VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT

Westward Ho Drive Sewer Siphon Replacement Project

Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by:

BPG
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PLANNING GROUP

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INITIAL STUDY

1. Project title:

Westward Ho Siphon Replacement Project

2. Lead agency name and address:

Valley Sanitary District
45500 Van Buren Street
Indio, CA 92201

3. Contact person and phone number:

Ron Buchwald, PE
Engineering Services Manager
Valley Sanitary District
(760) 238-5400

4. Project location:

The project alignment is located within existing public right of way (ROW) of Westward Ho Drive on the west end and terminates on the Indio Water Authority (IWA) Plant No. 4 site located proximal to the western termination of Avenue 46 on the east end. The distance is approximately 1,130 feet. The Westward Ho Siphon Replacement Project would replace an existing sewer siphon (pipeline) that has been structurally compromised from erosion within the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC). The project location is shown in Figure 1.

5. Project sponsor's name and address:

Valley Sanitary District
45500 Van Buren Street
Indio, CA 92201

6. General Plan designation:

Street corridors and CVSC do not have a designated land use within the General Plan. The eastern terminus is located on land designated Residential.

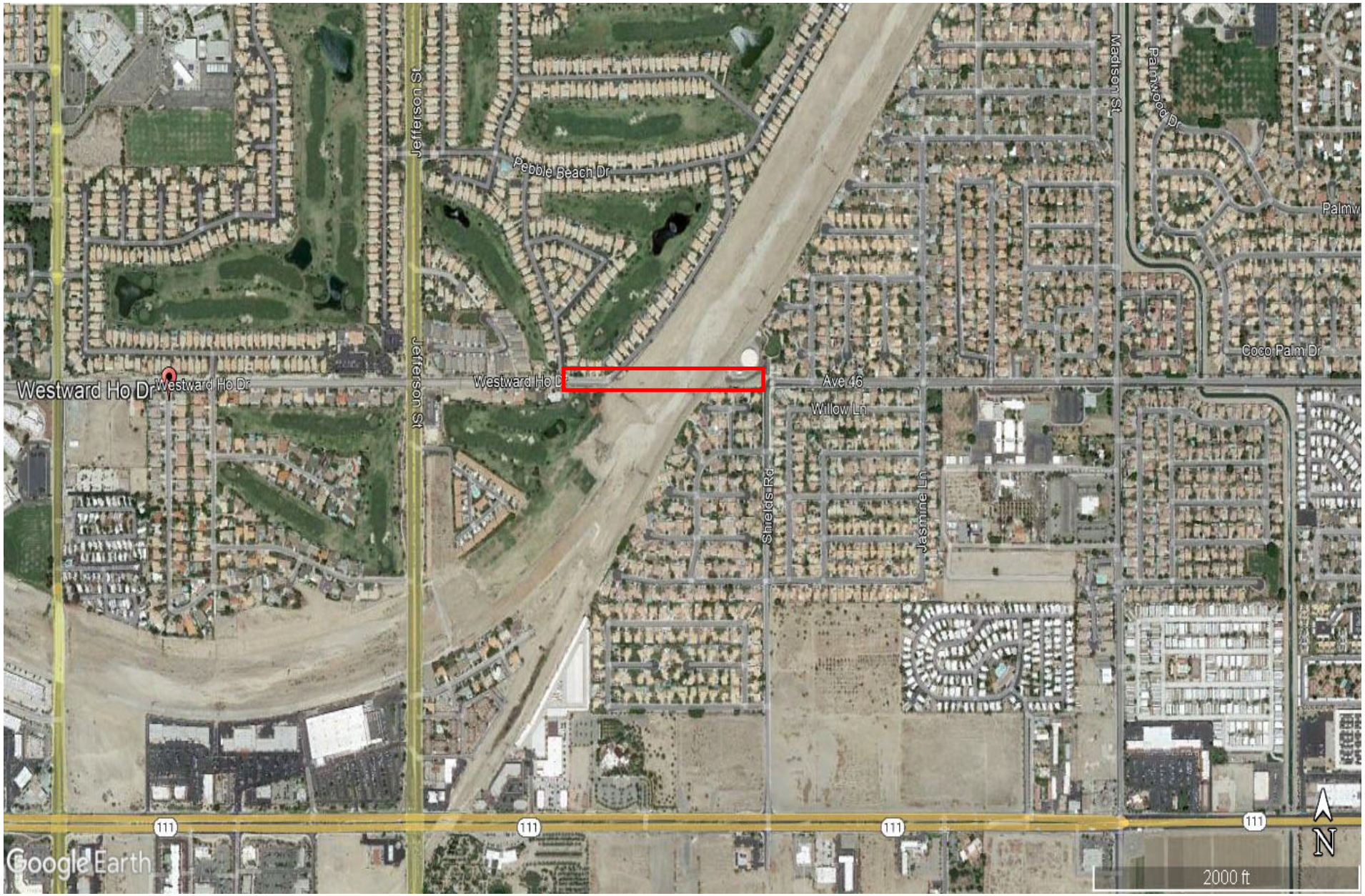

Figure 1 — Vicinity Map - **Project Site**

7. Zoning:

Street corridors and the CVSC are not provided a zoning designation. The eastern terminus is zoned Residential Low (RL).

8. Description of project:

The proposed Westward Ho Siphon Replacement Project would install a new sewer line between Westward Ho Drive on the west end and Indio Water Authority (IWA) property on the east end, a total distance of approximately 1,130 feet. In February 2019, a major rain event exposed the existing 12-inch diameter sewer siphon pipeline (also known as Avenue 46 Channel Siphon) which crosses the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) at eastern terminus of Westward-Ho Drive in Indio, California. The exposed sewer siphon was undermined as a result of the storm event. The sewer siphon was repaired and encased in concrete. It was determined by Valley Sanitary District (VSD) that the existing sewer siphon should be replaced with a deeper buried pipeline that would be safe from future storm erosions. The proposed project would replace the existing siphon by connecting a new pipeline segment to the existing pipeline at connection points within Westward Ho Drive on the west side and within the IWA Plant No. 4 property on the east side of the CVSC. The new segment would be installed approximately 50 feet under the CVSC (at its deepest point) using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to avoid direct impacts to the channel and impacts to the pipeline from future storm events.

An entrance pit approximately 4 feet in depth would be excavated within the disturbed dirt area just south of the water reservoir on the IWA Plant No. 4 property on the east side of the CVSC. The equipment and materials will be staged at this location and on the Westward Ho Drive side of the alignment to assemble the completed pipe connection. The HDD operation will advance the drill head under the CVSC while pulling the new pipeline segment behind it. A bentonite clay drilling slurry will be used to lubricate and support the tunnel as well as transport drilling spoils to the surface for disposal. A larger pit approximately 6 feet in depth will be excavated in Westward-Ho Drive at the existing pipeline. Two additional pits approximately 20 feet in depth will be constructed to allow installation of new manholes on either side of the CSWC. The new pipeline segment will be connected to the existing siphon pipeline. Both pits will be backfilled and the surface restored to existing conditions.

The majority of the work, including the use of noise generating equipment for installing the pipeline in the HDD bored hole, will be on the easterly side of the CSWC at the IWA Plant No. 4 site. The only equipment on the Westward Ho Drive side of the CSWC will be typical crew vehicles, generators for night lighting, if needed, and pipe joining equipment which will be equipped with silenced mufflers. The project may require up to two-night shifts to complete the pipeline installation. However, the anticipated scenario is that the installation could be completed within a 12-hour daytime shift.

As stated, this project is being proposed by VSD to replace a compromised pipeline segment. This will avoid potential failure of the existing siphon and resultant sewage spills within the CVSC. The siphon will not increase the capacity of the system or require improvements above ground. All work would occur underground. Construction is expected to begin in Winter 2023 and take approximately three months to complete. The design profile is shown in Figure 2.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting:

Land use at the western terminus is single-family residential to the north and west; a golf course and the CVSC is located to the south and east. Land use at the eastern end is single-family residential to the east and south, an IWA water tank and related infrastructure to the north and the CVSC to the west.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approval is required for the project design.

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun is there a plan for consultation?

A Phase I Cultural Resources Report was prepared for the proposed project and is included as Appendix G. The findings were negative for cultural resources. As part of the process, a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search was conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission. Tribal representatives identified as part of the SLF search were noticed during preparation of the Phase I Cultural Resources Report. Responses are provided as part of the Phase I Cultural Resources Report (Appendix G). As detailed herein, Valley Sanitary District conducted Tribal consultation required per Assembly Bill (AB) 52. Letters were sent to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians and the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. No responses were received.

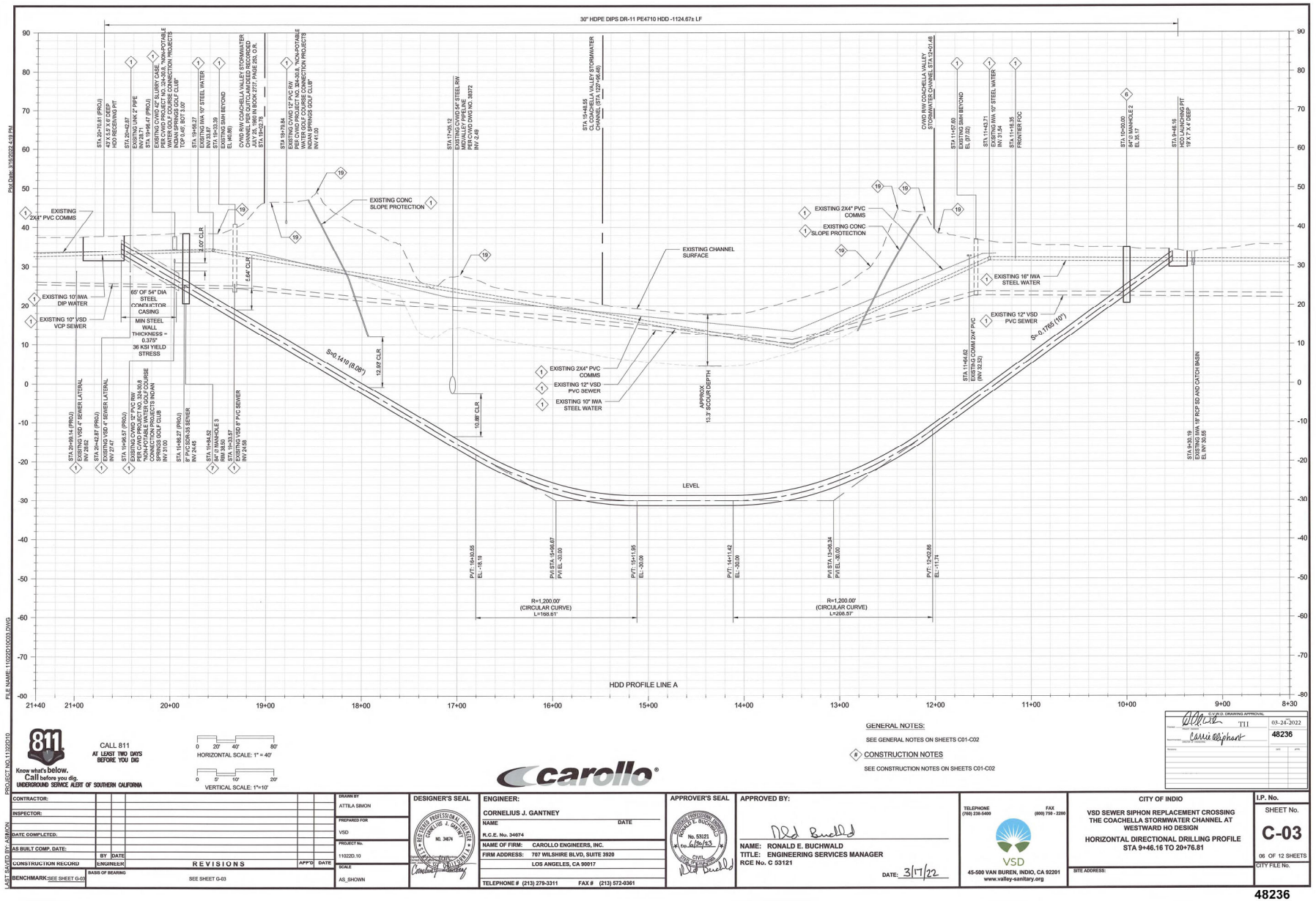

Figure 2—Design Exhibit

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" or "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION will be prepared.

☒ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potential significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Printed Name

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

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

a) The City of Indio General Plan 2040 (September 2019) provides planning and policy guidance for development within the City. The Land Use and Urban Design Element provides policy guidance for the preservation of visual resources with the City; however, no specific visual features in the project area are noted in General Plan 2040.

The project alignment is located below ground between the directional drilling entrance and exit pits. Views of the alignment are consistent with an urbanized area containing multiple land uses. Construction of the project would result in a temporary disturbance particularly at the directional drilling pits. All disturbed areas would be returned to preconstruction conditions when the project is complete. The project would have no change to the existing visual environment. No scenic views or resources would be affected. Thus, **no impact** to scenic vistas would occur.

b) There are three designated state scenic highways in Riverside County as defined by the California Department of Transportation. The nearest state-designated scenic highway to the study area is the segment of State Route 74 (SR-74) from the San Bernardino National Forest boundary to Highway 111 in the City of Palm Desert approximately 14 miles west of Indio. As noted, the project site is flat and comprised primarily of a paved street segment, CVSC corridor and disturbed land on IWA property. There are no trees, rock outcroppings, historic structures or other visually prominent features that would be affected by the project. **No impact** to these resources would occur as a result of the proposed project.

c) Westward Ho Avenue is part of an urban street system on the west end of the project alignment. Project construction would temporarily change the visual appearance of the street. However, the corridor does not have any distinctive visual characteristics; thus, project development would not substantially degrade the visual character of the site or surrounding areas. Impacts would be temporary and **less than significant**.

d) Street lighting occurs throughout the corridor. The proposed project is a new subsurface pipeline siphon and does not include any new lighting. Temporary lighting used to illuminate the construction area and equipment lights may be required. This light source would be terminated at the completion of construction. As noted, all improvements would be located subsurface. No new sources of glare would be constructed. Temporary light/glare impacts would be **less than significant.**

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

a) The project would be constructed within an existing street corridor, under the CVSC and within the disturbed IWA reservoir yard. No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would be affected by project implementation. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) The project corridor does not contain lands enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. The proposed project would not conflict with any zoning designations designed to promote agriculture. **No impact** would occur under this threshold**.**

c-e) Neither the project corridor or surrounding lands are used for timber production. The project would not conflict with any zoning designations designed to preserve timber or agricultural resources, result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use or involve changes to the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of farmland to non-farmland use. **No impact** would occur under these thresholds.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. AIR QUALITY – Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The project site is located within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which includes portions of Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Air quality conditions in the SCAB are under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD is required to monitor air pollutant levels to ensure that air quality standards are met and, if they are not met, to develop strategies to meet the standards. Depending on whether the standards are met or exceeded, the local air basin is classified as being in "attainment" or "non-attainment." The SCAB is a non-attainment area for both the federal and state standards for ozone and Particulate Matter $(PM)_{2.5}$. The SCAB is in attainment for the state and federal standards for PM_{10}, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and carbon monoxide (CO). Table 1 shows the significance thresholds that have been recommended by the SCAQMD for projects within the Basin.

Localized Significance Thresholds. In addition to the thresholds described above, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs). LSTs were devised in response to concerns regarding exposure of individuals to criteria pollutants in local communities. LSTs represent the maximum emissions from a project that are not expected to cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable federal or state ambient air quality

Table 1
SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Mass Daily Thresholds		
Pollutant	**Construction**	**Operation**
Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)	100 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)	75 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
Particulate Matter 10 (PM_{10})	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
Particulate Matter 2.5 ($PM_{2.5}$)	55 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
Sulfur Oxides (SO_x)	No standard	150 lbs/day
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	550 lbs/day	550 lbs/day

Notes: Ambient air quality thresholds for criteria pollutants based on SCAQMD Rule 1303, unless otherwise stated; lbs/day = pounds per day

standard at the nearest sensitive receptor, taking into consideration ambient concentrations in each source receptor area (SRA), project size and distance to the sensitive receptor. The nearest receivers are single-family residences located on the south side of Avenue 46 on the east side of the corridor and on the north side of Westward Ho Drive on the west side of the corridor. The closest residences to the east side of the corridor where the drilling equipment would be staged are approximately 130 feet to the south at the east end of Sandscript Court. LSTs only apply to emissions within a fixed stationary location, including idling emissions during both project construction and operation. LSTs are only applicable to the following criteria pollutants: Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), CO, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. LSTs are not applicable to mobile sources such as cars on a roadway (Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology, SCAQMD, June 2003, Revised July 2008).

LSTs have been developed for emissions within the 37 SRAs located in the SCAB for disturbance areas of one, two and five acres, at distances of 25, 50, 75, 100, 200 and 500 meters, with air pollutant modeling recommended for activity within larger areas. These values vary for each SRA which have been defined within the SCAB based on location, topography and meteorological conditions.

Construction emissions associated with implementing the proposed project were calculated using the California Emission Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2020.4.0 (2021) software. Construction emissions modeling for demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating application is based on the overall scope of the proposed development and construction phasing. In addition to SCAQMD Rule 403 requirements for fugitive dust control, emissions modeling also accounts for the use of low-VOC paint (50 g/L for non-flat coatings) as required by SCAQMD Rule 1113.

Project construction is expected to begin in late-2022 and be completed by late 2022. The project will not create any operational emissions; thus, only construction emissions are calculated and reported herein.

a) The SCAQMD has established criteria for determining consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), currently the 2016 AQMP, in Chapter 12, Sections 12.2 and 12.3, in the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook (SCAQMD 1993). The criteria are as follows (SCAQMD 1993):

> **Consistency Criterion No. 1:** The project will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards of the interim emissions reductions specified in the AQMP.
>
> **Consistency Criterion No. 2:** The project will not exceed the assumptions in the AQMP or increments based on the year of project buildout and phase.

As stated under threshold (b-c) below, construction and operation emissions would not exceed SCAQMD thresholds; thus, the project will not cause or contribute to new violations or delay the timely attaining of air quality standards specified in the AQMP. Thus, the project satisfies Consistency Criterion 1.

With respect to Consistency Criterion No. 2, the 2016 AQMP, the most recent AQMP adopted by the SCAQMD, incorporates local city General Plans and the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing and employment growth. The project will address a deficiency in the existing wastewater conveyance system. It will not cause or contribute to any population or job growth. Thus, the project would comply with Consistency Criterion 2 and would be consistent with the AQMP. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) Project construction would generate temporary air pollutant emissions. Both construction emissions and vehicle emissions associated with operation of the project are quantified herein. The CalEEMod output file for summer emissions is provided in Appendix A of this Initial Study.

Construction Emissions

Construction vehicles and equipment operating on the graded site as well as grading/site preparation activities have the potential to generate fugitive dust (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) through the exposure of soil to wind erosion and dust entrainment. Project-related construction activities would also emit ozone precursors (oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), reactive organic gases (ROG) as well as carbon monoxide (CO). The majority of construction-related emissions would result from the use of heavy-duty construction equipment and vehicles used by workers, vendors and for hauling purposes during site preparation/grading and directional drilling activities. For dust control purposes, it was assumed any disturbed area, unpaved soils and spoil material would be watered two times daily as required per SCAQMD Rule 403.

Table 2
Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions

Construction Phase		Maximum Emissions (lbs/day)				
	ROG	NO_x	CO	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
2022 Maximum lbs/day	1.0	10.3	6.9	0.01	2.7	1.5
SCAQMD Regional Thresholds (lbs/day)	*75*	*100*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Threshold Exceeded	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: Appendix A

As shown in Table 2, construction of the proposed project would not exceed the SCAQMD regional thresholds. Compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403 would be a standard project feature. No mitigation would be required to reduce construction emissions to less than significant. A **less than significant** impact would occur under this threshold.

c) Localized Significance Thresholds. The SCAQMD has published a "Fact Sheet for Applying CalEEMod to Localized Significance Thresholds" (South Coast Air Quality Management District 2011). CalEEMod calculates construction emissions based on the number of equipment hours and the maximum daily disturbance activity possible for each piece of equipment. Construction-related emissions reported by CalEEMod are compared to the localized significance threshold lookup tables. The CalEEMod output in Appendix A shows the equipment assumed for this analysis.

LSTs have been developed for emissions within areas of one, two and five acres in size, with air pollutant modeling recommended for activity within larger areas. Based on the number of type of equipment used for site preparation and grading and the SCAQMD *Fact Sheet for Applying CalEEMod to Localized Significance Thresholds*, the project would disturb less than one acre daily. The project site is located in Source Receptor Area 30 (SRA-30, Coachella Valley). LSTs for construction related emissions in the SRA 30 at varying distances between the source and receiving property for one acre disturbance areas are shown in Table 3.

As referenced, the nearest sensitive receptors to the drilling staging area are approximately 130 feet (40 meters); thus, the evaluation of construction emissions relative to LST thresholds was performed based on allowable emissions for a receptor distance of 25 meters. As shown in Table 5, emissions of NOx, CO, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ would not exceed the LST thresholds shown in Table 4 using the 25-meter threshold. The PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions assume the site would be watered twice daily as a standard condition to ensure compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403. Project-related construction impacts would be **less than significant** per threshold b referenced above.

Table 3
SCAQMD LSTs for Construction

Pollutant	Allowable emissions as a function of receptor distance in meters from a one-acre site (lbs/day)				
	25	**50**	**100**	**200**	**500**
Gradual conversion of NO_x to NO_2	132	166	238	376	733
CO	878	1,387	2,565	6.021	24,417
PM_{10}	4	13	35	80	214
$PM_{2.5}$	3	5	10	24	105

Source: http://www.aqmd.gov/CEQA/handbook/LST/appC.pdf, October 2009.

Table 4
On-site Construction Emissions

	Pollutant (lbs/day)			
Construction Phase	**NOx**	**CO**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Site Preparation/Drilling	10.3	6.6	0.5	0.4
LST Thresholds	132	878	4	3
Exceed Thresholds	No	No	No	No

Note: Daily emissions shown are the highest value occurring each phase.

Carbon Monoxide Hotspots. In addition to quantifying emissions, SCAQMD recommends performing a local CO hotspot analysis if an intersection meets one of the following criteria: 1) the intersection is at Level of Service (LOS) D or worse and where the project increases the volume to capacity ratio by 2%, or 2) the project decreases LOS at an intersection to D or worse. A CO hotspot is a localized concentration of CO that is above the state or national 1-hour or 8-hour CO ambient air standards. Localized CO "hotspots" can occur at intersections with heavy peak hour traffic.

As stated, the project will install a new sewer line siphon segment. Post-construction, it will not generate any traffic; thus, the project will not generate any CO emissions. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

Toxic Air Contaminants. In addition to impacts from criteria pollutants, project impacts may include emissions of pollutants identified by the state and federal government as TACs or HAPs. State law has established the framework for California's TAC identification and control program, which is generally more stringent than the federal program and aimed at TACs that are a problem in California. The state has formally identified more than 200 substances as TACs, including the federal HAPs, and has adopted appropriate control measures for sources of these TACs.

A substance is considered toxic if it has the potential to cause adverse health effects in humans, including increasing the risk of cancer upon exposure, or acute (immediate) and/or chronic (cumulative) non-cancer health effects. A toxic substance released into the air is considered a toxic air contaminant (TAC). Adverse health effects associated with exposure to TACs may include carcinogenic (i.e., cancer-causing) and noncarcinogenic effects. Noncarcinogenic effects typically affect one or more target organ systems and may be experienced on either short-term (acute) or long-term (chronic) exposure to a given TAC.

TACs are identified by federal and state agencies based on a review of available scientific evidence. In the State of California, TACs are identified through a two-step process that was established in 1983 under the Toxic Air Contaminant Identification and Control Act. This two-step process of risk identification and risk management and reduction was designed to protect residents from the health effects of toxic substances in the air. In addition, the California Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Information and Assessment Act, Assembly Bill (AB) 2588, was enacted by the legislature in 1987 to address public concern over the release of TACs into the atmosphere.

Examples of TACs include certain aromatic and chlorinated hydrocarbons, certain metals, and asbestos. TACs are generated by a number of sources, including stationary sources, such as dry cleaners, gas stations, combustion sources, and laboratories; mobile sources, such as automobiles; and area sources, such as landfills.

The following air toxic control measures (ATCMs) are required by state law to reduce diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions (DPMs are considered TACs):

- Fleet owners of mobile construction equipment are subject to the CARB Regulation for In-Use Off-road Diesel Vehicles (Title 13 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 9, Section 2449), the purpose of which is to reduce DPM and criteria pollutant emissions from in-use (existing) off-road diesel-fueled vehicles.
- All commercial diesel vehicles are subject to Title 13, Section 2485 of the California Code of Regulations, limiting engine idling time. Idling of heavy-duty diesel construction equipment and trucks during loading and unloading is required to be limited to 5 minutes; electric auxiliary power units should be used whenever possible.

Health effects from carcinogenic air toxics are usually described in terms of cancer risk. The SCAQMD recommends an incremental cancer risk threshold of 10 in a million (SCAQMD 2019). "Incremental cancer risk" is the net increased likelihood that a person continuously exposed to concentrations of TACs resulting from a project over a 9-, 30-, and 70-year exposure period will contract cancer based on the use of standard Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment risk-assessment methodology.

The greatest potential for TAC emissions during construction would be DPM emissions from heavy equipment operations and heavy-duty trucks during construction of the project. DPM has established cancer risk factors and relative exposure values for long-term chronic health hazard impacts; however, no short-term, acute relative exposure level has been established. Total project construction would last one to two months, after which project-related TAC emissions would cease. A three-month construction schedule represents a short duration of

exposure (.05% of a 30-year exposure period) while cancer and chronic risk from DPM are typically associated with long-term exposure. Thus, the project would not result in a long-term source of TAC emissions. In addition, the project would not require the extensive operation of heavy-duty diesel construction equipment, which is subject to a CARB Airborne Toxics Control Measure for in-use diesel construction equipment to reduce DPM emissions and would not involve extensive use of diesel trucks, which are also subject to a CARB Airborne Toxics Control Measure.

Furthermore, as shown in Tables 2 and 4, maximum daily particulate matter (i.e., PM_{10} or $PM_{2.5}$) emissions generated by construction equipment operation and haul-truck trips during construction (exhaust particulate matter, or DPM), combined with fugitive dust generated by equipment operation and vehicle travel, would be well below the significance thresholds.

At completion of construction, the project will have no emissions. Overall, based on the above considerations, the project would not result in substantial TAC exposure to sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the proposed project, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

d) The proposed project would generate odors from construction (i.e., diesel exhaust). However, these construction odors would be temporary. Construction emissions would not exceed SCAQMD impact thresholds; thus, short-term odors are not expected to be significant. Post-construction, all improvements would be underground; and thus, would not generate objectionable odors. Therefore, impacts associated with objectionable odors (significance threshold d) would be **less than significant.**

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. <u>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</u> - 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				

Material is this section is based in part on information contained in the Biological Resources Assessment prepared by ELMT Consulting, Inc., August 2022 and provided for reference as Appendix B.

a) The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) were consulted to determine the sensitive species that could potentially occur in the project area or vicinity, including any federally listed endangered or threatened species. No special status species plant or animal species and their habitats occur within the project area. Vegetation and wildlife species observed or likely to occur within the project area are identified as follows:

Vegetation
Vegetation consists mostly of ornamental trees and shrubs in association with adjacent development and non-native grasses and weedy annuals in association with disturbed open areas. Disturbed areas primarily support non-native weedy/early successional plant species. Plant species observed within the disturbed areas of the site include mouse barley, puncture vine, prickly-lettuce, annual sunflower and Russian thistle.

Developed areas encompass all building/structures, paved, impervious surfaces. Developed areas observed onsite include paved (asphalt roads) and loose gravel areas associated within existing facilities. Vegetation observed within these areas was minimal and consisted of ornamental/landscaped plants associated with onsite development. The bottom portion of the CVSC is subject to ephemeral storm flows and is routinely scoured following storm events. This area is generally devoid of vegetation with the exception of early successional plant species.

Wildlife

Fish. No fish or hydrogeomorphic features (e.g., creeks, ponds, lakes, reservoirs) that would provide suitable habitat for fish were observed on the project site. The CVSC, which flows through the survey area, is primarily subject to ephemeral water sources, and provides a limited amount of habitat for fish species. No fish are expected to occur within the CVSC within where the HDD will occur. Implementation of the proposed project will not have any direct impacts to

the CVSC, and indirect impacts from project implementation are not expected to impact any fish species they may occur in the CVSC when wet.

Amphibians. The CVSC is ephemeral and provides a limited amount of habitat to support common amphibian species such as Baja California tree frog and American bullfrog when water is present within the channel. Implementation of the proposed project will not have any direct impacts to the CVSC, and indirect impacts from project implementation are not expected to impact any amphibian species they may occur in the wet portion of the CVSC.

Reptiles. The project site provides minimal habitat to support reptilian species adapted to significant human disturbance and development. The only reptilian species observed during the field investigation was western side-blotched lizard. Other common reptile species that have the potential to occur on the project site include Great Basin fence lizard, southern alligator lizard, gopher snake, zebra tail lizard and coachwhip.

Birds. The project site provides minimal foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of local bird species, especially those adapted to a high degree of routine anthropogenic disturbance. Avian species detected during the field investigation include black phoebe, mourning dove, red-tailed hawk, common raven, house finch, rock pigeon, northern mockingbird, Brewer's blackbird, greater roadrunner and Eurasian collard dove.

The ornamental vegetation associated with the bordering residential developments and the CVSC provide marginal nesting opportunities for avian species. Further, the open unvegetated areas within the disturbed portions of the CVSC provide suitable nesting opportunity for ground-nesting birds such as killdeer. No actively breeding bird species or birds displaying nesting behaviors were observed during the field investigation. Nesting birds are protected pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 prohibit the take, possession, or destruction of birds, their nests or eggs). To ensure no impacts occur to birds protected under the MBTA, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would be implemented to ensure a nesting bird clearance survey is performed prior to any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities.

> **Mitigation Measure BIO-1:** Pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Fish and Game Code, removal of any trees, shrubs, or any other potential nesting habitat should be conducted outside the avian nesting season. The nesting season extends from February 1 through August 31 but can vary slightly from year to year based upon seasonal weather conditions. If ground disturbance and vegetation removal cannot occur outside of the nesting season, a pre-construction clearance survey for nesting birds, should be conducted within three (3) days of the start of any ground disturbing activities to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during construction. The biologist conducting the clearance survey should document a negative survey with a brief letter report provided to the City of Rancho Cucamonga indicating that no impacts to active avian nests will occur. If an active avian nest is discovered during the pre-construction clearance survey, construction activities can commence thereafter provided activities are able to maintain a 300-foot buffer around the active nest. For raptors and special-status species, this buffer will be expanded

to 500 feet. It is recommended that a biological monitor be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by the construction activity. Once a qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged and left the nest, or the nest otherwise becomes inactive under natural conditions, normal construction activities can occur.

Mammals. The project site provides minimal foraging and denning habitat for mammalian species adapted to significant human disturbance and development. However, most mammal species are nocturnal and are difficult to observe during a diurnal field visit. Mammals detected during the field assessment included desert cottontail, Botta's pocket gopher and California ground squirrel. Other mammalian species that have the potential to occur on the project site include opossum, coyote and racoon. No bat species are expected to roost on-site due to a lack of suitable roosting habitat (i.e., trees, crevices, abandoned structures) within and surrounding the project site.

Special Status Plants. Sixteen (16) special-status plant species have been recorded in the CNDDB and CNPS in the La Quinta quadrangle. As stated, no special-status plant species were observed on-site during the field investigation. The project site consists of heavily disturbed and developed land that have been subject to a variety of anthropogenic disturbances. These disturbances have reduced, if not eliminated, the ability of the project site to provide suitable habitat for special-status plant species. Based on habitat requirements for the identified special-status species, and known distributions, it was determined that the project site does not have potential to support any of the special-status species documented as occurring within the vicinity of the project site and all are presumed absent.

Special Status Wildlife. Twenty-three (23) special-status wildlife species have been reported in the La Quinta quadrangle (refer to Appendix C). No special-status animal species were observed on-site. Based on habitat requirements for the identified special-status wildlife species, and known distributions, it was determined that the project site and survey area have a low potential to provide suitable habitat for burrowing owl and western yellow bat. All other special-status species are presumed to be absent from the project site. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, no impacts to special-status species are expected to occur.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is a habitat area essential to the conservation of a listed species, though the area need not actually be occupied by the species at the time it is designated. This is a specific term and designation within the US Endangered Species Act. With certain exceptions, critical habitat must be designated for all threatened species and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, with certain specified exceptions. Based on maps viewed through the US Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, the proposed project site is not within or adjacent to designated critical habitat.

As stated, no special status plant or animal species occur within the project area; thus, none would be adversely affected by the project. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, impacts to migratory and nesting bird species, would be less than significant.

b and c) There are three key agencies that regulate activities within inland streams, wetlands, and riparian areas in California. The Corps Regulatory Branch regulates discharge of dredge and/or fill materials into "waters of the United States" pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Of the State agencies, the CDFW regulates alterations to streambed and associated plant communities pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code, and the Regional Board regulates discharges into surface waters pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

CVSC traverses the middle of the project stie from a northwest to southeast direction. This drainage feature is an ephemeral feature and only flows during storm events. No riparian vegetation was observed along the drainage feature within the proposed alignment. The CVSC, within the survey area, would fall under the regulatory authority of the Corps, Regional Board, and CDFW. However, based on the proposed design, a Horizontal Direction Drilling (HDD) method will be used to install the pipeline under the CVSC, which would not result in any jurisdictional impacts and regulatory approvals would not be required. The implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) used to control stormwater flows and drilling material will ensure no indirect impacts to the drainage feature will occur during installation. N**o impact** to jurisdictional resources would occur.

d) Habitat linkages provide links between larger habitat areas that are separated by development. Wildlife corridors are similar to linkages, but provide specific opportunities for animals to disperse or migrate between areas. A corridor can be defined as a linear landscape feature of sufficient width to allow animal movement between two comparatively undisturbed habitat fragments. Adequate cover is essential for a corridor to function as a wildlife movement area. It is possible for a habitat corridor to be adequate for one species yet inadequate for others. Wildlife corridors are significant features for dispersal, seasonal migration, breeding, and foraging. Additionally, open space can provide a buffer against both human disturbance and natural fluctuations in resources.

The proposed limits of disturbance will be confined to existing disturbed and/or developed areas, which have removed natural plant communities from the project site. Further, site is surrounded by existing developments, which have eliminated connection to nearby wildlife movement corridors.

The CVSC, that extends northwest to southeast through the middle of the project area, has not been identified in the CVMSHCP as a habitat linkage or migration corridor. Although channelized, the CVSC has the potential to provide local wildlife movement opportunities for a limited variety of wildlife species. However, the project will be confined within the boundaries of existing development, outside of the CVSC. As a result, implementation of the proposed project will not disrupt or have any adverse effects on any migratory corridors or linkages in the surrounding area. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

e) The area affected by construction does not contain any street trees that would be affected by the project. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

f) The project site is located within the boundaries of the Coachella Valley MSHCP; however, it is not located in a conservation area nor are species protected under the MSHCP found in the project area. Further, the project is a Covered Activity located outside designated conservation areas. Implementation of the proposed project is expected to be consistent with the applicable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures described in Section 4.4 of the CVMSHCP (refer to Appendix D of Appendix B). Since the proposed project is considered a Covered Activity under Section 7.1 of the CVMSHCP, no additional project-specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are required, and the project would be compliant with the CVMSHCP. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The background information and impact evaluation provided herein are based on data in the *Cultural Resources Investigation in Support of the Valley Sanitary District Westward Ho Siphon Project*, prepared by PaleoWest, LLC, August 2022 (Appendix C).

(a-b) The proposed study area for the cultural resource assessment is defined as the directional drill entrance and exit pits and staging area which will occur on the IWA site located at the eastern project terminus. Vertical impacts associated with the project will be approximately 10 feet below the surface for construction of the directional drilling pits. The siphon would be installed up to 60 feet below the surface at the deepest point near the center of the CVSC; however, this area would not be excavated.

