measures are specified that would bring the proposed project into conformance.

As described in *Section 3.3 Air Quality*, the project area lies within the SSAB. The results of the air quality modeling showed that pollutant emissions would not exceed federal General Conformity de minimis thresholds (**Appendix A**). Accordingly, the lead agency would be in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

4.5 Coastal Zone Management Act

The Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1451 *et seq.*), passed by Congress in 1972 and managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, is designed to balance completing land and water issues in coastal zones. It also aims to “preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore or enhance the resources of the nation’s coastal zone.” Within California, the Coastal Zone Management Act is administered by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the California Coastal Commission.

As described in *Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed project area is located approximately 80 miles east of the Pacific Coast. Therefore, no portion of the proposed project is within the coastal zone and the Coastal Zone Management Act does not apply.

4.6 Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 U.S.C. § 4201 *et seq.*) requires a federal agency to consider the effects of its actions and programs on the nation’s farmlands. The Farmland Protection Policy Act is intended to minimize the impact of federal programs with respect to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that, to the

extent possible, federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

As described in *Section 3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources*, the project area is located within the eastern Coachella Valley, which contains agricultural lands. The project area includes land designated as important farmland, including prime farmland and farmland of local importance. **Figure 3-1** and **Figure 3-2** show the designated important farmland and Williamson Act contracted lands within the project area, respectively. The proposed project would construct underground pipelines to consolidate 13 SWSs into CVWD's sanitary sewer system. The proposed project would be constructed within roadway rights-of-way, as well as on private or public land. The majority of the proposed project components would be located below-grade and ground surfaces would be restored to pre-construction conditions. The proposed project would not result in land use changes and would, therefore, not impact important farmland, conflict with agricultural zoning regulations, or result in other changes that would indirectly result in conversion of nearby farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, the proposed project would not adversely affect any farmland areas and the lead agency would be in compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

4.7 Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management, as amended by Executive Orders 12148 and 13690

Executive Order 11988 requires federal agencies to recognize the values of floodplains and to consider the public benefits from restoring and preserving floodplains.

As described in *Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed project area overlying the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is located within a 100-year SFHA (FEMA 2018). However, the proposed underground pipelines and associated lift station would not interfere with floodplain management or expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding. The proposed project would not alter drainage patterns of the sites or proposed project area, cause substantial erosion, substantially increase surface runoff, generate runoff in excess of the existing storm drainage systems, or be a source of polluted runoff. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact and be in compliance with Executive Order 11988.

4.8 Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Executive Order 13168

The MBTA (16 U.S.C. § 703-712) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. § 668-668c) prohibit the take of migratory birds (or any part, nest, or eggs of any such bird) and the take and commerce of eagles. Executive Order 13168 requires that any project with federal involvement address impacts of federal actions on migratory birds.

As described in *Section 3.4 Biological Resources*, although nesting habitat within the proposed project sites is considered low quality due to existing disturbances and proximity to heavily travelled roadways, the project area provides suitable habitat for numerous species of birds common in the area and nesting birds are likely to be present during the nesting season. If construction cannot be avoided during nesting season, implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** would reduce potential impact on nesting birds to less than significant. Thus, the lead agency would be in compliance with the Federal MBTA, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Executive Order 13168.

4.9 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act as amended (16 U.S.C. § 661 *et seq.*) is intended to promote conservation of fish and wildlife resources by preventing their loss or damage, and to provide for development and improvement of fish and wildlife resources in connection with water projects. Federal agencies undertaking water projects are required to fully consider recommendations made by USFWS, National Marine Fisheries Service, and State wildlife agencies when any waterbody is impounded, diverted, controlled, or modified for any purpose. Compliance with Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act is to be coordinated with Federal ESA consultation.

The proposed project would not impound, divert or control a surface water source. Operation of the project involves sewer conveyance and wastewater treatment and would not modify the groundwater source. The proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be an adverse effect on fish and wildlife resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

4.10 Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands

Under Executive Order 11990, federal agencies must avoid affecting wetlands unless it is determined that no practicable alternative is available. The Executive Order directs federal agencies to provide leadership and act to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in implementing civil works.

As described in *Section 3.4 Biological Resources*, the project site does not support federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404 and no waters or wetlands potentially subject to the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, RWQCB, or CDFW are located within the project. Therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands and the lead agency would be in compliance with Executive Order 11990.

4.11 Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species

Under Executive Order 13112, federal agencies must prevent and control introductions of invasive non-native species in a cost-effective and environmentally conscious manner to minimize their economic, ecological, and human health impacts. As directed by this Executive Order, a national invasive species management plan guides federal actions to minimize invasive species and their impacts. To support implementation of this plan, the USACE released a memorandum describing the USACE Invasive Species Policy.¹ As part of this policy, all civil works projects are required to address invasive species and potential impacts the project may have.

As described in *Section 3.4 Biological Resources*, non-native plant species were observed in the proposed project area during the field survey conducted for the Biological Resources Assessment. Measures to control spread of invasive species during construction will be implemented, such as using excavated soil onsite as fill to the extent possible and cleaning construction vehicle track-out on unpaved roads. In areas where revegetation is required, use of native species will be required, per the SWPPP, to ensure that introduction of invasive species does not occur. The lead agency would therefore be in compliance with Executive Order 13112.

4.12 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (6 U.S.C. § 1271 *et seq.*) was passed to preserve and protect designated rivers for their natural, cultural, and recreational value.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within the proposed project area, nor will any designated rivers be adversely affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any impacts related to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

4.13 Safe Drinking Water Act, Sole Source Aquifer Program

Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. § 300f *et seq.*) established the US EPA's Sole Source Aquifer Program. This program protects communities from groundwater contamination from federally funded projects.

