



Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project

Responses to Comments on the Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration

Final Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration

prepared by

City of Whittier

13230 Penn Street

Whittier, California 90602

Contact: Kimberly Badescu, Civil Engineer Assistant

prepared with the assistance of

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250 East 1st Street, Suite 1400

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May 2022



RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC.

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Responses to Comments

This section includes comments received during the circulation of the Draft Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) prepared for the Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project (proposed project). The Draft IS-MND was circulated for a 30-day public review period which began on Thursday, April 7, 2022, and ended on Friday, May 6, 2022. The City of Whittier received two comment letters on the Draft IS-MND during the comment period, as presented below.

Letter No.	Commenter (Name, Title, Agency, Division)	Page No.
1	Ivan Sulic, Chair Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority	2
2	Miya Edmonson, LDR/CEQA Branch Chief Caltrans Department of Transportation, District 7	3

The comment letters and responses follow.

Letter 1

COMMENTER: Ivan Sulic, Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority

DATE: April 24, 2022

The commenter states the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) Board of Directors met on April 21, 2022, to consider the Draft IS-MND for the proposed project. It was determined that the analysis provided sufficiently avoids adverse impacts to the Puente Hills Preserve (Preserve). No revisions to the CEQA document were requested by the Habitat Authority. Therefore, no revisions are necessary, and no errata are associated with this comment letter.

Letter 2

COMMENTER: Miya Edmonson, Caltrans Department of Transportation - District 7

DATE: April 29, 2022

The commenter states that any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways will need a transportation permit from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans recommends that the project limit construction traffic to off-peak periods and, if construction traffic would cause issues on any State facilities, a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues should be submitted to Caltrans for review. Caltrans does not request any revisions to the CEQA document. Therefore, no revisions are necessary, and no errata are associated with this comment letter.



Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority

Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill

April 21, 2022

Kyle Cason, Director of Public Works
City of Whittier, Public Works Department
13230 Penn Street
Whittier, California 90602
PubWks@cityofwhittier.org

Re: Comments on Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project

Dear Mr. Cason:

The Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the City of Whittier’s Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Whittier’s Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project released April 7, 2022. The Board of Directors for the Habitat Authority met on April 21, 2022, and is submitting these comments for your consideration.

The Habitat Authority is a joint powers authority established pursuant to California Government Code Section 6500 *et seq.* with a Board of Directors consisting of the City of Whittier, County of Los Angeles, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, and the Hacienda Heights Improvement Association. According to its mission, the Habitat Authority is dedicated to the acquisition, restoration, and management of open space in the Puente Hills for preservation of the land in perpetuity, with the primary purpose to protect the biological diversity. Additionally, the agency endeavors to provide opportunities for outdoor education and low-impact recreation.

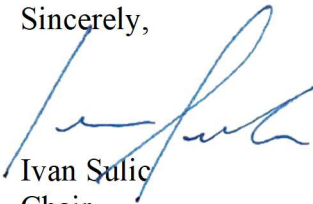
In the Puente Hills, the Habitat Authority manages the open space in its ownership as well as open spaced owned by the City of Whittier and Sanitation Districts, totaling over 3,880 acres, within the Cities of Whittier and La Habra Heights and the County unincorporated area known as Hacienda Heights. These lands are collectively referred to as the Puente Hills Preserve (Preserve). The proposed Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project is adjacent to Preserve lands that are managed by the Habitat Authority through Agreements with the City of Whittier, A97-172 and A15-128.

Overall, we support the City’s efforts to improve water supply to its residents and greatly appreciate the coordination and communication between Public Works staff and the Habitat Authority concerning the proposed project. Upon review of the Draft Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration we were pleased to note that careful consideration was given to avoiding direct and indirect impacts to biological resources on the adjacent Preserve, including implementation of several appropriate project-specific Best Management Practices and avoiding

heavy equipment activities from January 1 through September 1 when raptor and songbirds have a high potential to nest in the adjacent habitat.

Thank you for your consideration, and feel free to contact me or Ecologist Michelle Mariscal (mmariscal@habitatauthority.org) for further discussion. Also, please maintain our agency on the contact list for this planning process.

Sincerely,



Ivan Sulic
Chair

cc: Board of Directors
Citizens Technical Advisory Committee

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

April 29, 2022

Kyle Cason
City of Whittier
13230 Penn Street
Whittier, CA 90602RE: Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project
Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH # 2022040165
Vic. LA-72/PM: 2.78
GTS # 07-LA-2022-03910

Dear Kyle Cason:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced MND. The City of Whittier developed the Murphy Reservoir Replacement Project to respond to necessary repairs to the Murphy West and East Reservoirs and provide the water storage capacity needed to meet the demands of Pressure Zone 577, consistent with the City's Water Master Plan Update of 2018. Under the proposed project, the two existing reservoirs, which each of capacity of 0.5 million gallons (MG), would be replaced with one new reservoir of 2.31 MG capacity to address existing system deficiencies. The City of Whittier is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project site is approximately 1 mile from State Route 72 (SR-72). After reviewing the MND, the proposed project is a continuation of operation and maintenance activities conducted for the existing reservoirs and would not introduce new or increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on the local roadways. Also, construction-related traffic would be short-term and cease upon completion of construction activities. The proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), and no impacts associated with VMT would occur. The following information is included for your consideration.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Furthermore, Caltrans encourages Lead Agencies to implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that reduce VMT and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. For TDM strategies that the Lead Agency may want to consider integrating into this project to further reduce VMT, please refer to:

- The 2010 Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures report by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), available at <http://www.capcoa.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>, and/or
- Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference (Chapter 8) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), available at <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/index.htm>

Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. Caltrans recommends that the Project limit construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. If construction traffic is expected to cause issues on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review.

Finally, any work completed on or near Caltrans' right of way may require an encroachment permit. However, the final determination on this will be made by Caltrans' Office of Permits. This work would require additional review and may be subject to additional requirements to ensure current design standards and access management elements are being addressed. For more information on encroachment permits, see: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Karen Herrera, the project coordinator, at Karen.Herrera@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2022-03910.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse