

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT / NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING

DATE: April 14, 2022

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: Western Municipal Water District

PROJECT TITLE: Riverside Facilities Master Plan

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: April 14, 2022 through May 16, 2022

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies and interested parties that Western Municipal Water District (WMWD), as the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is preparing a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Riverside Facilities Master Plan (FMP; proposed project). The FMP is an integrated master plan that evaluates the performance and capacity of WMWD’s potable water, recycled/non-potable water, and wastewater systems within the Riverside Retail Service Area. The FMP provides a list of recommended capital improvement projects to guide WMWD with implementation of the recommended improvements to support future growth and development of the Riverside Retail Service Area. The FMP presents existing system deficiencies that need to be corrected as well as future improvements and facility upgrades to be implemented in the short-term (by 2030) and under buildout conditions (after 2030). The projects include upsizing of existing pipelines as well as new pipelines; new storage tanks; new booster pump stations; new pumps at existing pump stations; capacity upgrades at existing lift stations; and potential expansion of the Western Water Recycling Facility (WWRF).

The PEIR will include a programmatic assessment of the entire FMP, as well as site-specific assessments where sufficient information is available. Projects are categorized into two planning stages: those to be implemented by 2030 (priority facility and near-term projects) and after 2030 (future projects). Projects that may be considered by the Board for potential approval by 2030 will be evaluated at a project level in the PEIR, while projects that are anticipated to be considered after 2030 are considered long-term projects and will be evaluated at a programmatic level in the PEIR. A brief, initial discussion of potential environmental impacts is included in **Attachment A** to this NOP. To fulfill the requirement of potential federal funding partners, the PEIR may be prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through CEQA-Plus requirements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

PROJECT LOCATION: WMWD’s service area is located in western Riverside County, approximately 50 miles east of Los Angeles and covers 527 square miles. The proposed project would be located within WMWD’s Riverside Retail Service Area, which covers 104 square miles and is generally bounded by the City of Riverside to the north, the City of Moreno Valley to the east, the City of Lake Elsinore to the south, and the City of Corona to the west, which is shown on **Figure 1**. Proposed projects are included on **Figure 2** and are located in the City of Riverside and unincorporated portions of Riverside County.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS: WMWD is soliciting comments from responsible and trustee agencies as well as interested parties as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the PEIR. In accordance with CEQA, agencies are requested to review the project description provided in this NOP and provide comments on environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the agency. The PEIR will be used by WMWD when considering approval of the proposed project as well as any related discretionary approvals. All comments to the NOP are due no later than **4:00 p.m. on May 16**. Please send your comments to the mailing address or email address shown below. Include a return address or email address and a contact name for your agency or party with your comments.

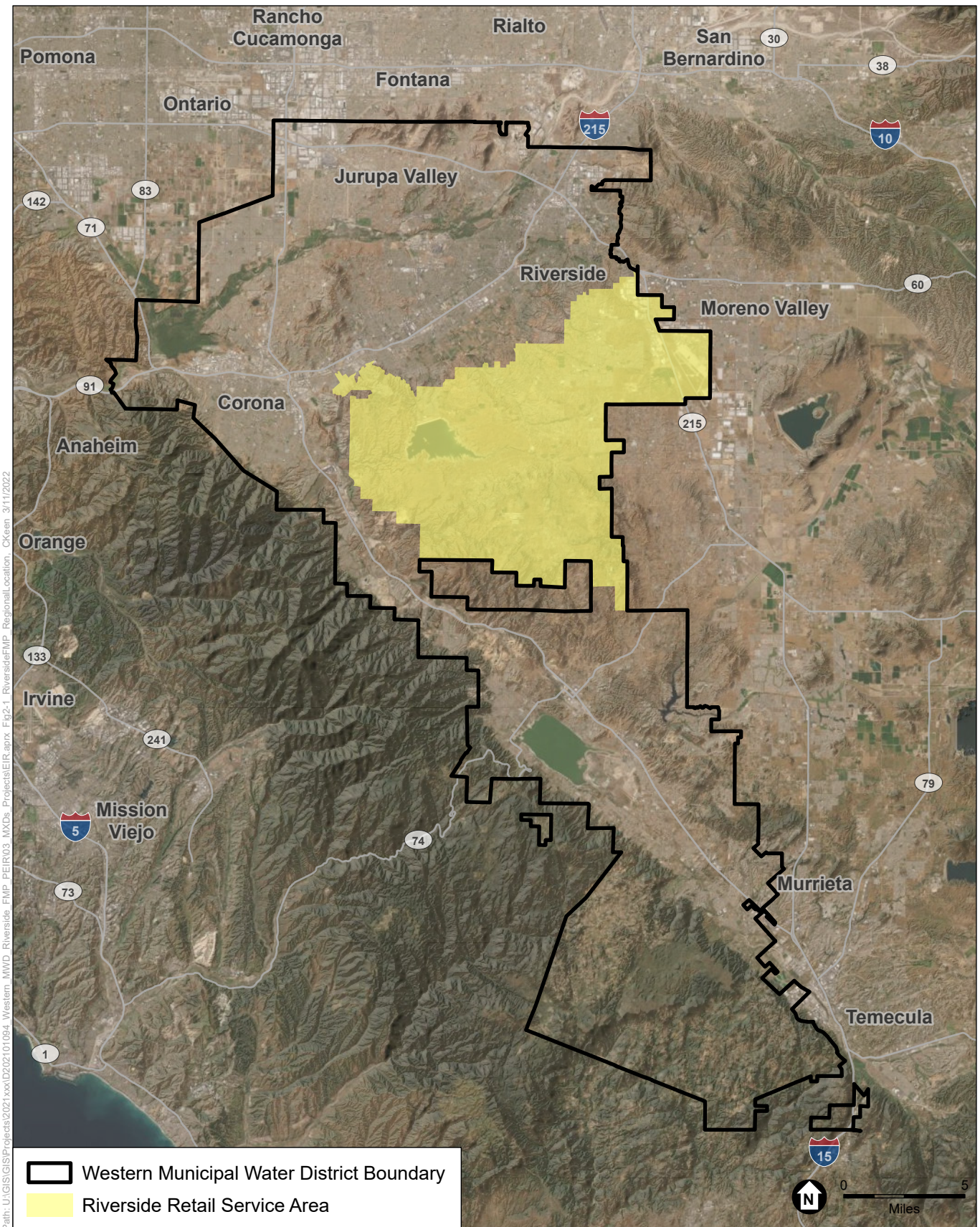
CONTACT PERSON: Western Municipal Water District
14205 Meridian Parkway
Riverside, CA 92518
Attn: Jason Pivovarovff, P.E., Deputy Director of Water Resources
JPivovarovff@wmwd.com
Phone: 562-665-8352

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: Copies of the NOP are available at WMWD’s office, located at 14205 Meridian Parkway, Riverside, CA 92518, as well as at the following libraries: Orange Terrace Branch Library, located at 20010-B Orange Terrace Pkwy, Riverside, CA 92508; Mead Valley Library, located at 21580 Oakwood St, Perris, CA 92570; and Woodcrest Library, located at 16625 Krameria Ave, Riverside, CA 92504. The NOP is be available online at the WMWD Web Site (<https://www.wmwd.com/135/Planning>).

SCOPING MEETING: WMWD will hold one virtual public scoping meeting to receive comments and suggestions about the issues to be included in the PEIR. The virtual public scoping meeting will include a brief presentation providing an overview of the proposed project. After the presentation, public comments will be accepted. The virtual scoping meeting will be held as follows:

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting Details	
Date:	April 26, 2022
Time:	6:00 PM
Zoom Link:	https://bit.ly/riversidefmppscopingmtg
Telephone Dial-in:	(888) 788-0099
Meeting ID:	854 7046 3556

If participating online, please register for the meeting by registering at the meeting link (<https://bit.ly/riversidefmppscopingmtg>) prior to joining. For the best experience it is recommended that the public download and install Zoom on your computer before the meeting begins. The free Zoom software can be downloaded in advance, or at the moment you join the meeting at: <https://zoom.us/download>; however, it is not required to install the Zoom software on your computer to participate and provide comments. If participating by phone, you will not be able to see the visual content presented, but you can listen and participate. When instructed to do so, please press *9 to raise your hand and press *6 to mute and unmute yourself.



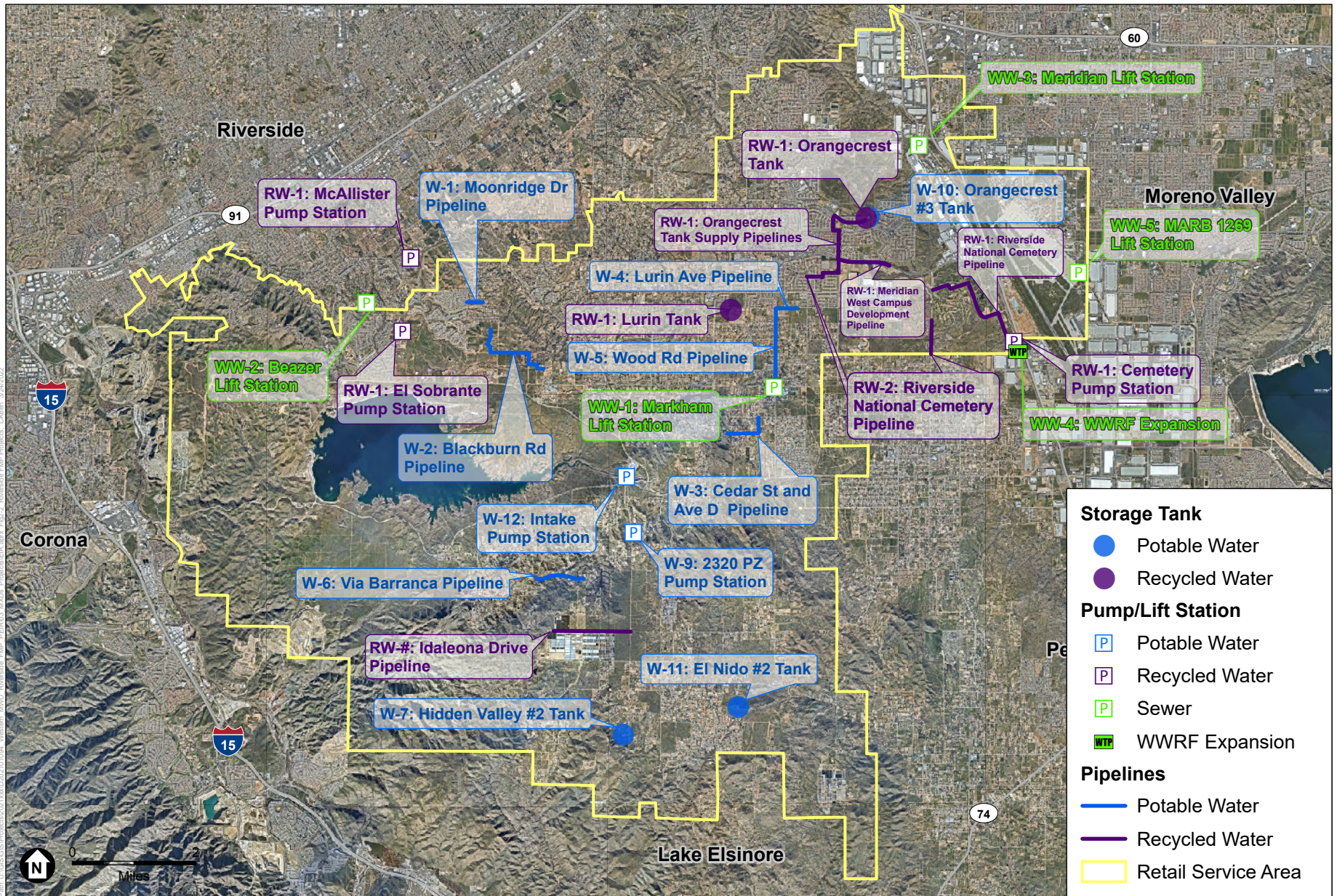
Path: U:\GIS\GIS\Projects\2021\01094\Western_MWD_Riverside_FMP_PEIFR03_MXD\Projects\EIR\aprx_Fig2-1_RiversideFMP_RegionalLocation_CKeen_3/11/2022