Within US EPA's Region 9, which includes California, there are nine sole source aquifers. None of these sole source aquifers are located within the project area. Therefore, the Sole Source Aquifer Program does not apply to the proposed project, and the lead agency would be in compliance with Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

¹ <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/regulatory/InvasiveSpecies/policy.pdf>

4.14 Executive Order 13195 – Trails for America in the 21st Century

The Executive Order 13195 requires federal agencies to protect, connect, promote, and assist trails of all types throughout the United States.

According to *Section 3.15 Public Services*, a regional trail exists along the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel along the western edge of the proposed project site (Riverside County 2015). However, the proposed project would not impact the regional trail. As a result, no adverse effects on trails would occur and the lead agency is in compliance with Executive Order 13195.

4.15 Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites

Sacred Sites are defined in Executive Order 13007 as “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.”

As discussed in *Section 3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources*, a search of the Sacred Lands File at the NAHC was performed as part of the project’s Cultural Resources Assessment Report and returned negative results. CVWD also conducted consultation with local Native American groups and local historical societies to obtain additional information and performed an intensive pedestrian survey within the project’s area. No Indian sacred sites were identified that would be impacted or adversely affected by the project, though two tribes indicated the presence of a village in the vicinity of the proposed project. Although the proposed project would only disturb a limited area that had previously been disturbed, there remains a possibility that previously unknown cultural resources could be encountered during construction. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures CUL-1, CUL-2, and CUL-3** would require appropriate treatment of any inadvertently discovered artifacts or human remains. With the implementation of these mitigation measures the proposed project would have a less than significant impact to tribal cultural resources and CVWD would be in compliance with Executive Order 13007.

4.16 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1801 *et seq.*) is the primary act governing federal management of fisheries in federal waters, from the three-nautical-mile state territorial sea limit to the outer limit of the US Exclusive Economic Zone. It establishes exclusive US management authority over all fishing within the Exclusive Economic Zone, all anadromous fish throughout their migratory range except when in a foreign nation’s waters, and all fish on the continental shelf. The Act establishes eight Regional Fishery Management Councils responsible for the preparation of fishery management plans to achieve the optimum yield from US

fisheries in their regions. The act also requires federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on actions that could damage Essential Fish Habitat, as defined in the 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act (Public Law 104-297). Essential Fish Habitat includes those habitats that support the different life stages of each managed species. A single species may use different habitats that consist of both the water column and underlying surface (e.g., streambed) throughout its life to support breeding, spawning, nursery, feeding, and protection functions.

As described in *Section 3.4 Biological Resources*, the proposed project would not be located in or impact any US federal waters regulated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on resident or migratory fish or fish habitat in the proposed project area and the CVWD would be in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

4.17 Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10

Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires that regulated activities conducted below the OHW elevation of navigable waters of the United States be permitted by USACE. Regulated activities include the placement/ removal of structures, work involving dredging, disposal of dredged material, filling, excavation, or any other disturbance of soils/sediments or modification of a navigable waterway. Navigable waters of the United States are those waters of the US that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to the mean high-water mark and/ or are presently used, or have been used in the past or may be susceptible to use to transport interstate or foreign commerce. Navigable waters of the US are not necessarily the same as state navigable waterways. Tributaries and backwater areas associated with navigable waters of the US and located below the OHW elevation of the adjacent navigable waterway, are also regulated under Section 10. OHW is defined as that line showing on the shore which is established by fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as clear, natural lines impressed on the waterway bank, shelving, changes in the character of the soil, destruction of terrestrial plants, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding area.

The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is a previously developed, unlined downstream extension of the Whitewater River constructed as a drainageway for agricultural irrigation return, treated wastewater, and stormwater runoff. CVWD routinely maintains the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel in order for it to function. The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel is a direct tributary to the Salton Sea, which is considered a Traditionally Navigable Water by the USACE. The proposed 4-inch force main would cross the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel using the existing State Route 111 bridge. The 4-inch force main would be suspended alongside the existing bridge or if space is available, inside the bridge cavity. The existing bridge is not below the OHW elevation; therefore, the proposed project would not be required to obtain a Section 10 permit.

4.18 Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act prohibits commercial enterprise and permanent roads within any wilderness area designated by this Act. It also prohibits temporary roads, use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or motorboats, landing of aircraft, other forms of mechanical transport, and structure or installation within wilderness areas unless necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving health and safety of persons within the area).

The proposed project is not located within a designated wilderness area. The Mecca Hills Wilderness (managed by the Bureau of Land Management) is located approximately four miles east of the proposed project location (BLM 2020). The Santa Rosa Wilderness (managed partially by the Bureau of Land Management and partially by the Forest Service) is located approximately eight miles west of the proposed project location (US Forest Service 2020, BLM 2020). The effects of the proposed project would be limited to the immediate project vicinity and would not extend to wilderness areas or federally managed lands. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on wilderness areas.

4.19 Environmental Justice

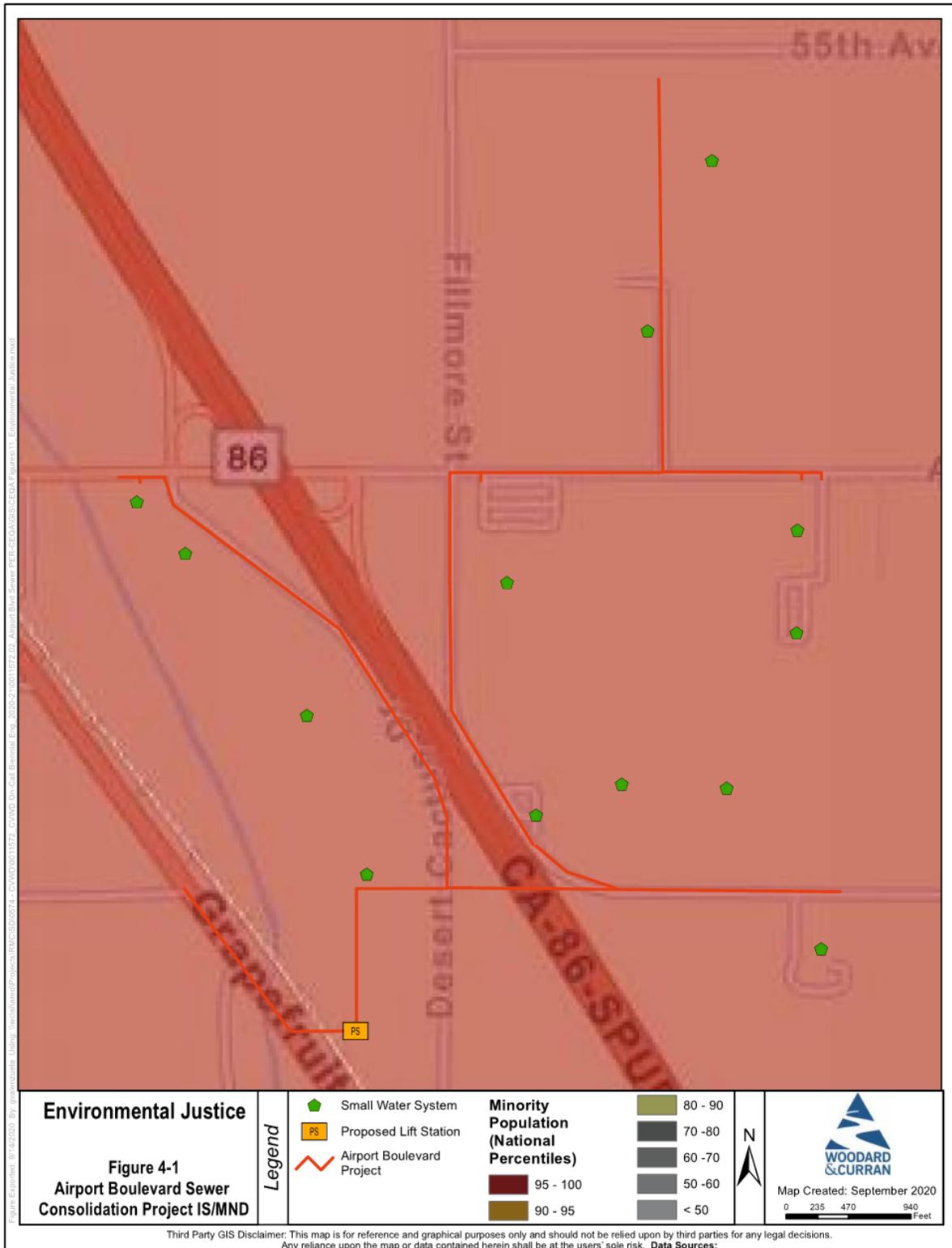
This section describes the existing socioeconomic resources in the proposed project area and the regulatory setting pertaining to environmental justice-related issues. This section also evaluates the potential for the proposed project to disproportionately affect minority or low-income groups. The US EPA defines environmental justice as:

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or economic groups should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies (US EPA 2019b)”.

According to US EPA guidelines, a minority population is present in a study area if the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent, or if the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

The proposed project would be located within the unincorporated community of Thermal in unincorporated Riverside County. According to the US EPA’s Environmental Screening and Mapping Tool (EJScreen), as shown in **Figure 4-1**, the entire project area is within the 90-95 percentile for minority population (US EPA 2019b). Therefore, the project area is composed of a minority population exceeding 50 percent.

Figure 4-1: US EPA EJScreen Map of Minority Population



US EPA guidelines recommend that analyses of low-income communities consider the US Census Bureau's poverty level definitions, as well as applicable State and regional definitions of low-income and poverty communities. According to 2014 to 2018 American Community Survey estimates, 34.4 percent of people in Thermal are considered to be in poverty (US Census Bureau 2018a). In comparison, the percentage of persons in poverty for the entire State of California was 14.3 percent for the same time period. (US Census Bureau 2018b).

DWR defines a DAC as a community with a median household income (MHI) less than 80 percent of the California MHI and a Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) as a community with an MHI less than 60 percent of the California MHI. To identify the location of DAC and SDAC communities for its mapping tool, DWR (DWR n.d.), relies on 2012-2016 American Community Survey data, which defines the Statewide MHI as \$63,783. A DAC would therefore be a community with an MHI of \$51,026 or less and an SDAC would be a community with an MHI of \$38,270 or less. According to the DWR Mapping Tool as shown in **Figure 4-2**, the entire project area is located within a SDAC.

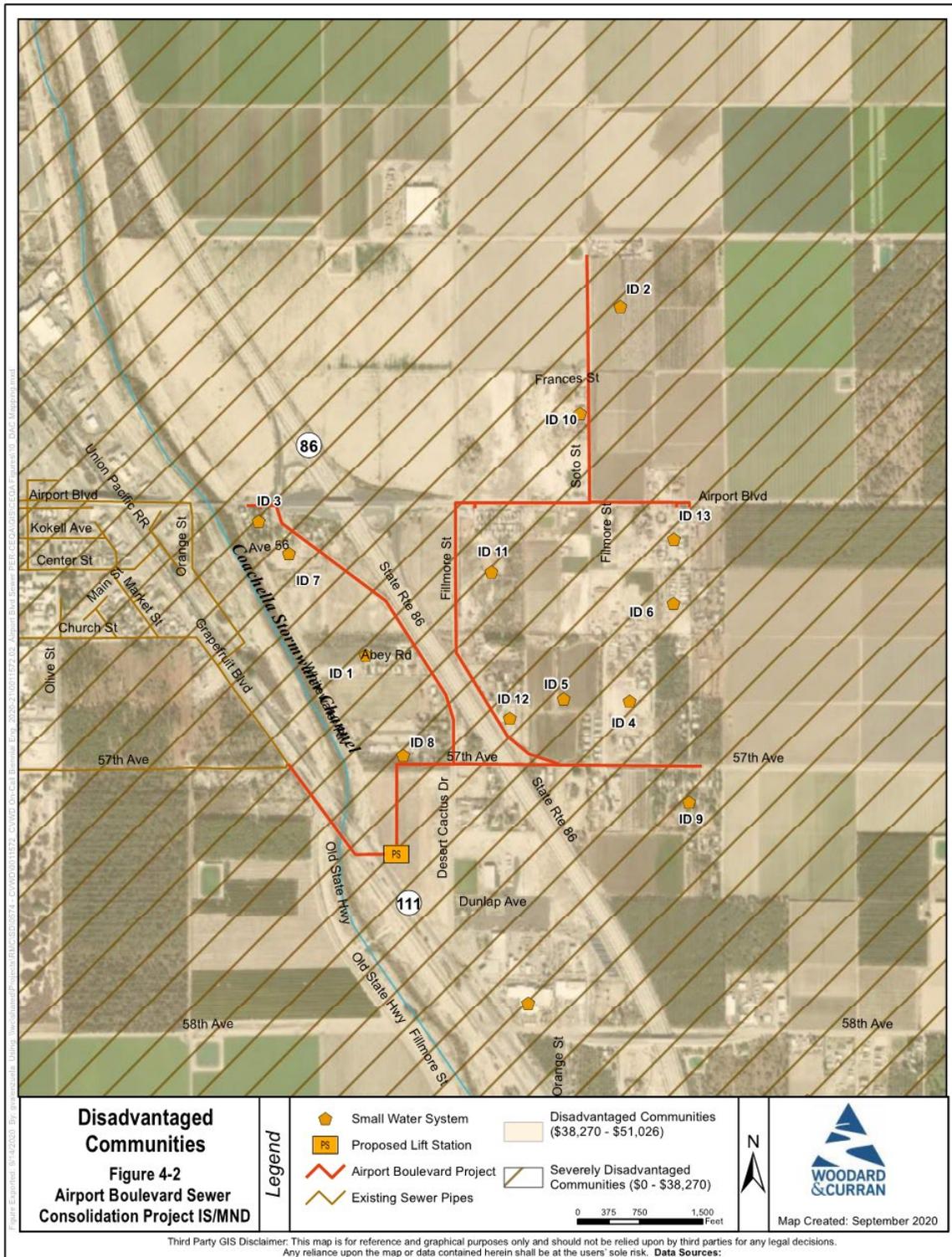
Impact Analysis

For the purposes of this analysis, an environmental justice impact would be significant if the proposed project would directly, indirectly, or cumulatively cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations. High and adverse impacts are considered those that are found to be significant environmental impacts in this IS/MND (when compared to relevant thresholds of significance for a given resource). As described in Sections 3.1 through 3.21, all potential impacts would be mitigated to less than significant.

The proposed project would construct pipelines to consolidate 13 SWSs with CVWD's sanitary sewer system. Although the construction of the pipelines has the potential for short-term environmental effects as described in this document (e.g., short term impacts on air quality, noise, hazards/hazardous materials, traffic, etc.), the consolidation of these SWSs would have the long-term benefit of providing reliable and safe sewer conveyance and wastewater treatment for these communities.

Although construction would generate impacts (e.g., dust, traffic, and noise), such activities would be intermittent and temporary, and would cease upon completion of work activities. Where potential impacts would occur, mitigation measures have been identified to reduce such effects to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, with the consideration of the benefits provided to these communities through implementation of the proposed project, the proposed project would not result in any disproportionately high adverse impacts on minority or low-income communities. Thus, no adverse environmental justice impacts would occur.

Figure 4-2: DWR DAC Mapping Tool



5. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

5.1 Alternatives Evaluated

Two alternatives to the project are evaluated in this section: the 1) No Project Alternative; and the 2) Phased Airport Boulevard Project Consolidation of Eight SWSs.

Under the No Project Alternative, the 13 SWSs within the Airport Boulevard consolidation project would not be consolidated into the CVWD sanitary sewer system and would continue to rely on septic systems for wastewater collection and treatment. The No Project Alternative would not be preferred because it would not meet any for the three project objectives. Furthermore, it could prove financially infeasible if future system improvements required by the State or Department of Environmental Health become cost prohibitive.

The Phased Airport Boulevard Project Consolidation of Eight SWSs alternative consists of consolidation of the SWSs closest to the existing sanitary sewer system. As a part of a phased approach, eight of the 13 SWSs of the proposed project would be immediately connected and then later the sanitary sewer connections would be expanded to include the remaining five SWSs. This alternative initially connects eight SWSs to the CVWD sewer system via construction of approximately 10,000 linear feet of new sewer mains, 31 new manholes, and a new 150 gpm sewer lift station. The additional onsite work needed to connect the existing homes includes approximately 7,200 linear feet of piping, onsite connections with two-way cleanouts and septic tank abandonments. This alternative would eventually meet the three project objectives, but not as quickly as the proposed project. The proposed project would more immediately meet the objectives of reliable wastewater disposal and water quality.

Table 5-1 provides a comparison between the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and the two alternatives with regard to the resource topics addressed in State CEQA Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, as well as the applicable federal cross-cutters. This alternatives analysis presents the environmental analysis behind choosing the proposed project over the alternatives.

Table 5-1: Comparison of Alternatives – Environmental Impacts

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Aesthetics				
Scenic vistas; Visual character and quality	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Scenic resources along a State Scenic Highway	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Light and glare	Potential Significant	Less than Significant	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
<p>The proposed project involves the construction of underground pipelines, which would not be visible after the completion of construction. There are no scenic highways in the project area. Construction would occur primarily during daytime hours and any lighting necessary for construction would be directed towards installation activities and away from adjacent land uses. During construction, aesthetics would be temporarily impaired by construction equipment; however, once construction is complete, the proposed pipelines would not be visible and would not result in permanent changes to scenic vistas, visual quality, or light and glare. Visual impacts from the lift station would be mitigated with low illumination securing lighting (Mitigation Measure AES-1). The No Project alternative would not involve construction of new structures that would impede views, change visual character, or add new substantial sources of light, and thus would not result in aesthetic impacts. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would have a similar impact to the proposed project in that there would be temporary visual impacts during construction; however, once construction is complete most of the facilities would not be visible and, with mitigation, would not result in significant permanent impacts. In addition, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would be located within the same project area as the proposed project, so there would be no impact to scenic highways.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Agriculture and Forestry				
Convert farmland; Conflict with zoning for agricultural use; Indirect conversion of farmland	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Loss of forest use; Conflict with zoning for forest use	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Pipelines would be constructed primarily within existing roadways and some public and privately-owned properties, with connections to existing small water systems, including onsite improvements on privately owned properties, and would not result in conversion of farmland or loss of forest land. Similarly, the No Project Alternative and the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not impact agricultural or forest land.				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Air Quality				
Consistency with AQMP; Non-attainment criteria pollutants	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Consistency with air quality standards; Sensitive receptors	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Objectionable odors	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant Impact
<p>The proposed project involves connecting SWSs that serve existing communities to provide them with safer, more reliable wastewater treatment services. Assuming 150 linear feet of pipeline would be constructed each day, proposed project construction emissions would not exceed regional or localized significance thresholds, nor would they exceed de minimis thresholds, so federal general conformity requirements do not apply. The proposed project would not generate substantial operational emissions and emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD thresholds for any criteria pollutants. The proposed project would result in a minor increase in motor vehicle trips associated with maintenance; however, intermittent trips from a single vehicle would not generate emissions exceeding regional thresholds for operation. Construction-related odors from diesel equipment would be temporary and, once operational, the project would not create objectionable odors that would be noticeable by nearby residences for long periods of time. The No Project/ No Action Alternative would not generate any construction emissions and would not result in any changes to operational emissions. Ongoing operation of the existing septic systems could have potentially significant odor impacts if the systems deteriorate. If the improvements proposed under the Phased Consolidation Alternative proceed at a rate similar to the proposed project, construction emissions would also be less than significant, and potentially to a lesser degree than the proposed project. However, operation emissions would be the same as the proposed project (less than significant).</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Biological Resources				
Sensitive species	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Sensitive habitat; Wetlands; Wildlife corridors;	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No Impact	Less than Significant Impact
Local policies and ordinances	No Impact	N/A	No Impact	No Impact
Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans	No Impact	N/A	No Impact	No Impact
<p>The proposed project area does not contain suitable habitat for any special status species; however, it provides suitable habitat for nesting birds and bird species common to the area. Implementation of mitigation measures would reduce potential construction impacts on birds protected under the MBTA and FGC 3503 and 3503.5 and CDFW special-status species to less than significant. The proposed project does not have the potential to impact sensitive vegetation communities or wildlife corridors because construction would occur in developed urban and agricultural areas. The proposed project is near the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, a jurisdictional water, but the implementation of BMPs would help minimize impacts. The proposed project would not conflict with the CVMSHCP/NCCP; the project is located within the CVMSHCP planning area boundary but is not a part of or adjacent to any specific Conservation Area of the CVMSHCP/NCCP. The No Project Alternative would involve no construction and therefore would not have the potential to result in impacts on migratory birds or other biological resources. The Phased Consolidation Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would have potentially significantly impacts to birds protected under the MBTA and FGC 3503 and 3503.5 and CDFW special-status species, if present, but mitigation would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would also implement similar BMPs to the proposed project to ensure that the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel would not be affected by construction. In addition, the Phased Consolidation of Eight SWSs Alternative would be located within the same project area as the proposed project, so it would not be located within or adjacent to any Conservation Area identified in the CVMSHCP/NCCP.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Cultural Resources				
Historical resources; Archaeological resources;	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Human remains	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
<p>The records search did not identify any cultural resources within the proposed project area, but there are resources recorded within 500 feet of the construction area. There is a possibility of identifying unanticipated cultural resources during ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed project. Implementation of cultural resource mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to less than significant. The potential for encountering human remains is low; however, additional mitigation measures would ensure less than significant impacts. The No Project Alternative would not involve construction and therefore would not have the potential to disturb previously known or unknown cultural resources or human remains. Construction of the Phased Consolidation Alternative would be phased but would result in consolidation of the same SWSs identified in the proposed project. Therefore, the alternative would have a similar potential to the proposed project to disturb unanticipated cultural and historical resources, as well as unanticipated human remains. Compliance with similar mitigation measures as the proposed project would ensure less than significant impacts</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Energy				
Wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary consumption of energy resources	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Conflict with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
<p>Construction of the proposed project would comply with required energy efficiency measures and operation would only result in a minimal increase in energy demand associated with fossil fuel consumption. Impacts associated with energy consumption would thus be less than significant. The proposed project would not involve a considerable increase in emissions from new vehicle trips, nor would it induce land use changes that would result in an increase in vehicle trips, such as urban sprawl. The proposed project would thus not conflict with state or local plans for energy efficiency and impacts would be less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not use energy for construction, and operational energy use would remain the same as under existing conditions. The Phased Consolidation Alternative is a phased project but would result in consolidation of the same SWSs identified in the proposed project. Therefore, the alternative would require a similar amount of construction energy and impacts would be less than significant.</p>				



Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Geology and Soils				
Geological hazards; Erosion and topsoil loss; Unstable soils; Expansive soils	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Alternative wastewater disposal systems	No impact	N/A	Potentially Significant Impact	No impact
Paleontological Resources	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
<p>The proposed project involves construction of pipelines to consolidate sanitary sewer systems and thus would not involve exposure of people or structures to seismically induced risk. The project would minimize soil erosion via implementation of BMPs in a SWPPP prepared in accordance with the SWRCB's Construction General Permit. Compliance with CVWD's professional engineering standards would ensure less than significant impacts related to risks of unstable soils or geologic hazards. The project is not located on expansive soils, nor would it involve the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. The potential for encountering fossil resources is low because ground disturbing activities would only reach a depth of 40 feet below ground surface and pipelines would be constructed primarily within roadway rights of way and other public and private lands that are already disturbed. Implementation of mitigation measures in the event of unanticipated fossil discovery would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to less than significant. The No Project Alternative would involve no construction and thus is not expected to result in impacts related to geologic hazards, septic systems or paleontological resources. Under the No Project Alternative, the existing septic systems are located in soils with high groundwater and low percolation that are unsuitable for alternative wastewater disposal systems. Similar to the proposed project due to construction occurring along the same alignments, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would have less than significant impacts related to geologic hazards, erosion, topsoil loss, unstable soils, and expansive soils due to compliance with existing permits, BMPs, and CVWD engineering standards. Additionally, paleontological resources are not expected to be encountered by the proposed project, and therefore are not expected to be encountered by the alternative project.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions				
GHG emissions	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No Impact	Less than Significant Impact
Conflict with GHG reduction plans	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact
<p>The proposed project's maximum annual GHG emissions (including amortized construction emissions) would not exceed the County's recommended annual threshold for CO₂e emissions. GHG emissions of the proposed project would be less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not involve construction, and GHG impacts of operation would not change from the existing condition. The Phased Consolidation Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would result in annual GHG emissions that are less than the County's annual threshold, though over a longer period of time than the proposed project. This extended schedule would reduce GHG emissions compared to the proposed project because of assumed improvements in equipment over time.</p>				
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
Routine handling of hazardous materials; Listed hazardous materials sites; Airport safety hazard; Wildland fire	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Accidental release of hazardous materials;	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Emergency response or evacuation plans conflict	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Hazardous materials near schools	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
<p>Construction of the proposed project would temporarily increase the routine transport and use of hazardous materials, and result in occasional transport and use of hazardous materials for lift station maintenance. There are no active hazardous materials sites in the project area. The proposed pipelines would extend into the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport influence area as defined in the Airport Land Use Plan but would not cause an airport safety hazard. There are no private airstrips in the project area. The project area is not a VHFHSZ, and standard fire safety practices would be used during construction. These hazards are expected to be less than significant. There is a risk of accidental hazardous materials release during construction. Mitigation requiring a Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan would reduce impacts to less than significant. Temporary traffic lane closures during construction could impede emergency response; mitigation to require a Traffic Management Plan would reduce impacts to less than significant. There are no schools present near the proposed project alignment.</p> <p>The No Project alternative would involve no construction and would thus have no impacts associated with hazardous materials or other hazards. Similar to the proposed project, the construction of the Phased Consolidation Alternative would increase risks related to hazardous materials spills and would require a Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan as mitigation to have less than significant impacts. Construction could impede emergency access vehicles over a longer period of time than the proposed project due to the extended construction schedule and would require a Traffic Management Plan as mitigation. The Phased Consolidation Alternative is not expected to result in significant impacts associated with use of hazardous materials during construction, airport/airstrip hazards or wildfires. There are no known active hazardous material cleanup sites in the Phased Consolidation Alternative alignment area, according to SWRCB GeoTracker. There are no schools near the pipeline alignments for the Phased Consolidation Alternative.</p>				
Hydrology and Water Quality				
Water quality standards or otherwise degrade water quality	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant Impact
Groundwater supply and recharge	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant Impact