The area affected by construction has been assessed through existing literature searches, record reviews, and a pedestrian survey. A literature review and records search at the Eastern Information Center (EIC), housed at the University of California, Riverside was completed on July 21, 2022. This inventory effort included the project area and a 0.5-mi radius around the project area, collectively termed the study area. The objective of this records search was to identify prehistoric or historic period cultural resources previously recorded within the study area during prior cultural resource investigations. As part of the cultural resources inventory, historical maps and aerial images were examined to characterize the developmental history of the study area and vicinity.

The records search results indicate that 28 previous investigations have been conducted and documented within the study area since 1970. Four studies (RI-004155, -0850, - 10374, and -10406) encompassed a portion of the project area. As such, approximately 50 percent of the project area has been previously inventoried for cultural resources. The records search indicated that 31 cultural resources have been previously documented within the study area. These

resources include 20 prehistoric archaeological sites, seven Historic Period structures or built environment resources, three prehistoric isolated resources and one multi-component resource. None of these resources are within the project area.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted on June 23, 2022, for a review of the Sacred Lands File (SLF). The objective of the SLF search was to determine if the NAHC had any knowledge of Native American cultural resources (e.g., traditional use or gathering area, place of religious or sacred activity, etc.) within the immediate vicinity of the project area. The NAHC responded on July 29, 2022, stating that the SLF was completed with negative results. The NAHC suggested that 18 individuals representing 12 Native American tribal groups be contacted for information regarding cultural resource issues related to the proposed project. Outreach letters were mailed to tribal groups on July 20, 2022 and then to the NAHC recommended contacts on August 8, 2022. To date, one response has been received:

- The Quechan Tribe of Fort Yuma Historic Preservation Department sent an email indicating the Tribe does not wish to comment on the Project, stating they defer to more local tribes.

No additional responses were received as of August 15, 2022.

A cultural resources survey of the project area was completed on August 2, 2022. The fieldwork effort included an intensive pedestrian survey of the entire project area, including both the terminus of Westward Ho Drive and the segment of Avenue 46. The intensive pedestrian survey was conducted by walking a series of parallel transects running north/south spaced at 15-meter (49-foot) intervals. The archaeologist carefully inspected all areas within the Project area likely to contain or exhibit sensitive cultural resources to ensure discovery and documentation of any visible, potentially significant cultural resources within the project area.

The project area is composed of heavily disturbed, developed areas including the IWA gated reservoir yard located between the CVSC and Shields Park. Sediments within the east portion of the project consist of fill sand with medium sized road gravels (~1 cm-3 cm). Ground visibility in this part of the project area was 90-100 percent. The surrounding area contained scatters of construction materials (large pipe segments, cords, bolts, etc.) that obscured a small area of ground beneath. All disturbance within the area appears to be modern and included construction materials, broken glass, plastic waste, soda cans, and other types of modern refuse. Vegetation was comprised of ruderal grasses/weeds.

The west-end of the project is within a residential cul-de-sac at the junction between Westward Ho Drive and Meadow Lake Drive. The cul-de-sac is bisected by a pathway that connects different sections of the Indian Springs Golf Club, which is adjacent to the Project area. The west-end of the Project area had low to good ground visibility (0–70 percent). Low visibility areas were paved with asphalt and concrete, whereas good visibility areas included undeveloped land adjacent to the stormwater channel. Sediments near the western edge of the channel were also sandy and contained smaller gravels (<1cm).

The cultural resource investigation, which included a records search and background research, Native American coordination, and a cultural resources survey, did not identify prehistoric or historic period archaeological or built-environment resources in the project area. Although the project vicinity contains a moderate density of cultural resources, the project area has been highly disturbed by channelization, residential development and the construction of existing VSD and IWA facilities. Thus, the archaeological sensitivity of the project vicinity is considered moderate to high, but the archaeological sensitivity of the project area is considered low. Given these findings, no impacts to historical resources would occur with project implementation. Further, no archaeological or Native American resources were identified within or adjacent to the Project area; thus, no impacts to archaeological resources would occur with project implementation. No further cultural resource work is recommended. However, the following best management practices are recommended for implementation during project construction to address the discovery of previously unknown cultural resources during ground disturbing activities.

As stated, no historic resources are located within the project area; thus, **no impact** would occur under threshold a. With implementation of Management Recommendations 1 and 2, impacts to archaeological resources per threshold b would be **less than significant.**

> **Management Recommendation 1.** If cultural resources are encountered during project related activities, work in the immediate area must halt and the Project Archaeologist should be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. If the discovery proves to be California Register of Historic Places (CRHR) eligible, additional work such as data recovery excavation, Native American consultation, and archaeological monitoring may be warranted to mitigate any adverse effects.
>
> **Management Recommendation 2.** If human remains are found, existing regulations outlined in the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 state that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code § 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the County Coroner must be notified within 24 hours of positive identification as human. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site within 48 hours of being granted access and provide recommendations as to the treatment of the remains to the landowner.

c) The potential for encountering human remains at the project site is low. No known burial sites have been identified within the project site or in the vicinity nor was any evidence of this found during preparation of the Cultural Resource Assessment. In addition, California Health and Safety Code §7050.5, Public Resources Code § 5097.98, and § 15064.5 of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines) mandate procedures to be followed, including that, if human remains are encountered during excavation, all work must halt, and the County Coroner must

be notified (Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code). The coroner will determine whether the remains are of forensic interest. If the coroner, with the aid of the supervising archaeologist, determines that the remains are prehistoric, the coroner will contact the NAHC. The NAHC will be responsible for designating the MLD responsible for the ultimate disposition of the remains, as required by Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code. The MLD should make his/her recommendations within 48 hours of their notification by the NAHC. This recommendation may include A) the non-destructive removal and analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American human remains; (B) preservation of Native American human remains and associated items in place; (C) relinquishment of Native American human remains and associated items to the descendants for treatment; or (D) other culturally appropriate treatment. Section 7052 of the Health & Safety Code also states that disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony. With adherence to these existing regulations, impacts would be **less than significant**.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. ENERGY – would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant adverse impact due to wasteful, inefficient, consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) Project construction would utilize common methods for site preparation, grading and installation of all infrastructure. Construction vehicles and equipment would utilize fossil fuels such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and motor oil. The project is projected to require approximately 196 gallons of diesel to fuel the excavation and directional drilling equipment and operate construction vehicles. Construction would be short-term and temporary. The project is not anticipated to include any unique features or construction techniques that would generate high energy demand or be wasteful or otherwise result in inefficient use of fuels or other sources of energy. The project would conform with all state and local requirements regarding construction-related energy use, including anti-idling regulations. The project would not generate any energy demand during operation. The project would not result in wasteful energy use and would result in a **less than significant** impact under this threshold.

b) The project would replace an existing wastewater siphon pipeline. As stated, the project would have no post-construction energy demand. It would require approximately 196 gallons of diesel fuel during construction. This would not represent a significant impact with respect to energy consumption nor would it conflict with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. **No impact** would result from the project under this threshold.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – would the project:				
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Information within this section is based in part on information contained in the *Requa Avenue Interceptor Design Project Geotechnical Report,* HDR Engineering, Inc., March 2014.

a (i-ii) The nearest active fault are strands of the San Andreas Fault, Coachella Valley segment, located approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the project corridor and VSD reclamation facility. This fault segment extends from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea (Earth Consultants International, August 2000). The project corridor is not located within the boundaries of an Earthquake Fault Zone as defined by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 (California Department of Conservation, website visited December 3, 2014). There are no known active or potentially active faults traversing the area and the risk of ground rupture resulting from fault displacement beneath the site is low.

During the life of the proposed improvements, the corridor will likely experience moderate to occasionally high ground shaking from known faults, as well as background shaking from other seismically active areas of the Southern California region. The project would be constructed consistent with modern methods intended to minimize impacts associated with geological conditions including ground shaking Impacts would be **less than significant.**

a (iii) Groundwater levels within the corridor are expected to be 100 feet or more below the surface (HDR Engineering, March 2014). Project excavation would be as deep as 18 feet; however, this is above the depth of known groundwater. The potential for encountering groundwater and related impacts associated with liquefaction at the subject site is considered low; however temporary dewatering and localized perched groundwater conditions could be encountered during construction of the direction al drilling entrance/exit pits. If this were to occur, a dewatering plan would be prepared to address this issue. Impacts would be **less than significant.**

a (iv) The project site is generally flat. No existing slopes would be disturbed during construction of the proposed project; thus, the potential for landslide is low. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) Based on the location of the project along the CVSC (Whitewater River) channel, the onsite soils are generally alluvial consisting of fine sands with varying amounts of silts and occasionally trace of clays. The project area is flat which limits erosion potential. The disturbed

area is less than one acre in size; thus, the project would not be subject to State Water Resources Control Board General Construction Permit during construction to minimize soil erosion. However, a Water Quality Management Plan would be required to provide Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be implemented during construction to minimize erosion from soil stockpiles and the management of the drilling slurry to avoid erosion/runoff from the leaving the immediate construction area. With implementation of BMPs specified in the WQMP prepared for the project, soil erosion hazard impacts would be **less than significant.**

c, d) Land subsidence is defined as the sinking or settling of land to a lower level. Causes can include: (1) earth movements; (2) lowering of ground water level; (3) removal of underlying supporting materials by mining or solution of solids, either artificially or from natural causes; (4) compaction caused by wetting (hydrocompaction); (5) oxidation of organic matter in soils; or (6) added load on the land surface. The new sewer siphon would be installed using directional drilling equipment which would pull the pipe through the drill hole rather than excavate a trench. The entrance/exit pits would be backfilled with excavated material at the completion of construction. No evidence of subsidence is present within the study area; thus, assuming construction occurs consistent with engineering recommendations, the potential for subsidence at the subject site is considered low. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

e) The proposed project does not include any improvements that would require the use of septic systems. **No impact** would occur.

f) Construction of the project would not impact, either directly or indirectly, any known unique paleontological resource or unique geologic features. Given the construction history and depth of previous disturbance, the potential for locating undiscovered paleontological or geological resources is remote. However, with implementation of Management Recommendations CR-1 and CR-2, a **less than significant** impact to paleontological resources would occur.

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

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are often referred to as greenhouse gases (GHGs), analogous to the way in which a greenhouse retains heat. Common GHG include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxides (N_2O_x), fluorinated gases, and ozone. GHGs are emitted by both natural processes and human activities. Of these gases, CO_2 and CH_4 are emitted in the greatest quantities from human activities. Emissions of CO_2 are largely by-products of fossil fuel combustion, whereas CH_4 results from off-gassing associated with agricultural practices and landfills. Man-made GHGs, many of which have greater heat-absorption potential than CO_2, include fluorinated gases, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFC), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). The accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. Without the natural heat trapping effect of GHGs, Earth's surface would be about 34° C cooler. However, it is believed that emissions from human activities, particularly the consumption of fossil fuels for electricity production and transportation, have elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere beyond the level of naturally occurring concentrations (Cal EPA, 2006).

Pursuant to the requirements of SB 97, the *CEQA Guidelines* were amended to include feasible mitigation of GHG emissions and analysis of the effects of GHG emissions. The adopted *CEQA Guidelines* provide regulatory guidance on the analysis and mitigation of GHG emissions in CEQA documents, while giving lead agencies the discretion to set quantitative or qualitative thresholds for the assessment and mitigation of GHGs and climate change impacts.

The majority of individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to create a project-specific impact through a direct influence to climate change; therefore, the issue of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards an impact is cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an

individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15355).

Potential GHG impacts are evaluated per the SCAQMD's recommended/preferred option threshold for all land use types of 3,000 metric tons CO2E per year. GHG emissions associated with the project's construction period and long-term operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod 2020.4.0.

a) Construction activities would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The project-related construction emissions are confined to the two-month construction window. Consistent with GHG methodology, emissions were amortized over a 30-year period to determine the annual construction-related GHG emissions over the life of the project. The proposed project would generate approximately 0.9 metric tons of GHG emissions. Amortized over 30 years, the project would generate 0.3 metric tons as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Emission Source	Annual Emissions (metric tons CO2E)
2022	0.9
Total	0.9
Construction (amortized over 30 years)	0.03

Sources: Emissions reported are from CalEEMod mitigated construction and operational data. See Appendix A for calculations.

The proposed project's emissions would be lower than SCAQMD's proposed 3,000 metric tons per year threshold. Impacts would be **less than significant.**

b) The proposed project is the installation of a sewer line interceptor. The project does not include residential, commercial, or industrial development that would generate ongoing operational GHG emissions. **No impact** would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:

wildland fires?

a-c) The proposed project would require the use of diesel fuel to operate the equipment and trucks; however, a fueling service would be used rather than having fuel stored on-site during construction. The project is a replacement sewer line siphon. It does not include manufacturing or other activities that would involve the routine use, handling, storage, or transport of hazardous materials. Indio High School is located at the southeast corner of Avenue 46 and Clinton Street. The nearest school to the project site is James Madison Elementary School located approximately one-half mile east of the eastern project terminus. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

d) Based on a review of available databases listing known hazard sites (Geotracker, Envirostar), there is no evidence of hazardous environmental conditions within the construction corridor. The proposed project does not involve residential or commercial development, and upon completion of project construction, the site would be returned to existing conditions. **No impact** would occur.

e) Thermal Airport, is located approximately eight miles southeast of the project site. The proposed project is not located within the Thermal Airport land use boundary, within 2 miles of a public use airport in proximity to a private airstrip. **No impact** would occur.

f) The proposed project would temporarily result in a lane closure on Westward Ho Drive to accommodate construction. However, the street would be repaired and reopened at completion of the directional drilling and pipeline connection. A traffic control plan would be prepared and provided to the City of Indio for review and consultation with emergency service providers regarding project actions that could impact evacuation routes or otherwise impair emergency vehicle routing or evacuation during emergencies. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

g) The project site is not located in a Fire Hazard Severity Zone as designated in the Fire Hazard Severity Zone viewer prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/ accessed June 2022). The proposed project does not involve residential or commercial development that would draw people to the area, and upon completion of project construction, the corridor would be returned to existing conditions. **No impact** would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surveys, in a manner which would:				
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface water runoff which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(iv) Otherwise impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				

a, c i-iv) The project area is comprised of a paved street corridor (Westward Ho Drive) and a disturbed area adjacent to existing IWA infrastructure. Project implementation would result in the installation of a new sewer line interceptor pipeline. The project would disturb less than one acre; thus, a 2009 General Construction Permit (Department of Water Resources) would not be required. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be implemented to avoid or minimize erosion and discharge impacts associated with the proposed project. The project would replace the existing ground cover (i.e., pavement or soil) and not create more impervious area than what occurs under existing conditions. Thus, post-construction, runoff quantities would be unchanged.

The project would install the new siphon pipeline under the CVSC to avoid direct impacts to this feature. The project would not modify on-site drainages or alter the course of an existing stream or river that would result in on- or off-site erosion or siltation or otherwise impact riparian or other natural resources. During construction, BMPs would be used to prevent drilling slurry from running off-site and all precipitation would directed away from the drilling pits; thus, no flooding on- or off-site would occur. The project would not substantially degrade water quality, result in polluted water leaving the site or otherwise violate discharge standards. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

b) The project would be unoccupied and would not require potable water service. Project construction would not increase the amount of impervious surface; thus, groundwater recharge potential would not be affected. Therefore, the project would not deplete groundwater or interfere with groundwater recharge. **No impact** would occur.

d) Seiches are oscillations of the surface of inland bodies of water that vary in period from a few minutes to several hours. Seismic excitations can induce such oscillations. Tsunamis are large sea waves produced by submarine earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. The project is located well inland from the Pacific Ocean and is not subject to tsunami hazard. The nearest inland body of water are the aeration ponds located on the VSD reclamation facility site. Sufficient freeboard exists such that if oscillations were to occur, they would likely be contained within the pond structure. The project site is generally flat. This area would not be subject to a mudflow hazard. **No impact** would occur.

e) The project site is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado River RWQCB. The RWQCB sets water quality objectives and beneficial uses in the Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan). These water quality objectives are intended for the reasonable protection of the present and probable beneficial uses of California inland water bodies including bays, estuaries, and groundwater. Valley Sanitary District implements measures with the RWQCB and ensures compliance with the Basin Plan through requirements to obtain applicable NPDES Permits. In this case, the project would have no effect on water quality within the CVSC and would include a SWPPP that incorporates BMPs for reducing or eliminating construction-related pollutants on-site. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the proposal:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) The Westward Ho Drive corridor has no land use designation. The eastern drilling pit location is in an area zoned for low density residential development; however, it is located on IWA reservoir property. The project would not result in the construction of improvements that would physically divide an existing community. Improvements would facilitate the conveyance of wastewater flows as part of the overall VSD system. N**o impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) The proposed project is subject to goals and policies within the City of Indio General Plan 2040 (September 2019). The City of Indio General Plan contains language supporting the development of infrastructure as needed to serve current and future populations. The Westward Ho Siphon Replacement project is required to avoid a failure in the conveyance system during future storm events. Replacing the temporary siphon would not conflict with any policy of the applicable planning documents. **No impact** would occur per this threshold.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. <u>MINERAL RESOURCES</u> -- 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a, b) The City of Indio General Plan 2040 Environmental Impact Report (2019) shows the project corridor is not within a mapped Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ). The proposed project would not require excavation of mineral resources nor would construction result in the loss of availability of any known regional or local mineral resources. Therefore, **no impact** to mineral resources would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. <u>NOISE</u> – Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Noise levels (or volume) are generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound power levels consistent with the human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz).

Sound pressure level is measured on a logarithmic scale with the 0 dB level based on the lowest detectable sound pressure level that people can perceive (an audible sound that is not zero sound pressure level). Based on the logarithmic scale, a doubling of sound energy is equivalent to an increase of 3 dB, and a sound that is 10 dB less than the ambient sound level has no effect on ambient noise. Because of the nature of the human ear, a sound must be about 10 dB greater than the reference sound to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dB change in community noise levels is noticeable, while 1-2 dB changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while those along arterial streets are in the 50-60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are in the 60-65 dBA range, and ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA can interrupt conversations.

In addition to the instantaneous measurement of sound levels, the duration of sound is

important since sounds that occur over a long period of time are more likely to be an annoyance or cause direct physical damage or environmental stress. One of the most frequently used noise metrics that considers both duration and sound power level is the equivalent noise level (L_{eq}). The L_{eq} is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period of time (essentially, the average noise level). Typically, L_{eq} is summed over a one-hour period.

The time period in which noise occurs is also important since noise that occurs at night tends to be more disturbing than that which occurs during the daytime. Two commonly used noise metrics – the Day-Night average level (L_{dn}) and the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) recognize this fact by weighting hourly L_{eq} over a 24-hour period. The L_{dn} is a 24-hour average noise level that adds 10 dB to actual nighttime (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM) noise levels to account for the greater sensitivity to noise during that time period. The CNEL is identical to the L_{dn}, except it also adds a 5-dB penalty for noise occurring during the evening (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM).

Vibration is sound radiated through the ground. The rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces is called ground borne noise. Ground borne vibration is almost exclusively a concern inside buildings and is rarely perceived as a problem outdoors. Ground-borne vibration related to human annoyance is generally related to velocity levels expressed in vibration decibels (VdB). However, construction-related groundborne vibration in relation to its potential for building damage can also be measured in inches per second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) (Federal Transit Administration, April 2018). Based on the FTA's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* and the California Department of Transportation's *Transportation-Related Earthborne Vibration, Technical Advisory* (September 2013) vibration levels decrease by 6 VdB with every doubling of distance.

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. Residences, hospitals, schools, guest lodging, libraries, and parks are most sensitive to noise intrusion; and therefore, have more stringent noise exposure standards than commercial or industrial uses that are not subject to impacts such as sleep disturbance. Sensitive land uses generally should not be subjected to noise levels that would be considered intrusive in character. Therefore, the location, hours of operation, type of use, and extent of development warrant close analysis to ensure that noise sensitive receptors are not substantially affected by noise.

Noise Standards

State of California. In 1976, the California Department of Health, State Office of Noise Control published a recommended noise/land use compatibility matrix which many jurisdictions have adopted as a standard in their general plan noise elements. The California State Office of Planning and Research 2017 updates to the General Plan Guidelines, Appendix D Noise Element Guidelines, Figure 2, shows that exterior noise levels up to 60 dBA (CNEL or Ldn) are normally compatible for low density single-family residences, duplexes and mobile homes. Noise levels up to 70 dBA (CNEL or Ldn) are conditionally compatible in urban settings like the

project site for multifamily residences. The term "normally compatible" refers to compatibility with the ambient outdoor noise environment for the land use type referenced such that interior noise levels are adequately attenuated without implementation of specific noise reduction measures. Whereas, "conditionally compatible" refers to exterior ambient conditions that require the use of construction materials and methods or mitigation to achieve interior noise standards for the specified land use type.

City of Indio Noise Standards. The City of Indio Municipal Code Section 95C.08(C) limits the use of construction equipment as follows:

(1) Pacific Standard Time.
  (a) Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
  (b) Saturday, 8:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
  (c) Sunday, 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.
  (d) Government Holidays, 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

(2) Pacific Daylight Time.
  (a) Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
  (b) Saturday, 7:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.
  (c) Sunday, 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.
  (d) Government Holidays, 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

As stated in Section 95C.09 (I), provisions of the noise control section of the municipal code –

"shall not preclude the construction, operation, maintenance and repairs of equipment, apparatus or facilities of park and recreation departments, public work projects or essential public services and facilities, including trash collection and those activities of public utilities subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission".

Further, Section 95C.09 (K) states - *"the provisions of this chapter shall not apply to any activity to the extent regulation thereof has been preempted by state or federal law or which is necessary or appropriate means of complying with health or safety requirements imposed by state or federal law."*

Vibration Standards. Vibration is a unique form of noise as the energy is transmitted through buildings, structures and the ground whereas audible noise energy is transmitted through the air. Thus, vibration is generally felt rather than heard. The ground motion caused by vibration is measured as peak particle velocity (PPV) in inches per second. Vibration impacts to buildings are generally discussed in terms of PPV which describes particle movement over time (in terms of physical displacement of mass). Vibration can impact people, structures, and sensitive equipment. Groundborne vibration generated by construction projects is usually highest during pile driving, rock blasting, soil compacting, jack hammering, and other high impact demolition and excavation-related activities. Grading also has the potential to cause short-term vibration impacts if large bulldozers, loaded trucks, or other heavy equipment operate within proximity to sensitive land uses. Use of the PPV descriptor is common when addressing potential impacts to structures. The maximum vibration level standard used by the California Department of

Transportation (Caltrans) for the prevention of structural damage to typical residential buildings is 0.2 ips PPV (Caltrans 2020).

The vibration velocity level (VdB) is used to describe potential impacts to people. The threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB. A vibration velocity of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels (Federal Transit Administration, 2018).

Construction activities referenced above that would generate significant vibration levels are not proposed (i.e., blasting, pile driving, jackhammering). However, to provide information for use in completing the CEQA evaluation, construction-related vibration impacts are evaluated using both PPV and associated VdB criteria.

a) Construction Noise. Temporary, construction-related noise would occur during construction of the proposed project. The noise levels associated with the operation of common construction equipment are shown in Table 6. The noise levels are provided for reference purposes; not all equipment shown would be used for the proposed project. Noise levels are expected to occur within the ranges shown.

Table 6
Typical Maximum Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Onsite	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 25 Feet from the Source	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 50 Feet from the Source	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 100 Feet from the Source
Air Compressor	86	80	74
Generator	87	81	75
Backhoe	86	80	74
Bobcat Tractor	86	80	74
Concrete Mixer	91	85	79
Loader	86	80	74
Bulldozer	91	85	79
Jack Hammer	94	88	82
Pavement Roller	91	85	79
Street Sweeper	88	82	76
Man Lift	81	75	69
Dump Truck	90	84	78
Mobile Crane	89	83	77
Excavator/Scraper	91	85	79
Horizontal Drill Rig	89	83	77

Table 6
Typical Maximum Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Onsite	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 25 Feet from the Source	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 50 Feet from the Source	Typical Maximum Level (dBA) 100 Feet from the Source

Source: FTA Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (September 2018), Table 7-1.
Noise levels are based on actual maximum measured noise levels at 50 feet (Lmax).
Noise levels are based on a noise attenuation rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance.

Construction of the proposed drill entrance/exit pits would likely utilize a backhoe and truck to remove spoils. The majority of the noise would be associated with use of a HDD rig and related support equipment required to remove spoils. The entrance pit would be located on the IWA Plant No. 4 property to maximize the distance between construction activities and the adjacent residences to the south and east. Noise levels associated with the equipment commonly used will range from 80 to 84-dBA at 50 feet from the source. A doubling of sound energy yields an increase of three decibels, so multiple pieces of equipment operating together may cause relatively small but noticeable increases in noise levels above that associated with one piece of equipment. Assuming two pieces of construction equipment, each producing a noise level of 83 dBA, are operating at one time on the site in proximity to one another, the worst-case combined noise level is estimated to 86 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the active construction area. Night-time work may be required as stated if the pipe installation cannot be completed in one 12-hour daytime shift. Up to two-night shifts may be needed. Use of a generator would be required for lighting during night-time hours. Pipe joining equipment would also be required to connect the existing siphon to the new pipe segment.

There are residential areas proximal to both the entrance and exit pits. These residences could experience temporary noise levels at or approximately 86 dBA Leq. The nearest residence to the entrance pit is approximately 130 feet to the south at the east end of Sandscript Court. The residences nearest the exit pit is on the north side of Westward Ho Drive approximately 50 feet from the centerline of the street. Worst-case construction noise levels at the east end would attenuate to approximately 80 dBA Leq at nearest receiver and would remain at 86 dBA at the nearest receivers on the west end. The City of Indio code exempts construction projects from noise standards, provided that the project complies with construction hour restrictions referenced above. Further, construction noise associated with utility and related infrastructure work is exempt per Sections 95C.09 (I) and (K) of the municipal code. However, because night-time work may be required, short-term noise impacts at neighboring residences may occur, and while exempt from the municipal code, the night-time noise would exceed the standards referenced above. Without mitigation, temporary construction noise impacts would be **potentially significant.** The following Mitigation Measures are recommended to minimize night-time noise levels at adjacent residential properties.

> **NOI-1** Electrical power shall be used to run air compressors and similar power tools. Internal combustion engines should be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer and in good repair. All diesel equipment should be operated with closed engine doors and should be equipped with factory-recommended mufflers.

Construction equipment that continues to generate substantial noise at the project boundaries should be shielded with temporary noise barriers, such as barriers that meet a sound transmission class (STC) rating of 25, sound absorptive panels, or sound blankets on individual pieces of construction equipment. Stationary noise-generating equipment, such as generators and compressors, should be located as far as practically possible from the nearest residential property lines.

NOI-2 Limit the number of large pieces of equipment operating adjacent to receivers to one at any given time.

NOI-3 Provide notification to residential occupants adjacent to the project site at least two weeks prior to initiation of construction activities that could result in noise levels of 75-dBA at adjacent residences. This notification should include the anticipated hours and duration of construction and a description of noise reduction measures being implemented at the project site. The notification should include a telephone number to call to submit complaints associated with construction noise.

NOI-4 Construction contractors shall develop and implement a noise control plan that includes a noise control monitoring program to ensure sustained construction noise levels do not exceed 75 decibels at the adjacent residences. The plan may include the following requirements:

- Contractor shall turn off idling equipment.
- Contractor shall perform noisier operation during the times least sensitive to receptors.
- All diesel equipment shall be operated with closed engine doors and shall be equipped with factory- recommended mufflers.
- Electrical power shall be used to run air compressors and similar power tools and to power any temporary structures, such as construction trailers or security staff facilities.
- For all noise-generating construction activities, additional noise attenuation techniques shall be employed as necessary to reduce noise levels. Such techniques shall include, but are not limited to, the use of sound blankets, noise shrouds and temporary sound barriers.

With implementation of measures NOI-1 through NOI-4, noise impacts during night-time construction would be reduced to **less than significant**.

Operational Noise

The proposed project does not include noise generating equipment. Periodic maintenance inspections would occur; however, that would be consistent with current activities throughout the VSD service area. No operational noise impacts would occur.

b) Vibration is a unique form of noise because its energy is carried through buildings, structures, and the ground, whereas noise is simply carried through the air. Thus, vibration is generally felt rather than heard. Some vibration effects can be caused by noise; e.g., the rattling of windows from truck pass-bys. This phenomenon is caused by the coupling of the acoustic energy at frequencies that are close to the resonant frequency of the material being vibrated. Typically, groundborne vibration generated by manmade activities attenuates rapidly as vibration rapidly diminishes in amplitude with distance from the source. In the U.S., the ground motion caused by vibration is measured as particle velocity in inches per second and is referenced as vibration decibels (VdB).

The vibration velocity level threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB (i.e., vibration velocity of 0.01 inches per second). A vibration velocity of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels for many people. If a roadway is smooth, the groundborne vibration from traffic is barely perceptible. The range of interest is from approximately 50 VdB, which is the typical background vibration velocity, to 100 VdB, which is the general threshold where minor damage can occur in fragile buildings.

Construction activity would be temporary and any vibration would be associated with brief pass by trips which would not persist for long periods. Construction activities that typically generate substantial groundborne vibration include deep excavation and pile driving. Based on the proposed scope of improvements, this type of construction activity would not occur on the project site. Further, the a drill rig is a stationary piece of equipment that would be located adjacnet to the entrance pit. It would not generate vibration like mobile equipment Assuming vibration levels would be simlar to those associated with a loaded truck, typical groundborne vibration levels could range from 80 VdB at a receptor distance of 50 feet to 74 VdB at 100 feet, based on the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* (September 2018) as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Typical Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	Approximate VdB				
	25 Feet	**50 Feet**	**60 Feet**	**75 Feet**	**100 Feet**
Large Bulldozer	87	81	79	77	75
Loaded Trucks	86	80	78	76	74
Jackhammer	79	73	71	69	67
Small Bulldozer	58	52	50	48	46

Source: FTA, 2018

As discussed, 100 VdB is the threshold where minor damage can occur in fragile buildings. There are no fragile buildings located in proximity to the construction site. Furthermore, vibration levels would be under the threshold associated with structural damage. Thus, structural damage is not expected to occur as a result of construction activities associated with the proposed project. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

c) The project site is located approximately eight miles northwest of Thermal Airport and outside the boundaries of any airport land use plan. No private airstrips are located in proximity to the project site. The project would not result in the construction of residential uses that could be adversely affected by airport noise. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. <u>POPULATION AND HOUSING</u> — Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) The proposed project is a new sewer line siphon installed to replace an existing line. The project would not induce population growth directly through the development of new residential occupancies or indirectly through the extension of utility infrastructure to a currently unserved area. Therefore, the project would result in **no impact** related to population growth.

b) Project implementation does not result in the removal of existing housing or the displacement of residents. **No impact** would occur**.**

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

a (i-v) The project would not induce population growth directly through the development of new residential occupancies or indirectly through the extension of utility infrastructure to a currently unserved area. The sewer line siphon replacement would address an existing deficiency in the conveyance system. Demand for public services would not change as a result of project construction and operation. Thus, the project would not require the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities to maintain acceptable levels of service. **No impact** would occur.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. RECREATION --				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a-b) The project would not increase demand for recreational facilities such that the deterioration of such facilities would be accelerated. Further, the project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. **No impact** would occur.

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

a) Project construction may temporarily impede traffic flow within Westward Ho Drive. The project would return the road surface to existing conditions upon completion. Post-construction, the project would not generate traffic with the exception of periodic maintenance visits that occur throughout the service area. A traffic control plan would be prepared by the contractor and submitted to VSD and the City of Indio for review and approval. The purpose of the traffic control plan is to identify measures that would be implemented to address street/lane closures, identify construction haul routes and detour routes if needed. No additional trips would be required to operate and maintain the project. A **less than significant impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) The CEQA Guidelines, specifically Section 15064.3, identify Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) as the most appropriate measure for the evaluation of transportation impacts and states that a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact. While vehicle delay may cause an inconvenience to motorists traveling through an area, it does not constitute an environmental impact. In general terms, VMT quantifies the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. All agencies and projects statewide are required to utilize the updated CEQA guidelines recommending use of VMT for evaluating transportation impacts as of July 1, 2020.

The proposed project would not generate any vehicle trips other than occasional maintenance trips that occur under existing conditions. The project would have no effect on VMT. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

c) Post construction, the project would return the Westward Ho Drive surface to existing conditions. The project would not result in any road improvements. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

d) The proposed project would maintain access to the area for use by emergency vehicles; however, the project would not alter emergency access routes. The project would not impair emergency access to the area. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

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

a) As documented in the Phase I Cultural Resources Report, no historical resources occur within the study area. Further, no archaeological resources were located in the area survey. Valley Sanitary District sent AB 52 consultation notices to three Native American Tribes; Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians and the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. No responses were received. As a result of the AB 52 process, no specific information has been obtained about the presence of Native American resources in or near the

project area. With implementation of the Management Recommendations provided in Section V, Cultural Resources, impacts would be less than significant under this threshold.

b) No evidence has been presented or discovered that indicates the presence of archaeological resources within the area to be directly impacted by the project. Thus, implementation of Management Recommendations presented in Section V, *Cultural Resources*, would adequately address potential adverse effects to previously unknown Tribal Cultural Resources inadvertently discovered during excavation of the directional drilling pits. With implementation of Management Recommendations, impacts would be **less than significant**.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Implementation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, or wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a determination by the 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) The project would replace an existing wastewater conveyance siphon within the existing VSD system. The project would not create additional demand on existing facilities such that wastewater treatment standards would be exceeded or new or expanded facilities would be required. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) The proposed improvements would not require use of potable water other than what is needed for construction purposes. No new water entitlements would be necessary. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

c) The project would not generate wastewater. It would replace an existing siphon pipeline which is part of the existing VSD conveyance system. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

d) The proposed project would generate minimal construction/demolition waste (CDW). It is anticipated that most of the material excavated would be used as backfill and that and spoils removed during the drilling process would be hauled off-site. The California Integrated Waste Management Act (CIWMA) of 1989 mandates that all cities and counties in California reduce solid waste disposed at landfills generated within their jurisdictions by 50% and 75% by 2020. CDW associated with the proposed project will be recycled to the extent practicable with the remainder sent to a landfill. During operation, the project would not generate solid waste. **A less than significant impact** would occur under this threshold.

e) The applicant and project contractor will comply with all local, state, and federal requirements for integrated waste management (e.g., recycling, green waste) and solid waste disposal as required by the CIWMA of 1989 and AB 341. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

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

a) The project site is located within a Local Responsibility Area for fire services. It is not located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) as depicted in the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) viewer (https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/) accessed June 2022. The project would temporarily impede access on Westward Ho Drive; however, access would be maintained. Emergency evacuation would not be affected nor would the project conflict with or impair implementation of an emergency evaluation plan. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

b) The project construction areas are located proximal to single-family residences; however, the improvements would be comprised of a buried sewer line siphon pipeline. The improvements,

due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

c) The site is limited to excavation pits on IWA property to the east and within Westward Ho Drive to the west. The sites are located in a developing area and surrounded in part, by residential development. Construction of the project would not require additional improvements designed to address fire risk. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

d) The site and surrounding area are generally flat and urbanizing. Given the desert environment and proximity to the CVSC, the area is not susceptible to wildfire. There are no steep slopes in the area that would become unstable or increase the risk of landslide or mudflow should a wildfire occur. **No impact** would occur under this threshold.

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

a) Construction activities would occur within a paved segment of Westward Ho Avenue, under the CVSC and within a disturbed area in the IWA reservoir yard. No vegetation removal or impacts to wildlife species or their habitat would occur. All disturbances would occur outside the OHWM of the CVSC. Although the project area is not anticipated to contain any known paleontological or archaeological resources, it may contain previously undetected subsurface archaeological resources. Management Recommendations 1 and 2 have been provided herein to address the unforeseen discovery of previously undetected subsurface cultural resources during excavation for the directional drilling pits. Adherence to these measures would reduce cultural resource, paleontological resource and tribal cultural resource impacts to **less than**

significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce potentially significant impacts to nesting birds to **less than significant.**

b) As presented in the discussion of environmental checklist Sections I through XX, the project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact after mitigation with respect to all environmental issues. Based on the limited scope of direct physical impacts to the environment associated with the proposed project, the impacts are project-specific in nature. Consequently, the project along with other cumulative projects would result in a **less than significant** cumulative impact with respect to all environmental issues.

c) In general, impacts to human beings are associated with air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise impacts. As presented in the discussion of the related environmental checklist sections, the project would have no impact or a less than significant impact with respect to these environmental issues. Therefore, the project would have a **less than significant** impact on human beings.

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