SOURCE: ESRI, 2022; WMWD, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Riverside Facilities Master Plan

Figure 1
Regional Location





SOURCE: Nearmap, 2022; WMWD, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Riverside Facilities Master Plan

Figure 2
Riverside FMP Projects

ATTACHMENT A

Potential Environmental Impacts

The PEIR will assess and disclose the reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that would likely result from the construction and operation of the proposed project. Potential impacts to resources listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as amended on December 28, 2018, are summarized below. The PEIR will identify mitigation measures if necessary to avoid, minimize, and offset potentially significant impacts of the project. The PEIR also will evaluate alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid, minimize, and offset potentially significant impacts of the project while attempting to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Aesthetics

Views in the project area consist mainly of residential and agricultural land uses, public facilities, open space and distant mountains vistas. Although there are no officially designated California State Scenic Highways within WMWD's Riverside Retail Service Area, Route 15 to the west of Lake Mathews is eligible for California State Scenic Highway status and some roadways may be considered scenic. Implementation of the proposed project would require construction of aboveground facilities such as storage tanks, pump stations, and treatment facility expansions. The PEIR will evaluate the potential for construction and operation of the proposed project to affect aesthetic resources, including potential impacts to scenic vistas and views, impacts to the visual character of sites that would support aboveground facilities, and the potential for new light or glare.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The proposed project area includes lands that are classified by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance. The northern portion of the of the service, north of Lake Mathews, contains Williamson Act Prime Agriculture Land. There does not appear to be any forestland within the project area. The PEIR will evaluate whether the proposed project would impact FMMP-designated farmland, or whether any agricultural or forestry land would be converted to non-agricultural or non-forestry uses.

Air Quality

Construction and operation of the proposed project could cause air emissions that would result from construction equipment exhaust, ground disturbance during construction, material hauling, construction employee-commute travel, vehicle operational maintenance trips, and vehicle trips associated with any increases in employment. The PEIR will estimate pollutant emissions from construction and operational activities.

Biological Resources

The proposed project could result in changes to wildlife habitat and disturbance of sensitive species during construction or operation. Site grading and introduction of new aboveground storage facilities could impact existing floral and faunal species or their habitats. The PEIR will discuss local ordinances and state and federal regulations governing biological resources, and will evaluate the potential for construction and operation of the proposed project to affect special-status species, sensitive natural communities, wetlands, wildlife movement corridors, and conservation plans.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project would require ground disturbing activities during construction that could disturb known or unknown archeological and historic sites, as well as human remains. Additionally, operation of project facilities could affect the integrity of historical or archaeological resources. The PEIR will assess the potential effects of the proposed project on cultural resources during construction and operation.

Energy

The proposed project could require significant amounts of energy during construction and operation of the proposed project facilities. The PEIR will quantitatively evaluate energy demand from construction equipment, haul trucks, vendor trucks, and construction workers. The PEIR will also quantify the Project's anticipated operational energy needs, including direct consumption of electricity to pump water, recycled water, and wastewater, and fuel needed for maintenance operations. Any construction of new or expanded energy related facilities could result in environmental effects.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project is located in western Riverside County, which is a seismically active region in California. The construction of new facilities could be subject to potential seismic hazards including ground shaking. In addition, construction activities could expose soils to storm water erosion. The PEIR will evaluate geologic hazards in the region and in WMWD's Riverside Retail Service Area, such as the potential for ground shaking, liquefaction, expansive soils, soil erosion and landslides.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with construction and operations. The PEIR will estimate construction-related emissions and long-term operational emissions, including total CO₂-equivalent emissions for evaluating the effects of GHGs. The PEIR will examine the project's effects on global climate change and evaluate consistency of the project with the State's GHG emissions reduction goals.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Excavation activities during construction of pipelines, pump stations, storage tanks, and treatment facilities could uncover contaminated soils or hazardous substances that pose a substantial hazard to human health or the environment. Operation of some projects may require transport, use, and disposal of regulated materials. The PEIR will assess the potential for the public or the environment to be affected by accidental release of hazardous materials due to project construction and operation.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction and operation of the proposed project could affect water quality and drainage patterns, particularly if excavation activities result in sediment or spills runoff. The PEIR will identify all impacts to water quality, water volume, surface runoff, groundwater resources, and seiche and dam inundation hazard zone impacts as a result of project implementation.