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Drainage alterations that cause erosion/sedimentation; flooding; exceed capacity of stormwater system; redirect or impede flood flows;	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones risk release of pollutants	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Conflict with or obstruct water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
<p>Excavation, grading, and other activities associated with construction of the proposed project would result in soil disturbance that would cause water quality violations through potential erosion and subsequent sedimentation of receiving water bodies. However, compliance with the SWRCB's Construction General Permit including implementation of BMPs outlined in a SWPPP would result in less than significant impacts to water quality. The proposed project would connect small wastewater systems to CVWD's sanitary sewer system but would not affect groundwater pumping. Disturbance of drainage patterns and runoff to the stormwater drainage system would be temporary and less than significant. The project would not have an impact related to flooding risks, or seiche, tsunami, or mudflows due to location away from the sources of such threats. The No Project Alternative would not involve construction of new facilities so would not have construction or operational impacts on water quality or drainage patterns, and there would be no impact related to flooding risks, or seiche, tsunami, or mudflows. However, ongoing operation of the septic systems would result in the continued impacts on water quality. Septic systems are a potential source of nitrate contaminant within the groundwater system. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would comply with the permitting requirements of the Construction General Permit and thus would have a less than significant impact on water quality. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would not impact groundwater supplies, similar to the proposed project. There would be no impact related to flooding risks, or seiche, tsunami, or mudflows.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Land Use and Planning				
Divide an established community;	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Conflict with an applicable land use plan	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
The project would not divide an established community and would not change land use, so it would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation with jurisdiction over the project. The No Project Alternative would not divide an established community and would not change land use; thus, no impact would occur. Similar to the proposed project, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not divide an established community and would comply with applicable land use plans.				
Mineral Resources				
Loss of availability of a known, valuable mineral resource or mineral resource recovery site	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
No impact would occur because there are no known mineral resources or mineral recovery sites in the vicinity of the project corridor. The same would be true for the No Project/ Alternative and the Phased Consolidation Alternative.				
Noise				
Excessive noise; Permanent increase in noise levels; Temporary increase in noise levels; Ground-borne vibration	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Aircraft noise	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
<p>Construction noise from the proposed project would be temporary and exposure of any single receptor would be limited to a few days at most. Although construction noise associated with capital improvement projects of a governmental agency are exempt from the Riverside County noise ordinance, construction noise and vibration impacts on residents are considered potentially significant, so noise control measures would be employed to ensure that impacts are less than significant. The proposed project would serve existing communities and would thus not expose new residents or workers to noise. Operation of the project would not generate perceptible noise. The No Project Alternative would not entail construction of new facilities and would thus have no temporary or permanent noise impacts. Similar to the proposed project, the impacts from temporary construction noise and vibration for the Phased Consolidation Alternative would be less than significant with mitigation; there would be no perceptible permanent operational noise impacts, and impacts associated with aircraft noise would be less than significant.</p>				
Population and Housing				
Population growth	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Displacement of housing or people	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
<p>The proposed project would not directly induce population growth, as it would serve the existing communities that currently rely on the SWSs and would not induce growth. The project would not displace housing or people. Neither the No Project Alternative nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative would displace housing or people. The No Project Alternative would not include new facilities and would not induce population growth. Similar to the project, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not directly induce population growth as it would serve the needs of the existing communities that currently rely on the SWSs.</p>				
Public Services / Recreation				
Fire protection services; Police protection services	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Schools; Other services-libraries	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Recreational facilities	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
<p>The project would not require additional or unusual fire or police protection resources or change existing demand for public services. It does not propose new recreational facilities that would impact the environment. There would be no impacts to public services or recreation associated with the proposed project. Similarly, there would also be no impacts from the No Project Alternative or the Phased Consolidation Alternative for the same reasons as the proposed project.</p>				
Transportation and Traffic				
Circulation system performance; Emergency access	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation
Consistency with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 subdivision (b) (VMT); Traffic hazards	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
<p>Construction would require lane closures for pipeline construction and would generate only minimal vehicle trips for construction workers. To ensure that potential traffic impacts are less than significant, the proposed project would implement transportation mitigation measures, including notifying emergency service providers and schools, implementing a traffic control plan, and avoiding high volume intersections. The buried pipelines would not result in traffic hazards and the lift station would not require lane closures for maintenance visits because there would be adequate room at the lift station site for vehicles. The No Project Alternative involves no construction and would not impact traffic circulation, emergency access, VMT, alternative transportation facilities, or create traffic hazards. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would extend the timeframe that traffic impacts could occur from construction activities compared to the proposed project but would implement mitigation similar to that of the proposed project to minimize construction impacts on congestion, traffic, and emergency vehicle access. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would not have a permanent impact involving VMT or traffic hazards.</p>				
Tribal Cultural Resources				
Tribal cultural resources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No impact	Potentially Significant / Less than Significant with Mitigation

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
<p>CVWD consulted with several California Native American tribes pursuant to AB 52. Consultation with two tribes indicate a nearby tribal village, though resources were not identified within the APE of the proposed project. Nonetheless, there is the potential for undiscovered resources to be encountered during construction. To reduce the potential impacts on tribal cultural resources, the project would implement mitigation in the event of an unanticipated discovery of cultural resources, tribal or otherwise, during project construction. Doing so would reduce impacts to less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not impact tribal cultural resources because it would not involve ground-disturbing activities. The Phased Consolidation Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would implement mitigation measures in the event of discovery of unanticipated tribal cultural resources to reduce impacts to less than significant.</p>				
Utilities and Service Systems				
Construction of new utilities causing environmental effects	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Sufficient water supply	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
Wastewater treatment capacity	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Solid waste capacity; Solid waste compliance	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
<p>The proposed project includes new wastewater facilities, but construction would not have significant environmental effects; no new water, stormwater, power, or telecommunications facilities would be required. CVWD has determined that it has sufficient wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity to serve the new service connections associated with the proposed project. Construction would generate a minimal amount of excess soils that would be reused onsite to the extent feasible; there would be no long-term solid waste generated by the proposed project so impacts would be less than significant. The No Project Alternative would not include construction of any facilities and would have no additional demands for water, wastewater or solid waste facilities. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would have similar impacts to the proposed project: it would not require additional water supplies, stormwater or other facilities, and would have a less than significant impact related to solid waste. CVWD has sufficient wastewater conveyance and treatment capacity to serve all of the small water systems that would be connected under the Phased Consolidation Alternative.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Wildfire				
Impair an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact	Potentially Significant /Less than Significant with Mitigation
Exacerbate wildfire risk due to required installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure	Less than Significant Impact	N/A	No impact	Less than Significant Impact
Exacerbate wildlife risk due to slope prevailing winds, or other factors	No Impact	N/A	No Impact	No Impact
Expose people or structures to risks from runoff, post-fire slope instability or drainage changes.	No Impact	N/A	No Impact	No Impact
<p>The project area is not in a VHFHSZ, and standard fire safety practices would be used during construction. Thus, no impacts are expected related to exacerbation of wildfire risk. Temporary traffic lane closures during construction would impede emergency response; mitigation to require a Traffic Management Plan would reduce impacts to less than significant. The No Project Alternative would involve no construction, and would thus have no impacts, associated with exacerbation of wildfire risk and would not impact emergency response or evacuation plans. Similar to the proposed project, the Phased Consolidation Alternative construction would impede emergency access vehicles, which would require a Traffic Management Plan as mitigation. The Phased Consolidation Alternative is not expected to result in significant impacts associated with exacerbation of wildfires.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Federal Cross-Cutters				
Federal Endangered Species Act	Comply	Comply	No Impact	Comply
<p>The proposed project site does not contain suitable habitat for any special status plant or wildlife species. All trenching would occur within paved or previously disturbed areas; therefore, the proposed project is not expected to result in direct or indirect impacts on special-status plant species. Mitigation would minimize potential impacts on protected nesting birds. The proposed project would not jeopardize listed species and the SWRCB and/or USDA would be in compliance with the Federal ESA. The No Project Alternative would involve no construction and thus would not impact sensitive species. The Phased Consolidation Alternative, similar to the proposed project, would involve trenching within paved or previously disturbed areas and would not impact undisturbed habitat. With mitigation to protect nesting birds, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not jeopardize listed species.</p>				
National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106	Comply	Comply	No impact	Comply
<p>The cultural resources assessment conducted for the proposed project would be submitted as part of the consultation process with the SHPO. Concurrence by SHPO would ensure compliance with the NHPA. No cultural resources were identified within the project area and the proposed project would implement mitigation measures in the event of unanticipated discovery of cultural resources. The No Project Alternative would not affect undisturbed soils or historical resources. Similar to the proposed project, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would conduct a cultural resources assessment, implement mitigation measures, and consult with SHPO to comply with the NHPA.</p>				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (AHPA)	Comply	Comply	No impact	Comply
<p>The cultural records search did not identify any scientific, prehistoric, historic, or archaeological materials or data within the proposed project area, but there are resources recorded within 500 feet of the construction area. There is a possibility of identifying unanticipated resources during ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed project. Implementation of cultural resource mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to less than significant by ensuring that resources are preserved. The No Project Alternative would not involve construction and therefore would not have the potential to destroy existing scientific, prehistoric, historic, or archaeological materials or data. Construction of the Phased Consolidation Alternative would be phased but would result in consolidation of the same SWSs identified in the proposed project. Therefore, the alternative would have a similar potential to the proposed project to disturb scientific, prehistoric, historic, or archaeological materials or data. Compliance with similar mitigation measures as the proposed project would ensure less than significant impacts.</p>				
Clean Air Act	Comply	N/A	No impact	Comply
<p>The results of the air quality modeling showed that pollutant emissions would not exceed federal General Conformity <i>de minimis</i> thresholds and impacts were less than significant; the SWRCB and/or USDA would be in compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act. The No Project Alternative would result in no changes to existing emissions and air quality. For the Phased Consolidation Alternative, impacts to air quality from construction emissions would be similar to that of the proposed project, though marginally lower due to the extended construction schedule. Both Alternatives are expected to comply with the Clean Air Act.</p>				
Coastal Zone Management Act	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<p>No portion of the proposed project area, the No Project Alternative area, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative area are within the coastal zone. Therefore, the Coastal Zone Management Act does not apply.</p>				
Farmland Protection Policy Act	Comply	N/A	No impact	Comply



Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Neither the proposed project, No Project Alternative, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative are located in areas currently under agricultural production, nor do they contain farmland. The proposed project and Alternatives would not conflict with State, local, and private programs and policies to protect farmland, and the SWRCB and/or USDA would be in compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act.				
Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management	Comply	N/A	No impact	Comply
The proposed project pipelines would be located underground and would not interfere with floodplain management or expose people or structures to a significant flooding risk. Similarly, the lift station would not be located in a flood control area. As such, the SWRCB and/or USDA would be in compliance with Executive Order 11988. Likewise, the No Project Alternative and the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not expose people or structures to significant flood-related risk.				
Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and Executive Order 13168	Comply	Comply	No impact	Comply
The proposed project would have less than significant impacts on protected birds with implementation of mitigation if construction cannot be avoided during the nesting season. The No Project Alternative would involve no construction and would not affect protected birds. The Phased Consolidation Alternative, with the incorporation of mitigation to protect nesting birds, would have a less than significant impact.				
Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands	No impact	N/A	No impact	No impact
The proposed project does not involve construction within federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404; therefore, no impacts would occur, and the SWRCB and/or USDA would be in compliance. Similarly, the No Project Alternative and the Phased Consolidation Alternative would not impact federally protected wetlands.				
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within the project area. Neither the proposed project, the No Project Alternative, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative would result in an impact.				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Safe Drinking Water Act – Source Water Protection	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
There are no sole-source aquifers in the project area. Neither the proposed project, the No Project Alternative, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative would result in an impact.				
Executive Order on Trails for America in the 21st Century	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
There are no trails in the project area. Neither the proposed project, the No Project Alternative, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative would result in an impact.				
Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Neither the proposed project, No Project Alternative, nor Phased Consolidation Alternative would be located on or impact any federal land that is identified as an Indian sacred site.				
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The proposed project is not located in, nor would it impact any US federal waters regulated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The proposed project is not expected to have an adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat, migratory fish, wildlife species, or fish habitat in a protected area. Similarly, the No Project Alternative and Phased Consolidation Alternative would not affect Essential Fish Habitat or waters regulated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.				
Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10	Comply	N/A	N/A	Comply
The proposed project would install a pipeline over the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel, a Traditionally Navigable Waterway. However, it would utilize an existing bridge that is located above the OHW. Therefore, it would not be subject to a Section 10 permit. The No Project Alternative would not construct new facilities and therefore would have no impacts. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would also not involve placement of structures over a Traditionally Navigable Waterway higher than the OHW.				

Issue Areas	Proposed Project		Alternatives	
	MND Findings	With Mitigation	No Project/ No Action	Phased Consolidation
Wilderness Act	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<p>The proposed project is not located in, nor would it impact, any designated wilderness areas. The nearest wilderness area is approximately four miles from the project location, and project impacts would not extend to the wilderness area. Neither the proposed project, the No Project Alternative, nor the Phased Consolidation Alternative would result in an impact.</p>				
Environmental Justice	Comply	N/A	Comply	Comply
<p>The proposed project alignment would be located in the community of Thermal, which has a 98.8 percent minority population and is considered to be low income or disadvantaged. The proposed project would have short-term construction impacts, but would achieve the long-term goal of supply safer, more reliable wastewater treatment services to this disadvantaged community. The No Project Alternative would have no impacts but would result in no benefits to the community. The Phased Consolidation Alternative would also be located within the community of Thermal and serve the same communities. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, the Phased Consolidation Alternative would have short-term impacts, but would result in long-term benefits to a disadvantaged community, though those benefits would take longer to be realized due to the extended construction schedule.</p>				

6. REPORT PREPARATION

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APPENDIX A: CALEEMOD RESULTS

APPENDIX B: BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C: CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT