

Eastside Water Bank Expansion Project

Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration/ Initial Study

Prepared for:



Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency
6500 West Avenue N
Palmdale, California 93551

Prepared by:

HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc.
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La Mesa, California 91942

January 2021

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DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PURSUANT TO: CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

PROJECT TITLE: Eastside Water Bank Expansion Project

LEAD AGENCY: Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK)

PROJECT SPONSOR: AVEK

PROJECT LOCATION:

Regionally, the approximately 160-acre site is in the Antelope Valley region of unincorporated Los Angeles County, California, between the communities of Pearblossom and Littlerock, east of the City of Palmdale, and north of State Route (SR) 138 (see Figure 1, *Regional Location*). Locally, the project site is north of East Avenue U, south of East Avenue T8, east of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility, and west of 106th Street East (see Figure 2, *Site Location*).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

AVEK is proposing to expand the existing Eastside Water Bank facility to include three recharge basins east of the existing recharge ponds, three 18-inch turnout pipes, and a single 24-inch delivery pipeline (see Figure 3, *Site Plan*). Specifically, the three recharge basins would be located on a 160-acre parcel east of the existing recharge ponds. In all, the three basins would encompass 74 acres. Operation of the project would involve the storing of surplus State Water Project (SWP) raw water, which would be recharged into local groundwater. Recharge is estimated to occur at a rate of 8,900 acre feet (AF) in 8 months. Excavations would be required to create the basins; excavated material would be used as fill material to construct the berms.

The 24-inch delivery pipeline would accommodate gravity flow to the new basins. The new 24-inch delivery pipeline would connect to the existing 24-inch pipeline at the existing operation and control (OC) building located south of the existing recharge ponds and would exit the building in the south and traverse eastward, paralleling East Avenue U towards the new recharge basins. Individual inlets to each of the three recharge basins would be through 18-inch pipes that connect to the 24-inch delivery pipeline.

Access to the new facilities would be provided from East Avenue U via a 20-foot wide road that would encircle the recharge basins and connect to the existing road that provides access to the Eastside Water Bank facilities. The road would be constructed with a Class 2 aggregate base surface.

FINDINGS:

AVEK finds that the Eastside Water Banking Expansion project WILL NOT have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project would not conflict with existing surrounding land uses.
2. The proposed project would not violate any air quality standard, or substantially contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.

3. The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to sensitive species; however, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 below, would reduce associated impacts related to biological resources to below a level of significance.
4. The proposed project may potentially result in significant impacts to unknown cultural resources; however, implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-4, below, would reduce associated impacts related to cultural resources to below a level of significance.
5. The proposed project would comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) guidelines for construction storm water runoff.
6. The proposed project would not create a significant increase in traffic on area roadways.
7. The proposed project would not result in significant impacts to aesthetics, agriculture resources, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazardous and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, and transportation/traffic.

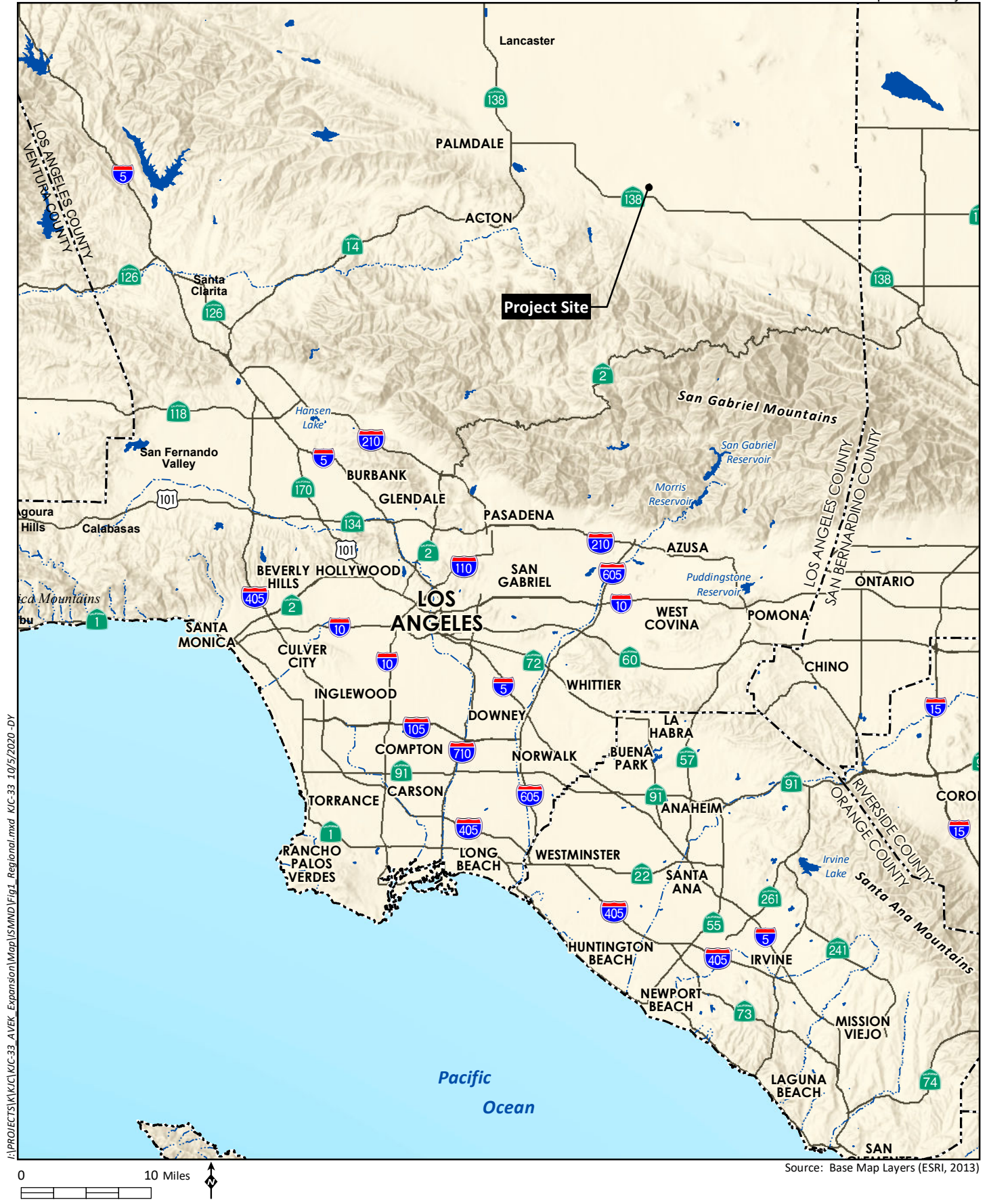
MITIGATION MEASURES

Implementation of the project-specific mitigation measures identified below for the issues of biological resources and cultural resources would reduce all associated potentially significant impacts to below a level of significance.

BIO-1 Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall prepare a relocation plan approved by CDFW and receive CDFW authorization for removal of Joshua trees. In addition, the applicant shall retain a certified arborist as that shall transplant Joshua tree, golden cholla, and chaparral yucca specimens within the impact zone.¹ Specimens appropriate for transplantation include unbranched Joshua trees under two meters, all golden cholla, and chaparral yucca less than 18 inches tall and 12 inches wide that have not flowered. All specimens shall be transplanted in the eastern portion of the project site that is outside of the 74 acres of disturbance for the recharge basins and not within the impact area of the access road, pipeline, or fencing. Transplantation shall occur within the fall and winter months (and should be transplanted as close to the date they are dug up as feasible. Plants should be deep watered following transplanting, and again once every three to four months for the first year following transplant. Timing of transplantation and appropriate watering schedule may be adjusted by qualified arborist.¹

BIO-2 In accordance with the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation, a pre-construction survey shall be conducted within 14 days prior to initiating ground disturbing activities. If there is a time lapse of 14 days or more between the preconstruction survey and start of project activities, per CDFW protocol, an additional pre-construction survey shall be conducted. The pre-construction survey shall consist of a single survey covering the entire study area. The survey shall be conducted using transects no wider than 20 meters and include a survey (at least visually) of a 500-foot buffer where potential burrowing owl habitat occurs adjacent to the study area. Additionally, a final survey is required within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance.

¹ A certified arborist as defined by the County of Los Angeles Urban Forestry Manual is an individual who obtained arborist certification from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) based on knowledge and competence, and who receives on regular basis continuing education administered by the ISA.



Regional Location

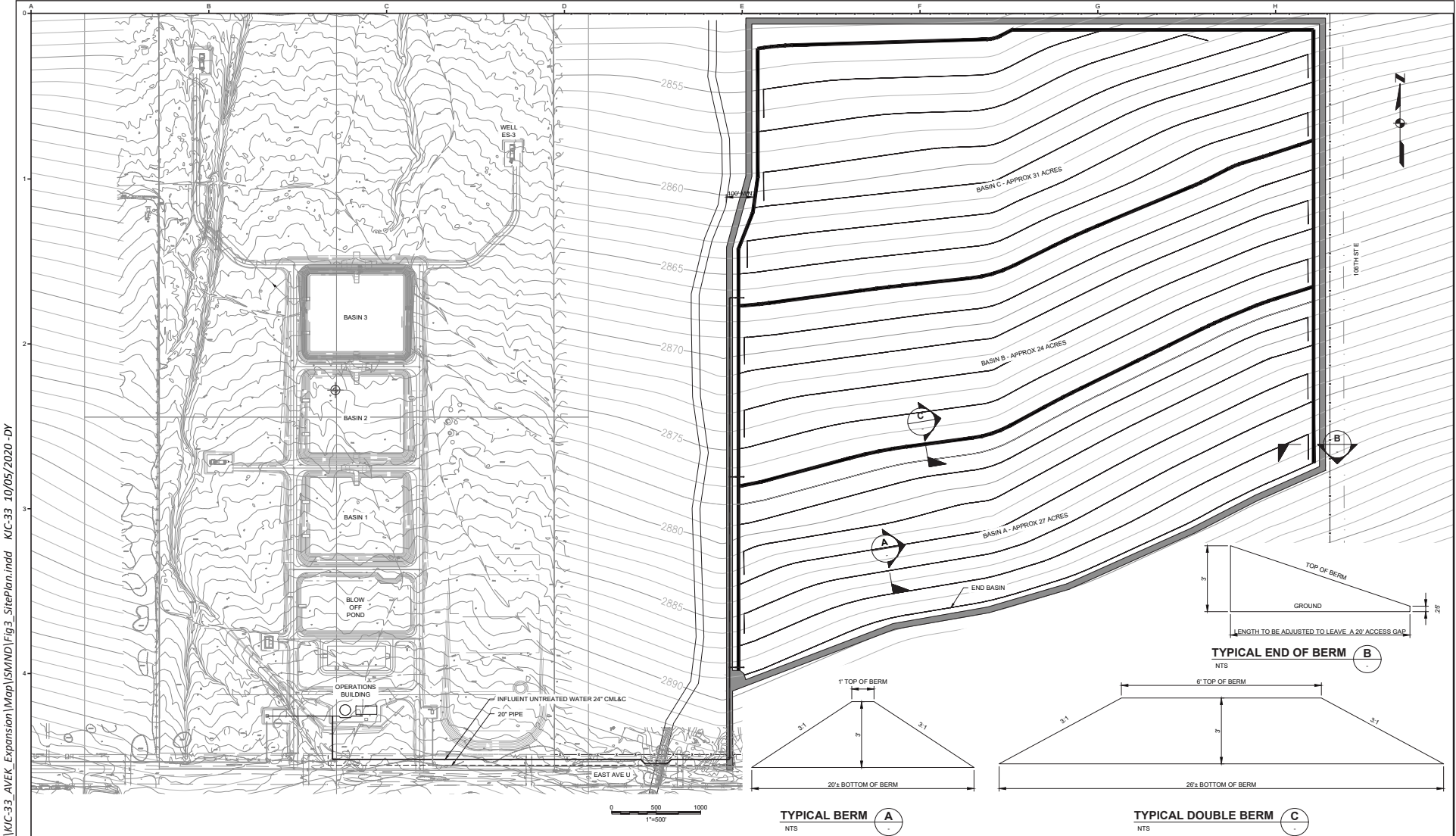
Figure 1

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Source: Aerial (Maxar, 2019)



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08/19/2020 - 20% SUBMITTAL

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

THIS DOCUMENT IS AN INTERIM DOCUMENT AND NOT SUITABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION. AS AN INTERIM DOCUMENT, IT MAY CONTAIN DATA THAT IS POTENTIALLY INACCURATE OR INCOMPLETE AND IS NOT TO BE RELIED UPON WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE PREPARER.

NO	REVISION	DATE	BY

SCALES
0 = 1"
0 = 25mm

IF THIS BAR IS NOT DIMENSION SHOWN, ADJUST SCALES ACCORDINGLY.

PRELIMINARY NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

DESIGNED
DRAWN
CHECKED

ANTELOPE VALLEY - EAST KERN WATER AGENCY
6500 West Avenue N, Palmdale, CA 93551
EASTSIDE WATER BANK EXPANSION

KJ Kennedy Jenks

CIVIL OVERALL YARD PIPING

SCALE
JOB NO 2044500'00
DATE AUGUST 2020
SHEET 7 OF 9
C-2

Source: Kennedy Jenks 2020

If a burrowing owl is observed on site during the pre-construction survey the burrow is required to be avoided if feasible. The avoidance buffer shall be 50 meters between October 16 and March 31, and 200 meters from April 1 to October 15 (CDFW 2012). If avoidance is not feasible, a relocation plan shall be developed and submitted to CDFW for approval.

BIO-3 A nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to clearing activities that occur between March 1 and August 31.

A nesting raptor survey shall occur prior to ground- or vegetation-disturbing activities between January 1 and August 31. In particular, the Joshua trees on site shall be surveyed prior to disturbance during this period.

If nesting birds are present, an appropriate buffer, between 50 and 500 feet depending on the species, shall be established by the biologist, and vegetation removal/construction within the buffer shall be delayed until the nesting cycle is completed.

BIO-4 Following completion of project construction, the streambed shall be restored to the pre-project conditions and contour. In the unlikely event that the pipe installation results in the removal of vegetation within the stream adjacent to East Avenue U, the area of vegetation shall be seeded with native vegetation similar to the surrounding habitat.

CUL-1 In the event that potentially significant cultural materials are encountered during project-related ground-disturbing activities, all work shall be halted in the vicinity of the archaeological discovery until a qualified archaeologist can visit the site of discovery, assess the significance of the archaeological resource, and provide proper management recommendations. If the discovery proves to be significant, additional work, such as data recovery excavation, may be determined necessary by the project archaeologist.

CUL-2 The Lead Agency shall retain a professional Native American monitor procured by the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI) Indians to observe all ground disturbing activities up to five feet below the surface of native soil, unless there is evidence to suggest cultural resources extend below the specified depth. Ground disturbing activities include but are not limited to tree/shrub removal and planting, clearing/grubbing, grading, excavation, trenching, drainage and irrigation removal and installation, and archaeological work. If cultural resources are encountered, the Native American monitor will have the authority to request ground disturbing activities cease within 60 feet of discovery to assess and document potential finds in real time.

CUL-3 If significant pre-contact and/or post-contact cultural resources, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop an Archaeological Treatment Plan (ATP), the drafts of which shall be provided to the FTBMI for review and comment. The ATP will provide details regarding the process for in-field treatment of inadvertent discoveries and the disposition of inadvertently discovered non-funerary resources.

CUL-4 The Lead Agency shall, in good faith, consult with the FTBMI on the disposition and treatment of any Tribal Cultural Resources encountered during all ground disturbing activities.

THE INITIAL STUDY PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT IS ATTACHED.

Form Prepared By:

Dwayne Chisam, P.E., General Manager/Chief Engineer
Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency
6500 West Avenue N
Palmdale, California 93551
(661) 943-3201



Signature

2/5/2021

Date

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INITIAL STUDY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

BACKGROUND DATA

1. Project Title: Eastside Water Bank Expansion Project
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency
6500 West Avenue N
Palmdale, California 93551
3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Dwayne Chisam
661-943-3201
4. Project Location: The project site is located within unincorporated Los Angeles County between the communities of Pearblossom and Littlerock. Specifically, the project site is located north of East Avenue U, south of East Avenue T8, east of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility, and west of 106th Street East. In addition, the project would include placement of a 24" pipeline that would extend from the existing OC building west of the site connecting to the project features on the 160-acre site.
5. Project Sponsor's Name/Address: Same as Lead Agency
6. General Plan Designation: Rural Land 2 (RL-2, residential maximum 1 du/2 gross acre; Non-Residential: Maximum FAR 0.5)
7. Zoning: A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) is a water wholesaler that supplies water to more than 20 municipal users and other entities within a 2,400-square-mile area in the Mojave Desert of California. The function of AVEK's Eastside Water Bank is to manage water resources and improve water supply reliability. This is accomplished by capturing low cost water for underground storage during wet periods and recovering this water for later use in the AVEK service area during dry periods or emergencies.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location

The approximately 160-acre project site is located east of the existing AVEK Eastside Water Bank in the Antelope Valley region of unincorporated Los Angeles County, California, between the communities of Pearblossom and Littlerock, east of the City of Palmdale (see Figure 1). The project site is north of East Avenue U, south of East Avenue T8, east of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility, and west of 106th Street East. In addition, the project would include placement of a 24-inch pipeline that would extend from the existing OC building west of the site to the project features on site (see Figure 3). The project

site is situated in Section 8, Township 5 North, Range 10 West as shown on the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute Littlerock quadrangle map.

Environmental Setting

The Antelope Valley is a high plain located on the southwestern edge of the Mojave Desert, with elevations on the valley floor ranging from about 3,500 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along base of the mountains to the south, west, and north to about 2,200 feet AMSL at the Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) western boundary. The desert portion of Antelope Valley is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, the Liebre and Sierra Pelona Mountains to the southwest, the Tehachapi Mountains to the northwest, and desert valley/mountain terrain in San Bernardino County to the east. The surrounding mountains range in elevation from approximately 6,000 to 9,000 feet AMSL and reduce coastal influences on the desert region. Wildlife habitat within the region is dominated by desert-adapted vegetation communities, including rabbitbrush scrub and creosote bush scrub, although the valley floor is generally highly disturbed as a result of historic and ongoing development and related activities.

The communities of Littlerock and Pearblossom are located in the southeastern portion of the Antelope Valley. Portions of these communities are developed or partially developed with a wide range of uses, including agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential, all with a distinctly rural character. The remaining portions of the valley are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing infrastructure. The primary east-west thoroughfare through these communities is Pearblossom Highway (SR 138), which is located less than one mile south of the project site. Land uses immediately surrounding the project site include the existing AVEK Eastside Water Bank, agricultural uses (including the Scattaglia Farms plant) and vacant land.

The project site is mainly comprised of primarily creosote bush scrub. The project site is relatively level with an elevation range of 2,840 feet AMSL in the northern portion of the site to 2,890 feet AMSL in the southern portion of the site. A large unnamed wash also extends generally north-south just west of the project site.

The project site, as well as the parcels to the north and west, are designated as Rural Land 2 (RL-2, residential maximum 1 du [dwelling unit]/2 gross acre; non-residential: maximum FAR [floor area ratio] 0.5) and zoned as A-2-1 (one-acre minimum lot size). Land south of the project site is designated as Light Industrial (IL) and zoned as M-1 (Light Manufacturing) and land to the east is designated as Rural Land 10 (RL-10, residential maximum 1 du/10 gross acre; non-residential: maximum FAR 0.5) and zoned as A-2-1.

Project Characteristics

AVEK is proposing to expand the existing Eastside Water Bank facility to include three recharge basins east of the existing recharge ponds, three 18-inch turnout pipes, and a single 24-inch delivery pipeline. Specifically, the three recharge basins would be located on a 160-acre parcel east of the existing recharge ponds (see Figure 3). In all, the three basins would encompass 74 acres. Operation of the project would involve the storing of surplus State Water Project (SWP) raw water, which would be recharged into local groundwater. Recharge is estimated to occur at a rate of 8,900 AF in 8 months. Excavations would be required to create the basins; excavated material would be used as fill material to construct berms approximately three feet tall surrounding each basin. There would be approximately one foot of freeboard between the water level and the top of the berm. A concrete emergency spillway would be constructed along the west side of the recharge basins to divert overflows and each of the new recharge basins would be connected to the concrete spillway by a corrugated metal pipe.

The 24-inch delivery pipeline would accommodate gravity flow to the new basins. The new 24-inch delivery pipeline would connect to the existing 24-inch pipeline at the existing OC building located south of the existing recharge ponds and would exit the building in the south and traverse eastward, paralleling East Avenue U towards the new recharge basins. As such, this pipeline configuration would bypass pre-treatment infrastructure at the existing facility and the existing recovery ponds. Individual inlets to each of the three recharge basins would be through 18-inch pipes that connect to the 24-inch delivery pipeline. The 18-inch diameter basin inlets each would be piped with a box inlet structure surrounded by grouted rip rap keyed into the basin floor for erosion control.

Access to the new facilities would be provided from East Avenue U via a 20-foot wide road that would encircle the recharge basins and connect to the existing road that provides access to the Eastside Water Bank facilities. The road would be constructed with a Class 2 aggregate base surface. Additionally, the entire perimeter of the project site would be enclosed with chain link fencing. Security lighting similar to the lighting at the existing Eastside Water Bank would be installed. In accordance with the Los Angeles County Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance, lighting would be directed toward the project site and designed not to create light trespass. Maintenance activities would consist of a few monthly trips concurrent with maintenance of the existing facility.

Project construction is anticipated to start as early as August 2021 and occur over an approximately five month period, during daylight hours after 7 A.M. Construction of the access road circling the proposed basins would require the import of approximately 25 truckloads of aggregate from a quarry approximately two miles west of the project site. All grading and soil moving cut/fill activities would be balanced on-site (i.e., no import or export of soil). Equipment would include typical construction equipment such as a grader, dozer, excavator, and vibratory roller. Worker activities at the site are anticipated to require up to 10 trips per day for clearing and grubbing and grading activities, and 20 trips per day for fencing and pipeline installation activities.

Additionally, during both construction and operation all developed areas would be stabilized. The project contractor would prepare and implement a Fugitive Dust Plan per Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) guidelines that would include the following or other measures with the equivalent level of reduction:

- All materials excavated or graded would be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive dust. Watering would occur at least twice daily with complete coverage of disturbed soil areas and unpaved/untreated roads in areas with active operations.
- Areas disturbed by clearing, earth moving, or excavation activities would be minimized at all times.
- All clearing, grading, earth-moving, or excavation activities would cease during periods of high winds (i.e., greater than 35 miles per hour averaged over one hour) so as to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- Stockpiles of soil or other fine loose material would be stabilized by watering or other appropriate method such as non-toxic soil binders to prevent wind-blown fugitive dust.
- On-site vehicle speed on unimproved roads would be limited to 15 miles per hour.
- Streets adjacent to the project site would be kept clean and project-related accumulated silt would be removed to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

The project also would be required to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Generally, a SWPPP demonstrates how water quality during and post construction would be maintained in accordance with mandated objectives. More specifically, the SWPPP would include temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary revegetation or other ground cover) to be employed to control erosion as well as measures for containment of hazardous materials (e.g., fuels, lubricants).

Project Objectives

The objective of the project is to expand the recovery and recharge capacity of the existing 80-acre Eastside Water Bank facility. The water bank allows AVEK to store water in the local aquifer through groundwater recharge in normal and wet years for use in times of water shortages. In addition, production from the recovery wells is blended with treated State Project Water at the Eastside WTP to ensure compliance with the Federal Disinfection By-Product (DBP) regulations.

Project Approval

AVEK is both the project proponent and the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In its role as Lead Agency, AVEK is responsible for ensuring the adequacy of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). Permits and approvals from other agencies also would be required for the proposed project. Table 1 below summarizes these required permits and approvals.

Table 1 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS		
Permit/Approval	Permitting/ Approving Agency	Permit/Approval Trigger
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit)	State Water Resources Control Board Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board	Prior to ground disturbance
Encroachment permit for work in the public right-of-way	Los Angeles County	Prior to work in public roadways or easements
Section 11672.60 of the California Health and Safety Code – Drinking Water Source Assessment and Protection Plan	California Department of Public Health	Prior to operation
Operating Permit Amendment		
Approval of Joshua tree relocation plan and take authorization for Joshua trees	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Prior to the issuance of a grading permit
1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement		
Waste Discharge Requirement	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board	Prior to construction


III. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below will be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

IV. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation that follows:

<input type="checkbox"/> The proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the general exemption (CEQA Guidelines, 15061 (b)(3)), a statutory exemption, and/or a categorical exemption, and that if a categorical exemption, none of the exceptions to the exemption apply. A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION will be prepared.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 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, no further environmental document is required. FINDINGS consistent with this determination will be prepared.	
	2/5/2021
Signature Dwayne Chisam, P.E., General Manager/Chief Engineer	Date For: Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency

V. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section evaluates the potential environmental effects of the proposed project using the environmental checklist from the State CEQA Guidelines as amended. The definitions of the response column headings include the following:

- A. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- B. “Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from earlier analyses may be cross-referenced).
- C. “Less Than Significant Impact” applies where the project creates no significant impacts, only less than significant impacts.
- D. “No Impact” applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. “No Impact” answers do not require an explanation if they are adequately supported by the information sources cited by the lead agency which show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

I. Aesthetics

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** Scenic vistas are generally defined as public viewpoints that provide expansive or notable views of a highly valued landscape and are typically identified in planning documents, such as a general plan, but can also include locally known areas or locations where high-quality public

views are available. The Los Angeles County General Plan recognizes that the coastline, mountain vistas, and other scenic features of the region are a significant resource. Further, the unincorporated areas contain scenic areas and diverse topographic, geologic, and vegetative features.

The desert portion of Antelope Valley offers diverse geological and physiographic features, and is surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, the Liebre and Sierra Pelona Mountains to the southwest, the Tehachapi Mountains to the northwest, and desert valley/mountain terrain in San Bernardino County to the east. Because of the unique geologic characteristics and varying climate within the Antelope Valley, a diversity of animal and plant habitats extend throughout this area. The geologic and biological diversity of Antelope Valley sets the tone for scenic resources within the region. Many scenic resources within the Antelope Valley have been preserved as open space, including the Los Padres and Angeles National Forests; several state parks, wildlife sanctuaries, regional parks, and other local park lands; and lakes, reservoirs, and other water features. Scenic vistas are provided within these resources and encompass views of an area that are visually or aesthetically pleasing.

The project site is comprised of land that primarily contains creosote bush scrub that exhibits signs of human disturbance, such as illegal trash dumping. The site is relatively level with an elevation range of approximately 2,850 feet AMSL in the northern portion of the site to 2,900 feet AMSL in the southern portion of the site. In general, the areas within the immediate vicinity of the project site are within a similar elevation range of the project site. Currently there are no features that obstruct views across the site and based on the topographic and vegetation characteristics, nearby views of the site are not considered scenic. The project includes grading, excavation, and removal of vegetation to accommodate the installation of the three basins and associated infrastructure. CEQA considers public viewpoints, which in the area of the project site, consist of the surrounding roadways. Views would change from vacant land with sparse creosote vegetation to the open basins. There are no pedestrian facilities along these roadways; thus, primarily it is the views from vehicles that would be altered, which would be brief and as noted, the site does not contain elements of a scenic vista.

Although CEQA considers public views, it is noted that there are private residences east of the site, the nearest being directly adjacent on the east side of 106th Street East. However, the prominent project features, the earthen basins, would not obstruct views across the site as the highest point of water retention in the basins would be nearly level with the surrounding elevation. The three-foot berms that would surround the basins would not be of a height to obstruct view. The project would be an extension of the existing Eastside Water Bank uses west of the project, thereby not introducing incompatible visual features. Project fencing would be similar to the fencing that encloses the existing facility, comprised of chain link fencing that would provide visibility across the site. Temporary construction-related effects on views could occur with regard to staging areas and construction of the project facilities; however, these would not result in significant impacts due to their short-term, temporary nature.

Thus, given that the project would not be a significant departure from existing visual conditions within and surrounding the project site and that no scenic vistas would be disturbed or obstructed, no impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

- b. **No Impact.** The Los Angeles County General Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Element recognizes that scenic resources consist of designated scenic highways and corridors (or routes), and hillsides and ridgelines (County 2015b). The project site and surrounding areas are characterized by vacant land that consists of fallow farmland or supporting creosote brush and lands that are sparsely developed with little topographic relief. Neither the Caltrans State Scenic Highway Program nor the Los Angeles County General Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Element identifies any state

scenic highways within visible proximity to the project site. The only designated scenic highway within Antelope Valley is the Angeles Crest Highway, located over 10 miles south the project site within the Angeles National Forest/San Gabriel Mountains. Accordingly, the project would not result in impacts to scenic resources within a state scenic highway. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

- c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project is in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County near the communities of Pearblossom and Littlerock. The site and surrounding area are not considered urbanized. Existing development includes the existing Eastside Water Bank to the west, Scattaglia Farms to the southwest, and scattered residences to the east. The project is the expansion of the existing Eastside Water Bank to the west and involves the installation of three basins and associated infrastructure. Thus, the project is an extension of existing land uses and would not introduce new features or elements not already present in the project area. Specifically, similar to the existing facilities to the west of the project site, the site would be constructed with three earthen recharge basins, have a 20-foot access road, and chain link fencing. Three-foot berms would encompass the basins and the basin themselves would be or earthen materials. Construction activities associated with the project (i.e., grading and excavation) would result in short-term visual effects. During the construction period, the presence of construction vehicles, debris piles, and lay down areas would slightly impact the visual qualities of the landscape in the immediate vicinity. As noted above under Item 1.a, construction-related visual impacts would be temporary, localized, and generally not observable and would therefore be less than significant.

Given that the proposed project would not be a substantial departure from the existing visual character of the project site and immediate vicinity, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings. Visual character and quality impacts would be less than significant.

- d. **Less than Significant Impact.** In the short term, construction activities would occur during daylight hours; thus, not necessitating the need for lighting, apart from security lighting to prevent theft or destruction of materials and equipment. Such lighting would be directed inward and downward to provide localized illumination. In the long term, the project would include the installation of security lighting at the site. This security lighting would be similar in nature to the lighting at the existing Eastside Water Bank and the adjacent agricultural plant (Scattaglia Farms). In accordance with the Los Angeles County Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance, lighting would be directed toward the project site and designed not to create light trespass. With the required adherence to ordinance regulations, light impacts would be less than significant.

In relation to glare, additional water surface, created by the retention of water in the recharge basins, may create a limited source of light reflection or glare during peak water levels. However, each groundwater basin cell would be surrounded by approximately three-foot berms with one foot of freeboard, which would limit the amount of glare exiting the basin. Glare impacts would be less than significant.

2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</p>				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farm-land 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** The project area is designated as “Other Land” by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) (Department of Conservation 2016). Other Land is land that is not suitable to be categorized as any other FMMP classification. Common examples include low-density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities; strip mines; borrow pits; and water bodies

smaller than 40 acres. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- b. **No Impact.** The project site is zoned for heavy agricultural uses (A-2-1); however, the site is not currently utilized for agricultural uses. The project site is not within Williamson Act contract land. The project would be a continuation of the existing Eastside Water Bank, immediately west of the site. Surrounding land uses to the north and east are also zoned A-2-1; while the surrounding land is largely comprised of native habitat, there are irrigated agricultural uses to the north on an adjacent property. None of the adjacent properties is within a Williamson Act contract. Project implementation does not include any activities that would prevent surrounding land uses from being used for agricultural purposes. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- c. **No Impact.** Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) defines “forest land” as land that can support 10 percent native cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. No forest land occurs within or adjacent to the project site. Moreover, no land zoned as forest land or timberland exists within the project site or within its vicinity. As discussed further in Section V.4, *Biological Resources* below, the site supports Joshua trees and other desert species, and fallow agricultural land, none of which constitutes a forest. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland, and no impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- d. **No Impact.** As stated in Item 2.c, the project site is not in an area designated as forest land. Accordingly, project construction and operation would not convert forest land to non-forest use, and no impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- e. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not involve other changes (i.e., beyond those previously described) that would directly impact agricultural or forest lands or introduce new elements into the landscape that would contribute to future conversion of agricultural use to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

3. Air Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c. 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 (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less than Significant Impact.** The project site is within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The MDAB is comprised of four air districts, including the AVAQMD. The AVAQMD's area of responsibility covers approximately 1,300 square miles of arid valley within the northeastern portion of Los Angeles County, including the project site and vicinity. The AVAQMD develops and administers local regulations for stationary air pollutant sources within its portion of the MDAB, and also develops plans and programs to meet attainment requirements for both National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS).

Air quality is defined by ambient air concentrations of six specific pollutants, called criteria pollutants, identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to be of concern with respect to the health and welfare of the general public. These pollutants include ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (including both particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter [PM₁₀] and particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter [PM_{2.5}]), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb). Criteria pollutants can be emitted directly from sources (primary pollutants; e.g., CO, SO₂, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, and lead), or they may be formed through chemical and photochemical reactions of precursor pollutants in the atmosphere (secondary pollutants; e.g., ozone, NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}). Note that PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} can be both primary and secondary pollutants. The principal precursor pollutants of concern are reactive organic gases (ROGs, also known as volatile organic compounds [VOCs]) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). The MDAB is classified as a nonattainment area for state and federal ozone standards, a nonattainment area for state PM₁₀ standards, and in attainment or unclassified (meaning there is insufficient data to determine attainment status) for all other NAAQS and CAAQS pollutants (AVAQMD 2016).

The proposed project is required to comply with the applicable provisions of the AVAQMD, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the USEPA. The AVAQMD and CARB are the responsible agencies for developing attainment plans to achieve attainment with the NAAQS, and the USEPA reviews and approves these plans. CARB has issued a number of CAAQS. These standards include pollutants not covered under the NAAQS and also control some pollutants to more stringent levels than those in the corresponding NAAQS. Pollutants regulated under these standards include ozone, NO₂, CO, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, Pb, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility reducing particles. The AVAQMD has adopted several related Air Quality Management Plans (AQMPs), most recently, the federal 8-hour ozone attainment plan, adopted in 2008 (AVAQMD 2008).

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the regional planning agency for Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial counties. SCAG addresses regional issues relating to transportation, economy, community development, and environment. With regard to air quality planning, SCAG has prepared the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG), which includes Growth Management and Regional Mobility chapters that form the basis for the land use and transportation control portions of the AQMP. The RCPG is used in the preparation of the air quality forecasts and consistency analysis included in the AQMP. Both the RCPG and AQMP are based, in part, on projections originating with county and city general plans.

The proposed project would include the construction and operation groundwater recharge basins associated with the existing Eastside Water Bank. As discussed in Item 13.a, under *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not result in population growth. Because the project does not include growth-generating components, it would be consistent with projections contained in the County's General Plan, and thus, consistent with SCAG and AQMP forecasts. In addition, as discussed in Item 3.b, below, emissions of criteria pollutants and ozone precursors would not exceed the AVAQMD thresholds. Because the proposed project is consistent with the local general plan and the regional growth management plan, pursuant to AVAQMD guidelines, it also would be considered consistent with the AQMP. Accordingly, project-related emissions are accounted for in the AQMP. The project would not conflict with the applicable air quality plan and the impact would be less than significant.

- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** As stated in Item 3.a, the MDAB is classified as a nonattainment area for ozone and PM₁₀. The proposed project is not anticipated to result in operational air quality impacts because the project involves the construction of recharge basins and associated pipelines, which are passive uses. Operational activities would be limited to periodic maintenance visits that would occur concurrent with maintenance of the existing facilities. Therefore, the project would result in negligible operational emissions of criteria pollutants and ozone precursors; however, temporary construction-related air quality impacts would occur. Temporary air quality impacts would result from construction activities, including clearing and grubbing, fencing installation, pipeline excavation and installation, access road construction, and basin berm construction. Construction of the project is anticipated to start as early as August 2021 and be completed in approximately five months.

Criteria pollutant and precursor emissions from the project's construction activities were calculated using CalEEMod, version 2016.3.2. CalEEMod is a computer model used to estimate air emissions resulting from land development projects throughout the state of California. CalEEMod was developed by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with the California air quality management and pollution control districts. The calculation methodology, source of emission factors used, and default data are described in the CalEEMod User's Guide Appendices A, D, and E (CAPCOA 2017).

Construction activities would result in the generation of criteria pollutants and ozone precursors from the exhaust of off-road equipment and from the exhaust of vehicles traveling to and from the project site. Modeling assumptions for the off-road equipment required for construction of the project were developed based on project-specific information provided by the project engineer and CalEEMod default values. Modeling assumptions for worker vehicle trips during construction were based on a conservative (highest anticipated) estimate of 10 trips per day for clearing and grubbing and grading activities, and 20 trips per day for fencing and pipeline installation activities. Construction of the access road circling the proposed basins would require the import of approximately 25 truckloads of aggregate from a quarry approximately 2 miles west of the project site. All other grading and soil moving cut/fill activities would be balanced on-site (i.e., no import or export of soil). The complete

modeling assumptions and input are included in Appendix A, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculations, of this IS/MND.

Construction activities would result in the generation of fugitive dust (i.e., PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} that become airborne as a direct or indirect result of human activities) from equipment disturbing soil and from vehicles and equipment moving over unpaved road and disturbed areas. Project construction activities would be required to comply with the AVAQMD Rule 401, *Visible Emissions*, and Rule 403, *Fugitive Dust*. The project would be required to implement Reasonably Available Control Measures to control fugitive dust emissions during construction. Accordingly, the project contractor would prepare and implement a Fugitive Dust Plan per AVAQMD guidelines that would include the following or other measures with the equivalent level of reduction:

- All materials excavated or graded would be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive dust. Watering would occur at least twice daily with complete coverage of disturbed soil areas and unpaved/untreated roads in areas with active operations.
- Areas disturbed by clearing, earth moving, or excavation activities would be minimized at all times.
- All clearing, grading, earth-moving, or excavation activities would cease during periods of high winds (i.e., greater than 35 miles per hour averaged over one hour) so as to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- Stockpiles of soil or other fine loose material would be stabilized by watering or other appropriate method such as non-toxic soil binders to prevent wind-blown fugitive dust.
- On-site vehicle speed on unimproved roads would be limited to 15 miles per hour.
- Streets adjacent to the project site would be kept clean and project-related accumulated silt would be removed to prevent excessive amounts of dust.

The results of the modeling of the project's construction emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors are shown and compared to the AVAQMD thresholds in Table 2, *Maximum Daily Construction Emissions*. The complete modeling output is included in Appendix A to this initial study. As shown in Table 2, the project's construction activities would not result in emissions of criteria pollutants and ozone precursors in excess of the AVAQMD thresholds. Therefore, the project would not violate an applicable air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 2
MAXIMUM DAILY CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS**

Construction Activity	Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	NO _x	CO	SO _x	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
Clear and Grub	1.1	10.7	7.5	<0.0	0.6	0.4
Fencing Installation	0.7	5.6	6.6	<0.0	0.5	0.3
Pipeline Construction	1.0	9.7	9.5	<0.0	0.9	0.5
Access Road Grading	0.7	7.9	4.4	<0.0	1.6	0.4
Access Road Surface	1.1	14.6	8.8	<0.0	7.9	1.3
Basin Berm Construction	0.7	7.9	4.4	<0.0	1.6	0.4
Maximum Daily Emissions	1.1	14.6	9.5	<0.0	7.9	1.3
<i>AVAQMD Thresholds</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>548</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>65</i>
Exceed Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A); Thresholds – AVAQMD 2016.

- c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The MDAB is classified as a nonattainment area for ozone and PM₁₀. As discussed in Item 3.a, the project would not violate an air quality standard or generate significant levels of air pollutant emissions. Therefore, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. Impacts would be less than significant.
- d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved and are referred to as sensitive receptors. Examples of these sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. The closest sensitive receptor to the project construction area is a rural single-family residence across 106th Street East, approximately 100 feet east of the project site. Additional single-family residences are located along East Avenue U, approximately 500 feet southeast of the project site. The closest school to the project site is the Keppel Academy, approximately 3,200 feet west of the project construction area. Construction activities would generate diesel emissions from construction equipment. Diesel particulate matter (DPM) is classified by CARB as a Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC) based on published evidence of a relationship between diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer and other adverse health effects. The dose of a TAC to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance in the environment and the extent of exposure a person has with the substance; a longer exposure period to a fixed amount of emissions would result in higher health risks. Current models and methodologies for conducting cancer health risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods (typically 30 years for individual residents based on guidance from Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment [OEHHA]) and are best suited for evaluation of long-duration TAC emissions with predictable schedules and locations. These assessment models and methodologies do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities. Cancer potency factors are based on animal lifetime studies or worker studies where there is long-term exposure to the carcinogenic agent. There is considerable uncertainty in trying to evaluate the cancer risk from projects that will only last a small fraction of a lifetime (OEHHA 2015). Project construction activities would only occur sporadically near the closest sensitive receptors for a few weeks of the five-month construction period. Considering the rural nature of the project site, the short total construction duration, and the fact that concentrated use of heavy construction equipment would occur at various locations throughout the project site only for short periods, construction of the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial DPM concentrations, and the impact would be less than significant.
- e. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project could produce odors during proposed construction activities resulting from heavy diesel equipment exhaust. The use of diesel equipment would not be

concentrated in any single portion of the construction area for more than a few days. Odors emitted during construction would be temporary, short-term, and intermittent in nature, and would cease upon the completion of project construction activities. Therefore, due to the short duration of the project and dispersal of construction equipment use throughout the project site, odor impacts from construction of the project would be less than significant.

4. Biological Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

A project-specific Biological Resources Letter Report (BRLR) was prepared by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX 2020b) to evaluate biological resources within the project area. The results and conclusions of this report are summarized below and included in entirety in Appendix B, Biological Resources, of this IS/MND.

- a. **Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.** Federal and state endangered or threatened species lists are maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), respectively. Sensitive or special status species represent non-listed species designated as entities such by USFWS, CDFW, local agencies, and special interest groups, such as the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), which publish watch-lists of declining species.

A database search revealed that 22 CNPS sensitive plant species are known to occur in the general vicinity of the project area. Only 1 of the 22 species, Joshua tree, was observed on the project site. Two species, Robbins' nemacladus (*Nemacladus secundiflorus* var. *robbinsii*) and Mojave paintbrush (*Castilleja plagiotoma*), have low potential to occur in the project area and none were observed during site reconnaissance. The remaining 19 species do not have potential to occur in the area. It is noted that a single species, the Gleason paintbrush (*Castilleja gleasoni*) is state-listed as a rare species; however, it was not observed on site during surveys and is not expected to occur on the project site due to the lack of appropriate habitat.

The intent of the California Desert Native Plant Act (CDNPA) is to protect desert native plants from unlawful harvesting on both public and private lands (CDFW 2020). In relation to plant harvesting, the CDNPA divides desert native plants into two categories of sensitivity. Category 1 includes plants that may not be harvested except with a scientific permit and Category 2 includes are plants can only be harvested with a permit issued by the commissioner or the sheriff of the county in which the native plants are growing. The Joshua tree is listed as a Category 2 plant; there are 182 Joshua trees on the project site. Additionally, on September 22, 2020 the CDFW Commission determined that listing the Joshua tree as threatened or endangered may be warranted. It is therefore now considered a candidate species for state listing, and impacts require take authorization from CDFW. The project site contains two additional CDNPA sensitive plant species: the chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*) and golden cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*). These species were present in small numbers (less than 20 each).

During construction Joshua trees would be avoided to the greatest extent possible in the temporary impact areas within the entire 160-acre parcel, including areas around the basin and along the pipeline alignment. Yet, the proposed project would result in impacts to approximately 79 Joshua trees as part of the disturbance of the 74 acres that encompass the area of permanent impact for the construction of the recharge basins and associated maintenance roads. Impacts to Joshua trees would be avoided during the pipeline installation by placing the pipeline parallel to East Avenue U. Impacts to Joshua tree are considered significant unless mitigated.

Impacts to chaparral yucca and golden cholla, both of which are sensitive in relation to the CDNPA, are anticipated to be less than 10 of each species resulting from construction of the basins. Impacts to these plants are considered significant unless mitigated.

As such, a plan would be developed to outline the specifics of the proposed mitigation to compensate for impacts to plants protected under the CDNPA and the California Endangered Species Act. The plan is proposed to include the transplanting of existing trees and propagation from seed for mitigation of Joshua tree impacts. This plan would be used to apply for a take authorization for Joshua trees.

To reduce potential impacts to this sensitive plant species to less than significant levels, the following mitigation measure will be implemented:

BIO-1

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall prepare a relocation plan approved by CDFW and receive CDFW authorization for removal of Joshua trees. In addition, the applicant shall retain a certified arborist as that shall transplant Joshua tree, golden cholla, and chaparral yucca specimens within the impact zone.² Specimens appropriate for transplantation include unbranched Joshua trees under two meters, all golden cholla, and chaparral yucca less than 18 inches tall and 12 inches wide that have not flowered. All specimens shall be transplanted in the eastern portion of the project site that is outside of the 74 acres of disturbance for the recharge basins and not within the impact area of the access road, pipeline, or fencing. Transplantation shall occur within the fall and winter months (and should be transplanted as close to the date they are dug up as feasible). Plants should be deep watered following transplanting, and again once every three to four months for the first year following transplant. Timing of transplantation and appropriate watering schedule may be adjusted by qualified arborist.²

There are 25 sensitive animal species known to occur in the general vicinity of the project site. Eight of the 25 species are listed at the federal or state level. These listed species include the federally and state listed as endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and Sierra Madre yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), the federally listed as endangered and state species of concern arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) and San Bernardino kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami parvus*), the federally and state listed as threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), the state listed as threatened Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*) and Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and the federally proposed to be listed as threatened and state species of concern mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*). An additional species of note is a state species of concern, the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a ground-nesting raptor. The project site does not contain suitable habitat for the least Bell's vireo, Sierra Madre yellow-legged frog, arroyo toad, San Bernardino kangaroo rat Swainson's hawk and mountain plover also are not expected to occur. However, the project area does support suitable habitat for desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and burrowing owl, as well as nesting migratory birds and raptors. Potential impacts to these species are discussed below.

Desert Tortoise. In the Mojave Desert, typical desert tortoise habitat consists of creosote bush scrub with a high diversity of perennials. During the initial habitat assessment, the habitat within the survey areas was considered to include a mix of land with low to moderate potential habitat and habitat not suitable for desert tortoise based on vegetation communities, elevation, and location within the current and historic range of the species.

The USFWS requires desert tortoise protocol surveys for projects that are within the range of the species and contain suitable habitat on site (USFWS 2010). Accordingly, a USFWS protocol presence/absence survey for this species was conducted by HELIX in the spring of 2020. Burrows observed on site consisted of those used by small or medium rodents or other animals, not desert tortoise. Many of the burrows observed had been partially excavated by canine activity. Desert tortoise scat, scutes, track, and other signs were not observed. Based on the lack of desert tortoise burrows, low quality of the habitat, and the fact that no desert tortoise or tortoise signs were observed during the 2020 protocol surveys, desert tortoise is presumed to be absent from the survey area. In

² A certified arborist as defined by the County of Los Angeles Urban Forestry Manual is an Individual who obtained arborist certification from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) based on knowledge and competence, and who receives on regular basis continuing education administered by the ISA.

addition, given the currently occurring human disturbance, development, and trash adjacent to the site, it is unlikely that desert tortoise would occur on the site. No impacts would occur in relation to this species.

Mohave Ground Squirrel. The Mohave ground squirrel is found in a variety of desert scrub habitats, including creosote bush scrub. The Mohave ground squirrel is most often found in sandy soils in or near alluvial fans, but also is found in gravelly soils. As previously discussed, currently the project site is comprised of creosote bush scrub, Great Basin scrub, and developed land. In spring 2020 the project site was assessed for the presence of Mohave ground squirrel in accordance with the CDFW Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Mohave ground squirrel trapping. During both visual observations and trappings, no Mohave ground squirrels were detected and thus it is concluded that no impacts would occur in relation to this species.

Burrowing Owl. The focused burrowing owl survey was conducted according to the CDFW burrowing owl survey guidelines (CDFW 2012). No burrowing owls were observed on or adjacent to the study area. Burrows with potential to support burrowing owl were noted on the project site and mapped; however, no sign of burrowing owl occupation was observed in the study area. No burrowing owls are present within the study area or surrounding buffer zone. However, since the study area was determined to have potential to support burrowing owl, potential impacts to this species are considered significant unless mitigated. The following mitigation shall occur to reduce impacts to nesting birds to less than significant.

BIO-2 In accordance with the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation, a pre-construction survey shall be conducted within 14 days prior to initiating ground disturbing activities. If there is a time lapse of 14 days or more between the pre-construction survey and start of project activities, per CDFW protocol, an additional pre-construction survey shall be conducted. The pre-construction survey shall consist of a single survey covering the entire study area. The survey shall be conducted using transects no wider than 20 meters and include a survey (at least visually) of a 500-foot buffer where potential burrowing owl habitat occurs adjacent to the study area. Additionally, a final survey is required within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance.

If a burrowing owl is observed on site during the pre-construction survey the burrow is required to be avoided if feasible. The avoidance buffer shall be 50 meters between October 16 and March 31, and 200 meters from April 1 to October 15 (CDFW 2012). If avoidance is not feasible, a relocation plan shall be developed and submitted to CDFW for approval.

Nesting Birds. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503.5 prohibit direct take of nesting birds. In addition, the California Fish and Game Code Section 3500 restricts activities that would result in indirect take of a bird nest. Birds in Los Angeles County can nest in trees, shrubs, utility poles, buildings, and the ground. Several species of birds were observed nesting within the eastern portion of the study area. Nesting species observed include common raven (*Corvus corax*), cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*), and mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*). Clearing of on-site vegetation should occur outside the breeding season (March 1 to August 31) in order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds if feasible. However, if clearing cannot be avoided during the breeding season, impacts would be considered

potentially significant and the following mitigation shall occur to reduce impacts to nesting birds to less than significant:

BIO-3 A nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to clearing activities that occur between March 1 and August 31. A nesting raptor survey shall occur prior to ground- or vegetation-disturbing activities between January 1 and August 31. In particular, the Joshua trees on site shall be surveyed prior to disturbance during this period.

If nesting birds are present, an appropriate buffer, between 50 and 500 feet depending on the species, shall be established by the biologist, and vegetation removal/construction within the buffer shall be delayed until the nesting cycle is completed.

- b. **No Impact.** The study is comprised of creosote bush scrub, Great Basin scrub, disturbed habitat, and developed land, none of which is a sensitive habitat. The project site does not contain riparian areas or sensitive natural communities. Thus, no impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- c. **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** As part of the general biological assessment, the site was searched for signs of drainage courses, waterways, or other areas that could be subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), CDFW, or State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) jurisdiction. There is a single ephemeral drainage located in the western portion of the project site. The sparse vegetation that is present within the drainage is like that of the adjacent disturbed habitat. This drainage may be the result of road run off and shows signs of recent flows and does not connect to downstream waters. Due to the lack of connection, and the ephemeral nature of this drainage, it was determined to not be a Water of the United States, but it is jurisdictional to CDFW and RWQCB.

The project's proposed 24-inch delivery pipeline would cross this drainage at the location of East Avenue U. This portion of the drainage is disturbed and unvegetated as it is also part of the existing road. The stream jurisdictional width was determined by HELIX to be the same width for both CDFW and RWQCB impacts. At this point the drainage from top of bank to top of bank is approximately 18 feet wide. Temporary impacts are anticipated to be no longer than 20 feet, resulting in temporary impacts to less than 0.01 acre of waters jurisdictional for both the CDFW and RWQCB. These impacts are considered significant unless mitigated.

The project will be required to obtain a 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) from the CDFW and a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) from the Lahontan RWQCB. The impacts are within the allowable range to use General Order 2004-0004 from the RWQCB, which allows for streamlining of the WDR process. It is noted that the portion of the streambed to be impacted is currently unvegetated and disturbed as part of the existing East Avenue U; accordingly, the following mitigation measure is required to reduce impacts to less than significant:

BIO-4 Following completion of project construction, the streambed shall be restored to the pre-project conditions and contour. In the unlikely event that the pipe installation results in the removal of vegetation within the stream adjacent to East Avenue U, the area of vegetation shall be seeded with native vegetation similar to the surrounding habitat.

- d. **No Impact.** According to the Antelope Valley Area Plan (Area Plan), habitat linkages are defined as area within the overall range of a species or suite of species that possess sufficient cover, food, forage, water, and other essential elements to serve as a movement pathway, or between two or more larger areas of habitat. Depending on the species, linkages vary in size. For example, a belt of coastal

sage scrub traversing a golf course, connecting sage scrub habitat areas on either side, providing a safe passage zone for smaller, slower-moving species (such as lizards and rodents) to maintain population connectivity between the two sides of the golf course is one form of habitat linkage. Wildlife corridors, which are areas of open space of sufficient width to permit larger, mobile species (such as foxes, bobcats, and coyote) to pass between larger areas of open space, or to disperse from one major open space region to another, are another type of habitat linkage. Such areas are generally several hundred feet wide, unobstructed, and usually possess cover, food, and water. Regional habitat linkages, which are primarily associated with the Antelope Valley Significant Ecological Area (SEA) are identified in the Conservation and Natural Resource Element of the County General Plan. The project site is not identified as supporting a wildlife corridor (County 2015b). Further, the project site does not contain the characteristics of a corridor, such as large areas of suitable habitat, and the existing facilities to the west and agricultural uses to the north and southwest prevent these areas from being safe passages due to human activities in these areas. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

- e. **Less Than Significant Impact.** There are no local policies or ordinances, including tree preservation ordinances, that are applicable to the project. It is noted, however, that while the County of Los Angeles does not currently have an ordinance protecting Joshua trees, many cities in the Antelope Valley do have such ordinances. The County typically requests that projects avoid impacts or transplant Joshua trees. A total of 79 Joshua trees would be impacted by the project. Incorporation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce impacts to Joshua trees to less than significant. Nonetheless, regardless of whether the on-site Joshua trees are transplanted, impacts would be less than significant because the County does not currently have an ordinance protecting Joshua trees. There are no other applicable policies or ordinances that would be affected, and impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.
- f. **No Impact.** The project area is within the boundaries of the Western Mohave Plan (WMP) and California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment but is not located within one of the Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMAs) that occur in the plan area. The WMP encompasses over nine million acres of land that is comprised of over three million acres each of federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and private land. The WMP only applies to projects on BLM land and does not apply to privately owned land (BLM 2012). The proposed project is not on BLM land and therefore the WMP does not apply.

The Antelope Valley has multiple conservation areas. Conservation areas that occur in the region include Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), DWMAs, and SEAs. The project site does not occur on or adjacent to a designated or proposed conservation area. The closest conservation area is a SEA designated in the Los Angeles County General Plan that is associated with Littlerock Wash to the west and Big Rock Creek/Big Rock Wash to the east (County 2015). The project is over five miles east of the Littlerock Wash reach and four miles west of the Big Rock Creek reach of the adopted Antelope Valley SEA. In addition, a proposed Antelope Valley SEA occurs approximately three miles to the east of the project site. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

5. Cultural Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

A project-specific cultural resources assessment was prepared by PaleoWest Archaeology (Cultural Resource Assessment for the Eastside Water Expansion Phase 1 Project Near the Community of Littlerock, Los Angeles County, California, 2020) to evaluate cultural resources and the potential for the proposed project to impact such resources. The results and conclusions of this report are summarized below.

- a. **No Impact.** As part of the background research, PaleoWest’s existing cultural resources database was reviewed to identify previously recorded cultural resources and studies located within a 0.5-mile radius of the project area. Of note, PaleoWest’s archives includes the 2014 record search that was conducted for the existing Eastside Water Bank. In all, results of this search identified eight prior investigations that have been conducted previously within a 0.5-mile radius of the project area. The search indicated that nine cultural resources have been previously documented within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. These cultural resources include: six historical refuse scatters, a historical refuse scatter with a prehistoric isolated flake, the east branch of the California Aqueduct, and SR 18. None of the nine previously recorded resources is located within the project area.

A cultural resources pedestrian survey of the project site was conducted by PaleoWest archaeologists on July 9, 2020. Numerous concentrations of household refuse and construction debris were noted in the project area. However, the remains appear to be modern with no diagnostic or definitively historical objects.

Due to the lack of historical resources identified in the project site during the review of PaleoWest’s record search archives and discovery of no historical resources on the project site during the pedestrian survey, no impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

- b. **Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.** As discussed in Item 5.a, archival research indicated that nine cultural resources have been previously documented within a 0.5-mile radius of the project site. However, none of the nine previously recorded resources is located within the project

area. During the pedestrian survey of the project site, one prehistoric lithic scatter was discovered on the site. An evaluation of significance indicates that the scatter does not meet the eligibility requirements for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR).

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted on June 16, 2020 for a review of the Sacred Lands File. The NAHC responded on June 29, 2020 stating that the Sacred Lands File search yielded negative results; however, the NAHC requested that 10 individuals representing 8 Native American tribal groups be contacted to elicit information regarding cultural resource issues related to the proposed project. Outreach letters were sent to the 10 recommended individuals on June 29, 2020. At the time of this report, two responses have been received. A reply was received on July 2, 2020 from Jairo Avila on behalf of the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, stating that Tribal records indicate the presence of Tribal cultural resources in areas directly north and south of the project site. Mr. Avila further noted that although cultural resources have not been reported within the project boundaries, a variety of archaeological sites and isolated artifacts have been documented throughout the vicinity. A reply was received on July 2, 2020 from Jill McCormick on behalf of the Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation, stating that the Tribe did not wish to comment on the project and that they would defer to more local Tribes.

In accordance with the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 52, AVEK sent notification to the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI) on September 10, 2020. The Tribe responded on September 24, 2020, requesting additional information. The Tribal representative requested the project's grading information and to receive a copy of the existing Eastside Water Bank Facility's cultural resources report to further evaluate the potential for TCRs to occur at the project site, and these materials were provided.

Tribal consultation occurred on October 29, 2020 between AVEK and a Tribal Historic and Cultural Preservation Officer from the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, and was concluded with a letter from the Tribe to the District on January 10, 2021. During the consultation, the Tribal representative noted Tribal cultural significance of the site due to a cultural resources site identified in the Tribe's records occurring within 0.5 mile of the project (site CA-LAN-4139) and the identification of a prehistoric lithic scatter during PaleoWest's pedestrian survey, as described above. Specifically, the Tribe has indicated that the project area is sensitive for prehistoric and historic Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR). The location is bounded by the Native Villages of *Tomijainga* and *Tameonga*, habitation sites, lithic scatters, isolated finds, and the Little Rock Wash, which has historical and ethnographic significance to the FTBMI. Most of the TCRs are outside of the study area; however, they all share a connection through the prehistoric and historic trails that intersect the project area. The Tribe considers newly discovered lithic scatter to be a TCR. The Tribe also noted that the project is situated in a geologically active area and evidence of earlier prehistoric resources may have been buried by moving sediments. The area has remained relatively undeveloped and it is archaeologically understudied, indicating a higher potential for previously undocumented TCRs within the Project boundary.

Therefore, the Tribe requested Native American monitoring during ground-disturbing activities. The Tribe also requested mitigation measures addressing inadvertent discoveries of TCRs, the development of an Archaeological Treatment Plan if significant cultural resources are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, and stipulations concerning the curation of artifacts. Additionally, if TCRs are discovered at the project site, the Tribe requested that the cultural materials would be reburied or curated at an appropriate facility (see Mitigation Measures CUL-2 through CUL-4 below).

Due to the cultural sensitivity of the project site and the presence of the prehistoric lithic scatter, there is potential for the proposed project to impact unknown archaeological resources. However,

implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, identified below, would reduce these potential impacts to a less than significant level. Further, based on the cultural sensitivity of the site as indicated during Tribal project consultation, there is potential to result in significant impacts to a known TCR as well as additional, unknown subsurface TCRs. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-2 through CUL-4 below would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

CUL-1 In the event that potentially significant cultural materials are encountered during project-related ground-disturbing activities, all work shall be halted in the vicinity of the archaeological discovery until a qualified archaeologist can visit the site of discovery, assess the significance of the archaeological resource, and provide proper management recommendations. If the discovery proves to be significant, additional work, such as data recovery excavation, may be determined necessary by the project archaeologist.

CUL-2 The Lead Agency shall retain a professional Native American monitor procured by the FTBMI Indians to observe all ground disturbing activities up to five feet below the surface of native soil, unless there is evidence to suggest cultural resources extend below the specified depth. Ground disturbing activities includes but are not limited to tree/shrub removal and planting, clearing/grubbing, grading, excavation, trenching, drainage and irrigation removal and installation, and archaeological work. If cultural resources are encountered, the Native American monitor will have the authority to request ground disturbing activities cease within 60-feet of discovery to assess and document potential finds in real time.

CUL-3 If significant pre-contact and/or post-contact cultural resources, as defined by CEQA (as amended, 2015), are discovered and avoidance cannot be ensured, the archaeologist shall develop an Archaeological Treatment Plan (ATP), the drafts of which shall be provided to the FTBMI for review and comment. The ATP will provide details regarding the process for in-field treatment of inadvertent discoveries and the disposition of inadvertently discovered non-funerary resources.

CUL-4 The Lead Agency shall, in good faith, consult with the FTBMI on the disposition and treatment of any TCRs encountered during all ground disturbing activities.

- c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site is not located in one of the 11 significant general fossil localities identified in the County's General Plan EIR. According to PaleoWest (2020), geologic mapping indicates the project area is underlain by Holocene alluvial deposits to an unknown depth consisting of unconsolidated, moderately to well stratified, well-sorted alluvial boulder, cobble, gravel, sand, and silt with a undissected to slightly dissected surface. Additionally, the California Department of Conservation, California Geologic Survey (CGS) identifies the project site as having surficial and underlying materials that consist of younger Quaternary alluvium (CGS 2010). This deposit type exhibits little or no potential for the occurrence of paleontological resources, due to its relatively young age and high energy mode of formation. Based on the previously described nature of the site (i.e., relatively level and encompassing common valley terrain), there are no local features within or adjacent to the project site which are geologically unique. The project would have a less than significant impact in relation to this issue.
- d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** No human remains are anticipated to be discovered during project construction. However, in the event that any human remains are discovered during construction, all work would be halted in the vicinity of the discovery and the County Coroner would be contacted, in accordance with Health and Safety Code 7050.5, CEQA 15064.5(e), and Public Resources Code

5097.98. The County Coroner would follow all appropriate procedures. Impacts to human remains would therefore be less than significant.

6. Geology and Soils

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Expose people or structures to 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a.i. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Seismically induced ground rupture is the physical displacement of faults during an earthquake event. Ground rupture and related effects such as lurching (i.e., the rolling motion of surface materials associated with passing seismic waves) can adversely affect surface and subsurface structures. The project site, like most of Southern California, is within a seismically active region characterized by a series of northwest-trending fault zones associated with the San Andreas Fault System. The project area is not traversed by known faults. Several unnamed

faults are known to occur in the general vicinity of the project area, the closest of which is located approximately 1.5 miles to the southeast. The project area is within three miles of the San Andreas Fault Zone, which is located to the southwest along the base of the San Gabriel Mountains. Although the project area is located within close proximity to several local and regional faults that could impact the site during a seismic event, the project area does not lie within an Alquist-Priolo fault rupture hazard zone, and no known faults or potentially active faults traverse the project area (CGS 2020). While the potential for on-site rupture cannot be completely discounted (e.g., unmapped faults could conceivably underlie the site), the likelihood for such an occurrence is considered low due to the absence of known faulting within or adjacent to the project area. Therefore, impacts related to fault rupture would be less than significant.

- a.ii. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project area is located in seismically active southern California and is likely to be subjected to moderate to strong seismic ground shaking. Seismic shaking at the site could be generated by events on any number of known active and potentially active faults in the region, in particular the nearby San Andreas Fault Zone. Faulting in the region generally comprises a number of northwest-trending faults at the boundary between the Pacific and North American tectonic plates. An earthquake along any of the known active fault zones in the region could result in severe ground shaking and consequently cause injury and/or property damage in the project vicinity. This could potentially result in significant impacts to proposed facilities, such as rupture of proposed pipelines (depending on factors such as event duration, motion frequency, and underlying soil/geologic conditions). The project design, however, would incorporate measures to accommodate projected seismic loading, pursuant to existing guidelines such as the “Greenbook” Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction (Greenbook Committee of Public Works Standards, Inc. 2018) and the California Building Code as codified in the Los Angeles County Municipal Code (Title 26) and the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2. The CBC is based on standard specifications for engineering and construction activities. Based on the incorporation of applicable measures into project design and construction, the potential impacts associated with strong seismic ground shaking are assessed as less than significant.
- a.iii. **No Impact.** Liquefaction is the phenomenon whereby soils lose shear strength and exhibit fluid-like flow behavior. Severe or extended liquefaction can result in significant effects to surface and subsurface facilities through the loss of support and/or foundation integrity. Loose, granular soils are most susceptible to these effects, with liquefaction generally restricted to saturated or near-saturated soils at depths of less than 100 feet. The project area is not within an area, as mapped by the CGS, considered to be at risk for liquefaction (CGS 2020). Accordingly, no impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- a.iv. **No Impact.** The project site is not located within or adjacent to an area with a historical occurrence of landslides or where local topographic, geological, geotechnical or ground-water conditions indicate a potential for landslides to occur (CGS 2020). Further, the project site and surrounding area are relatively flat, with little topographical relief. Specifically, the project site ranges from 2,840 feet AMSL in the northern portion of the site to 2,890 feet AMSL in the southern portion of the site. Given the absence of active faults, the relatively level topography in the project site and surrounding area, and the nature of surface and underlying alluvial materials and geologic characteristics, the potential for seismically induced landslides is very low to nonexistent. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** In all the project would convert 74 acres of fallow agricultural land to support the three basins, additional land would be disturbed for the installation of the 24-inch delivery pipeline, the four 18-inch pipeline connections, and the 20-foot wide access road that would encircle the recharge basins. Soil exposed by construction activities could be subject to erosion if

exposed to heavy rain, winds, or other storm events. There is the potential for soil erosion or loss of topsoil during construction activities as the ground is cleared and graded.

Proposed grading, excavation, and construction activities would increase the potential for erosion and transport of eroded material (sedimentation) both within and downstream of the project area. Specifically, project activities would involve: (1) removal of surface stabilizing features (e.g., vegetation); (2) excavation of existing alluvial materials at recharge basin sites; (3) movement of excavated material to form berms around the basins, and (4) trenching for pipeline installation. The influx of sediment into downstream receiving waters could result in direct effects such as increased turbidity, and would provide a transport mechanism for other contaminants such as hydrocarbons that tend to adhere to sediment particles.

The project would require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit and be required to submit a Notice of Intent to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board for the preparation a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Generally, a SWPPP demonstrates how water quality during and post construction would be maintained in accordance with mandated objectives. Often this is achieved by employing Best Management Practices (BMPs) (see Section 9, Hydrology and Water Quality). Many BMPs designed to protect water quality also serve to reduce soil erosion and loss of topsoil.

The specific BMPs may include the following:

- Preservation of existing vegetation within staging/parking areas where feasible.
- Covering stockpiled, excavated, and/or fill materials to reduce potential off-site sediment transport.
- Use of erosion control devices, such as straw wattles, mulch, mats, and/or geotextiles.
- Use of sediment controls to protect the site perimeter and prevent off-site sediment transport, including measures such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, gravel bags, temporary sediment basins, street sweeping, stabilized construction access points and sediment stockpiles, and use of properly fitted covers for sediment transport vehicles.
- Compliance with local dust control measures.
- Daily backfill, compaction, and/or covering of excavated pipeline trenches to minimize erosion potential.
- Paving of disturbed roadway areas as soon as feasible after completion of trenching.
- Regular inspection and maintenance of all erosion control and sediment catchment facilities to ensure proper function and effectiveness.

During operation, erosion and sedimentation are not considered to be significant as all developed areas would be stabilized. Routine monitoring and maintenance would require use of the 20-foot wide access drive. The roadway would include the application of Class II aggregate materials, which are designed to be tightly compact, thus lessening erosion potential. There would be no other activities that would contribute to erosion or sedimentation. Thus, potential impacts related to erosion would be less than significant.

- c. **No Impact.** As discussed in Items 6.a.iii and 6.a.iv, the project area is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project (CGS 2020). No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- d. **No Impact.** Expansive (or shrink-swell) behavior in soils is attributable to the water-holding capacity of clay minerals, and can adversely affect the integrity of facilities such as pavement, foundations, or underground utilities. Mapped native topsoils within the project area consist predominantly of Hesperia fine sandy loam, with minor areas of Arizo gravelly loamy sand. The expansive potential of both of these soil types is identified as low (U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1970). No impacts would in occur in relation to this issue.
- e. **No Impact.** The proposed project would involve installation of facilities to expand the existing Eastside Water Bank. Septic tanks or other alternative waste water disposal systems would not be a part of the proposed project. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

7. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Greenhouse gases, as defined under California’s AB 32, include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, recognizes that California is a source of substantial amounts of GHG emissions. The statute states that:

Global warming poses a serious threat to the economic wellbeing, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. The potential adverse impacts of global warming include the exacerbation of air quality problems, a reduction in the quality and supply of water to the state from the Sierra snowpack, a rise in sea levels resulting in the displacement of thousands of coastal businesses and residences, damage to marine ecosystems and the natural environment, and an increase in the incidences of infectious diseases, asthma, and other human health-related problems.

To help avert these potential consequences, AB 32 established a State goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, which is a reduction of approximately 16 percent from emissions forecasts at the time of the bill, with further reductions to follow. In addition, AB 32 required CARB to develop a Scoping Plan to help the State achieve the targeted GHG emission reductions. In 2015, Executive Order (EO) B-30-15 established a California GHG emission reduction

target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The EO aligns California’s GHG emission reduction targets with those of leading international governments, including the 28-nation European Union. California is on track to meet or exceed the target of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, as established in AB 32. As a follow-up to AB 32 and in response to EO-B-30-15, Senate Bill (SB) 32 was passed by the California legislature in 2016 to codify the EO’s California GHG emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The most recent update to the Scoping Plan was adopted in December 2017 and establishes a proposed framework for California to meet the SB 32 reduction target (CARB 2017).

GHG emissions are measured in units of pounds or tons of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e).³ While the County has not adopted GHG emissions significance thresholds, AVAQMD has established a significance threshold of 100,000 metric tons of CO₂e emissions per year, and a daily significance threshold of 548,000 pounds for a project (AVAQMD 2016). The project’s construction period GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod, as described in Section 3, Air Quality. The complete modeling input and output are included in Appendix A to this IS/MND. The project is expected to generate maximum daily GHG emissions of 2,279 pounds CO₂e and total construction period GHG emissions of 58 tons CO₂e. These emissions would be well below the AVAQMD annual and daily GHG thresholds. Amortized (averaged) over the anticipated 30-year lifespan of the project, the project’s construction would contribute approximately 1.9 tons CO₂e per year to global GHG emissions. Once operational, the project would not be a substantial source of GHG emissions. Therefore, the project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment, and impacts would be less than significant.

- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in Item 7.a, above, the proposed project would result in negligible amounts of GHG emissions. The proposed project would not result in emissions that would adversely affect state-wide attainment of GHG emission reduction goals as described in AB 32, SB 32, and the CARB Scoping Plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, and impacts would be less than significant.

8. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³ The effect each GHG has on climate change is measured as a combination of the volume of its emissions, and its global warming potential (GWP). The global warming potential is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere and is expressed as a function of how much warming would be caused by the same mass of CO₂. CO₂ has a GWP of 1; CH₄ has a GWP of 25; and N₂O has a GWP of 298.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Materials and waste are generally considered hazardous if they are poisonous (toxicity), can be ignited by open flame (ignitability), corrode other materials (corrosivity), or react violently, explode, or generate vapors when mixed with water (reactivity). The term “hazardous material” is defined in the State Health and Safety Code (Chapter 6.95, Section 25501[o]) as any material that, because of quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment. Hazardous waste is defined as any hazardous material that is abandoned, discarded, or recycled, as defined in the State Health and Safety Code (Chapter 6.95, Section 25125). The transportation, use, and disposal of hazardous materials, as well as the potential releases of hazardous materials to the environment, are closely regulated through many state and federal laws.

During the project construction period, hazardous substances used to maintain and operate construction equipment (such as fuel, lubricants, adhesives, and solvents) would be present. The use of these materials could potentially result in significant impacts through accidental discharge associated with use and storage of hazardous materials. The transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and/or wastes would be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. In addition, implementation of the proposed project would require conformance with the NPDES Construction General Permit, as described in Section 6, *Geology and Soils*. Specifically, this would entail implementation of a SWPPP to address the use of hazardous materials and the potential discharge of contaminants including construction-related hazardous wastes through the installation of appropriate BMPs. While specific BMPs would be determined during the SWPPP process, the suite

of BMPs would include standard industry measures and guidelines contained in the NPDES Construction Permit text and Stormwater Best Management Practices Construction Handbook (CASQA 2009). Based on implementation of appropriate BMPs, potential impacts associated with construction-related hazardous materials and/or wastes would be less than significant.

In relation to operational hazardous materials and/or wastes, the existing Eastside Water Bank facility utilizes a sodium hypochlorite chlorination system to chlorinate and disinfect raw water produced by the extraction wells. However, the expansion project does not include extraction wells and therefore would not include the use of such chemicals. Yet, as an expansion of the existing facility, the project would be included in the facility's Emergency Action Plan. The intent of the Emergency Action Plan is to reduce the risks associated with the use of on-site regulated chemicals. The project would not interfere with implementation of the Emergency Action Plan and would not require additional measures or precautions, as it would not introduce new hazardous materials or wastes. The project involves the construction of recharge basins, associated pipelines, and an access road and as noted. Operation of the proposed infrastructure would not require the use of hazardous materials. Therefore, operation-related hazardous materials and/or waste impacts would be less than significant.

- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** During project construction, the use of construction equipment would require fuels, oil, sealants, and other hazardous materials related to construction. As with most construction, there is the possibility of accidental release of a hazardous substance during typical construction activities. However, as discussed above under items 6.b and 9.a, a SWPPP would be prepared and implemented, in compliance with the requirements of the RWQCB. The SWPPP would identify BMPs for hazardous materials handling and controlling runoff discharged from the site during project construction. Additionally, the transport and use of such hazardous materials would cease following construction. Therefore, with the adherence to required regulations, impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.
- c. **No Impact.** The nearest school, Keppel Academy, is located approximately 0.6 mile west of the project site. While small amounts of hazardous materials (i.e., fuel, lubricants, etc.) would be present in the project area during construction, these materials would be typical of those used at construction sites and would be handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Standard construction procedures and the distance between the school and the project area would prevent the use of these materials from causing a significant hazard to the nearby school or its students and staff. Post construction, the project would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, nor would it result in hazardous emissions. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- d. **No Impact.** Government Code 65962.5 requires that the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Department of Health Services (DHS), the SWRCB, and any local enforcement agency, as designated by Section 18051, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, identify and update annually a list of sites that have been reported to have certain types of contamination. The DTSC EnviroStor database and the SWRCB Geo Tracker databases were consulted to identify if the project site or surrounding nearby properties are on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code 65962.5 (DTSC, SWRCB 2020). A review of both the Envirostor and GeoTracker databases on July 23, 2020 did not identify the project site or properties within 1,000 feet of the project site on either database. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- e. **No Impact.** The closest public airport to the project area is the Palmdale Regional Airport, located approximately 10 miles northwest of the project area. The project area is not within an Airport Influence Area or Accident Potential Zone, as designated by the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan, nor is the project area located within an airport land use plan area or airport compatibility

zone (Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission 1991). Thus, the placement of three recharge basins, as well as underground pipelines and an access road, would not result in safety hazards associated with airports. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- f. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Los Angeles County General Plan Figure 12.6, Disaster Routes Map (County 2015b) indicates that SR 14 and SR 138 are major freeway disaster routes in the area and that there are several highway disaster routes within the vicinity. The project involves the construction of three recharge basins and associated pipelines, in addition to an access road along the perimeter of the lot encompassing the proposed basins. East Avenue U is a dirt road in the vicinity of the project site and project design does not include improvements or alterations to existing roadways and would not involve a full or partial lane closure to roadways. During construction of the project, heavy construction vehicles could interfere with emergency response to the site or emergency evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency (e.g., vehicles traveling behind a slow-moving truck). However, such trips would be both brief and infrequent. During operation of the proposed project, there would be virtually no increase in traffic that would lead to congestion on surrounding roadways because operation of the project would not result in a substantial increase in employees or population. Therefore, the project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.
- g. **No Impact.** According to the Los Angeles County General Plan Figure 12.5 Fire Hazard Severity Zone Policy Map, the project site is not located in a fire hazard zone. Additionally, a review of the CAL FIRE Fire Severity Zone Maps indicate that the project area is not located within an area designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ; CAL FIRE 2011). The proposed project would not involve habitable buildings and the operation of the four recharge basins and associate infrastructure would not expose people or structures to a significant risk or loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

9. Hydrology and Water Quality

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional resources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area, structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Potential water quality impacts associated with the proposed project would be limited to short-term construction-related erosion/sedimentation and on-site use/storage of materials such as vehicle fuels and lubricants. Based on the nature of the proposed project (i.e., constructing water recharge basins, associated pipelines, and access road), no potential long-term impacts to water quality would result. As required under the NPDES, administered by the RWQCB (and described in Sections 6 and 9), a SWPPP would be prepared and implemented for the proposed project. The plan would address erosion control measures that would be implemented to avoid erosion impacts to exposed soil associated with construction activities. More specifically, the SWPPP would include temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary revegetation or other ground cover) to be employed to control erosion from disturbed areas. Measures for the control of pollutants during construction include:

- Use existing access points to minimize dust and tracking materials onto public streets;
- Designated and clearly delineated (e.g., with temporary fencing) parking, storage, fueling and service areas located outside of drainages, protected by silt fence and oil absorbents, and sloped to control drainage;
- Minimize diesel storage;

- Stockpile spill cleanup materials;
- Regular vehicle inspection for leaks;
- Fuel off-channel with a secondary containment system for spills;
- Use quick connects whenever possible;
- Fueling by Authorized Personnel only;
- Spill cleanup materials readily available; and
- Implement good housekeeping measures, such as appropriate trash storage and disposal, and regular (weekly) removal.

Operation of the project would involve the storing of surplus State Water Project (SWP) raw water, which would be recharged into local groundwater. The effect of the proposed project on groundwater quality is analyzed with regard to the difference in SWP water quality compared to indigenous water quality, because the mixing of SWP and indigenous water may affect the overall quality of water available for use. The quality of SWP water supplies is monitored by the California Department of Water Resources on a routine basis to determine levels of dissolved solids and concentrations of nutrients, chloride, sulfate, sodium, trace metals, and other constituents.

The project site is within the jurisdiction of the Lahontan RWQCB and the Lahontan RWQCB Basin Plan identifies the water quality objectives and provisions that are intended to protect groundwater (Lahontan RWQCB 2019). In general, the Basin Plan stresses non-degradation of groundwater. The project would utilize SWP raw water supplies and would not introduce treated water supplies or reclaimed water to the groundwater basins. Because SWP supplies are required to meet drinking water standards, they would not impair the beneficial uses of groundwater in the AVEK service area. The project would be in compliance with the provisions of the applicable state and regional policies, and impacts to groundwater quality would be less than significant.

- b. **No Impact.** The project would store surplus SWP water that would act to recharge the local groundwater basin, thereby the project would not deplete native groundwater supplies. Specifically, raw SWP water would be delivered to the proposed recharge basins, where it would percolate into local groundwater, and would, to some extent, blend with that water. The associated groundwater recharge areas would work in conjunction with the existing Eastside Water Bank facility through a system of pipelines.

Groundwater banking capacity depends on several factors, including the transmissivity of the underlying aquifer material and vadose zone. It is anticipated that maximum mounding associated with the operating scenario modeled is approximately 90 feet. To reduce liquefaction potential, it is recommended to prevent mounding from reaching within 50 feet of grade. Since the project area has an approximate depth-to-groundwater of about 250 feet (based on Department of Water Resources and United States Geological Survey data), mounding is not anticipated to be a liquefaction concern, even if recharge were to roughly double (assuming all else remains the same).

Grading and excavation associated with the proposed recharge basins and pipelines would not occur at such depths that would affect local groundwater supplies. Stored water would generally accumulate below the recharge area and because flow rates are relatively low, there would be minimal mixing between the recharged and indigenous groundwater. The proposed project would not require the use

of local groundwater or otherwise impact the groundwater table, but would actually increase groundwater levels via recharge.

AVEK has prepared annual water resources reports, the latest of which identified that as a result of water banking projects that groundwater within AVEK's service area and within the area of the existing Eastside Water Bank Facility have raised groundwater levels, thereby increasing the amount of available groundwater (AVEK 2018). The project would be beneficial to the availability of groundwater and no adverse impacts would occur in relation to this issue.

- c. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed three recharge basins would require excavation, with excavated material used as fill material for the berms. If control measures are not employed, the amount of grading/excavation required for construction of the recharge basins and associated infrastructure would result in an increased potential for soil erosion at the project site and potentially off site. However, as discussed in Sections 6 and 9 of this IS/MND, the project would be required to comply with the NPDES Construction General permit and implement BMPs. The project construction-related BMPs would serve to reduce temporary erosion and siltation impacts. Please refer to response to item 6 b. for a list of standard BMPs that may be incorporated into the project as part of the commitment to the NPDES Construction General Permit.

Additionally, as stated in Item 6.b, erosion and sedimentation are not considered to be significant long-term concerns for the proposed project, as all developed areas would be stabilized. The access road would include the application of Class II aggregate, which would be tightly packed to minimize erosion potential. The recharge basins themselves would not include features that increase erosion and siltation and the 18-inch diameter basin inlets each would be piped with a box inlet structure surrounded by grouted rip rap keyed into the basin floor for erosion control. Impacts in relation to erosion and sedimentation either on or off site would be less than significant.

- d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The conversion of the project site from undeveloped land to supporting three recharge basins and associated infrastructure would alter the site's drainage pattern. Currently, there are no impediments to drainage flowing across the site. While minor alterations to drainage across the site would occur due to the construction of basins and berms, the streambed that runs across the western portion of the site would not be altered other than a small area of disturbance at East Avenue U, which would be returned to existing conditions at the completion of construction. A concrete emergency spillway would be constructed along the west side of the recharge basins to divert overflows and each of the new recharge basins would be connected to the concrete spillway by a corrugated metal pipe. Each basin can be isolated for maintenance purposes with turnout valves. Overflow would move from the south-most Basin A northwards to Basin C and be controlled by closing the valves at the turnouts to prevent flow outside of the basins into the surrounding northern area. If flow overtops the basins, it would collect in the natural creek to the west of the basins.

The project would include minimal impervious surfaces and the recharge basins would collect stormwater flows; thus, there would be no increase in surface runoff. As discussed above, any overflow from the recharge basins would be diverted to eliminate sheet flow or ponding. Accordingly, impacts associated with runoff would be less than significant.

- e. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project site is located in an undeveloped area of unincorporated Los Angeles County. East Avenue U is a graded dirt road in the area of the project site with no storm drain facilities, such as curb and gutters or drainage outlets and there are no other municipal stormwater drainage systems within the vicinity of the project site. As stated in Item 9.d, the proposed project would not significantly increase the local surface runoff volumes. Potential short-term

pollutant generation would be avoided or reduced below a level of significance through implementation of a SWPPP, as discussed in Item 9.a, above. Impacts would be less than significant.

- f. **No Impact.** No potential water quality impacts other than those described above in this section are anticipated.
- g. **No Impact.** According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map, the eastern half of the project site is designated as an Area of Minimal Flood Hazards, and the western half is designated as having a 0.2-percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard (FEMA 2008). Thus, the probability of flooding at the site is minimal. Further, the project does not include the construction of housing. Therefore, no impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- h. **No Impact.** As discussed in item 9.g, the probability of flooding at the project site is minimal. Additionally, the project would not introduce obstacles, such as buildings, enclosures, or other large above-ground features that would impede or redirect flood flows. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- i. **No Impact.** As discussed in item 9.g, the probability of flooding at the project site is minimal. There are no levees or dams located in the vicinity that have the potential to result in flooding at the site. The proposed basins would have one foot of freeboard between the water surface elevation and the top of the berms. As noted above, a concrete emergency spillway would be constructed along the west side of the recharge basins to divert overflows and each of the new recharge basins would be connected to the concrete spillway by a corrugated metal pipe. Each basin can be isolated for maintenance purposes with turnout valves. Overflow would move from the south-most Basin A downhill to Basin C and controlled by closing the valves at the turnouts to prevent flow outside of the basins into the surrounding northern area. If flow overtops the basins, it would collect in the natural creek to the west of the basins. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to significant risks related to flooding. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- j. **No Impact.** Tsunamis are usually caused by displacement of the ocean floor causing large waves and are typically generated by seismic activity. Given the project area's distance from the Pacific coast (over 40 miles), no impacts associated with tsunamis would occur. A seiche is a large wave generated in an enclosed body of water, often caused by ground-shaking associated with seismic activity. The project area is not within a close enough proximity to a water body to be at risk of inundation by a seiche; no impact would occur. Lastly, mudflow is a mixture of soil and water that runs like a river of mud down a hillside and is usually generated by heavy rainfall. The project is not located on a hillside and the site does not have significant slopes. Therefore, the project would not be exposed to mudflow. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

10. Land Use and Planning

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a linear feature, such as an interstate highway or railroad tracks, or removal of a means of access, such as a local road or bridge that would impact mobility within an existing community or between a community and outlying area. The project site is located on private property that does not provide through access to adjacent areas. Further, the project is the extension of the existing land uses to the west of the project site. In addition, the area surrounding the project site is largely undeveloped. There are no residential communities located directly adjacent to the project site, so no communities would be divided with project implementation. Construction and operation of water recharge basins and associated infrastructure to serve as an expansion of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility would not physically divide an existing community. No associated impact would occur.
- b. **No Impact.** As a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan, the Area Plan refines the countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to the Antelope Valley, such as community maintenance and appearance, and provides more specific guidance on elements already found in the General Plan (County 2015a).

As stated in the Area Plan, the Antelope Valley planning area is predominately rural and has major constraints, including natural hazards, environmental issues, lack of infrastructure, and limited water supply. The Area Plan further states that water conservation strategies and encouraging the recycling of water is important. The project is in concert with this goal of the Area Plan by providing land for water recharge and providing infrastructure to support water security during water shortages.

The Los Angeles County General Plan and the Area Plan also emphasize a need to maintain the rural character of the Area Plan and protect against incompatible land uses and conflicts with the existing land use pattern. The project is an extension of the existing land uses to the west providing cohesion and it would not introduce urban land uses into the rural setting.

The project site is designated as Rural Land 2, which allows for residential development with a maximum 1 dwelling unit per 2 gross acres and non-residential development with a floor to area ratio of 0.5. According to the Area Plan, allowable land uses in the Rural Land categories are single family residences; equestrian and limited animal uses; and limited agricultural and related activities. The General Plan and Area Plan do not define the related activities; however, consistent with the intent of the Rural Land 2 land use designation to preserve the character of the Antelope Valley, the project would not introduce urban land uses that would be in conflict with the rural nature of the surrounding area. Further, the land use designation was not designed for the express purpose of avoiding or

mitigating an environmental effect, although to an extent prohibiting more urban uses would avoid some environmental effects; as noted, the project is not urban and would not introduce the type of environmental effects that are associated with more intense development.

The zoning designation for the project site is A-2-1 (Heavy Agriculture). According to Los Angeles County Code Section 12.06, this zoning designation does not preclude utility facilities. Furthermore, when a local agency is directly and immediately engaged in “the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water,” the agency has an absolute exemption from complying with local building and zoning ordinances for the location or construction of facilities (Government Code, Section 53091, subds. (d), (e)). The project involves facilities directly and immediately engaged in the production, generation, treatment, and transmission of water. Therefore, the project is exempt from the County’s zoning ordinance. Accordingly, the proposed project would not conflict with zoning or general plan land use designations or related policies. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- c. **No Impact.** As discussed in Item 4.f, the WMP does not apply to the project site. Additionally, the project site does not occur on or adjacent to a designated or proposed conservation area. The closest conservation area is a SEA designated in the Los Angeles County General Plan that is associated with Littlerock Wash to the west and Big Rock Creek/Big Rock Wash to the east (County 2011). The project is over five miles east of the Littlerock Wash reach and four miles west of the Big Rock Creek reach of the adopted Antelope Valley SEA. In addition, a proposed Antelope Valley SEA occurs approximately three miles to the east of the project site. The project would not conflict with an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

11. Mineral Resources

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** Mineral resources (i.e., minerals and aggregate deposits, such as sand, gravel, and other construction aggregate) are largely produced in the washes along the southerly foothills of Los Angeles County. Each area within the County is classified into Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) by the CGS. Using the data from the CGS, the County’s General Plan developed a map of MRZ-2 occurring in the County. MRZ-2 indicates existence of a deposit that meets certain criteria for value and marketability. According to the Conservation and Natural Resources Element of the County’s General Plan, the project area is outside MRZ-2 (County 2015b). Further, the project area has not been used for mineral resource recovery and is not delineated as a mineral resource recovery site on

land use plans. Because the project area does not contain known significant mineral resources and is not currently used (or planned for use) as a mineral resource recovery site, no impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- b. **No Impact.** Refer to Item 11.a, above.

12. Noise

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a. Exposure of persons to or generation of 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located within the vicinity of 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction Noise

The project would include the construction of recharge basins and pipelines. Construction activities would produce elevated short-term noise levels that could potentially impact nearby single-family residences. Construction of the recharge basins would occur as close as 300 feet from the nearest residence, a single-family residence located east of the project site. Pipeline excavation could occur as close as approximately 1,500 feet to the nearest residences near the intersection of East Avenue U and 106th Street East.

Construction equipment would not all operate at the same time or location. Furthermore, construction equipment would not be in constant use during construction, which is limited to the hours of 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. Table 3, *Construction Equipment Noise Levels*, provides the 50-foot distance maximum noise levels (L_{MAX}) and time-averaged A-weighted noise levels (dBA L_{EQ}) for commonly used construction equipment.

**Table 3
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NOISE LEVELS**

Unit	Percent Operating Time	dBA L_{MAX} at 50 feet	dBA L_{EQ} at 50 feet
Backhoe	40	77.6	73.6
Breaker	20	90.3	80.3
Compactor	20	83.2	76.2
Compressor	40	77.7	73.7
Concrete Mixer Truck	40	78.8	74.8
Concrete Pump Truck	20	81.4	74.4
Dump Truck	50	76.5	72.5
Drum Mixer	40	80.0	77.0
Medium Excavator	40	78.0	74.0
Large Excavator	40	80.7	76.7
Front-End Loader	40	79.1	75.1
Grader	40	85.0	81.0
Paver	50	77.2	74.2
Roller	20	80.0	73.0

Source: USDOT 2008

Section 112.03 of the Los Angeles County Municipal Code states that no person shall, between the hours of 9:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M. of the following day, perform any construction or repair work of any kind upon, or any excavating for, any building or structure, where any of the foregoing entails the use of any power driven drill, riveting machine excavator or any other machine, tool, device or equipment which makes loud noises to the disturbance of persons occupying sleeping quarters in any dwelling hotel or apartment or other place of residence. Further, while the Area Plan does not contain goals or policies in relation to construction noise, the Los Angeles County General Plan Policy N 1.9 identifies that sensitive uses should not be exposed to exterior noise levels of 65 dB Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)⁴ (County 2015b).

The project would comply with the allowable hours of construction in accordance with the Los Angeles County Municipal Code. As shown in Table 3, the greatest noise source related to commonly used construction equipment is a breaker, which is used for demolishing concrete or rocks. This equipment would not be required for this type of excavation (fallow agricultural land with no rocks, boulders, or geological landforms). Therefore, a grader, at 81 dBA L_{EQ} at 50 feet would be appropriate to conservatively calculate the greatest noise impacts during construction. In an open environment, free of intervening obstacles, noise levels decrease by 6 dB with a doubling of distance. The distance to the nearest sensitive receptor is approximately 300 feet. At that distance there would be a noise reduction of more than 12 dB relative to the levels presented in Table 3. Therefore, the loudest construction equipment would generate noise levels that are less than 65 dB at the nearest

⁴ CNEL is the average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day that is obtained after the addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and after the addition of 10 decibels to the sound levels in the evening, from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. (County 2015b).

sensitive receptor and thus project-related construction would not exceed the County standard of 65 dB.

Although excavation activities would be required to create the recharge basins, excavated material would be used as fill material to construct the berms. Therefore, there would be no trips related to soil export. Additionally, construction traffic associated with construction workers commuting to the site would be limited. As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, of this IS/MND, modeling assumptions for worker vehicle trips during construction were based on a conservative (highest anticipated) estimate of 10 trips per day for clearing and grubbing and grading activities, and 20 trips per day for fencing and pipeline installation activities. Construction is anticipated to last five months. Temporary, short-term increases in noise levels from haul trucks and worker vehicles would occur only for the duration of project construction, and the increase in noise levels would not affect noise-sensitive land uses; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Noise

Operation of the proposed recharge basins and pipelines would not result in noise impacts because the recharge basins would only collect and hold water, and the pipelines would be underground except at the location of where the 18-inch pipelines deliver water to the basins. There would be no increase in operational traffic associated with the proposed project. Presently, the traffic associated with the existing facility is limited to a few monthly trips to the site during maintenance visits; maintenance of the expansion site would occur simultaneously, thereby not increasing trips. Impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.

- b. **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project does not include components that would result in groundborne vibration that would be discernible at neighboring noise-sensitive receptors, such as the residences to the east of the project's eastern boundary along 106th Street. Equipment in use during construction (e.g., dozer and excavator) may result in small levels groundborne vibration.

According to Caltrans' Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual, the distinctly perceptible vibration annoyance potential criterion is defined as 0.04 inches/second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) for continuous/frequent intermittent sources (Caltrans 2013). As a guide, major construction activities within 200 feet may be potentially disruptive to sensitive operations (Caltrans 2013). The use of a vibratory equipment during construction would occur at a distance no closer than approximately 300 feet from the nearest off-site residential land uses. At 300 feet, a vibratory roller would create a PPV of less than 0.02 in/sec, which is below the threshold defined by Caltrans. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.

- c. **No Impact.** As discussed in item 12.a, operation of the proposed recharge basins and pipelines would not result in noise impacts because the recharge basins would only collect and hold water, and the pipelines would be underground except at the location of where the 18-inch pipelines deliver water to the basins. There would be no increase in operational traffic associated with the proposed project. Presently, the traffic associated with the existing facility is limited to a few monthly trips to the site during maintenance visits; maintenance of the expansion site would occur simultaneously, thereby not increasing trips. Therefore, the project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above existing levels. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- d. **Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed in item 12.a, construction would occur as close as 300 feet to the nearest sensitive receptor. At 300 feet, the loudest construction equipment would generate less than 65 dB, and would not exceed the 65 dB threshold. Therefore, implementation of the

project would not result in a significant temporary increase in noise levels at the project area. Impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.

- e. **No Impact.** The proposed project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The closest public airport to the project area is the Palmdale Regional Airport, located approximately 10 miles northwest of the project area. The project would not expose people at the project area to excessive noise levels related to airports. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- f. **No Impact.** The proposed project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip. The nearest private airport is the Brian Ranch Airport, a private airstrip located approximately 10 miles from the project area. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

13. Population and Housing

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project would not induce population growth due to the fact that no new housing or businesses are proposed. The project would not extend services to new areas or allow for the development of land that previously could not be developed due to service constraints. The project would allow for greater water supply reliability; however, while water supply would increase because of the water banking activities, this increase is to provide greater water supply security in times of drought, rather than support additional demands. Thus, it would not indirectly induce unplanned growth. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- b. **No Impact.** The project site is undeveloped fallow agricultural land that does not support any residences. The project site is designated as Rural Land 2, which could potentially support up to 80 residences (maximum 1 unit per 2 acres). However, the project site was purchased by AVEK with the intent of expanding the existing Eastside Water Bank and as discussed in Section 10, *Land Use and Planning*, this is also in conformance with the land use designation. Thus, the project would not indirectly displace housing by converting land set aside for residential land uses. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- c. **No Impact.** As discussed in Item 13.b, there are no people or housing currently located on the project site. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly displace people from the site. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

14. Public Services

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** The operation of the proposed project would generate no demand for increased public services because operation of the project would not result in an increase in employees or population. The project is an expansion of the existing facility with passive land uses that would not involve the permanent stationing of employees at the site. Employees would visit the site for routine maintenance. Please see the discussions below for the individual public services.

Fire Protection. Fire protection may be required during construction in the event of an accident, but such requirements would be short term and would not require increases in the level of public service offered. The project’s proposed access road would improve accessibility to the site in the event fire protection services are needed during operation. The operation of the basins is a passive land use in that it do not involve employees o on site with the exception of routine maintenance. The proposed facilities would not require fire protection service. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase the need for new fire department staff or new facilities, and the proposed project would have no impacts associated with fire protection services.

Police Protection. During construction, police protection may be required in the event of an accident, but such requirements would be short term and would not require increases in the level of public service offered. As stated above, the project involves the construction of an access road, which would improve accessibility to the site in the event police protection services are needed. Therefore, the

project would not substantially increase the need for new police department staff or new facilities, and the proposed project would have no impacts associated with police protection services.

Schools. The proposed project would place no demand on school services because it would not involve the construction of facilities that require such services (i.e., residences) and would not involve the introduction of a temporary or permanent population into this area.

Parks The proposed project would place no demand on parks because it would not involve the construction of facilities that require such services (i.e., residences) and would not involve the introduction of a temporary or permanent population into this area.

Other Public Facilities The proposed project would not involve the introduction of a temporary or permanent human population into this area. Accordingly, the proposed project would not result in impacts to other public facilities.

15. Recreation

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not generate residents or employees that are permanently station at the site, who would require parks or other recreational facilities. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- b. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

16. Transportation

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less Than Significant Impact.** As discussed, the two major planning documents that guide planning decisions in the project area are the Los Angeles County General Plan and the Area Plan, which contain the goals and policies that are specifically tailored to the strategic planning vision and concerns of the Antelope Valley. While the Los Angeles County General Plan does not identify additional circulation features beyond those that presently exist (including traditional roadways and alternative transportation such as bus and light rail lines), the Area Plan contains goals and policies that are directed towards promoting a range of transportation options. Generally, the Area Plan recognizes that the area is largely automobile-dependent; however, it does provide policies that seek to increase access to alternative modes of travel, such as trails, bikeways, and bicycle routes. Specifically, in relation to the project, the County General Plan Bicycle Master Plan Figure 3-7 includes Class II bike lanes along 106th Street East, which provides the eastern boundary for the project site (County 2015b). The project would not conflict with plans to provide bike lanes along 106th Street East. Site design does not include ingress or egress along 106th Street. Once operational,

the land uses are passive uses would contribute only minimal if any additional traffic on local roadways. Within the project vicinity, there are no sidewalks or bus routes along East Avenue U Street, 106th Street East, or East Avenue T8. The nearest bus route traverses 96th Street East to the west of the project site. Therefore, the project would not adversely affect transportation facilities. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.

- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** In September 2013, the Governor's Office signed SB 743 into law, starting a process that fundamentally changes the way transportation impact analyses are conducted under CEQA. In response to the passage of SB 743, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) was required to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide a new approach to evaluating traffic impacts. These changes include the elimination of auto delay, level of service, and similar measurements of vehicular roadway capacity and traffic congestion as the basis for determining significant impacts. The mandate of SB 743 was to devise an alternative traffic impact evaluation criterion that would promote the reduction of GHG emissions as well as foster the development of multi-modal transportation networks and a diversity of land uses. SB 743 further suggested that a measurement such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would be an appropriate method to evaluate traffic impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3). VMT is defined as a measurement of miles traveled by vehicles within a specified region and for a specified time period. VMTs are calculated based on individual vehicle trips generated and their associated trip lengths.

The project entails the installation of the recharge basins, pipelines, and access road and with the exception of construction-related traffic during the approximate five-month construction period and maintenance activities, there is no traffic associated with the project. As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality*, of this IS/MND, modeling assumptions for worker vehicle trips during construction were based on a conservative (highest anticipated) estimate of 10 trips per day for clearing and grubbing and grading activities, and 20 trips per day for fencing and pipeline installation activities. Thus, no further analysis of traffic generation was quantitatively conducted.

Construction

The project would result in a short-term increase in traffic during construction. Project-related construction traffic would include (1) deliveries of equipment and materials; (2) removal of construction waste; and (3) construction personnel travel to and from the work site. As noted, vehicle trips during the anticipated five-month construction time are conservatively anticipated to be no more than 20 trips per day. Such trips would not be considered substantial in relation to the existing traffic load in the project vicinity.

Operation

Operation of the proposed project would result in a minimal increase of traffic, if any, as routine maintenance of the project would likely occur in concert with the existing facility, not requiring additional trips. If additional trips are generated, they would be limited to a few monthly trips to the site during maintenance visits. Thus, the project would not generate substantial traffic such that the project would conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.

Therefore, given the short-term nature and the minimal number of construction-related vehicle trips and that project-related trips would be accounted for in the current trips for the maintenance of the existing facility, impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.

- c. **No Impact.** The project would not include aviation components or structures where height would be an aviation concern and therefore would not affect air traffic patterns. No associated impact would occur.
- d. **No Impact.** The proposed project would not include site modifications that would result in hazards due to design features such as sharp curves, dangerous intersections, etc., nor would it cause incompatible uses (such as tractors) on local roads. As shown in Figure 3, the proposed access road would be constructed along the perimeter of the proposed basins and would not include hazardous design features. No impacts associated with hazardous design features or incompatible uses would occur.
- e. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Refer to item 8.f. Traffic associated with the project during construction and operation would be both brief and infrequent. Additionally, the project involves the construction of an access road, which would improve emergency access to the project site. Therefore, the project would not result in adequate emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.
- f. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Refer to item 16.a. The project would not interfere with plans or policies regarding transportation, including but not limited to the Los Angeles County General Plan and the Area Plan. Additionally, as discussed in item 16.d, the project would not result in hazardous roadway conditions. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.

17. Utilities and Service Systems

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. 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 the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **No Impact.** The project would not involve the construction of facilities that would generate sewage; therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or the expansion of existing wastewater treatment facilities. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- b. **No Impact.** Presently, the project site is undeveloped. The proposed project involves the expansion of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility to include three recharge basins and associated infrastructure, to provide greater water reliability during times of water shortages. The project would not include or require new water or wastewater treatment facilities. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- c. **No Impact.** No existing storm drain facilities are located on or adjacent to the site. As discussed in Section 9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the project is designed to capture on-site drainage and prevent sheet flow or ponding; thus, no impacts would occur in relation to storm drain facilities. No impacts would occur in relation to this issue.
- d. **No Impact.** The proposed project involves the expansion of the existing Eastside Water Bank facility to include three recharge basins and associated infrastructure. The intent of the project is to provide water security in times of water shortages. Implementation of the proposed project would thereby have a positive impact on water availability, and no new or expanded entitlements would be needed. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- e. **No Impact.** The project would not involve the construction of facilities that would generate sewage; therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or the expansion of existing wastewater treatment facilities. No impact would occur in relation to this issue.
- f. **Less than Significant Impact.** Minimal amounts of solid waste would be generated temporarily during the construction of the proposed project. Operation of the recharge basins would not generate solid waste on a regular basis, with minimal amounts of waste potentially generated periodically as a result of maintenance activities. Existing landfills would have adequate capacity to fulfill the project's minimal solid waste generation needs. Impacts would be less than significant in relation to this issue.
- g. **No Impact.** The proposed project would comply with all applicable, federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. No impact would occur.

18. Mandatory Findings of Significance

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of past, present, and probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a. **Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.** Implementation of the proposed project could potentially result in impacts to biological resources and cultural resources as summarized below and discussed in detail in Sections V.4 and V.5, respectively. In relation to biological resources, the project has the potential to impact protected or sensitive species, including Joshua trees, chaparral yucca, golden cholla, and nesting birds (including burrowing owls). Further, the project also may potentially result in impacts to unknown cultural resources. Degradation of the quality of the environment would be reduced to below a level of significance through implementation of the Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 as identified in Section V.6, *Biological Resources*, and Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 as identified in Section V.5, *Cultural Resources*.
- b. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Cumulative impacts are defined as two or more individual (and potentially individually less than significant) project effects that, when considered together or in concert with other projects combine to result in a significant impact within an identified geographic area. In order for a project to contribute to cumulative impacts, it must result in some level of impact on a project-specific level. As described in some detail above, several of the project effects are identified as “No Impact,” including most or all of the topic areas under aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, and utilities and service systems. The following discussion considers only those effects for which some level of potential impact was identified. This includes topics for which “Less than Significant Impacts” were identified, as well as those for which the threshold question assumed some level of impact (i.e., those for which consideration of a potential “substantial” or “significant” effect was considered, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15382). Because of the general lack of ongoing

development projects within the project vicinity, it is unlikely that localized cumulative impacts would occur as discussed in further detail below.

Potential regional cumulative effects were considered for the topics of biological resources and cultural resources, which required project-related mitigation. The project would have the potential to cause impacts to protected or sensitive plant species, nesting birds, and an ephemeral drainage. However, the project would implement mitigation to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels (see Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4). Potential impacts to these biological resources occurring as a result of cumulative development also would require mitigation; thus, project-related impacts to biological resources would be less than cumulatively considerable. With regard to cultural resources, the project has the potential to encounter significant cultural and/or archaeological resources during ground-disturbing activities; however, mitigation would preclude loss of such resources and no cumulative impacts are anticipated as other cumulative impacts would also be required to adhere to such measures.

Additionally, this IS/MND identified that there were less-than-significant impacts to several environmental resources areas that did not rise to the level of requiring mitigation. Yet, despite a lack of project-related impacts, impacts to these resources are considered in a cumulative context. These issue areas include geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, and transportation.

Potential hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the proposed project would be minimal due to implementation of a SWPPP and BMPs, as part of project conformance with NPDES permit conditions, which would minimize the potential for drainage- and water quality-related impacts; no cumulative impacts are anticipated.

With regard to hazards and hazardous materials, no regional problem is identified. The project would handle hazardous materials in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations to minimize the potential for an accidental release. In the event that the project would result in accidental discharge associated with transport, use, storage, and/or disposal of hazardous materials during construction or of the facility, there are prescribed activities to be conducted in accordance with NPDES Construction General Permit, as well as the associated project SWPPP, that would reduce impacts associated with the discharge of contaminants to less than a level of significance. Other projects in the vicinity would be similar to the same requirements. As such, the project's contribution would be less than cumulatively considerable.

Geology and soils impacts are inherently restricted to the project area and would not contribute to cumulative impacts associated with other planned or proposed development; thus, it is not necessary to address this issue on a cumulative scale. Considering that mandatory compliance with the General Plan and Los Angeles County Municipal Code reduce construction noise impacts to less than significant levels, the project would not incrementally contribute to a significant cumulative noise impact. Additionally, operational noise impacts would be minimal; the basins would not involve loud machinery and it is likely that no additional traffic would occur as maintenance of the basins would occur in concert with the existing facility, not requiring new trips.

As discussed in Section 16, the project would result in a short-term increase in traffic during construction and minimal, if any, long-term increase in traffic generation resulting from project operations. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable increase in traffic in the project area. The project would not induce population growth and thereby, directly or indirectly, contribute to cumulative impacts to public services.

The last category of cumulative impacts is related to project-specific impacts that are not localized to the immediate project area. This includes topics such as air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, which disperse from their original source and affect entire air basins (or with global warming, potentially the entire world). For these issues, the baseline analysis often addresses the cumulative condition—it is the contribution to the larger picture that is assessed in analyses of consistency with regional air quality strategies and pollutant dispersal. As noted in discussion of Sections 3 and 7, the project’s contribution would be negligible and/or short-term and not cumulatively considerable.

For these reasons, impacts associated with cumulative effects would be less than significant.

- c. **No Impact**. The project would result in beneficial impacts by providing greater water supply security. As identified in Sections V.1 through V.17 of this document, there are no project-related environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on humans. Also, there would be no project-related cumulative significant adverse effects as discussed in V.18. Thus, the project would not consist of a use or activities that would negatively affect persons in the vicinity and the project would have a less-than-significant impact in relation to this issue.

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