Land Use and Recreation

The proposed project would construct facilities within WMWD's Riverside Retail Service Area, primarily within rural residential areas. Much of the proposed infrastructure would be installed within public rights-

of-way or on property owned by WMWD, although some new parcels will be developed. The PEIR will evaluate the compatibility of the proposed projects with surrounding land use and recreational facilities, and will assess whether the proposed project will divide an established community.

Mineral Resources

The proposed project would involve ground-disturbing activities that could impact the availability of known mineral resources. A majority of WMWD's Riverside Retail Service Area is within Mineral Resources Zone 3, a zone where the significance of the mineral deposits is undetermined. To the west of Lake Mathews is an area within Mineral Resource Zone 2, a zone where there are known/inferred significant mineral resource deposits, including clay and concrete aggregate. The PEIR will identify if impacts to mineral resources would result from implementation of the proposed project.

Noise

Implementation of the proposed project would require construction and operation of project elements that would generate noise and vibration. Construction activities that could be a significant source of noise and vibration include trucking operations, use of heavy construction equipment (e.g., graders, cranes, and frontend loaders, pile driving equipment). During project operations, aboveground facilities such as pump and lift stations could generate permanent noise. The PEIR will describe the City of Riverside, City of Moreno Valley, City of Corona, and County of Riverside noise policies and ordinances, and assess potential noise impacts based on these thresholds.

Population and Housing/Growth Inducement

Implementation of the proposed project would improve the potable, recycled water, and wastewater systems within WMWD's Riverside Retail Service Area, and would support projected population growth in the service area. The proposed project would not build new housing or otherwise have a direct impact on population growth in the project area, nor would it require displacement of existing residents. The PEIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed project to indirectly induce growth and result in secondary environmental effects associated with growth.

Public Services

Implementation of the proposed project is unlikely to affect demand for public services, or require new or expanded facilities for public service providers. The PEIR will include an assessment of the project's potential to affect existing police and fire protection services, schools, or parks, during construction and operational activities.

Traffic and Transportation

Construction of the proposed project could affect traffic on local roadways as a result of hauling of material and equipment, road closures and detours, and increase in traffic hazards caused by construction activities. Additionally, the construction of pipelines would occur primarily in established rights-of-ways, which would impact circulation patterns in the City of Riverside, City of Moreno Valley, City of Corona, and parts of unincorporated Riverside County. The PEIR will evaluate the potential for construction vehicles, lane closures, or road closures to impact traffic and circulation in the project area.

Tribal Cultural Resources

WMWD is conducting AB 52 tribal consultation with the following seven Native American Tribes who have requested to be informed of activities initiated by WMWD: Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Temecula Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. There is a potential for the proposed project to affect tribal cultural resources during ground-disturbing activities associated with construction of the proposed project. The PEIR will evaluate potential impacts to tribal cultural resources and incorporate the results of AB 52 consultations into the analysis.

Utilities and Service Systems

The proposed project could result in the temporary disruption of services to adjacent land uses. The PEIR will describe the existing water, electricity, telecommunications, and gas utilities serving the project's local communities. Existing and projected regional utility supplies, demands, and facilities will be described along with any constraints or service deficiencies in the region. The PEIR will evaluate the project's potential to affect utilities and service systems.

Wildfire

The project site is located within rural residential communities in western Riverside County. The project site area is located within a State/Federal Responsibility Area. The severity zones include Very High, High, and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The project site includes steeper slopes to the southeast of Lake Mathews. During construction, equipment and on-site diesel fuel could pose a risk to wildfire with possible ignition sources such as internal combustion engines, gasoline-powered tools, and equipment that could produce a spark, fire, or flame. The use of spark-producing construction machinery within fire risk areas such as the project area could expose temporary project workers and contractors to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. The PEIR will evaluate potential impacts of wildfires due to implementation of the proposed project.