
# South Yuba County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Improvement Project

## Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared for: Olivehurst Public Utility District

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March 13, 2023

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## FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| ACM | Asbestos containing materials |
| Acre | 43,560 square feet |
| ADL | Aerially deposited lead |
| ADWF | Average dry weather flow |
| AF | Acre feet |
| Air Basin | Sacramento Valley Air Basin |
| APCD | Air Pollution Control District |
| APE | Area of Potential Effect |
| APN | Assessors Parcel Number |
| ARB | Air Resources Board |
| AQAP | Air Quality Attainment Plan |
| AQMD | Air Quality Management District |
| AST | Above ground storage tank |
| ATC | Authority to Construct |
| BFE | Base flood elevation |
| bgs | Below ground surface |
| BMP | Best Management Practices |
| BTEX | Benzene/toluene/ethylbenzene/xylene |
| CAA | Federal Clean Air Act |
| CAAQS | California Ambient Air Quality Standards |
| CARB | California Air Resources Board |
| CASQA | California Stormwater Quality Association |
| CBC | California Building Code |
| CCAA | California Clean Air Act |
| CCR | California Code of Regulations |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| CDSA | Yuba County Community Development and Services Agency |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| CESA | California Endangered Species Act |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CGS | California Geological Survey |
| CHRIS | California Historical Resources Information Systems |
| CLSM | Controlled low-strength material |
| CNDDB | California Natural Diversity Database |
| CNEL | Community noise equivalent sound level |
| CNPS | California Native Plant Society |
| CO | Carbon Monoxide |
| COC | Contaminant of concern |
| Corps | United States Army Corps of Engineers |
| CRHR | California Register of Historic Resources |
| CUP | Conditional Use Permit |
| CVRWQCB | Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board |

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| CWA | Clean Water Act |
| dB | Decibel |
| dBA | A-weighted sound level |
| dbh | Diameter at Breast Height |
| DEIR | Draft Environmental Impact Report |
| DOC | California Department of Conservation |
| DWR | California Department of Water Resources |
| EDD | California Employment Development Department |
| EIR | Environmental Impact Report |
| EPA | US Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Environmental Site Assessment |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FESA | Federal Endangered Species Act |
| FHSZ | Fire Hazard Severity Zone |
| FIRM | Flood Insurance Rate Maps |
| FRAQMD | Feather River Air Quality Management District |
| GGS | Giant garter snake |
| GHG | Greenhouse Gas |
| GMP | Groundwater Management Plan |
| gpm | Gallons per minute |
| GSA | Groundwater sustainability agency |
| GSP | Groundwater Sustainability Plan |
| HDD | Horizontal Directional Drilling |
| HDPE | High Density Polyethylene |
| HCP | Habitat Conservation Plan |
| hp | Horsepower |
| HREC | Historical Recognized Environmental Condition |
| IESNA | Illuminating Engineering Society of North America |
| IPCC | International Panel on Climate Change |
| IPS | Influent Pump Station |
| IS | Initial Study |
| LAFCO | Local Agency Formation Commission |
| $L_{dn}$ | Day-night average sound level |
| $L_{eq}$ | Equivalent continuous sound level |
| LRA | Local Responsibility Area |
| LRP | Legally Responsible Person |
| LS | Lift Station |
| LSAA | Lake / Streambed Alteration Agreement |
| MBTA | Migratory Bird Treaty Act |
| mgd | Million gallons per day |
| MDB&M | Mount Diablo Base and Meridian |
| MMRP | Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan |
| MMT | Million metric tons |

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| msl | Mean sea level |
| NAAQS | National Ambient Air Quality Standards |
| NAHC | Native American Heritage Commission |
| NCCP | Natural Community Conservation Plan |
| NCIC | Northern California Information Center |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NFIP | National Flood Insurance Program |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| NMFS | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| NOI | Notice of Intent |
| NOP | Notice of Preparation |
| $NO_X$ | Nitrogen Oxides |
| NPDES | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System |
| NRCS | National Resource Conservation Service (formerly, Soil Conservation Service, USDA) |
| NTU | Nephelometric Turbidity Unit |
| NWI | USFWS National Wetland Inventory |
| OES | Yuba County Office of Emergency Services |
| OPUD | Olivehurst Public Utility District |
| OPR | Office of Planning and Research |
| OSHA | Occupational Safety and Health Administration |
| PCB | Polychlorinated biphenyl |
| PGE | Pacific Gas & Electric |
| $PM_{10}$ | Suspended Particulate Matter; Ten micron Particulates |
| $PM_{2.5}$ | Fine Particulate Matter |
| ppb | Parts per billion |
| ppm | Parts per million |
| PRC | Public Resources Code |
| PRD | Permit Registration Documents |
| PS | Pump Station |
| psi | Pounds per square inch |
| PTO | Permit to Operate |
| PWWF | Peak Wet Weather Flow |
| QSP | Qualified SWPPP Practitioner |
| ROG | Reactive Organic Gases |
| ROW | Right of way |
| RWCQB | Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| SAAQS | State Ambient Air Quality Standards |
| SACOG | Sacramento Area Council of Governments |
| SCADA | Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition |
| SCH | State Clearinghouse |
| SCP | Sediment Control Plan |
| SGMA | Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 |
| SIP | State Implementation Plan |

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| SMAQMD | Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District |
| $SO_2$ | Sulfur Dioxide |
| SR | State Route |
| SSMP | Sewage System Management Plan |
| SSO | Sanitary Sewer Overflows |
| SVAB | Sacramento Valley Air Basin |
| SWPPP | Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan |
| SWRCB | State Water Resources Control Board |
| TCP | Traffic Control Plan |
| TPH | Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons |
| TPH-d | Diesel Fuel |
| TPH-g | Gasoline |
| TPH-mo | Motor Oil |
| $\mu g/m^3$ | Micrograms per Cubic Meter |
| USACE | United States Army Corps of Engineers |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service |
| USGS | United States Geological Survey |
| UV | Ultraviolet |
| UWMP | Urban Water Management Plan |
| VELB | Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle |
| VMT | Vehicle Miles Traveled |
| VPB | Vernal pool brachiopods |
| WDR | Waste Discharge Requirement |
| WP | Water Plant |
| WPIC | Western Pacific Interceptor Canal |
| WWTP | Wastewater Treatment Plant |
| WY | Water Year |
| YCGP | Yuba County General Plan |
| YGM | Yuba Groundwater Model |

# INITIAL STUDY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

**Project Title**: South County Infrastructure Project

**Entitlements Requested**: Obligation of Public Funds

**Lead Agency Name and Address**: Olivehurst Public Utility District
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Olivehurst, CA 95961

**Contact Person and Phone Number**: John Tillotson
Phone: (530) 743-4657

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study evaluates the potential effects of constructing and operating public water and wastewater facilities in south Yuba County, within and adjacent to the community of Olivehurst. The proposed project elements evaluated in this Initial Study are consistent with the policies and requirements of the Yuba County General Plan (2030 General Plan) which has been subject to the preparation and certification of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21083.3 (b)-(f) of the California Public Resources Code (PRC) permits CEQA environmental documents prepared for proposed projects that are consistent with all relevant planning designations and policies to be focused on the environmental effects that are peculiar to the project or to the parcel on which the project would be located, and that were not previously evaluated in an applicable General Plan EIR. The project assessed in this Initial Study meets these statutory requirements for focused review.

Therefore, this Initial Study focuses on whether the proposed project may cause significant effects on the environment that were not addressed or analyzed as significant effects in the Yuba County General Plan 2030 EIR. The Initial Study also assesses any effects for which substantial new information shows that identified effects would be more significant than described in the previous General Plan EIR. The Initial Study is also intended to assess whether any environmental effects of the project are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or by other means [Section 21094(a)(2) of the PRC]. If such revisions, conditions or other means are identified, they will be included in the project as mitigation measures.

This Initial Study relies on State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064 through 15065 in its determination of the significance of environmental effects. According to Section 15064, the finding as to whether a project may have one or more significant effects shall be based on substantial evidence in the record. The existence of controversy alone, without substantial evidence of a significant effect, does not trigger the need for an EIR.

# 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Olivehurst Public Utility District (OPUD or District) provides urban water and wastewater services, as well as other community services, within and adjacent to the community of Olivehurst in an unincorporated area of Yuba County, California. Olivehurst is located approximately 40 miles north of Sacramento, and four miles south of Marysville (see Figure 1).

OPUD is proposing to expand its wastewater collection system to provide capacity for wastewater from the City of Wheatland that will be received and treated at OPUD's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to take advantage of unused treatment capacity at the WWTP consistent with State and local regionalization goals. Wheatland wastewater pipelines within the recently annexed South Yuba County Service Area (see Figure 2) would be oversized to accommodate planned urban development in this area. Separately, OPUD additionally proposes to extend the District's water service to the South County Service Area. The South Yuba County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Improvement Project (South County Infrastructure Project) is intended to provide the water and sewer conveyance system improvements to meet these needs.

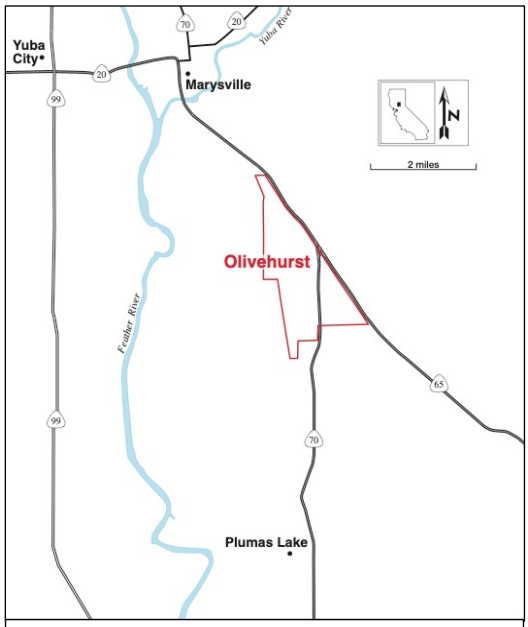


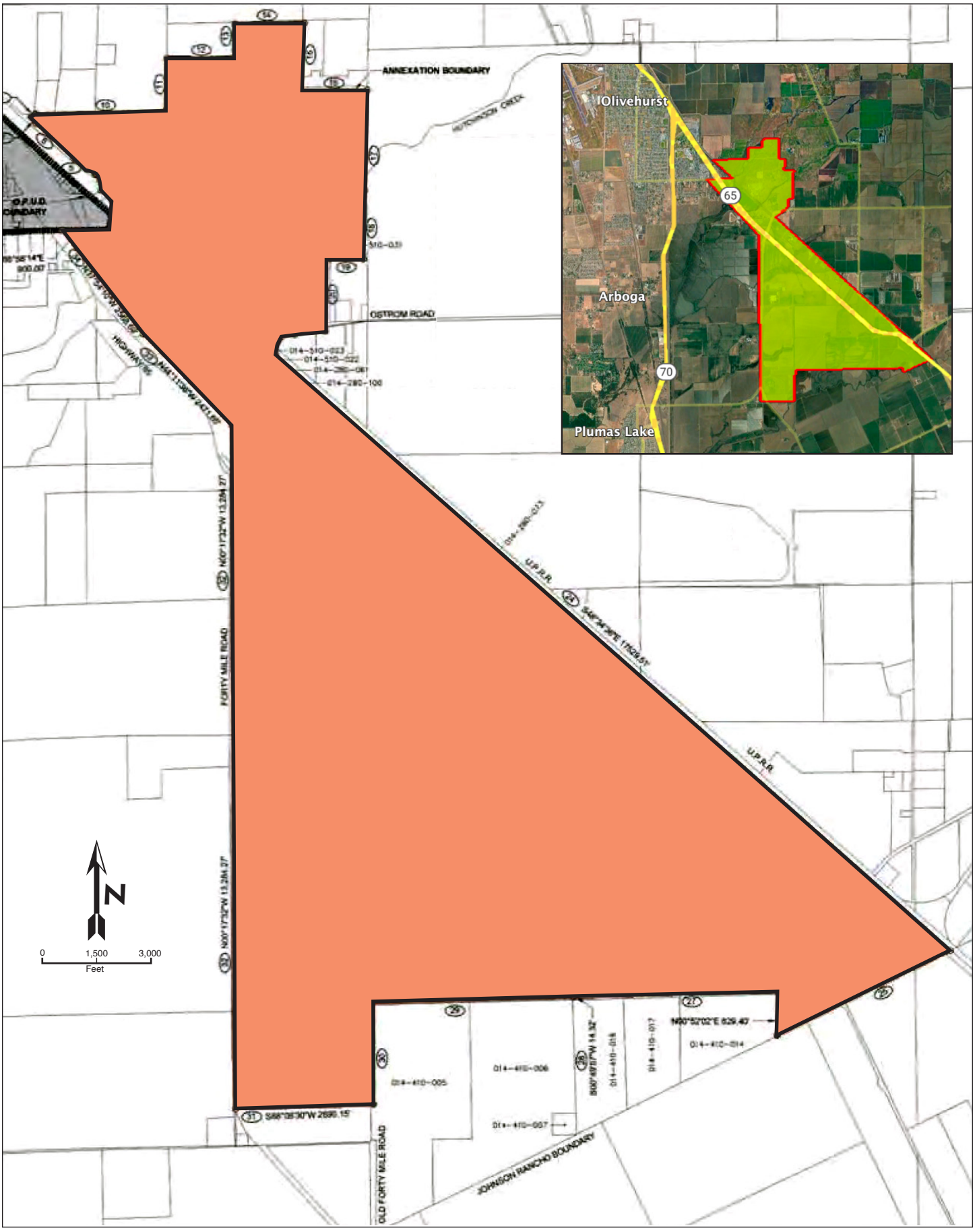
Figure 1 Regional Location

The proposed project would include improvements that will assist in the mitigation of sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) in its existing service area of historic (Old) Olivehurst. One of the new sewer pipelines for the project will be routed near areas that are subject to SSOs. Incrementally oversizing the new sewer pipelines to accommodate flow from the existing Old Olivehurst collection system was determined to be a cost-effective solution for SSO mitigation.

OPUD has identified this five-component project to meet these purposes. As planned by OPUD, the five components would consist of:

- **Component 1.** Completion of SSO reduction measures to the existing wastewater collection system serving the existing community of Olivehurst;
- **Component 2.** Modification of the existing OPUD WWTP to accommodate increased wet weather flows and replace equipment within the WWTP that has reached the end of its operational life;
- **Component 3.** Expansion of OPUD's wastewater collection system to provide service to the recently annexed South County Service Area between Forty Mile Road and Rancho Road;
- **Component 4.** Construction and operation of a Water Plant and backbone treated water distribution pipelines within the General Plan growth area along Forty Mile Road and Rancho Road; and,
- **Component 5.** Construction and operation of a wastewater collection system to accept and treat City of Wheatland untreated wastewater at the existing OPUD WWTP.

In aggregate, these improvements are identified as the South County Infrastructure Project (see Figures 3 and 4).

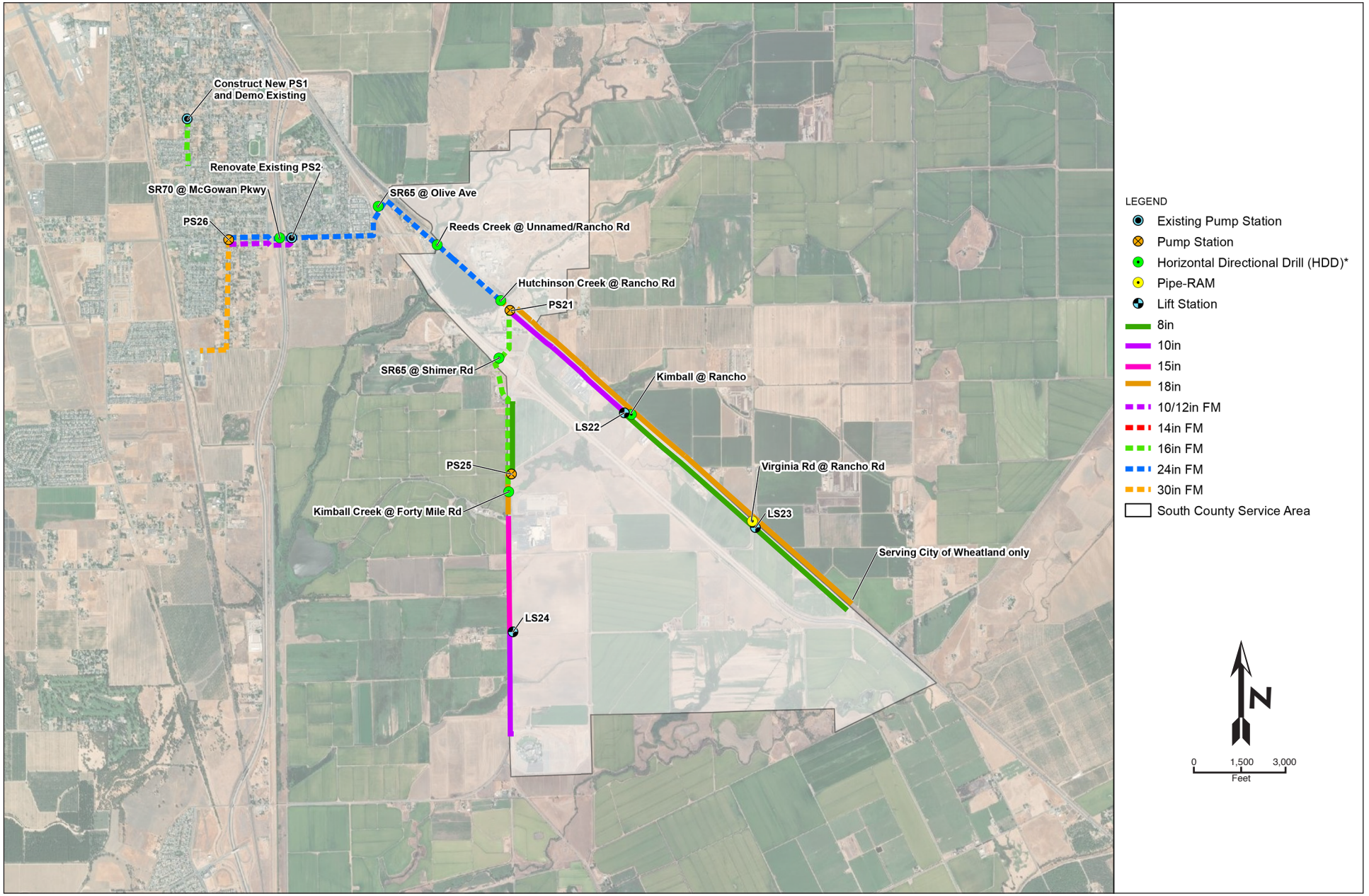



*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: MHM Inc., 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 2**

South Yuba County Service Area

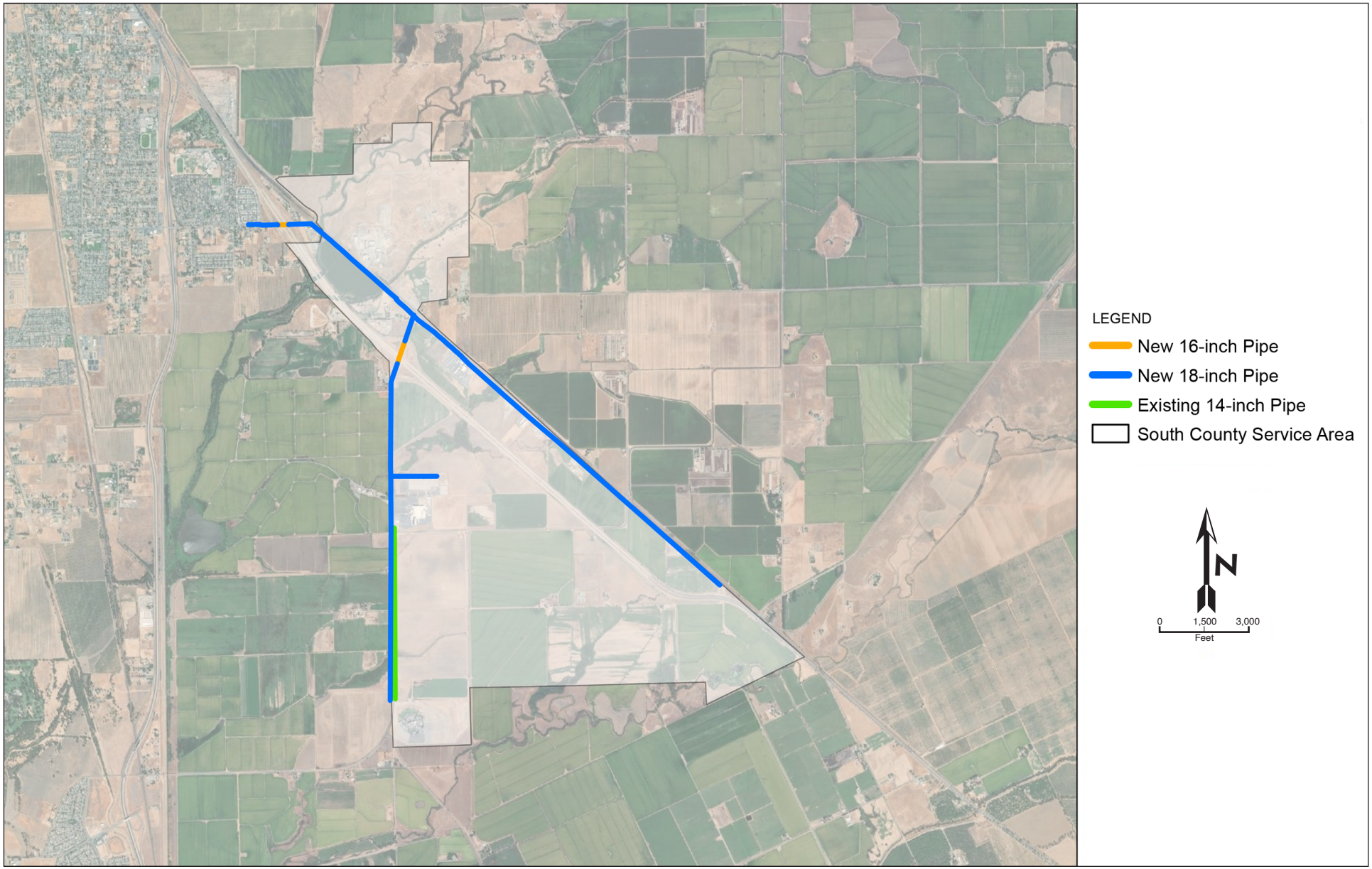



*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 3**

Proposed Wastewater Pipeline and Pump and Lift Station Improvements




*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 4**

Proposed Water System Pipeline Improvements

Additional water supply and distribution facilities beyond those identified in the project would be necessary to serve the ultimate planned buildout of the South County Service Area. In addition to the components described above, the District contemplates that additional water supply wells and water treatment plants, as necessary, would be required as water demands increase. No locations for these facilities or service needs have been identified to serve future land uses consistent with the Yuba County General Plan. Additionally, a water supply pipeline would be needed along the south boundary of the South County Service Area within the general alignment of Morrison Road to connect the Rancho Road water system to the Forty Mile Road system and increase system reliability. None of these facilities are currently designed or proposed.

## PROJECT PROPONENT: OLIVEHURST PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

OPUD currently provides potable water, wastewater, recreation, and fire protection services for the communities of Olivehurst and Plumas Lake. OPUD was formed on November 13, 1948 as an independent special district. The District was formed to provide domestic water and fire protection services to the community of Olivehurst. It has since added wastewater collection and treatment, park, drainage, and street lighting services (LAFCo 2012). As of 2023, the District's total service area boundary encompasses approximately 18 square miles, although not all urban services are provided at every location throughout its service area.

The District operates two separate groundwater pumping, treatment, and distribution systems for the communities of Olivehurst and Plumas Lake. The District's Olivehurst system is made up of six active groundwater wells, one standby groundwater well, two storage tanks, two hydropneumatic tanks, eight filter vessels, three treatment facilities, and a distribution system made up of steel, asbestos cement (AC), and plastic (C-900) pipelines. The Olivehurst water system was constructed in 1951 and is currently undergoing pipe replacement and water meter improvements to increase system efficiency and conserve water. These improvements are independent of, and unrelated to, the proposed project. The proposed project ultimately would result in an expansion of the District's Olivehurst system. (OPUD 2017, 2022)

The District also operates wastewater collection and treatment systems for the communities of Olivehurst and Plumas Lake. The District operates an activated sludge, tertiary wastewater treatment facility permitted as of 2021 for three million gallons per day (mgd) discharge. The wastewater treatment facility has an average dry weather flow of 1.5 mgd. The wastewater collection system consists of approximately 32 miles of gravity sewer main collection lines, 8 miles of force main sewer collection lines, and 18 lift stations. The District's wastewater treatment facility discharges fully treated effluent into the Clark Lateral thence into the Western Interceptor Drainage Canal before flowing into the Bear River. (OPUD 2017)

## PURPOSE AND NEED

In 2011, Yuba County adopted a new General Plan. The 2030 General Plan (Yuba County 2011) is a long-range, generalized planning policy document to guide development of the county over a period of 20 years. The General Plan consists of a policy document and a series of land use and circulation maps and diagrams. The narrative policy document sets forth the adopted policies of the County regarding issues of public interest and regulation. Topics addressed in the General Plan include goals, policies, and programs regarding: economic, environmental, and social sustainability; managed growth and development of land use and infrastructure; use and conservation of resources; protection of public health, safety, and welfare; regional planning and coordination; rural lifestyle; and local quality of life.

In adopting the 2030 General Plan, Yuba County identified and mapped future land uses within the county. As mapped by the General Plan and Zoning Code, the area south of Olivehurst was identified for future growth and development as shown in Figure 5. According to the General Plan, this area has been planned to host employment-generating commercial and industrial uses.

The District's purpose in proposing the South County Infrastructure Project is to aid future economic development consistent with the Yuba County General Plan (YCGP) by ensuring the timely provision of community water and wastewater services to areas designated by the YCGP for employment uses and/or agricultural industrial uses. An additional purpose is to provide regional wastewater treatment services consistent with the themes and policies of the YCGP.

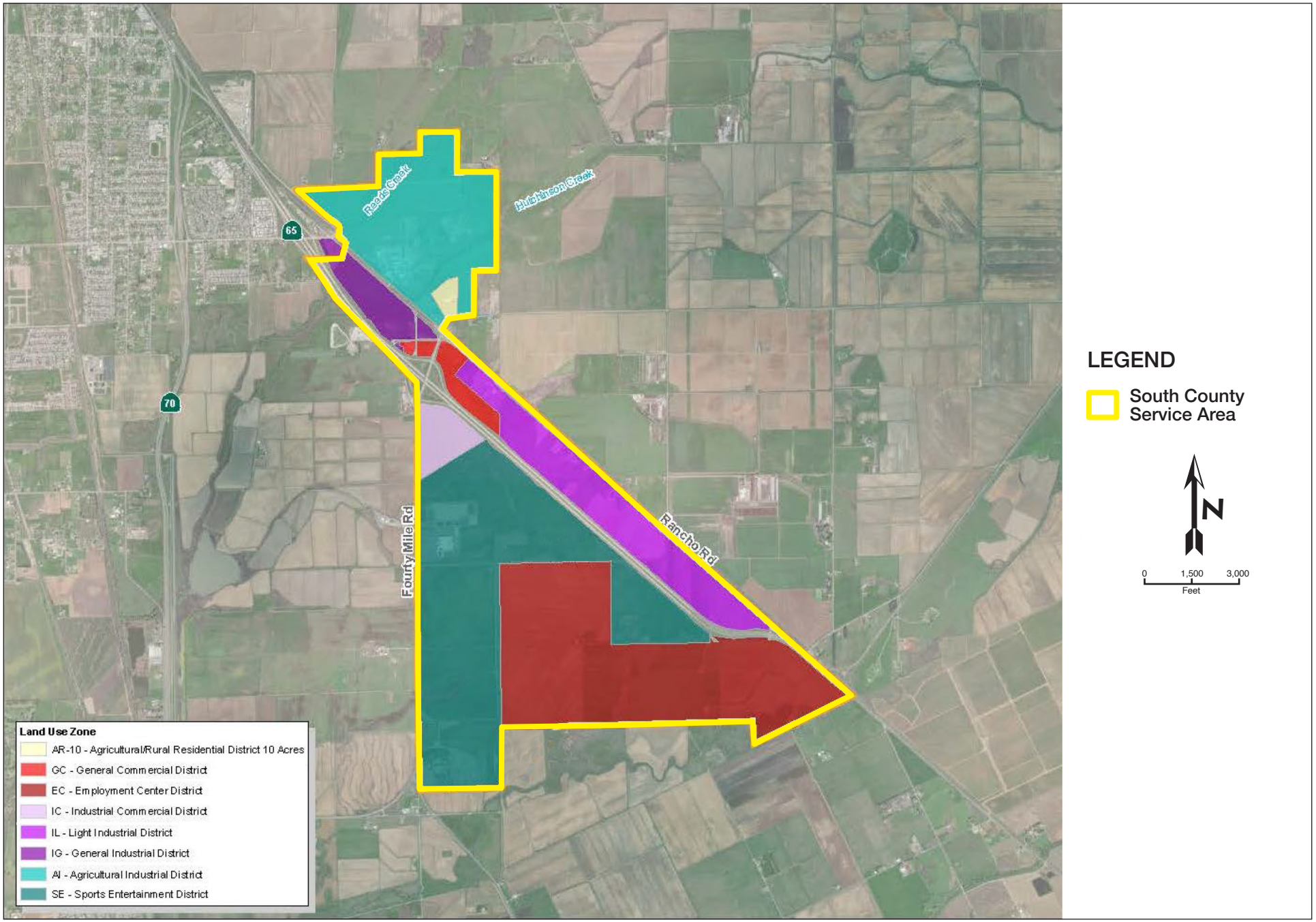
The South County Infrastructure project, by itself, does not propose or authorize any urban development. Future land uses that may occur within the South County Service Area would be required to conform to all applicable regulations, performance standards and design standards of the General Plan and the Yuba County Code. The South County Infrastructure project would not permit land uses of greater density or intensity than permitted under the 2030 General Plan and would not allow new development in areas where such development is prohibited by the 2030 General Plan.

## APPLICABLE YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

Providing community utility services to future employment-generating land uses would be consistent with the following goals and policies of the Yuba County General Plan.

### 2030 GENERAL PLAN THEMES

- **Economic, environmental, and social sustainability**. The County recognizes the dynamic relationship between economic, social, and environmental objectives. The 2030 General Plan policies and actions are designed to achieve the optimal balance among these sometimes competing objectives.
- **Managed growth and development of land use and infrastructure**. The County encourages revitalization and development of land uses and infrastructure from existing areas outward, where greenfield development occurs. The County's policies are designed to avoid "leapfrog development," and carefully consider the regional land use and economic context. As the County develops, there will be new opportunities to improve and diversify the economy, preserve and enhance the environment, and provide better and more affordable housing. Growth will be managed to preserve and enhance the quality of life for residents rather than allowing the benefits to accrue only to newcomers or people living outside Yuba County. Infrastructure and other public improvements will be planned for in advance of development, utilizing the General Plan as a basis for commitment of public funds, and by requiring development to finance specific infrastructure and improvements.
- **Regional Planning and Coordination** with the cities, surrounding counties, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), state and federal agencies, special districts and school districts, Beale Air Force Base, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), and other public agencies. The County's General Plan supports regionalization of infrastructure and services, where this make sense, and strategically considers the County's position in the region and the policies necessary to achieve a future desired position in the region.




*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 5**

Zoning Designations within South Yuba County Service Area

### GENERAL PLAN UPDATE VISION AND GOALS

#### Economic Independence

- Promote and encourage new commercial and industrial development to balance the recent residential development, generate revenues, and create local jobs and services for residents.

#### Sustainable and Vibrant Valley Communities

- Encourage the ability for future incorporation and/or annexation of unincorporated areas by establishing realistic and manageable growth boundaries.
- Link new transportation, water, and sewer infrastructure to sound and sustainable policies. Efficiently provide public improvements and services. Consider lifecycle costs - long-term operation and maintenance costs in addition to initial construction costs. Strive for regionalized facilities.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

#### Goal CD 12. Level of Service: Public Services and Facilities

Ensure high-quality public services, infrastructure, and facilities with adequate capacity to meet the needs of Yuba County's existing and future residents, businesses, industries, and employers.

*Policy CD 12.1* New developments will be required to demonstrate the availability of adequate water supply and infrastructure, including during multiple dry years, prior to approval.

*Policy CD 12.2* New developments will be required to construct and dedicate and/or fund on a fair-share basis wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment facilities consistent with applicable local, State, and federal standards.

#### Goal CD 13. Phasing and Location of Development

Phasing and location of development that promotes efficient public infrastructure and services.

*Policy CD 13.1* Growth should be phased from developed areas and existing infrastructure outward in a logical, efficient manner, and in a way that avoids premature conversion of agricultural lands, changes in rural character, and unnecessary loss of other land-based natural resources.

*Policy CD 13.2* The County will not induce growth by supporting the provision of services or infrastructure in areas that are not planned for development.

#### Goal CD 14. Coordinated Public Services, Regional Services

Provide coordinated public service and infrastructure planning.

*Policy CD 14.4* The County will coordinate with special districts, cities, LAFCO, SACOG, Caltrans, joint powers authorities, and other relevant agencies to provide efficient local and regional infrastructure, public facilities, and public services.

**NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

**Vision**

- Link new transportation, water and sewer infrastructure to sound and sustainable policies.
- Increase the viability of our agricultural areas by allowing for compatible agricultural related businesses such as, but not limited to, processing facilities, agro-tourism, and boutique farming.

*Policy NR3.13* The County's Economic Development Strategy and Work Plan should include as a focus the expansion of existing agriculture and agriculture-related industries and development of new value-added activities, agricultural processing, distribution, marketing and sales, and other agriculture-related economic activities.

# EXISTING FACILITIES

## WASTEWATER PIPELINE SSO REDUCTION MEASURES (COMPONENT 1)

Existing facilities associated with Component 1 include an existing pump station (PS-1) near the southwest corner of Olivehurst Avenue/11th Avenue intersection, an existing wastewater collection pipeline within the paved section of Olivehurst Avenue from PS-1 to 14th Avenue, a pump station (PS-2) near the intersection of McGowan Parkway and Dan Avenue, and an 8-inch force main within the paved section of McGowan Parkway from PS-2 to a 21-inch gravity pipeline serving the WWTP at the intersection of McGowan Parkway and Donald Drive (see Figure 6).

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE (COMPONENT 2)

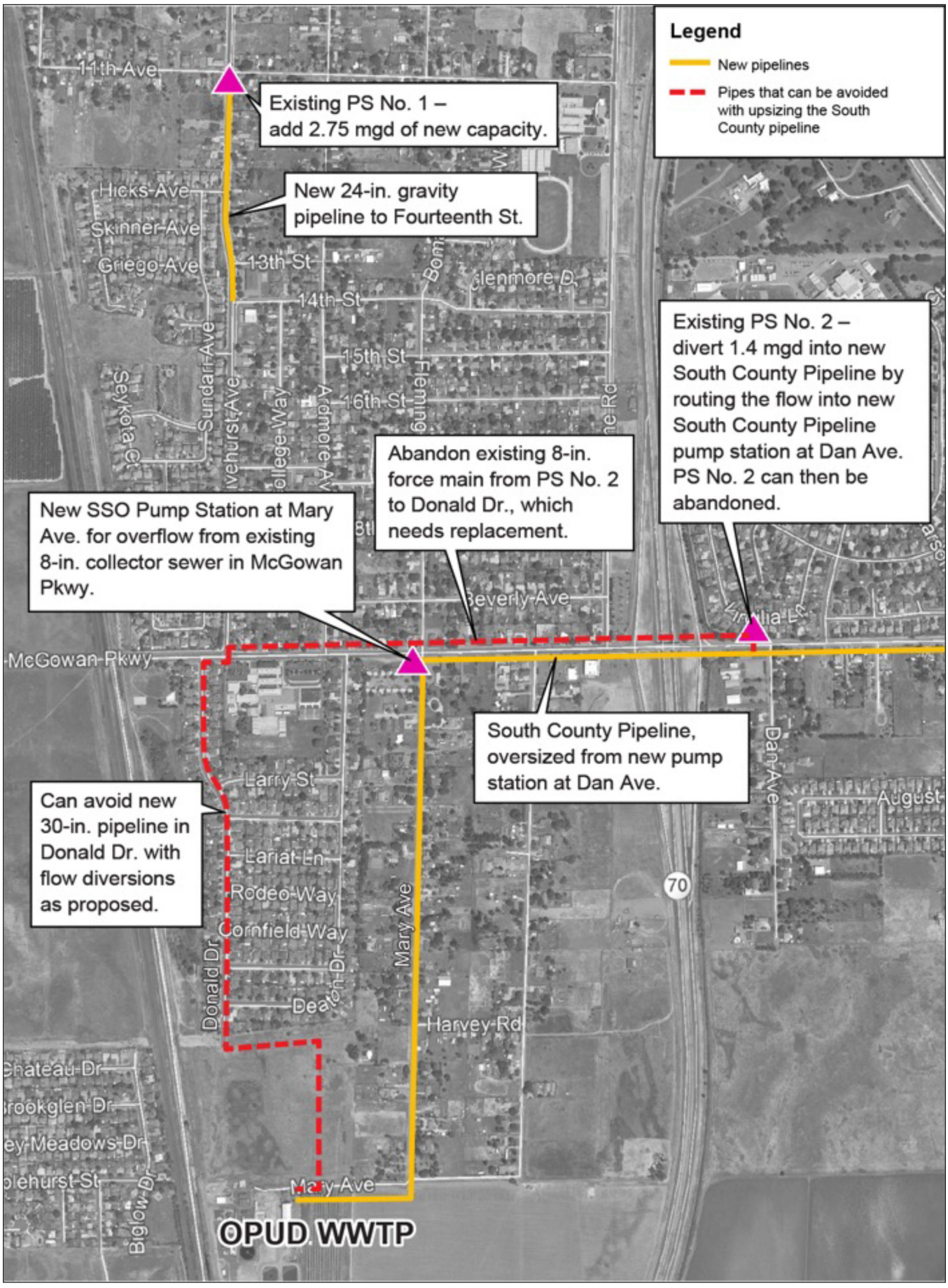
Component 2 would be located within the existing facility boundary of the OPUD WWTP. The 38-acre WWTP site houses the WWTP, a corporation yard for the OPUD water utility, and a five-acre solar array.

The wastewater treatment facility is an activated sludge treatment plant that uses filtration and ultra-violet light to clean and disinfect the water before tertiary treated water is discharged into the Clark Lateral, then flows through the Western Pacific Interceptor Canal (WPIC) through Reeds Creek, through the Bear River, to the Feather River. Figure 7 identifies existing facilities at the WWTP.

The WWTP is permitted to treat three million gallons per day (mgd). The current average dry weather flow (ADWF) into the WWTP is approximately 1.5 mgd. During significant rain events, peak wet weather flow (PWWF) can exceed the WWTP's treatment capacity, and thus, storage will be provided in the Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) and Emergency Storage Basin (ESB).

## WASTEWATER PIPELINES – SOUTH COUNTY SERVICE AREA (COMPONENT 3)

No community wastewater collection or treatment facilities currently exist within the South County Service Area. On-site wastewater collection and treatment systems serve individual commercial and residential uses along Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road, as well as a casino and amphitheater (see Figure 8).




*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 6**
Proposed SSO Facilities


*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Google Earth 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 7**

Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant


*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Google Earth 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 8**

Existing Setting for Water and Wastewater Pipelines

### WATER PLANT/DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES – SOUTH COUNTY SERVICE AREA (COMPONENT 4)

No community water supply, treatment, or distribution facilities currently exist within the South County Service Area. On-site water wells serve individual commercial and residential uses along Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road, as well as a casino and amphitheater. A private 14-inch water pipeline is located east of Forty Mile Road approximately one mile from the southerly project boundary (see Figure 8).

### WASTEWATER PIPELINE CONNECTOR – CITY OF WHEATLAND (COMPONENT 5)

No wastewater transmission facilities currently exist between the City of Wheatland and the OPUD Olivehurst wastewater collection system (see Figure 8).

## PROJECT AND COMPONENT LOCATIONS AND SURROUNDING USES

The five proposed project components are located within and adjacent to the community of Olivehurst in an unincorporated area of Yuba County, California. Olivehurst is located approximately 40 miles north of Sacramento, and four miles south of Marysville. See Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.

**Components 1 and 2 - SSO Reduction Measures/WWTP Modifications -** are located within the existing urbanized community of Olivehurst. See Figures 6 and 8. All pipelines associated with Component 1 would be constructed within paved travel lanes of Olivehurst Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Mary Avenue. The McGowan Parkway pipeline segments associated with SSO reductions measures begin just westerly of Dan Avenue at PS-2 and proceed west to the intersection of McGowan Avenue with Mary Avenue. Two pump stations adjacent to Olivehurst Avenue and McGowan Parkway (PS-1[1] and PS-26) would be constructed. Another, PS-2 adjacent to McGowan Parkway, would be fitted with upgraded equipment. Improvements and modifications to OPUD's wastewater treatment plant would take place within the existing plant site located at the westerly terminus of Mary Avenue (3908 Mary Avenue) (see Figure 7). Components 1 and 2 are located within Sections 5, 8, 9, and 17 of Township 14 North, Range 3 East, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M). The approximate center point of Components 1 and 2 is located at: 39°04'23.61" N, 121°32'49.59" W.

Land uses adjacent to Component 1 consist primarily of single family residences on Olivehurst Avenue and Mary Avenue, and a mixture of commercial, and single-family and multi-family residences adjacent to McGowan Parkway. Improvements to be constructed with implementation of Component 2 would be sited within the boundaries of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Land uses adjacent to the WWTP on the west consist of the WPIC, Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and Arboga Road. There are existing single family residences between the railroad tracks and Arboga Road. On the south, the WWTP site is bordered by the WPIC, and agricultural land. On the north, the project is bordered by uncultivated agricultural lands, with scattered residences approximately 0.15 miles to the northeast. To the east of the site are agricultural lands, and State Route (SR) 70.

[1] PS-1 currently exists. The existing pump station has a capacity of only 1.75 million gallons per day (mgd), and has reached the end of its operational life. The existing facility will be demolished, and a new PS-1, with a capacity of 4.5 mgd, will take its place.

Facilities to be constructed with implementation of **Components 3, 4, and 5 – South County Wastewater Collection/Water Supply and Delivery/Wheatland Wastewater Pipeline Connector -** are located in an undeveloped area south of the existing community of Olivehurst (see Figures 3, 4, and 8). Pipelines associated with Components 3, 4 and 5 would be constructed primarily within the paved travel lanes of Forty Mile Road, Rosser Road, Shimer Road, Rancho Road, Olive Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Mary Avenue. The Wheatland Connector pipeline would be constructed within Rancho Road. Five wastewater pump or lift stations would be constructed adjacent to Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road. As part of Component 4, a new water well and Water Plant would be constructed east of Forty Mile Road. Improvements associated with Components 3 and 4 are located within Sections 5, 8-10, 14-15, 17, and 22-27 Township 14 North, Range 3 East, MDB&M. The approximate center point of Components 3 and 4 is located at 39°03'04.73" N, 121°29'59.02" W.

The existing land use within the area of Components 3, 4, and 5 primarily consists of irrigated agriculture. Developed uses include an amphitheater, a casino, SR 65, Union Pacific railroad tracks, confined animal agriculture, and heavy commercial and light industrial uses, especially along Rancho Road. Rancho Road, north of McGowan Parkway and Olive Avenue, is characterized by single family residences on large parcels.

## PROPOSED PROJECT AND COMPONENTS

Tables A-1 through A-5, located in Appendix A of this document, provide the details of pipelines, pump stations and lift stations, pipeline crossings of freeways and waterways, and methods of borings at crossings. For further information regarding proposed project facilities, refer to Appendix A.

### WASTEWATER PIPELINE SSO REDUCTION MEASURES (COMPONENT 1)

The identified collection system improvements are intended to reduce the hydraulic grade line in the Old Olivehurst sewage collection system, thereby reducing the possibility of overflows during peak rainfall events. As shown on Figure 3, SSO components to be constructed with implementation of the proposed project include:

- Increase the capacity of Pump Station 1 (PS-1) from 1.75 to 4.5 mgd. The existing PS-1 would be decommissioned and removed, and a new pump station, also identified as PS-1, would be constructed at the southwest corner of 11th Avenue and Olivehurst Avenue. The pump station would be constructed on a 100 foot by 85 foot parcel (8,500 square feet).
- Construct a new 16-inch diameter force main from the new PS-1 to 14th Avenue (to prevent surcharging an existing pipeline due to an increase in the capacity of PS-1).
- Re-equip the existing PS-2 and revise the downstream piping from PS-2 so that flow that currently is sent to the west to Donald Avenue will be diverted to a new PS-26 at McGowan Parkway and Mary Avenue. This action would remove approximately 2.0 mgd of peak wastewater from the overloaded existing Old Olivehurst collection system, and place it in the new project pipeline to the OPUD WWTP.
- Replace and abandon the existing 8-inch force main in poor condition with a 12-inch force main on McGowan Parkway from PS-2 to PS-26. This force main would be narrowed to 10-inches where it passes within the SR 70 overpass bridge.

- In addition to conveying flow from the South County service area, Wheatland, and PS-2, the new PS-26 will also be sized to divert approximately 1 mgd of sewage from the existing 8-inch diameter gravity collector sewer in McGowan Parkway into the project pipeline. This will further reduce peak flows in the existing Old Olivehurst sewer collection system to mitigate for future overflows.
- Install the recommended WWTP improvements described in the following discussion of Component 2.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT SSO AND PEAK WET WEATHER FLOW IMPROVEMENTS (COMPONENT 2)

OPUD is implementing modifications to their wastewater collection system to provide SSO relief and accept wastewater from the City of Wheatland. An increase in ADWF capacity would not be provided as part of the South County Infrastructure Project, because the WWTP has sufficient ADWF capacity to handle near term flow increases. However, PWWF are expected to increase as a result of SSO mitigation and the introduction of Wheatland peak flows as described above.

The following improvements are required to increase the PWWF capacity of the WWTP, and to upgrade and replace existing equipment (see Figure 9). The SSO mitigation improvements will result in up to 3.0 mgd of additional PWWF being conveyed to the WWTP during periods of rainfall, and the introduction of Wheatland to the OPUD service area would result in an immediate increase of peak flow of approximately 1.0 mgd. Increasing the amount of wastewater that the collection system can convey to the WWTP will result in lower hydraulic grade lines in the collection system, thereby resulting in fewer SSO events. These improvements consist of:

- Add an additional 50 horsepower (hp) pump to the Influent Pump Station (IPS)
- Add a new 105-foot diameter secondary clarifier and one additional 20 hp return activated sludge pump and one additional 5 hp waste activated sludge pump
- Add a concrete lined Emergency Storage Basin at the south end of the plant site act as an equalization basin that will store increased flows that occur during significant storms. An earthen-lined ESB will be constructed if there are insufficient funds to construct a concrete-lined basin. A dewatering pump station will also be added to allow for sending stored secondary effluent back to the plant headworks
- Provide other site, utility-specific, and similar improvements to support of the improvements previously described.

Additionally, the following other components have been added to the improvements list to replace aging equipment and accommodate supplemental capacity should funding be available:

- Upgrades to IPS, screening, and grit removal systems
- Modifications to the oxidation ditches and associated equipment
- Expansion of the filtration system
- Upgrades to the ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system
- Upgrades to the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system
- Upgrades to the ancillary support facilities
- Upgrades associated with site civil, electrical, instrumentation, and yard piping for the different facilities undergoing improvements.

Figure 9 additionally shows an aerial view of the existing WWTP and recommended improvements (highlighted). Construction of some of these improvements are contingent upon the availability of OPUD funding and may be eliminated and/or postponed prior to construction.


*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 9**

Proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

All of the proposed improvements would be within the existing WWTP site perimeter security fence. Access to the site is through the existing main gate located at the southwest end of Mary Avenue. Construction access would be through the main gate, avoiding the paved areas of the main plant site (as much as possible) by using the unpaved plant road located just to the west of the existing Maintenance Building, or the construction of a new gravel road between the existing easterly site perimeter fence and the existing solar panel arrays.

The construction staging area will be located on site directly east of the existing sludge drying beds.

Excavation for the Storm Drainage Basin and the Flow Equalization Basin 2 will create an excess of 71,000 cubic yards of material not needed onsite. Excess material may be temporarily stockpiled to the east of the Flow Equalization Basin 2 and will need to be disposed of offsite at the conclusion of construction.

## WASTEWATER PIPELINES AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES (COMPONENTS 1, 3, AND 5)

This component consists of sewer pipeline, pump stations, and lift stations required to:

- Provide a backbone wastewater collection and transmission system to serve future demands for the South County Services Area consistent with the Yuba County General Plan
- Convey City of Wheatland wastewater to the Olivehurst WWTP.

Wastewater system improvements are shown on Figures 3 and 8, and include force mains and gravity sewer pipelines ranging in size from 8 to 30 inches in diameter. Detailed information regarding the types of improvements, their size, and construction methods are set forth in Appendix A. The size of the sewer conveyance system is based on the demands from the service area and the City of Wheatland. Some private facilities (e.g., Pacific Gas and Electric [PG&E] yard, Hard Rock Fire Mountain Casino, and Toyota Amphitheatre) are currently served by an on-site wastewater disposal system or another WWTP. Plans for connecting these proposed facilities to the OPUD's sewer collection system are assumed for sizing, but it is understood that they may not connect until a later date. The estimated wastewater ADWF for the South County Service Area at buildout and City of Wheatland contributions is 5.0 mgd. This amount includes 1.5 mgd ADWF for the City of Wheatland.

Pipelines associated with Components 1, 3, and 5 are summarized in Table 1. More detailed information is set forth in Appendix A. The pipelines noted in Table 1 are sized to accommodate flow from the South County service area and Wheatland. In the event that local funding is insufficient, then some reduction in pipeline sizes may be required. A later construction phase, with appropriate CEQA review, will be completed at a future time, when additional conveyance capacity is required.

**Table 1 Wastewater Pipeline Summary**

| Type | Size Range (inches) | Overall Length (feet) | Overall Length (miles) | Number of Pump Stations | Number of Lift Stations | Number of Crossings | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | *Roadway* | *Waterway* |
| Force Main | 6 - 30 | 44,440 | 8.4 | 5 | n/a | 3 | 5 |
| Sanitary Sewer | 8 - 24 | 23,130 | 4.4 | n/a | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Total Length of Wastewater Pipelines | n/a | 65,570 | 12.8 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

*Source: Jacobs/MHM/Planning Partners 2023.*

The vertical alignment of pipelines within roadways would maintain a minimum of 48 inches from the top of pipe to the pavement surface. Trench depths would range from 60 inches to 22 feet. All pipeline alignments would provide for a one-foot separation from the pipe edge to any existing utility being crossed while maintaining the minimum cover. Any existing utilities would be surveyed and potholed by the design engineer/team or construction contractor to determine the proposed vertical alignment and crossing method.

Facilities associated with the wastewater pipelines include five pump stations and three lift stations For additional information regarding these facilities, refer to Tables A-2 and A-3 in Appendix A.

A permanent generator would be provided for each pump and lift station to protect against sewer overflows due to power outages. Each generator would be housed in a manufacturer provided sound attenuating enclosure. The size of each generator would depend upon the final sizing of the pumps for each station and whether the District would prefer the generator to be able to power the duty pumps only or all pumps, including the backup pump, simultaneously. Pump stations used to mitigate for SSOs (for example, PS-1 and PS-26) will also include standby generators.

Generators must be able to run for an extended period of time during a power outage. A minimum fuel storage capacity equal to 24 hours of run time would be required. A double contained, under generator type, fuel tank would be provided for most stations. The larger stations may need to have a separate fuel tank depending upon the required size.

Odor control at pump and lift stations would be provided by one of two ways. OPUD's preferred system is to use a bio- bed filter. All pump and lift stations may have bio-bed or mechanical air scrubbers. Odor control may not be provided at either Pump Station PS-1 or PS-26, since pathways for foul air by use of the gravity sewer pipelines can be used for this purpose. Similarly, this gravity pipeline approach will be used at Lift Stations LS-23 and LS-24.

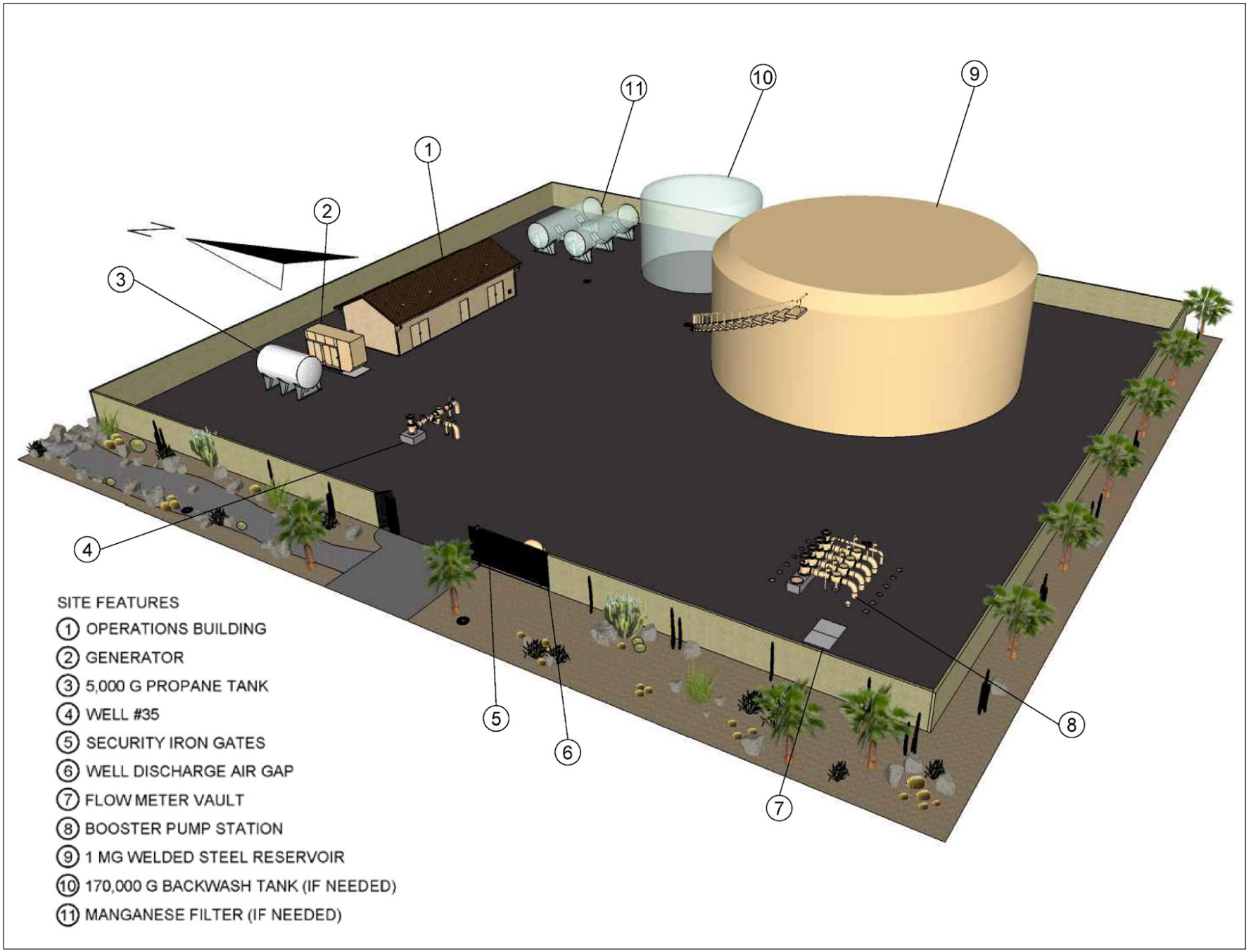
As part of a road improvement project on McGowan Parkway, Yuba County has previously constructed a portion of the pipeline described in Appendix A, Table A-1. From the east end of the McGowan Parkway SR 70 overcrossing to Olive Avenue at the west end of the SR 65 overcrossing, Yuba County has installed the 12-inch force main serving PS-2, and a 24-inch force main. No additional construction within this segment is planned beyond those facilities.

## WATER PLANT/DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES – SOUTH COUNTY SERVICE AREA (COMPONENT 4)

This component consists of a production well and Water Plant to meet a portion of the demand for treated water for municipal and industrial needs and fire protection, and a backbone distribution system to meet future treated water demands for the South County Services Area consistent with the Yuba County General Plan.

### WATER PLANT

As proposed, the Water Plant (WP) would be constructed on a 0.95-acre site located approximately 1,700 feet east of Forty Mile Road and 800 feet north of the newly constructed Hard Rock Casino. The WP would consist of a new water well (OPUD Well #35), well pump, reservoir, booster station, and chorine feed system (see Figure 10).




*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Affinity Engineering, 2021; Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022

**Figure 10**

Proposed Forty Mile Water Well and Storage Tank

As planned, the new well would provide 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm), although ultimate production could approach 3,000 gpm depending upon the type and timing of future development within the WP service area. A new welded steel reservoir would be constructed with an approximate capacity of 1,017,000 gallons. The tank dimensions would be 76-foot diameter by 32-foot shell height. The tank color is planned to be equivalent to Engard's "Desert Sand" or Glidden's "Pelt" subject to final approval by the District. The booster station is designed to pump out of the reservoir and maintain a desired pressure of 65 pounds per square inch (psi) with a pressure range of between 60 and 70 psi in the water system. A chlorine feed system would inject chlorine to be used for disinfection as part of the WP's treatment process. A backup generator supplied by an on-site propane tank would be provided to power the WP if necessary. Water provided by the WP and transmitted to the regional grid in Forty Mile Road would be provided by a 24-inch pipeline from the WP to a proposed pipeline to be constructed along the southbound travel lane of Forty Mile Road. For additional information regarding the 24-inch water main, refer to Appendix A, Table A-1.

A single generator would be installed at the WP with project implementation (see Figure 10). Additionally, a 5,000 gallon propane tank to supply fuel to the generator would be anchored to a concrete slab. The generator would be dual fuel powered generator to provide power during a power outage. The generator will initially be fueled by propane until natural gas is available. A second generator may be installed in the future.

During construction, needed water to the WP's construction site would be provided by an existing agricultural well located south of the Hard Rock Casino. An above-ground temporary 8-inch pipeline would be used during the construction phase. The 3,725-foot long pipeline would be removed at the completion of construction of the WP.

**WATER DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES**

This subcomponent consists of treated water pipelines required to:

- Provide a backbone water distribution system to serve future demands for the South County Services Area consistent with the Yuba County General Plan.

Water system improvements are shown on Figure 4 and include water pipelines ranging in size from 16 to 24 inches in diameter. Detailed information regarding the water mains, their size, and construction methods are set forth in Appendix A.

The size of the water distribution system is based on the projected demands from future urban uses within the South Yuba County Service area. Estimated average day, maximum day, and peak hour water demands for the South County service area are 4,980, 9,960 and 19,920 gpm, respectively. These water demands were used to develop design criteria for water pipelines. Additionally, the water distribution system would connect with the existing OPUD water system serving the community of Olivehurst. The existing 14-inch private water main located on south Forty Mile Road is not a South Yuba County facility, and is not planned to serve any identified demands for the South Yuba County Service area.

Pipelines associated with Component 4 are summarized in Table 2. More detailed information is set forth in Appendix A.

| Table 2 Treated Water Pipeline Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Crossings | |
| Type | Size Range (inches) | Overall Length (feet) | Overall Length (miles) | Roadway | Waterway |
| Water Main | 16 – 24 | 36,939 | 7.0 | 2 | 5 |

*Source: Jacobs/MHM/Planning Partners 2023.*

The vertical alignment of pipelines within roadways would maintain a minimum of 48 inches from the top of pipe to the pavement surface. Trench depths would range from 60 inches to 12 feet. All pipeline alignments would provide for a one-foot separation from the pipe edge to any existing utility being crossed while maintaining the minimum cover. Any existing utilities would be surveyed and potholed by the design engineer/team to determine the proposed vertical alignment and crossing method.

As part of a road improvement project on McGowan Parkway, Yuba County has previously constructed some of the pipelines described in Appendix A, Table A-1. From the east end of the McGowan Parkway SR 70 overcrossing to Olive Avenue at the west end of the SR 65 overcrossing, Yuba County has installed 16- and 18-inch water mains to connect with the existing OPUD water distribution system within Olivehurst. No additional construction within this segment is planned beyond those facilities.

# CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

## CONSTRUCTION PHASING AND SCHEDULE

The construction timing of the proposed South County Infrastructure project components will be directly influenced by the availability of funding for construction. Several sources of funding are being pursued by OPUD and other project sponsors, but none of the sources have been finalized as of the date of this document. If funding can be secured earlier than expected, the schedule set forth below could be accelerated.

Given the current state of project design and permitting, a preliminary schedule for construction is set forth in Table 3.

| Table 3 Potential Construction Schedule | |
|---|---|
| **Description of Stage** | **Duration/Timeline** |
| Authorization to Bid | Early Winter 2024 |
| Bidding and Award Period | Summer 2024 |
| Contractor Notice to Proceed | Fall 2024 |
| Initiation of Construction | Winter/Spring 2024 |
| Completion of Construction | Spring 2027 |
| Startup and Commissioning | Summer 2027 |

*Source: Jacobs Engineering 2023.*

## EASEMENTS AND STAGING AREAS

Construction staging areas would be required to store project equipment and materials that cannot be stored adjacent to the work areas. Staging areas would also be required to provide space for the field offices of the Contractor and the field construction management staff.

Satellite staging areas would be required for special construction where sufficient working room is not provided by the permanent and temporary construction easements. Such locations include tunnel jacking and reception shaft areas that require a concentration of material and equipment. These are located at the SR 70 at McGowan, SR 65 at Olive Avenue, SR 65 at Shimer Road, and at the five stream crossings. Recommended staging areas at these sites have been identified. The proposed Pump Station No. 2 site and Pump Station No. 26 (aka Mary PS) site are potential staging areas for these crossings and for work on Mary Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Olive Avenue. Other than a staging area at the WWTP, no other staging areas have been identified.

## PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION - TRENCHING AND RESTORATION

Conventional excavating equipment is expected to be sufficient for excavating trenches for the South County Sewer Service Area, OPUD Sewer Force Mains, Wheatland Sewer Force Main, OPUD Water Line, and OPUD gravity sewer pipelines.

Two trench types are expected to be implemented on this project: vertical and modified sloped. Key assumptions for these trench types follow:

- Vertical trench walls will remain stable long enough to install shoring or bracing.
- Shoring and bracing are available in the trench widths and depths required for this project.

The vertical trench type will be used where insufficient working space prevents implementing the modified sloped type. The modified sloped trench type will likely be used where ample working space is available. While this trench configuration results in a larger amount of earthwork, it is generally more economical than vertical trenching; less sheeting, shoring, and bracing are required, thereby reducing the overall time and labor required to safely install the pipeline.

Soils are considered suitable for driving sheet piles as a means of meeting trench safety requirements. However, some of the South County Sewer Service Area is located within the Community of Olivehurst where use of sheet piles will not always be feasible (given concerns about excessive noise caused by driving sheet piles and claims of damage to existing structures during sheet piles installation). Some combination of shoring with bracing or sloped trench walls will be required to meet trench safety requirements.

Within all pipeline trenches associated with the project, controlled low-strength material (CLSM) using job-excavated materials will be used for a substantial portion of the backfill of each trench, thereby reducing the need to transport unneeded materials off site. CLSM will consist of cement, soils excavated from the trenches, and water proportioned to obtain a compressive strength of between 50 and 200 pounds per square inch.

Surface restoration within paved roadways includes providing a structural section that meets or exceeds the existing structural section and Yuba County Standard. Surface restoration in undeveloped areas would include the restoration of existing contours with native material and

construction of a permanent maintenance road. The structural section for the paved maintenance road would consist of 3 inches of asphalt concrete over 8 inches of aggregate base. The paved maintenance road would be 12 feet wide with 2-foot-wide shoulders.

## SOILS EXCAVATION AND TRENCH STABILITY

Based on the findings of a geotechnical evaluation completed for the proposed project, it is anticipated that the site soils will be excavatable with a medium to large size excavator (such as a CAT 320 or similar). Open excavations 5 feet or deeper will require sloping and/or shoring in accordance with Section 8.4 of the Yuba County Standard Specifications and Cal OSHA requirements. For planning and preliminary design, anticipate sloping/shoring requirements within the soil along the alignment for Type A soil. Excavations near waterway crossings or where perched groundwater/seepage or a sand layer is encountered will require shoring/sloping requirements for a Type C soil (shoring or sloping at a gradient of 1.5:1).

## TRENCH DEWATERING

Borings at anticipated trench depths were conducted with the geotechnical evaluation. Groundwater was not encountered at any of the borings. However, the study anticipates that groundwater/seepage could be encountered at or near trenchless crossings or perched at shallower depths along the project alignments. Groundwater levels may be higher during the late fall through late spring months, resulting from higher water levels in creeks and precipitation infiltrating the shallow surficial soil and ponding above the hard clay layers. Similarly, landscape irrigation along the project alignment could infiltrate and pond above the hard clay layer.

The geotechnical study recommends that sump pumps should be adequate to dewater excavations if groundwater/seepage is encountered. during excavation. The study strongly recommend scheduling the project excavations and backfill during the summer through early fall months to reduce potential groundwater/seepage impacts.

## TRENCHLESS CROSSINGS

The water main and wastewater pipeline improvements include five trenchless creek crossings along Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road. Additionally, the wastewater pipelines include three trenchless roadway crossings at SR 70/McGowan Parkway, near SR 65/McGowan Parkway and at SR 65/Shimer Road.

Traditional open-cut methods of installing the pipelines beneath highways and creeks are not feasible for the South County Infrastructure project and thus trenchless construction methods would be required. Based on interpretation of the subsurface conditions from historical and project geotechnical investigations, anticipated ground behavior during construction, lengths of the crossings, availability of workspace, feasibility of construction, construction cost, potential settlement impact, agency requirements, and environmental requirements, Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and Pipe Ramming or Auger Boring are identified as the trenchless methods for the South County Infrastructure Project's proposed highway and creek crossings. HDD was selected for its cost- effectiveness, low risk of settlement, lack of need for personnel entry beneath the ground, and ability to cross beneath roadways, culverts, and water bodies. Several of the crossings (Rancho Road/Virginia Creek and Forty Mile Road/Kimball Creek) would be constructed using pipe ramming or auger boring techniques. See Table A-4 in Appendix A.

### HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONAL DRILLING

HDD is typically a surface-launched process where a small diameter pilot borehole is drilled along the design alignment and stabilized by filling it with drilling mud (bentonite). The pilot borehole is enlarged by successive reaming passes, while keeping the borehole filled with drilling mud. When the borehole diameter is approximately 12 inches larger than the pipe or 1.5 times the outside diameter of the pipe, the pipe is pulled into the borehole, displacing most of the drilling mud. Shafts are not typically required because HDD bores are installed along a sweeping vertical curve (concave up) from surface to surface. Some agencies, such as Caltrans, require a casing. If a casing is required, the HDPE casing would be installed first, and the carrier pipe or pipes would be pulled through the casing.

Workspaces and pipe string laydown spaces are limited for some crossing locations, especially at SR 70/McGowan Parkway Crossing and at Reeds Creek and Unnamed Creek/Rancho Road Crossings.

### PIPE RAMMING

Pipe ramming is a trenchless method for installation of steel pipes and casings. The method is useful for pipe and casing installations under roads or streams, where other trenchless methods could cause subsidence or heaving. Pipe ramming is preferable for shorter distances and applications that do not require tight directional control.

The method uses pneumatic percussive blows to drive the pipe through the ground. The leading edge of the pipe is almost always open, and is typically closed only when smaller pipes are being installed. The shape allows a small overcut (to reduce friction between the pipe and soil and improve load conditions on the pipe), and directs the soil into the pipe interior. Further reduction of friction is typically achieved with lubrication, and different types of bentonite and/or polymers can be used (as in horizontal directional boring) for this purpose.

### AUGER BORING

Auger boring is defined as a trenchless application in which a casing pipe is jacked into the earth's surface while simultaneously rotating helical augers remove the excavated spoil. In auger boring, excavated soil is removed from the top of the casing tube. Auger boring employs a cutting edge attached to the auger within the casing pipe and hydraulic jacks, to rotate and penetrate the soil. So that there is unimpeded rotation within the casing, the auger diameter tends to be slightly less than that of the casing pipe. Rotation of the helical auger chain causes the cutting edge to bore through the ground, moving spoil behind the casing pipe, allowing for removal. Excavated material can be removed by mechanical means such as conveyors or excavators, by hand or through the use of muck buckets.

# 3. REQUIRED APPROVALS

This environmental document is intended to address the environmental impacts associated with all of the following decision actions and approvals:

- **Obligation of Public Funds (OPUD):** The approval action for the South County Infrastructure Project or any portion thereof will consist of the execution of a construction contract or other action that would obligate public funds to initiate the project.
- **Obligation of Public Funds (State Water Resources Control Board, Clean Water State Revolving Fund):** As a responsible agency under CEQA, an approval action by the State Board for a portion of the South County Infrastructure Project will consist of the obligation of public funds to initiate the project.

OPUD has the following discretionary powers related to the proposed South County Infrastructure project:

- **Certification of the Environmental Document:** OPUD will act as the lead agency as defined by CEQA, and will have authority to determine if this environmental document is adequate under CEQA.
- **Consider Project:** OPUD will consider approval of the project as described above.

# 4. PREVIOUS RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

## YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Adoption of a General Plan is a project subject to the requirements of CEQA. To comply with CEQA, Yuba County prepared and certified an Environmental Impact Report on June 7, 2011.

The 2030 General Plan EIR was prepared as a program EIR, as described under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq. [14 CCR 15000 et seq.). A program EIR "may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related...in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[a][3]). As a program EIR, the County's document focused on the overall effect of the 2030 General Plan.

Section 1.1.1 of the 2030 General Plan EIR sets forth the County's vision for the use of the General Plan EIR in the environmental review and consideration for future projects.

> The County intends to use the 2030 General Plan EIR to streamline approval of private and public projects. The County will make full use of existing streamlining provided by CEQA, and will make full use of emerging streamlining techniques .... The County has invested substantial resources in the 2030 General Plan and wants to promote fiscally prudent use of this EIR, once it is certified, to accommodate development consistent with the 2030 General Plan.

In certifying the 2030 General Plan EIR, the County anticipated that future actions (*such as the proposed OPUD South County Infrastructure project*) could be based, in whole or in part, on the environmental evaluation undertaken as part of the 2030 General Plan and its EIR. The Yuba County 2030 General Plan EIR, Section 1.7 specifically identifies the actions of other agencies and private organizations such as OPUD as falling within the purview of the 2030 General Plan EIR.

The 2030 General Plan EIR was comprehensive in its evaluation of the environmental effects of future urban and rural development pursuant to the 2030 General Plan. Impact topics assessed in the EIR consisted of:

- 4.1 Aesthetics
- 4.2 Agricultural and Forest Resources
- 4.3 Air Quality
- 4.4 Biological Resources
- 4.5 Cultural Resources
- 4.6 Geologic, Soils, Mineral, and Paleontological Resources
- 4.7 Climate Change
- 4.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.10 Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing
- 4.11 Noise and Vibration
- 4.12 Public Services and Facilities
- 4.13 Transportation and Traffic
- 4.14 Utilities and Service Systems
- 4.15 Energy
- 5 Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- 6 Other CEQA Considerations

Thus, because the South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with the Yuba County 2030 General Plan, the EIR for the Yuba County 2030 General Plan (2011) provides relevant environmental analysis and conclusions for the environmental analysis set forth in this Initial Study. The various sites of proposed infrastructure are located within the planning boundaries of the 2030 General Plan. All future land uses and supporting infrastructure, including the project sites and proposed project actions, were assessed in the General Plan EIR. Thus, the 2030 General Plan EIR provides the foundational environmental document for evaluating development throughout the County.

## TIERING

"Tiering" refers to the relationship between a program-level EIR (where long-range programmatic cumulative impacts are the focus of the environmental analysis) and subsequent environmental analyses such as the subject document, which focus primarily on issues unique to a smaller project within the larger program or plan. Through tiering a subsequent environmental analysis can incorporate, by reference, discussion that summarizes general environmental data found in the program EIR that establishes cumulative impacts and mitigation measures, the planning context, and the regulatory background. These broad based issues need not be reevaluated subsequently, having been previously identified and evaluated at the program stage.

Tiering focuses the environmental review on the project-specific significant effects that were not examined in the prior environmental review, or that are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or by other means. Section 21093(b) of the Public Resources Code requires the tiering of environmental review whenever feasible, as determined by the Lead Agency.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15152, subsections (a) through (d), permit second tier documents to be an EIR or a Negative Declaration, whichever is appropriate under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15065 and 15070. For instance, Section 15152, subsection (a) refers to a "later EIR or negative declaration" tiering from a broader EIR. In fact, the California Legislature made a declaration in Public Resources Code Section 21093 that environmental impact reports shall be tiered whenever feasible to achieve the efficiencies outlined in Section 21093. This Initial Study was prepared specifically to comply with the State CEQA Guidelines.

The 2030 General Plan EIR contained a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of implementing the Yuba County 2030 General Plan. The 2030 General Plan EIR is comprehensive in its analysis of the environmental impacts associated with development of the County, including the area that makes up the proposed site of the South County Infrastructure Project. This includes discussion of a full range of alternatives and growth inducing impacts associated with urban development in the county, including the South County area.

Therefore, the South County Infrastructure Project is related to the Yuba County General Plan and, pursuant to Section 15152 of the State CEQA Guidelines, tiering of environmental documents is appropriate. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15152(g) specifically provides that,

> "[w]hen tiering is used, the later EIRs or Negative Declarations shall refer to the prior EIR and state where a copy of the prior EIR may be examined. The later [environmental document] should state that the Lead Agency is using the tiering concept and that the [environmental document] is being tiered with the earlier EIR.

The Yuba County 2030 General Plan and the EIR for the 2030 General Plan can be reviewed at the following location:

Olivehurst Public Utility District
1970 9th Street
Olivehurst, CA 95961
Contact Person: John Tillotson
Phone: (530) 743-4657

## INCORPORATION OF THE YUBA COUNTY 2030 GENERAL PLAN EIR BY REFERENCE

The EIR for the Yuba County 2030 General Plan is a comprehensive document. Due to various references to the Yuba County 2030 General Plan EIR in this proposed South County Infrastructure Project Initial Study, and to its importance relative to understanding the environmental analysis that has occurred to date with respect to development in the South County area, the document is hereby incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15150.

## SUMMARY OF YUBA COUNTY 2030 GENERAL PLAN EIR

The Yuba County 2030 General Plan EIR analyzed the environmental impacts associated with adoption of the Yuba County 2030 General Plan allowing for development, open space preservation, and provision of services within the unincorporated areas of Yuba County. The "project site," as defined by CEQA, consists of the unincorporated areas of Yuba County. The 2030 General Plan was an update of the County's existing 1996 General Plan. The overarching purpose of the updated plan is to provide policy guidelines for future development and conservation in the county, and to adapt the General Plan to issues that had emerged since the creation of the previously written elements. The 2030 General Plan provides the framework for decisions guiding where and how development should occur and the priorities given to the County's natural resources in order to achieve the highest quality of life possible for its residents. The General Plan is comprehensive in scope, addressing land use, transportation, housing, conservation of resources, economic development, public facilities and infrastructure, public safety, and open space, among many other subjects.

The Yuba County 2030 General Plan contemplates a full range of land uses that would constitute a balanced community, including residential uses at a variety of densities, as well as commercial, office, employment, and open space uses. Additionally, public or quasi-public uses are contemplated by the Yuba County 2030 General Plan, including utilities, schools, parks, fire stations, government offices, and other uses.

A summary of the EIR's environmental conclusions, mitigation measures, and project alternatives is attached to this Initial Study as Appendix B.

# 5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

## PURPOSE AND LEGAL BASIS FOR THE INITIAL STUDY

As a public disclosure document, this Initial Study also provides local decision makers and the public with information regarding the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. According to Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of an Initial Study is to:

1. Provide the Lead Agency with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an EIR or a Negative Declaration.
2. Enable an applicant or Lead Agency to modify a project, mitigating adverse impacts before an EIR is prepared, thereby enabling the project to qualify for a Negative Declaration.
3. Assist in the preparation of an EIR, if one is required by:
    a. Focusing the EIR on the effects determined to be significant,
    b. Identifying the effects determined not to be significant,
    c. Explaining the reasons for determining that potentially significant effects would not be significant, and
    d. Identifying whether a program EIR, tiering, or another appropriate process can be used for analysis of the project's environmental effects.
4. Facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of a project.
5. Provide documentation of the factual basis for the finding in a Negative Declaration that a project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
6. Eliminate unnecessary EIRs.
7. Determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used with the project.

## INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Following each major environmental category and topic in the Initial Study, there are four determinations by which to judge the project's impact. These categories and their meanings are shown below:

**"No Impact"** means that it is anticipated that the project will not affect the physical environment on or around the project area. It therefore does not warrant mitigation measures.

**"Less-than-Significant Impact"** means the project is anticipated to affect the physical environment on and around the project area, however to a less-than-significant degree, and therefore not warranting mitigation measures.

**"Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated"** applies to impacts where the incorporation of mitigation measures into a project has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant" to "Less-than-significant." In such cases, and with such projects, mitigation measures will be provided including a brief explanation of how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.

**"Potentially Significant Impact"** means there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant, and no mitigation is possible.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, including several impacts that are "Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Responses to the following questions and related discussion indicate whether or not the proposed project would have or would potentially have a significant adverse impact on the environment, either directly or indirectly, or individually or cumulatively with other projects. All phases of project planning, implementation, and operation are considered. Mandatory Findings of Significance are located in Section XXI below.

The following analysis includes a table for each issue area that identifies particular project components that may result in impacts to the associated issue area. Project components that are identified in these tables will be evaluated further in the section, while project components that would have no impact will not be discussed further.

| I. AESTHETICS | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project: | | | | |
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | | | | **X** |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | | | | **X** |
| c) In non-urban areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? | | | **X** | |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | | | **X** | |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The primary scenic resource within the project areas are the rural and agricultural landscape. Due to the generally flat topography, short- and mid-range views from and to project components are limited to rural and agricultural uses, and areas of residential and industrial uses. Long-range views include views to the Sierra Nevada foothills and the Sutter Buttes. Viewers in the vicinity of the proposed project improvements are limited to motorists on perimeter roadways, surrounding residents, and persons associated with scattered agricultural, recreational, and industrial uses. The existing visual setting of the water plant and Pump/Lift Stations 21-25 is characterized as rural (Google Earth 2022). See Figures 3, 4, 7 and 8.

Neither the location of the project components nor the views to or from the project components have been designated as an important scenic resource by Yuba County or any other public agency. No state or locally designated scenic highway has been identified in the vicinity of the project area (Caltrans 2022).

## REGULATORY SETTING

Chapter 11.19.060 of the Yuba County Code regulates lighting and illumination. Several of the provisions of this Code apply to the proposed project elements.

C. Control of outdoor artificial light. This Subsection is intended to minimize outdoor artificial light that may have a detrimental effect and reduce the unnecessary illumination of adjacent properties.

2. Prohibited lighting. The following types of exterior lighting are prohibited:
   a. Drop-down lenses;
   b. Mercury vapor lights;
   c. Searchlights (excluding emergency/safety response activities), laser lights, or any other lighting that flashes, blinks, alternates, or moves.

3. Fixture type. All lighting fixtures shall be shielded so as not to produce obtrusive glare onto the public right-of-way or adjoining properties. All luminaries shall meet the most recently

adopted criteria of the illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) for "cut off" or "full cut off" luminaries. In the figure below, cd refers to the candela or measurement of luminous intensity based on the direction or angle of the light projection.

4. Light trespass. Lights shall be placed to deflect light away from adjacent properties and public streets, and to prevent adverse interference with the normal operation or enjoyment of surrounding properties.
    a. Direct or sky-reflected glare from floodlights shall not be directed into any other property or street.
    b. No light or combination of lights, or activity shall cast light exceeding one foot candle onto a public street, with the illumination level measured at the centerline of the street.
    c. No light, combination of lights, or activity shall cast light exceeding 0.5 foot candle onto a residentially zoned property, or any property containing residential uses.

# ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| I.a | | | | | No scenic vistas in the project area. |
| I.b | | | | | No scenic highways in project area. |
| I.c | ✓ | | | ✓ | Several project components would be visible. |
| I.d | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | Would include new night lighting. |

**Question (a) Scenic vista: No Impact.** Given the lack of distinctive topographical features in the project vicinity, views to and from the project sites are limited to short- to medium-range views of mixed agricultural, recreational, and industrial uses. These components of the viewshed would be classified as common, and would not be considered to be scenic vistas. Thus, the project components are not located in an area with scenic vistas. No designated scenic vista is visible from the project areas, nor are the project areas visible from any nearby scenic vista. Because the proposed project would not affect a scenic vista, no impact would result with implementation of the project, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Scenic resources: No Impact.** No state- or locally-designated scenic highway is visible from the project area features, nor are the areas of the project visible from any nearby designated scenic highway. The nearest designated State Scenic Highway, State Route 50 in El Dorado County, is over 40 miles to the southeast of the project area. Because the project areas are not located within the viewshed of a designated scenic highway, there would be no damage to scenic resources within the viewshed of a scenic highway. No impact would result with implementation of the proposed project, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (c) Visual character: Less-than-significant Impact.** While the proposed pipeline infrastructure of the project would be buried within existing roadways, there are several components of the project that would be visible, including pump stations, lift stations, the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), and the water plant (WP).

Of these, the WWTP and Pump Stations 1 and 2 are existing uses located within the urban area of Olivehurst. As proposed, the existing Pump Station 1 would be demolished and a replacement Pump Station 1 would be constructed on an adjacent parcel. Pump Station 2 would be renovated within its existing footprint. Equipment associated with the pump stations would be hidden from view by perimeter fencing. All improvements proposed for the WWTP would be constructed within the existing area of the plant site. See Figures 7 and 9. Although implementation of the proposed project would alter the appearance of existing WWTP and pump station facilities, the modified facilities would not be considered to be out of character in appearance or size with adjacent facilities and uses.

Pump Station 26 would be constructed at the southwest corner of McGowan Parkway and Mary Avenue within the urbanized area of Olivehurst. Like Pump Stations 1 and 2, all equipment would be hidden from view by perimeter fencing. Pump Station 26 would be similar in size to other commercial and multi-family residential buildings in the surrounding area.

The visual character of the area surrounding the WP and Pump and Lift Stations 21 - 25 is primarily rural agricultural, although there are several areas developed with heavy commercial and recreational uses. The WP would be constructed approximately 1,600 feet east of Forty Mile Road, and northeast of the Hard Rock Casino and hotel. The landscape between the WP and Forty Mile Road is dominated by existing and proposed parking lots. In this landscape, the WP would make a minor contribution to the view. Pump Station 25 would be constructed within the same landscape nearer to Forty Mile Road. Both the pump station and WP would be considered common and appropriate by most viewers.

Pump Station 21 and Lift Stations 22 – 24 would be sited in rural landscapes with little current development. Land uses surrounding these facilities are primarily agricultural, interspersed with scattered residences and commercial uses. While these project components would be visible from adjacent roadways, these facilities would be of a scale and appearance similar to other agricultural and commercial structures in the vicinity.

Since the proposed project elements would be consistent with the existing and planned uses of the area, and the visible project components would not affect the existing visual character of the areas, implementation of the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (d) New source of light or glare: Less-than-significant Impact**. The proposed project includes a new exterior emergency/security lights associated with the pump stations, wastewater treatment plant improvements, and water plant. The new lighting would be at a similar level and character to existing lighting in the surrounding area. The proposed project would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area as a result of lighting or glare, and a less-than-significant impact would result. No mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As set forth in the 2030 Yuba County General Plan Program EIR, development in Sutter County, Butte County, Nevada County, and Yuba County and cities in the region would cause substantial changes to the existing visual character. Important visual resources present in Yuba County (agricultural lands, views of the Sutter Buttes and the Sierra Nevada, waterways, etc.) would be affected by land use change under the cumulative scenario in the General Plan Program EIR by related projects and plans. As development occurs in the unincorporated County and surrounding areas, substantial changes in visual conditions would continue as open viewsheds are replaced by urban development. Increased urban development would also lead to increased nighttime light and glare in the region and more limited views of the night sky and sky glow effects, and would disrupt the rural nature of the area. The effect of these changes on aesthetic resources from past and planned future projects, when considering the related projects, would be a cumulatively significant impact.

Despite the range of policies and programs in the 2030 General Plan that would reduce or avoid adverse aesthetics impacts throughout Yuba County, urban development of agricultural lands and open space would occur. Growth and development in adjacent counties (Sutter County, Butte County, Nevada County, and Placer County) would involve similar conversion of former agricultural lands, open space, and elements of the rural landscape. Given the large scale of this development and the rural nature of the regional setting, the impacts on visual resources from implementing projects accommodated under the 2030 General Plan would be cumulatively considerable.

Implementation of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would be consistent with the 2030 General Plan, including future land uses identified in the Plan. The potential impacts to visual quality of implementing the project and its components would be limited since most infrastructure would be buried within existing roadways. Components of the project that would be visible include pump stations, lift stations, the wastewater treatment plant, and the water plant. Several of these facilities, such as the wastewater treatment plant and several pump stations, would be located within the urban area of Olivehurst and would have little adverse visual effect. The remaining facilities (water plant, pump and lift stations) would be located in a primarily agricultural area, but an area designated for future urban development by the 2030 General Plan. Because the aesthetic effects of the proposed project would be less than significant, the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative aesthetic resource effects.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The area surrounding the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and several pump stations (PS-1, PS-2 and PS-26) is primarily urban, as they are existing facilities within the community of Olivehurst. The general area of the water plant (WP) is rural agricultural, and includes the developed and developing areas of the Hard Rock Casino. The project pipeline alignments would be located within and along roadways which traverse rural areas of Yuba County, with a portion of the pipeline alignments within the community of Olivehurst. Most of the proposed pump and lift stations would be located on vacant land adjacent to Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road. See Figures 3, 4, 7 and 8.

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) provides data and services to support the preservation of agricultural land in agricultural uses. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program's (FMMP) Important Farmlands Maps[1] of Yuba County designates the WWTP site, and the sites of PS-1, PS-2, and PS-26 as Urban and Built-Up Land. The proposed site of the proposed water plant (WP) is designated as Grazing Land (DOC 2021a). The wastewater and water system pipeline alignments are located within roadways or roadway easements. Adjacent lands abutting pipeline routes are designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land. All other pump and lift station locations are designated as Grazing Land, Other Land, and Urban and Built-Up Land, except for Lift Station 23, which is located on designated Prime Farmland. A Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) station is located outside of the public road right of way, west of Rosser Road. The farmland designation of this area is Grazing Land (DOC 2021a). See Table 4 for Important Farmland and Yuba County Zoning Designations.

[1] The Important Farmland Map uses a classification system that combines technical soil ratings from the Natural Resources Conservation Service digital soil data and current land use. The minimum land use mapping unit is 10 acres unless specified.

| **Table 4** | **South County Infrastructure Project Important Farmlands and Yuba County Zoning Designations** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Project Component** | **FMMP Designation** | **Zoning Designation** |
| Pump Station 21 | Other Land | IG – General Industrial District |
| Pump Station 22 | Grazing Land | IL – Light Industrial District |
| Lift Station 23 | Prime Farmland | IL – Light Industrial District |
| Lift Station 24 | Grazing Land | SE – Sports Entertainment District |
| Pump Station 25 | Grazing Land | SE – Sports Entertainment District |
| Pump Station 1 | Urban and Built-Up | RM – Medium Density Residential |
| Pump Station 2 | Urban and Built-UP | RS – Single Family Residential |
| Pump Station 26 | Urban and Built-Up | NMX – Neighborhood Mixed Use |
| Water Treatment Plant | Grazing Land | SE – Sports Entertainment District |
| WWTP | Urban and Built-Up | PF – Public Facilities District |

*Sources: Yuba County Zoning Map, Yuba County 2021a. California, State of. Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2018.*

The areas of the project components include multiple Yuba County zoning designations as shown in Table 4 above. The wastewater and water system pipeline alignments are located in areas zoned for commercial and employment center uses, industrial, and sports entertainment. None of the project components are located in agriculturally zoned areas.

Yuba County does not participate in the Williamson Act program, and there are no Williamson Act contracts on the project area (Yuba County 2011a).

No forest lands, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production occur in the project area (CDFW 2015; Yuba County 2011a).

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| **Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question** | **Project Component** | | | | **Discussion** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Water Plant** | **WWTP** | **Pipelines** | **Pump Stations** | |
| | ***Applicable to Issue Area?*** | | | | |
| II.a | | | | ✓ | Prime Farmland at Lift Station 23 |
| II.b | | | | | No zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act |
| II.c | | | | | There is no forest land or timberland in project area. |
| II.d | | | | | There is no forest land or timberland in project area. |
| II.e | | | | ✓ | Prime Farmland at Lift Station 23. No forest land. |

**Question (a) and (e) Convert farmland to non-agricultural use: Less-than-significant Impact.** Project pipelines would be located within paved roadways or crossings of the public right-of-way, and in general would not affect adjacent farmlands. Following construction of the pipeline network, all roadways and other disturbed property would be restored to pre-construction conditions. Except for Lift Station 23, none of the project components are located on Farmland as

classified by the FMMP[2]. While the area of Lift Station 23 is designated as Prime Farmland, the lift station would be located at the edge of existing farmland, and a very small area would be permanently modified. However, because the limited area of conversion (approximately 3,510 square feet or 0.08 acre) is on the edge of existing agricultural activities, and no other changes to the project area would occur following construction of the lift station, the proposed project would not impair the overall agricultural productivity of the site. The proposed project would not result in any change to the existing environment that could result in the near-term conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Because construction of the proposed facilities would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use, a less-than-significant impact would result. No mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Conflict with zoning for agricultural use: Less-than-significant Impact.** None of the areas of project components are zoned for agricultural uses (see Table 4 above). The proposed project includes the construction of an updated water and wastewater pipeline network, which would not conflict with any adjacent agricultural uses. Yuba County does not participate in the Williamson Act program, so there are no parcels within the County under Williamson Act contract (Yuba County 2011a). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any Williamson Act contracts. No feature of the project would preclude or limit the agricultural use of adjoining parcels. Thus, the proposed project would not conflict with adjacent agricultural uses. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

**Questions (c) and (d) Conflict with zoning for or loss of farmland, forest land, or timber land: No Impact.** The project area is not zoned for forest lands or timberland production by Yuba County, and no such lands exist in the vicinity. Thus, there would be no loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Because the proposed project would not conflict with any existing forest land or timberland production zoning, and no changes associated with the project are proposed that would result in the conversion of existing farmland, forest land, or timber lands, no impact would occur. No mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As set forth in the 2030 Yuba County General Plan Program EIR, conversion of Important Farmland in the Sacramento Valley is a significant cumulative impact resulting from urbanization. The cumulative loss of forestland through development in the region is also considered a significant cumulative impact. The loss of Important Farmland is a cumulatively considerable impact when considered in connection with the significant cumulative losses that would occur through implementation of the General Plan, past farmland conversions, and planned future development.

The forest land areas that could potentially be affected by implementation of the General Plan are within the previously existing (1996) Rural Community Boundary Areas. The conversion of forestland in Yuba County combined with timberland conversion in adjacent counties as a result of rural community development and rural subdivisions is a significant cumulative impact. The 2030 General Plan, while maintaining previously existing (1996) rural community boundaries, would make a considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

[2] Grazing Land does not fall under the definition of agricultural land according to the Public Resources Code.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on agriculture and forestry resources resulted in a conclusion of no impact or a less-than-significant impact to such resources. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

# III. AIR QUALITY

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | | **X** | | |
| b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? | | **X** | | |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | | | **X** | |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | | | **X** | |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Air quality influences public health and welfare, the economy, and quality of life. Air pollutants have the potential to adversely impact public health, the production and quality of agricultural crops, visibility, native vegetation, and buildings and structures.

Ambient air quality is described in terms of compliance with state and national standards, and the levels of air pollutant concentrations considered safe to protect the public health and welfare. These standards are designed to protect people most sensitive to respiratory distress, such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people already weakened by other disease or illness, and persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise. The U.S. EPA, the federal agency that administers the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970, as amended, has established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for seven air pollution constituents. As permitted by the CAA, California has adopted more stringent state ambient air quality standards (SAAQS), and expanded the number of air constituents regulated.

The project site is located in Yuba County, within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (SVAB). Air quality within Yuba County is regulated under both federal and state Clean Air Acts by the Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) (which includes Yuba and Sutter counties). As required by the California Clean Air Act (CCAA), the FRAQMD has published various air quality planning documents, including Rules and Regulations, to comply with the federal and state AAQS. Air Quality Attainment Plans (AQAP), prepared by the FRAQMD, are incorporated into the State Implementation Plan (SIP), which is subsequently submitted to the EPA.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is required to designate areas of the state as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for any state standard. An "attainment" designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations do not violate the standard for that pollutant in that area. A "nonattainment" designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once. Of the criteria pollutants, the FRAQMD is in nonattainment for state ozone and state $PM_{10}$ standards. The project site is located within an area of the FRAQMD classified as attainment for all federal NAAQS. (CARB 2020; FRAQMD 2016)

## CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

The criteria pollutants of concern in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin are ozone and particulates (dust). Ozone is not emitted directly into the environment, but is generated from complex chemical reactions between reactive organic gases (ROG), or non-methane hydrocarbons, and oxides of nitrogen ($NO_X$) that occur in the presence of sunlight. Ozone exposure causes eye irritation and damage to lung tissue in humans. Ozone also harms vegetation, reduces crop yields, and accelerates deterioration of paints, finishes, rubber products, plastics, and fabrics. Research also shows that children exposed to unhealthful levels of ozone suffer decreased lung function growth and increased asthma.

$PM_{10}$, or inhalable particulate matter, is a complex mixture of primary or directly emitted particles, and secondary particles or aerosol droplets formed in the atmosphere by precursor chemicals. The main sources of fugitive dust are unpaved roads, paved roads, and construction. Additional sources of $PM_{10}$ include fires, industrial processes, mobile sources, fuel combustion, agriculture, miscellaneous sources, and solvents. Health studies link particulate pollution to sudden death in infants as well as adults with heart and lung ailments, shortening lives by years. Exposure to airborne particles also aggravates respiratory illnesses like asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and pneumonia.

$PM_{2.5}$ is atmospheric particulate matter having a particle size less than 2.5 microns (μm) in diameter. These particles are so small they can be detected only with an electron microscope. Sources of fine particles include all types of combustion, including motor vehicles, power plants, residential wood burning, forest fires, agricultural burning, and some industrial processes. These small particles can be inhaled into the lungs and have the potential to cause health-related impacts in sensitive persons.

### FRAQMD RULES AND REGULATIONS

All projects are subject to FRAQMD rules in effect at the time of construction. A complete listing of current rules is available at www.fraqmd.org. Specific rules that may relate to construction activities or building design may include, but are not limited to:

**Regulation IV: Stationary Emission Sources Permit System and Registration**. Any project that includes the use of equipment capable of releasing emissions to the atmosphere may require permit(s) from FRAQMD prior to equipment operation. The applicant, developer, or operator of a project that includes an emergency generator, boiler, or internal combustion engine should contact the FRAQMD early to determine if a permit is required, and to begin the permit application process. Portable construction equipment (e.g., generators, compressors, pile drivers, lighting equipment, etc.) with an internal combustion engine over 50 horsepower are required to have a FRAQMD permit or a California Air Resources Board portable equipment registration. Other general types of uses that require a permit include, but are not limited to fumigation chambers, gasoline tanks and dispensing, spray booths, and operations that generate airborne particulate emissions.

**Rule 3.0: Visible Emissions**. A person shall not discharge into the atmosphere from any single source of emissions whatsoever, any air contaminants for a period or periods aggregating more than three minutes in any one hour which is as dark or darker in shade as that designated as No. 2 on the Ringleman Chart.

**Rule 3.15: Architectural Coatings**. The developer or contractor is required to use coatings that comply with the volatile organic compound content limits specified in the rule.

**Rule 3.16: Fugitive Dust**. The developer or contractor is required to control dust emissions from earth moving activities, storage or any other construction activity to prevent airborne dust from leaving the project site.

**Rule 7.10: Indirect Source Fee**. An applicant for a building permit shall pay fees to the FRAQMD based on number of units (residential) or square footage of the building and associated parking (commercial and industrial).

## SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

The FRAQMD has established thresholds for certain criteria pollutants for determining whether a project would have a significant air quality impact. Construction and operational emissions are calculated separately. The FRAQMD significance thresholds are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5 FRAQMD Significance Thresholds – Criteria Pollutants**

| Project Phase | Threshold of Significance | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) | Nitrogen Oxides ($NO_X$) | $PM_{10}$ | $PM_{2.5}$ |
| Construction | 25 lbs/day* | 25 lbs/day* | 80 lbs/day | Not established |
| Operational | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day | Not established |

Notes: * NOx and ROG Construction emissions may be averaged over the life of the project, but may not exceed 4.5 tons/year.
*Source:* *Feather River Air Quality Management District "A Technical Guide to Assess the Air Quality Impact of Land Use Projects Under the California Environmental Quality Act" 2010.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| III.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | All components of the project would result in emissions during the construction phase. There would be limited operational emissions. |
| III.b | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| III.c | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| III.d | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

**Question (a) (b) Conflict with air quality plan; Net increase of criteria pollutant: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** As stated above in the discussion of the regulatory environment, for nonattainment criteria pollutants, the FRAQMD has attainment plans in place that identify strategies to bring regional emissions into compliance with federal and state air quality standards. The policies and provisions of the FRAQMD and the 2030 Yuba County General Plan control air quality impacts from the proposed project. The proposed project would result in the installation of backbone infrastructure, and would not conflict with the land use designations of the area of the project set forth by the 2030 Yuba County General Plan. Thus, the proposed

infrastructure improvement project would be consistent with the land use assumptions used by the FRAQMD in drafting the air quality attainment plans.

As stated above, the proposed project would be subject to FRAQMD Rules and Regulations. The proposed emergency generators at the water plant and the pump and lift stations would be subject to stationary source permit requirements. To ensure project compliance with applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations, the following mitigation measure would be required:

**Mitigation Measure AQ-1:**

> Prior to construction, OPUD or its contractor shall provide to the County a receipt of a FRAQMD approved Dust Control Plan or Construction Notification form in compliance with Rule 3.16 Fugitive Dust. Further, OPUD or its contractor shall obtain an Authority to Construct (ATC) and Permit to Operate (PTO) for the proposed emergency generators above 50 horsepower in accordance with Regulation IV: Stationary Emission Sources Permit System and Registration. Additional applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations may include: Rule 3.0: Visible Emissions, Rule 3:15: Architectural Coatings, and Rule 7:10: Indirect Source Fee. OPUD or its contractor will be required to implement measures of applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations as determined by the FRAQMD.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would require completion of the ATC/PTO for the proposed project emergency generators and compliance with applicable Rules and Regulations of the FRAQMD as described above would ensure the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any SVAB attainment plan or the SIP. Therefore, a less-than-significant impact would result, and no additional mitigation would be required.

## CONSTRUCTION-RELATED AIR POLLUTANT EMISSIONS

Implementation of the proposed project would result in short-term (construction) air pollutant emissions, including ROG, CO, $SO_2$, $NO_X$, and fugitive dust. The individual components of construction emissions include employee trips, exhaust emissions from construction equipment, and fugitive dust emissions. Emission levels for these activities would vary depending on the number and types of equipment used, duration of use, operation schedules, and the number of construction workers. The project includes installation of approximately 26.8 miles of wastewater and water pipeline, construction of eight (8) pump and lift stations along the pipeline route, wastewater treatment plant improvements, including enlarging an existing emergency storage basin, and a new water plant. In addition, emergency back-up generators would be installed at each pump and lift station and the water plant.

Construction-related emissions were estimated using the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) Roadway Construction Emissions Model (Version 9.0) for installation of proposed pipeline and the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2020.4.0 for construction of the proposed pump and lift stations, the wastewater treatment plant improvements, and the new water plant (see Appendix C). This analysis conservatively assumes construction of several project components could occur at the same time over the course of several years, with construction beginning in early 2024. The maximum daily construction emissions from the Roadway Model and CalEEMod for overlapping construction phases were summed in order to present the most conservative analysis. The results were compared to the standards of significance discussed above in order to determine the associated level of impact. All assumptions

used to complete the modeling are included in Appendix A. A summary of estimated construction-related emissions of ROG, $NO_X$, and $PM_{10}$ in maximum pounds per day and tons per year for the project is shown in Table 6 below, based on anticipated project phasing. To determine whether the project would result in significant air quality impacts, FRAQMD guidelines identify thresholds of significance for certain criteria air pollutants, as set forth in Table 5 above. Since construction would span several years, this analysis uses 4.5 tons/year as the threshold for construction-related ROG and NOx emissions, and 80 pounds/day for $PM_{10}$ emissions.

**Table 6 Estimated Unmitigated Construction-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions**

| Construction Phase | Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds/day) | | | Annual Emissions (tons/year) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ROG** | **$NO_X$** | **$PM_{10}$** | **ROG*** | **$NO_X$*** |
| *Phase I (2024)* | 12.27 | **115.64** | 26.14 | 1.17 | **10.05** |
| Significance Threshold | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day | 4.5 tons/yr | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | NO | **See Note*** | NO | NO | **YES** |
| *Phase II (2025)* | 52.65 | 101.04 | 6.75 | 1.43 | **8.51** |
| Significance Threshold | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day | 4.5 tons/yr | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **See Note*** | **See Note*** | NO | NO | **YES** |
| *Phase III (2026)* | **159.73** | **169.74** | 44.34 | 2.05 | **10.41** |
| Significance Threshold | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day | 4.5 tons/yr | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **See Note*** | **See Note*** | NO | NO | **YES** |
| *Phase IV (2027)* | **47.52** | **32.13** | 1.35 | 0.15 | 0.16 |
| Significance Threshold | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day | 4.5 tons/yr | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **See Note*** | **See Note*** | NO | NO | NO |

Notes: Calculations completed in February 2023.
NOx = nitrogen oxide, $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter, ROG = reactive organic gases
* The significance threshold of 4.5 tons/year may be used for NOx and ROG construction emissions that are averaged over the life of the project.
*Source: Planning Partners 2023. FRAQMD 2010.*

Based on construction modeling, ROG and NOx emissions would be above maximum daily FRAQMD significance thresholds in most construction years. However, of those exceedances, only $NO_x$ emissions would exceed annual FRAQMD significance thresholds of 4.5 tons/year in 2024, 2025, and 2026. $PM_{10}$ emissions is not anticipated to exceed the daily FRAQMD significance threshold in any construction year.

Because construction-related $NO_x$ emissions would exceed FRAQMD emissions significance thresholds, implementation of the proposed project would have a significant impact related to air quality. The following mitigation would be required:

**Mitigation Measure AQ-2:**

OPUD will implement, or its construction contractors will implement, the following measures as established by the Standard Construction Mitigation Measures provided in the FRAQMD's Indirect Source Review Guidelines (2010) and FRAQMD Construction Phase Mitigation Measures (FRAQMD 2016) in order to reduce emissions during construction.

A. Develop and submit a fugitive dust control plan to minimize fugitive dust emissions during project construction to FRAQMD for approval.
B. Construction equipment exhaust emissions shall not exceed FRAQMD Regulation Ill, Rule 3.0, Visible Emissions limitations (40 percent opacity or Ringelmann 2.0).
C. The contractor shall be responsible to ensure that all construction equipment is properly tuned and maintained prior to and for the duration of on-site operation.
D. Limit idling time to five minutes
E. Utilize existing power sources (e.g., line power) or clean fuel generators rather than temporary power generators.
F. Develop a traffic plan to minimize traffic flow interference from construction activities. The plan may include advance public notice of routing, use of public transportation, and satellite parking areas with a shuttle service. Schedule operations affecting traffic for off-peak hours. Minimize obstruction of through-traffic lanes. Provide a flag person to guide traffic properly and ensure safety at construction sites.
G. Portable engines and portable engine-driven equipment units used at the project work site, with the exception of on-road and off-road motor vehicles, may require California Air Resources Board (CARB) Portable Equipment Registration with the State or a local district permit. The owner/operator shall be responsible for arranging appropriate consultations with the CARB or FRAQMD to determine registration and permitting requirements prior to equipment operation at the site.
H. All grading operations on a project should be suspended when winds exceed 20 miles per hour or when winds carry dust beyond the property line despite implementation of all feasible dust control measures.
I. Work areas shall be watered or treated with Dust Suppressants as necessary to prevent fugitive dust violations.
J. An operational water truck should be available at all times. Apply water to control dust as needed to prevent visible emissions violations and off-site dust impacts. Travel time to water sources should be considered and additional trucks used if needed.
K. On-site dirt piles or other stockpiled material should be covered, wind breaks installed, and water and/or soil stabilizers employed to reduce wind-blown dust emissions. Incorporate the use of approved non-toxic soil stabilizers according to manufacturer's specifications to all inactive construction areas.
L. All transfer processes involving a free fall of soil or other particulate matter shall be operated in such a manner as to minimize the free fall distance and fugitive dust emissions.
M. Apply approved chemical soil stabilizers according to the manufacturers' specifications, to all- inactive construction areas (previously graded areas that remain inactive for 96 hours) including unpaved roads and employee/equipment parking areas.
N. To prevent track-out, wheel washers should be installed where project vehicles and/or equipment exit onto paved streets from unpaved roads. Vehicles and/or equipment shall be washed prior to each trip. Alternatively, a gravel bed may be installed as appropriate at vehicle/equipment site exit points to effectively remove soil buildup on tires and tracks to prevent/diminish track-out.
O. Paved streets shall be swept frequently (water sweeper with reclaimed water recommended; wet broom) if soil material has been carried onto adjacent paved, public thoroughfares from the project site.
P. Provide temporary traffic control as needed during all phases of construction to improve traffic flow, as deemed appropriate by the Department of Public Works and/or Caltrans and to reduce vehicle dust emissions.

Q. Reduce traffic speeds on all unpaved surfaces to 15 miles per hour or less and reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic by restricting access. Provide appropriate training, on-site enforcement, and signage.
R. Reestablish ground cover on the construction site as soon as possible and prior to final occupancy, through seeding and watering.

**Mitigation Measure AQ-3:**

OPUD and its construction contractors shall implement the following measures to reduce, track, and offset construction-related project emissions, consistent with established FRAQMD Construction Phase Mitigation Measures (FRAQMD 2016).

A. Prior to beginning construction activities, OPUD shall assemble a comprehensive inventory list (i.e., make, model, engine year, horsepower, emission rates) of all heavy-duty off-road (portable and mobile) equipment (50 horsepower and greater) that will be used an aggregate of 40 or more hours for the construction project.
B. OPUD and its construction contractors shall provide a plan for approval by FRAQMD demonstrating that the heavy-duty (equal to or greater than 50 horsepower) off-road equipment to be used in the construction project, including owned, leased and subcontractor vehicles, will achieve a project wide fleet-average 5 percent ROG reduction, 20 percent NOx reduction and 45 percent particulate reduction compared to the most recent CARB fleet average at time of construction. A Construction Mitigation Calculator (MS Excel) may be downloaded from the SMAQMD website to perform the fleet average evaluation http://www.airquality.org/ceqa/index.shtml. Acceptable options for reducing emissions may include use of late model engines (Tier 4), CARB Approved low-emission diesel products, alternative fuels, engine retrofit technology (Carl Moyer Guidelines), after-treatment products, voluntary off-site mitigation projects, provide funds for air district off-site mitigation projects, and/or other options as they become available. The FRQAMD should be contacted to discuss alternative measures.

   The results of the Construction Mitigation Calculator shall be submitted and approved by the District PRIOR TO BEGINNING WORK. OPUD and its construction contractors shall provide a monthly summary of heavy-duty off-road equipment usage to the FRQAMD throughout the construction of the project.

C. OPUD may also contribute to the FRAQMD's Off-Site Mitigation Program to reduce project emissions to less than significant. OPUD shall compile a list of all emission sources and consult with the FRAQMD staff to implement this mitigation measure. The project contractors shall track emissions generated from equipment and vehicles throughout construction of the project. If determined necessary by the FRAQMD and before construction activities begin, OPUD shall pay a deposit to FRAQMD for contribution to the FRAQMD Off-site Mitigation Fund. This deposit will be held by FRAQMD and applied toward the final off-site mitigation amount to be paid after project construction is complete. Total construction emissions shall be calculated at the end of construction activities. Using these calculations, OPUD shall make a final payment to the FRAQMD Off-Site Mitigation Fund, if necessary, to further offset construction pollutant emissions that exceeded FRAQMD thresholds. (*Personal communications* with Sondra Spaethe, FRAQMD 2023)

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-3(b), which requires the use of higher-tier off-road equipment that would result in a project wide fleet-average 20 percent NOx reduction, would substantially reduce the emissions of $NO_X$, as presented in Table 7.

**Table 7 Estimated Mitigated Construction-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions**

| Construction Phase | Annual Emissions (tons/year) |
|---|---|
| | **$NO_X$*** |
| *Phase I (2024)* | **10.05** |
| Significance Threshold | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **YES** |
| **Mitigation: 20 percent NOx Reduction *** | **8.04** |
| *Phase II (2025)* | **8.51** |
| Significance Threshold | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **YES** |
| **Mitigation: 20 percent NOx Reduction *** | **6.81** |
| *Phase III (2026)* | **10.41** |
| Significance Threshold | 4.5 tons/yr |
| Criterion Exceeded? | **YES** |
| **Mitigation: 20 percent NOx Reduction*** | **8.33** |

Notes: Calculations completed in February 2023.
NOx = nitrogen oxide, $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter, ROG = reactive organic gases
* The significance threshold of 4.5 tons/year is used for construction NOx. As required by FRAQMD Construction Phase Mitigation Measures (FRAQMD 2016), a project wide fleet-average 20 percent NOx reduction would be required.
*Source: Planning Partners 2023. FRAQMD 2010.*

However, as shown in the table, even with implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2(b), emissions of $NO_X$ may not be reduced to below the applicable FRAQMD threshold of significance. Following completion of the Construction Mitigation Calculator and reporting of heavy-duty off-road equipment usage to the FRQAMD throughout the construction of the project, if it is determined that actual calculated emissions would exceed significance thresholds, OPUD would be required to contribute to the FRAQMD Off-site Mitigation Fund as set forth in Mitigation Measure AQ-2(c). Funding provided to the off-site mitigation program will be allocated to the Carl Moyer Program administered locally to obtain emission reductions in Yuba and Sutter counties. Implementation of the above construction mitigation measures would reduce criteria air pollutant emissions during construction, and this impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

## OPERATIONS-RELATED EMISSIONS

Once operational, the proposed wastewater and water pipelines would not generate any air emissions. Operational emissions associated with the water plant and pump and lift stations include the regular maintenance testing of the emergency back-up generators, in addition to two employee trips per month for maintenance to the pump and lift stations, and two employee trip per month for maintenance at the water plant. There would be no substantive increase in operational emissions at the WWTP with the proposed improvements. Operational emissions were estimated with CalEEMod. All assumptions used to complete the modeling are included in Appendix A. A

summary of estimated operations-related emissions of ROG, $NO_X$, and $PM_{10}$ in maximum pounds per day for the project is shown in Table 8 below, and compared to the FRAQMD standards of significance above to determine the level of impact.

**Table 8 Estimated Operational-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions**

| Project Component | ROG (pounds/day) | NOx (pounds/day) | Total $PM_{10}$ (pounds/day) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Max Emissions** | 5.09 | 6.72 | 0.31 |
| **AQMD Threshold** | 25 lbs/day | 25 lbs/day | 80 lbs/day |
| **Exceed Threshold?** | NO | NO | NO |

Notes: Calculations completed in February 2023.
NOx = nitrogen oxide, $PM_{10}$ = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter, ROG = reactive organic gases
*Source: Planning Partners 2023. FRAQMD 2010.*

Based on the low-level of estimated operational emissions shown in Table 8, project emissions of criteria pollutants are not expected to exceed FRAQMD significance thresholds of 25 pounds/day of $NO_X$, 25 pounds/day ROG, and 80 pounds/day of $PM_{10}$. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

## SUMMARY

Because project construction and operation emissions of criteria pollutants are not expected to exceed FRAQMD significance thresholds with implementation of mitigation measures, and the proposed project would comply with applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations, the project would not emit air pollutants that would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in any criteria pollutant. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Questions (c) and (d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations / Result in other emissions: Less-than-significant Impact.** Sensitive receptors are defined as areas where young children, chronically ill individuals, the elderly, or people who are more sensitive than the general population reside. Existing land uses immediately surrounding the SSO Reduction Measures and WWTP modifications consist primarily of single family residences on Olivehurst Avenue and Mary Avenue, and a mixture of commercial, and single-family and multi-family residences adjacent to McGowan Parkway. There are scattered residences approximately 0.15 miles to the northeast of the WWTP. Additional scattered residences are located along the proposed pipeline alignments on Rancho Road, north of McGowan Parkway and Olive Avenue.

During construction, some odors and hazardous pollutants could result from vehicles and equipment using diesel fuels. Construction vehicles would be required to limit idling time compliant with the ARB and FRAQMD guidelines. Cancer risk associated with diesel exhaust exposure is typically associated with chronic exposure. Because the level of overall emissions would be low, and the duration of emissions would be temporary, and most construction activities would not occur in the vicinity of sensitive receptors, or would occur intermittently in the vicinity of sensitive receptors, cancer risk and odors from diesel exhaust during construction would be considered less than significant.

Operational-related emissions of toxic air contaminants are typically associated with stationary diesel engines or land uses that involve heavy truck traffic or idling. The proposed sewer and water pipeline would not generate emissions during operations. The proposed emergency generators at the water plant and the pump and lift stations would be a source of toxic air emissions from project operations. However, as described above, generator use would be limited to maintenance testing or during emergency use, and would be regulated by FRAQMD permit conditions. Since the proposed generators would be used intermittently, and would be subject to FRAQMD permit conditions, the proposed project is not anticipated to result in the exposure of nearby sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of toxic air contaminants during project operations.

Further, no feature of the proposed improvements would result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. While the proposed project includes improvements to the existing WWTP, and sewer pipeline with associated pump and lift stations to transport wastewater, odor control systems at the proposed pump and lift stations would minimize the potential for foul air at these locations.

Because no substantial levels of air pollutant emissions would occur during construction or operation activities, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial air pollutant concentrations or create emissions leading to odors. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

### NATURALLY OCCURRING ASBESTOS

Naturally occurring asbestos is not a potential concern in the project area. For more information, see Section IX, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Air quality in the region does not meet State of California standards. Construction and operation of projects accommodated under regional plans could have a long-term impact on a region's emission profile and ability to attain and maintain NAAQS and CAAQS. The cumulative effects from short- and long-term criteria pollutants generated from the proposed 2030 General Plan, combined with related projects, creates a significant cumulative impact.

Construction-related and operational criteria air pollutant emissions associated with General Plan buildout would exceed FRAQMD significance thresholds. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to air pollutants in the region.

Toxic air contaminants are considered in land use planning in association with sensitive land uses. Projects and plans throughout the region would contribute roadway and railway traffic that could occur near sensitive receptors, resulting in a significant cumulative impact. The County considers the contribution of the 2030 General Plan to be cumulatively considerable.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's

environmental effects on air resources set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

# IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | | **X** | | |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | | **X** | | |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? | | **X** | | |
| 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 site? | | | **X** | |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | | | **X** | |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? | | | **X** | |

This analysis includes a review of pertinent literature, a review of regulatory requirements, results of reconnaissance field surveys, and a preliminary analysis of general impacts of project implementation on biological resources. The evaluation is based on and summarizes the *Biological Technical Report, Olivehurst Public Utility District South County Infrastructure Project* (Padre 2023a), prepared by Padre Associates, Inc. (Padre) (February 2023), included as Appendix D of this Initial Study.

Padre evaluated the potential biological resource impacts of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project through a review of available data and field surveys. Prior to the field surveys, Padre reviewed available project information, county soil survey maps, topographic maps, and other environmental documents. The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) was queried for records of special-status species reported within the Olivehurst and Wheatland, California quadrangles, and the surrounding seven quadrangles (California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] 2022). A list of federally listed Threatened and Endangered species was obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (USFWS 2022a). An unofficial species list was obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the two quadrangles within which the project occurs (NMFS 2022). The federal species lists and CNDDB query results are included in the Biological Technical Report (see Appendix D). Special-status taxa that are known to exist or have the potential to exist on the project site were also identified through a review of relevant literature (California Native Plant Society [CNPS] 2022; Zeiner et al. 1988; 1990a, b). A query of the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) was reviewed for information regarding mapped waters and wetlands in the project area (USFWS 2022b). The results of the literature review were used to identify known

occurrences of special-status plant and animal species in the project vicinity, and to identify potentially sensitive and regulated habitat.

Reconnaissance level field surveys were conducted by Padre biologists from February 15 to 17, 2022 to assess biological resources, and to determine the likelihood of occurrence for special-status species or sensitive and regulated habitats on the project site. Follow-up surveys were conducted in June 2022 for the purposes of detecting elderberry shrubs during the blooming season. Additional follow-up surveys were conducted on various aspects of the project in August and December 2022 and January 2023 to resurvey areas due to changes in the project design, and to review the depressional features along Rancho Road during the wet season to confirm areas of inundation.

Detection methods included direct observation with binoculars; examination and identification of tracks, scats, burrows/diggings, and carcasses/skeletal remains; and identification of vocalizations (calls and songs). No trapping or netting was performed during surveys. Plants not identified in the field were collected and returned to the lab for identification using standard taxonomic references (Baldwin 2012). Prior to the field surveys, the CNDDB query was reviewed to identify occurrences of special-status plant and animal species in the project vicinity. During the field surveys, vegetative cover types and significant habitat features, such as wetlands, potential nest trees, and potential dens or burrow clusters, were noted and mapped for avoidance to the extent feasible during project design and planning. Lists of plants and wildlife observed during surveys were compiled and are included in Appendix D.

It should be noted that some portions of the study area are situated on private property that was inaccessible during the field surveys, including the Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) workspace adjacent to Rosser Road. Reconnaissance surveys for this location were conducted using binoculars from the fence line, and aerial imagery. Aquatic resource features were generally mapped based on surface indicators; an aquatic resource delineation was not performed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The majority of the study area consists of lands within developed urban areas, disturbed habitat along roadway shoulders or in vacant lots, and land within or adjacent to agricultural fields. See Appendix D, *Biological Technical Report*, Figures 2A-2T. Wetlands and riparian cover types occur along the waterways at the trenchless crossing locations. The agricultural fields in the area are primarily used to produce rice and other grain crops. Disturbed areas and road shoulders that had vegetation present support annual grassland and ruderal cover types. Proposed pipeline alignments are limited to developed lands within the paved roadway and disturbed shoulder with minimal vegetation present. Workspaces associated with HDD crossings are within natural and undeveloped lands or agricultural lands. Pump stations and lift stations are within developed and disturbed lands, vacant lots, natural and undeveloped lands, or agricultural lands.

There are several natural drainage crossings throughout the pipeline alignments. These include crossings of Hutchinson Creek, Reeds Creek, Kimball Creek, and Virginia Creek. At these crossings, the vegetation communities observed were a mix of natural riparian communities, emergent wetland vegetation, and annual grassland cover types. Dominant species varied from crossing to crossing. Kimball Creek supported predominantly emergent wetland vegetation with little or no riparian corridor. Hutchinson Creek and Reeds Creek supported a riparian corridor. Virginia Creek is a channelized canal that supports little to no vegetation.

At multiple locations along the pipeline alignment, roadside ditches and depressions are present that support a range of hydrologic characteristics that affect the types of vegetation that grow. Ditches with prolonged or perennial inundation supported wetland plant species. The roadside ditches with a shorter hydroperiod supported more facultative wetland species or were barren of vegetation. Many of these ditches supported algal matting or biotic crust on the ground's surface, an indicator of hydrology and inundation during the wet season.

## WATERS AND WETLANDS

The project sites were examined for evidence of regulated habitats, such as waters and wetlands, under regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The NWI map of the study area was reviewed to assist in the identification of waters and wetlands on the site (USFWS, 2022b).

There are several riverine features identified on the NWI map within the project area. These include Hutchinson Creek, Reeds Creek, Kimball Creek, and Virginia Creek. In addition to the natural riparian crossings, NWI identifies several man-made features including stock ponds, irrigation canals, and the artificially flooded portions of the Olivehurst Public Utility District (OPUD) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). In addition to the features mapped on NWI, there were many roadside ditches and depressions that had evidence of wetland vegetation and hydrology. The potential wetland areas were defined by the presence of hydrophytic vegetation and supported a combination of facultative (FAC), facultative-wetland (FACW), and obligate wetland (OBL) plant species. In addition, evidence of hydrology was commonly noted as in the form of algal matting and saturated soil. For detailed information regarding these features, refer to Appendix D of this Initial Study.

The South County Infrastructure Project is designed to avoid impacts to drainage crossings by using trenchless methods at all major waterway crossings. Trenchless methods include HDD crossings at some locations, and pipe ramming or auger boring methods in the roadway at other locations. At these trenchless crossing locations, temporary impact footprints will be sited outside of the riparian community and/or adjacent wetlands. In several cases, culverted crossings may be trench-installed within the paved roadway and beneath the existing shallow culverts without disturbance to the culverts or the waterway.

In addition to the waterway crossings, there are multiple roadside ditches and depressions that support a range of hydrologic characteristics. Roadside ditches that have been constructed for drainage are prevalent along much of the pipeline alignments in roadways. These features range from unvegetated roadside ditches or dry roadside ditches supporting a mix of upland or facultative wetland grasses to wet roadside ditches supporting emergent wetland vegetation. In addition, roadside depressions occur, primarily along Rancho Road, and often in the low lying area between the roadway and the adjacent railroad tracks. Many of these depressions have indicators of hydrology and inundation during the wet season, including algal mat or biotic crust formation. Some of these depressions support wetland plant species. Because of their proximity to the road, these areas often have deep tire ruts from vehicular use during the wet season and are highly disturbed wet depressions.

## WILDLIFE

Wildlife observed at the project site were characteristic of the region and the time of year that surveys were conducted. Species observed during the survey are listed in Appendix D of this Initial Study. The vegetation communities within and surrounding the study area provide habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species. The composition, density, distribution, and physical characteristics of vegetative communities determine the diversity and abundance of wildlife species residing in the project area.

A large portion of the study area is in active agricultural production or is surrounded by urban development that limits use by wildlife. However, the waterways, riparian corridors, and wetlands provide forage and cover for a variety of resident and migratory wildlife species. In addition, certain types of agricultural fields, such as rice, can provide wildlife habitat. Surveys were conducted during the non-nesting season; therefore, many species observed are non-resident migratory species that would not be present in the project area during the spring and summer breeding season.

## SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS, AND SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

A list of special-status plant and animal species that historically occur in the vicinity of the project site was compiled using the resources discussed above. The species identified from these data sources were further assessed for their potential to occur within the project site based upon previously documented occurrences, their habitat requirements, and the quality and extent of any available habitat within the project sites. Based on this initial review, 2 special-status plants and 12 special-status wildlife species have the potential to occur within the project site. See Appendix D, Table 5 and Section 4.7, for a complete list of special-status species potentially occurring in the vicinity of the proposed project site, including an analysis of the probability of occurrence on the site.

A number of special-status species may occur on or adjacent to the proposed pipeline alignments and other project features. These include: rare plants, vernal pool branchiopods (VPB) (vernal pool fairy and tadpole shrimp), valley elderberry longhorn beetle, giant garter snake, western pond turtle, cooper's hawk, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, Northern harrier, white-tailed kite, and song sparrow (Modesto population).

## WILDLIFE MIGRATION CORRIDORS

Wildlife migration corridors are generally defined as connections between fragmented habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated wildlife populations. Migration corridors may be local, such as those between foraging and nesting or denning areas, or they may be regional in extent. Migration corridors are not unidirectional access routes; however, reference is usually made to source and receiver areas in discussions of wildlife movement networks. "Habitat linkages" are migration corridors that contain contiguous strips of native vegetation between source and receiver areas. Habitat linkages provide cover and forage sufficient for temporary inhabitation by a variety of ground-dwelling animal species.

Within the study area there are several natural drainages and riparian corridors that provide suitable migratory corridors for an array of species. These drainages and riparian areas include Reeds Creek, Hutchinson Creek, Kimball Creek, and Virginia Creek, and other smaller unnamed waterways. These creeks help to provide access for wildlife to move from foothill habitat areas to valley habitat areas,

including the Feather River, Sutter National Wildlife Refuge, and other wildlife areas. At the drainage crossings within the study area, the vegetation communities observed were a mix of natural riparian communities, emergent wetland vegetation, and annual grassland cover types. Signs of mammals moving through the riparian corridors were observed for several species, including raccoon, coyote, and mink.

The project is designed to avoid impacts to the drainage crossings and associated riparian corridors using trenchless installation methods for pipeline crossings at these locations. Impacts to wildlife corridors will be limited to indirect temporary disturbance during construction, primarily during daytime hours.

### SENSITIVE NATURAL COMMUNITIES

There are no identified sensitive natural communities in areas that would be affected by the proposed South County Infrastructure Project.

## REGULATORY SETTING

Biological resources within the project area are managed and regulated by the following federal and State entities and regulatory programs:

| Federal | State of California |
|---|---|
| • Federal Endangered Species Act<br>• Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act<br>• Migratory Bird Treaty Act / Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act<br>• Clean Water Act<br>• Rivers and Harbors Act | • California Endangered Species Act<br>• Fully Protected Species, Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515<br>• California Fish and Game Code Section 3503<br>• California Native Plant Protection Act<br>• California Fish and Game Code Section 1600<br>• Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act<br>• Clean Water Act<br>• Oak Woodland Protection |

For more information regarding the substance and effects of these regulations and programs, refer to Section 5 of Appendix D.

The Yuba County 2030 General Plan contains goals and policies with respect to biological resource issues. The project site and pipeline alignments are within the County of Yuba, and are therefore within the jurisdiction of this General Plan. The applicable goals and policies are found under the Natural Resources Element of the General Plan, and are outlined below (County of Yuba 2011a).

### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

**Goal:** Protect and restore habitat for special-status species that have the potential to occur in Yuba County.

### *Implementing Policies*

- Policy NR-5.1: New developments that could adversely affect special-status species habitat shall conduct a biological resources assessment and identify design solutions that avoid such adverse effects. If, after examining all feasible means to avoid impacts to special-status species habitat through project design, adverse effects cannot be avoided, then impacts shall be mitigated in accordance with guidance from the appropriate state or federal agency charged with the protection of the subject species, including pre-construction surveys conducted according to applicable standards and protocols, where necessary.
- Policy NR-5.2: The County will coordinate its environmental review and mitigation requirements with the Yuba-Sutter NCCP/HCP, once adopted.
- Policy NR-5.3: The County will support the continued development and implementation of the Yuba-Sutter NCCP/HCP, once adopted.
- Policy NR-5.4: New developments shall be located and designed to preserve and incorporate existing native vegetation to the maximum extent feasible. Fire safety standards may override consideration of retaining existing vegetation in certain circumstances.
- Policy NR-5.5: The County will support cooperative restoration, development, and promotion of natural resources with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, and other public agencies with an interest in the Yuba County's water and wildlife assets.
- Policy NR-5.6: The County will seek funding to enhance and restore habitat along the Yuba River, in coordination with development of recreational facilities and public access.
- Policy NR-5.7: New developments and public investments near Yuba County's streams and rivers shall be designed to avoid tree removal, erosion, or other modifications that would adversely affect salmonid habitat.
- Policy NR-5.8: New private developments adjacent to riparian areas shall provide a buffer designed and maintained to preserve existing wildlife habitat; provide habitat conditions favorable to native local wildlife; restrict activities that may adversely affect wildlife habitat quality; and restore degraded habitat, where feasible.
- Policy NR-5.9: New developments shall be designed to avoid the loss of jurisdictional wetlands. If loss is unavoidable, the County will require applicants to mitigate the loss on a "no net loss" basis through a combination of avoidance, minimization, restoration, and/or constructed wetlands, in accordance with federal and state law.
- Policy NR-5.10: The County will encourage measures on agricultural lands that conserve or restore habitat.
- Policy NR-5.11: The County will support the use of mitigation fees from the Yuba-Sutter Natural Community Conservation/Habitat Conservation Plan to fund preservation and restoration elements of the County's open space strategy.
- Policy NR-5.12: Any new developments adjacent to the Spenceville Wildlife Refuge, Marysville Wildlife Area, Feather River Wildlife Area, Daugherty Hill Wildlife Area, or Starbend Fishing Access shall be buffered from wildlife areas or otherwise designed to avoid adverse direct and indirect effects on wildlife. Buffers related to firearm use, if necessary, should occur within the public wildlife area.
- Policy NR-5.13: New developments that could adversely affect wildlife movement corridors shall conduct a biological assessment and avoid placing any temporary or permanent barriers within such corridors, if they are determined to exist on-site. Avoiding barriers to wildlife movement may be accomplished at the project or community plan level.

- Policy NR-5.14: The County will discourage development that would substantially and adversely affect the designated winter and critical winter range of the Mooretown or Downieville deer herd.
- Policy NR-5.15: Roads, water lines, sewer lines, drainage facilities, and other public facilities constructed to serve unincorporated County development shall be located and designed to avoid substantial impacts to stream courses, associated riparian areas, and wetlands, to the greatest extent feasible.

#### TREES AND OTHER IMPORTANT VEGETATION

**Goal:** Preserve the County's trees and other vegetation that provide aesthetic and habitat benefits.

***Implementing Policies***

- Policy NR-10.1: Building placement, grading, and circulation should be planned to retain as much existing native vegetation as feasible, with a priority on preserving existing oak trees that have a diameter at breast height (dbh) of 6 inches or greater and all other trees that have a dbh of 30 inches or greater. The County's policies and standards for fire safety may override consideration of retaining existing vegetation in certain circumstances.
- Policy NR-10.2: The County will encourage the preservation of healthy, attractive native vegetation during land development. Where this is not feasible, the County will require landscaping that uses climate-appropriate plant materials.

### LOCAL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS

No Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan has been approved within Yuba County.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CEQA Appendix G Question | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump/Lift Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| IV.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Impacts to special status plants and wildlife |
| IV.b | | | ✓ | ✓ | Impacts at LS 23 and stream crossings |
| IV.c | | | ✓ | ✓ | Impacts at LS 23 and stream crossings |
| IV.d | | | ✓ | | LTS impacts at stream crossings and riparian areas |
| IV.e | | | | | No local ordinances present |
| IV.f | | | | | No HCP or other conservation plans present |

Effects on biological resources in natural or semi-natural areas resulting from development take the form of direct impacts, including habitat loss and fragmentation, introduction of barriers to movement and dispersion, and conversion of native communities to developed conditions. Development may also result in indirect impacts that affect the quality of habitat on the project site and in the project area. Indirect impacts include invasion of non-native plants into natural areas, noise disturbances, and declines in air and water quality. The proposed improvements associated with the South County Infrastructure Project are primarily within developed areas in the community of Olivehurst, and in developed roadways and disturbed areas in rural southern Yuba County. All of

the proposed alignments for trench-installed pipelines are within the paved roadway and disturbed shoulder, with the exception of short overland connections to permanent above-ground features (e.g., Water Plant, lift stations, and pump stations). Trenchless construction methods are proposed for large drainage crossings to avoid impacts to waterways and riparian habitat. Permanent above-ground project features are sited within upland areas and disturbed or developed areas to the extent feasible to minimize habitat loss.

Effects on biological resources in the project area will be primarily temporary, with permanent impacts limited to above-ground project features such as the Water Plant, and lift stations and pump stations. There will be temporary impacts to wildlife habitat during pipeline installation and construction of above-ground structures. General construction may temporarily alter the natural movement and behavior of wildlife in the project area. Construction may also result in indirect impacts that affect the quality of habitat in the project area.

The following analyses provide an assessment of potential impacts from the proposed project activities, and includes project-specific measures proposed by OPUD, and/or prescribed mitigation measures to reduce impacts to special-status species or other biological resources to a level of less than significant.

## OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The permanent, above-ground features associated with this project would result in the conversion of approximately 2.43 acres of existing undeveloped areas to developed lands. Construction of pump stations, lift stations and the Water Plant will occur in annual grassland, ruderal, developed, disturbed, and agricultural lands. Installation of the pipeline alignments using trench installation and bored trenchless methods will result in temporary impacts, primarily within the paved roadway and unvegetated road shoulder, that include pipeline connections to pump stations, lift stations, and the Water Plant through overland areas including annual grassland, disturbed lands, and roadside ditches and depressions that are seasonally inundated. HDD-installed highway and waterway crossings will result in temporary impacts from the HDD workspace and the pipe string staging area. Table 9 summarizes the permanent and temporary impacts associated with the project.

**Table 9 South County Infrastructure Project Biological Resource Impacts**

| Feature | Cover Type | Impact Area (Acres) |
|---|---|---|
| **Permanent Impacts** | | |
| Pump Station 1 | Annual Grassland, Ruderal (urban vacant lot) | 0.19 |
| Pump Station 26 | Annual Grassland, Ruderal (urban vacant lot) | 0.46 |
| Pump Stations 21 | Annual Grassland | 0.24 |
| Lift Station 22 | Annual Grassland | 0.10 |
| Lift Station 23 | Agricultural (rice), Roadside ditch / depression (seasonally inundated) | 0.12 |
| Pump Station 25 | Disturbed land (Unpaved parking lot) | 0.23 |
| Pump Station 24 | Annual Grassland | 0.14 |
| Water Plant | Disturbed land (Stockpile / staging area) | 0.95 |
| **Temporary Impacts** | | |
| SR 70 HDD (McGowan Pkwy) | Developed land (paved roadway) | 0.29 |

**Table 9 South County Infrastructure Project Biological Resource Impacts**

| Feature | Cover Type | Impact Area (Acres) |
|---|---|---|
| SR 65 HDD (Olive Ave – Rancho Rd) | Annual Grassland, Wet depression (seasonally inundated) | 0.95 |
| Reeds Creek HDD (Rancho Rd) | Disturbed land (road shoulder), Roadside ditch / depression (seasonally inundated), annual grassland, agricultural | 0.88 |
| Hutchinson Creek HDD (Rancho Rd) | Annual grassland, Disturbed land (road shoulder), agricultural | 1.28 |
| SR 65 HDD (Rosser Rd – Shimer Rd) | Grazed pasture, developed land (paved road) | 0.69 |
| Kimball Creek HDD (Rancho Rd) | Annual grassland, Roadside ditch / depression (seasonally inundated) | 0.90 |
| Virginia Creek Bore (Rancho Rd) | Developed land (paved road), disturbed land (road shoulder) | 0.02 |
| Kimball Creek Bore (Forty Mile Rd) | Developed land (paved road) | 0.03 |
| Trench Installed Pipeline1 | Developed land (paved road), Disturbed land (road shoulder), Annual Grassland, Roadside ditch / depression (seasonally inundated) | -- |

1 Total acreage not available for 32.6 miles of trench installed pipeline because trench width and depths are variable and not fully defined. Trench installed pipeline will occur primarily in existing roadways in developed and disturbed land.

*Source: Padre Associates, Inc. 2023.*

Temporary disturbance areas within or near sensitive areas (e.g., riparian corridors, waterways and wetlands, and suitable habitat for special-status species) will require work within designated workspace and delineation of the work areas to prevent encroachment on sensitive areas. Limited tree removal may occur in some of these work areas though the number, type, and size of trees that may need to be removed is unknown.

No mitigation is proposed for permanent or temporary impacts to developed lands, disturbed lands, and upland annual grasslands and ruderal areas. Yuba County does not have a tree ordinance that would require mitigation for the loss of individual oak trees, and no mitigation for tree removal is proposed.

Cover types that are regulated habitats or potentially suitable habitat for special-status species will be assessed below.

**Question (a) Adverse effect on special-status species. Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.**

**SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS**

The likelihood of occurrence of special-status plant species within project disturbance areas is limited because most impacts are within cover types not known to support special status plants. Potential for occurrence of special-status plants within suitable habitat areas is limited due to the level of disturbance in roadside ditches and depressions that provide seasonally inundated habitat. Two plant species were identified as having a moderate potential for occurrence within creeks, large ditches, or depressions that support a prolonged hydroperiod: Sanford's arrowhead (*Saggitaria sanfordii*) and Brazilian watermeal (*Wolffia brasiliensis*). The project will avoid impacts to the drainage

crossings through the use of trenchless pipeline construction methods; however, impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions may provide habitat for Sanford's arrowhead, particularly in large ditch or depression features that support a prolonged hydroperiod, such as those along the southern portion of Rancho Road. Project impacts to some of these areas cannot be avoided.

Because of this, there is some potential for project-related impact to special-status plants in locations where impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions could not be avoided, or where workspaces and trench-installed pipeline will occur in close proximity to these features. Construction of these features may have an impact on special-status plants. This would be a potentially significant impact. The following mitigation measures would facilitate actions to reduce potential impacts to special status plants to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-1**

Pre-construction special-status species plant surveys shall be conducted by OPUD or its contractor in all impact areas that provide potentially suitable habitat for special-status plants prior to initiating project construction activities. All surveys shall be conducted in accordance with agency-approved survey protocols during the appropriate blooming period. If no special-status species are identified in protocol surveys, no additional mitigation is required. If surveys determine that special-status species occur within impact areas, Mitigation Measure BIO-2 shall apply.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-2**

If special-status plants are identified within project impact areas, one of the following measures shall apply:

A. If feasible, the project shall be adjusted to avoid impacts to special-status plants. If modifications can be made to avoid special-status species, the installation of protective fencing may be necessary to prevent accidental encroachment. If adjustment of construction areas or methods is not feasible, Mitigation Measure BIO-2B shall apply.

B. If there is no feasible alternative to avoid special-status plant species impacts, OPUD shall mitigate for impacts to special-status plants. A Mitigation Plan shall be prepared and implemented that provides for plant salvage, transplantation, seed collection and replanting, and/or topsoil collection and replacement as appropriate for the species identified within the project impact area. Transplantation or seed placement shall be within suitable or restored habitat after completion of construction for temporary impacts, or within off-site habitat at a mitigation site for permanent impacts. The Mitigation Plan shall include monitoring requirements to ensure successful establishment of special-status plants, that established performance criteria are achieved, and that no net loss of special-status plants has occurred after the prescribed monitoring period.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 would require preconstruction plant surveys; consultation with resource agencies, if necessary; avoidance measures during construction; or habitat restoration, potential impacts to rare plants would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

**SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE SPECIES**

***Vernal Pool Branchiopods***

Seasonally inundated wetlands, vernal pools, ditches, and depressions provide suitable habitat for VPBs, including the listed vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*). There are two occurrences of vernal pool fairy shrimp located less than 0.5 miles from the northern portion of the project site (CNDDB 2022) that occur in seasonally inundated roadside habitat similar to wet ditch and depression habitat observed within the study area. There are no classic vernal pool landscapes within the study area, but potentially suitable habitat for VPBs occurs in seasonally inundated ditches and depressions that provide a sufficient hydroperiod primarily along Rancho Road. See Appendix D, *Biological Technical Report*, Figures 2A-2T. Due to proximity to the roadway, habitat in the project area is often highly disturbed by off-road vehicle use, trash dumping, and other urban influences, and therefore may be suboptimal for fairy shrimp occurrence; however, given proximity to other occurrences of this species in similar roadside habitat, occurrence cannot be ruled out.

Project impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions may provide habitat for VPBs, particularly the vernal pool fairy shrimp. Because of this, there is some potential for project-related impacts to VPBs in locations where impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions could not be avoided, or where workspaces and trench-installed pipeline will occur in close proximity to these features. Construction of these features may have an impact on VPBs.

**Indirect Impacts**. The trench installed pipeline within Rancho Road is proposed to be constructed in or on the shoulder of the existing paved roadway, and will not directly impact seasonally inundated ditch or depression features. Trench installation of the pipeline alignment on this road will involve construction in close proximity to potentially suitable habitat for VPBs in seasonally inundated ditches and depressions immediately adjacent to the roadway. Additionally, HDD workspace at several locations occurs immediately adjacent to potentially suitable habitat for VPBs. Indirect impacts could occur in areas where construction will be in close proximity to seasonally inundated ditch and depression features. These include the following:

- Pipe string staging area off north end of Rancho Road at the SR 65 HDD crossing
- Trench-installed pipelines in the paved roadway or disturbed road shoulder on Rancho Road
- Pipe string staging area adjacent to Shimer Road at the SR HDD crossing
- HDD workspace and pipe stating area southeast of Kimball Creek and northeast side of Rancho Road
- Bore pit locations in the paved road and disturbed road shoulder on Rancho Road at the Virginia Creek crossing.

**Direct Impacts**. Direct impacts may occur in areas where impacts to seasonally inundated ditch and depressions cannot be avoided, including HDD workspace areas at two of the drainage crossings and Lift Station 23. These include:

- Pipe string staging area off north end of Rancho Road at the SR 65 HDD crossing
- HDD workspace on the northwest side of the Reed Creek crossing on Rancho Road
- HDD workspace on the northwest side of the Kimball Creek crossing on Rancho Road
- Lift Station 23 and the pipeline connection to Lift Station 23.

There would be potentially significant indirect and direct impacts with implementation of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project. The following mitigation measures would facilitate actions to reduce potential impacts to special status branchiopods to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-3 (Both direct and indirect impacts.)**

Section 7 Consultation with USFWS shall be conducted to analyze the direct and indirect effects on listed wildlife species and to obtain regulatory permits and authorizations for impacts to listed species and loss of habitat. Measures and requirements outlined in agency authorizations may supersede the following measures.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-4 (Indirect impacts.)**

Trench excavation and stockpiling for pipeline installation shall be entirely located within the paved roadway or disturbed shoulder on Rancho Road in areas where seasonally wet ditches and depressions were mapped adjacent to the roadway. Equipment staging and trench excavation in these areas will be limited to designated workspace areas in the paved roadway and shoulder. To reduce the potential for indirect impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions in close proximity to construction activities, but where no direct impacts will occur, the following measures shall apply:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, crews shall attend an environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding the potential presence of listed branchiopod species and the importance of avoiding impacts to these species and their habitat.
B. All work shall be conducted during the dry season when potential habitat features on or near the proposed pipeline installation areas are dry.
C. Fencing shall be placed and maintained to delineate the approved work areas and prevent encroachment on seasonally inundated ditch and depression features. A qualified biologist shall oversee the installation of fencing. Once fencing is installed, a biologist will inspect fencing weekly to ensure its integrity and effectiveness.
D. All excavation, construction staging, and stockpiles shall be limited to paved roadways, disturbed shoulder, and approved work areas.
E. Storm water BMPs (silt fencing and straw waddles) shall be placed around construction disturbance and dirt stockpiles to reduce potential for erosion and sedimentation into potential branchiopod habitat features.
F. No application of water (e.g., dust suppression) shall occur in seasonally inundated ditch or depression features without additional measures (such as barriers and/or use of low flow water truck nozzles) in place to keep water out of potential or known VPB habitat features during the dry season.
G. Any groundwater encountered within the trench excavation shall not be discharged to areas where seasonally inundated ditch or depression features are located.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-5 (Direct impacts.)**

If avoidance of habitat features as described in BIO-4 is not feasible and direct impacts (temporary or permanent) will occur to seasonally inundated ditch and depression features, compliance with one of the following mitigation measures (5A or 5B) shall be required:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, surveys conducted in accordance with USFWS protocols shall be conducted in all potentially suitable habitat to be impacted. If protocol surveys determine that the seasonally inundated ditch and depression features are not occupied by federally listed vernal pool branchiopod species, no further mitigation is required for impact to species habitat (mitigation for jurisdictional aquatic features consistent with Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 may still apply). If protocol surveys detect the presence of federally listed species, then the following measures shall be implemented:

    1. Prior to the initiation of construction, construction crews shall attend an Environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding the potential presence of listed vernal pool branchiopod species and the importance of avoiding impacts to these species and their habitat.
    2. All work shall be conducted during the dry season when potential habitat features on or near the proposed pipeline installation areas are dry.
    3. Fencing shall be placed and maintained around any avoided (preserved) seasonally inundated ditch and depression features to prevent encroachment. A qualified biologist shall oversee the installation of fencing. Once fencing is installed, a biologist will inspect fencing weekly to ensure its integrity and effectiveness.
    4. A USFWS approved biologist shall monitor construction activities in known or potential vernal pool branchiopod habitat that results in temporary or permanent impacts.
    5. For temporary impacts that will be restored after construction, a Site Restoration Plan outlining requirements for topsoil collection, preservation, and restoration will be prepared and approved by the USFWS. Implementation of the approved Plan shall include the following requirements at minimum. Prior to excavation in locations with potential or known vernal pool branchiopod habitat, the uppermost soil layer that may contain branchiopods eggs (cysts) shall be collected, labelled, and stored under appropriate climatic conditions until construction in temporary impact areas is complete. Once construction is complete, topsoil shall be placed back in the feature from which it was collected.
    6. For permanent impacts, loss of vernal pool branchiopod habitat shall be mitigated through the purchase of mitigation credits at a USFWS approved mitigation bank in accordance with mitigation ratios approved by the USFWS.

B. If OPUD or its contractor chooses not to conduct protocol-level surveys, they may assume presence of listed vernal pool branchiopod species within seasonally inundated ditch and depression features that provide potentially suitable habitat. If presence of listed species is assumed, then measures BIO-5A (1) through (6) as set forth above shall apply to mitigate impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-3 through BIO-5 would require consultation with resource agencies; preconstruction surveys, if necessary; avoidance measures during construction; habitat restoration; or purchase of mitigation credits, potential impacts to vernal pool branchiopods would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

### *Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle*

Surveys during the blooming season identified four elderberry shrubs within 165 feet (VELB encroachment buffer) of project activities along Rancho Road; however, these shrubs were located east of the railroad and would not be impacted by the project or accidental encroachment. A single elderberry shrub occurs on the shoulder of Forty Mile Road and within 20 feet (VELB core area) of a proposed trench-installed pipeline within the paved roadway. This shrub was very small, though several stems were greater than one inch in diameter. The shrub is exposed to frequent disturbance within 20 feet of the canopy due to its location at the edge of pavement on Forty Mile Road. No emergence holes occur on the shrub. and this shrub is highly disjunct from riparian habitat and other elderberry shrubs. It is very unlikely that the VELB occurs, though habitat is present due to the presence of this single shrub that could be indirectly impacted.

Implementation of the project will not require removal of the shrub; however, a 20-foot protective buffer is not possible because that would extend the buffer into the paved travel lane. Incursion into the 20-foot protective buffer would be a significant impact. The following measure will ensure that the elderberry shrub is not directly impacted by the project.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-6**

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, implement Mitigation Measure BIO-3. Measures and requirements outlined in agency authorizations may supersede the following measures.
B. A 20-foot exclusion zone extending from the dripline of the shrub shall be maintained during construction in all directions away from the pavement. The exclusion zone will be reduced on the pavement side of the shrub to the edge of gravel roadway shoulder so that the fencing will not interfere with the roadway. Consistent with measures outlined by the USFWS to mitigate potential impacts to VELB, the following measures shall be implemented:
    1. Fence and flag the elderberry shrub to be avoided and provide a minimum setback of at least 20 feet from the dripline of the elderberry plant for ground disturbance activities (e.g., trenching) to ensure that activities will not damage or kill the elderberry shrub. Due to its location at the edge of pavement on Forty Mile Road, the 20-foot setback will be adjusted (reduced) consistent with the edge of the gravel road shoulder so that fencing does not interfere with the paved roadway.
    2. Prior to the initiation of any construction, environmental training shall brief the contractors and key employees of the need to avoid any impacts to elderberry plants, and to advise them of penalties associated with damage or destruction of the plants. The work crew shall be instructed regarding the status of the VELB and the need to protect its elderberry host plant, and possible penalties for non-compliance with avoidance and minimization measures.
    3. A qualified biologist shall monitor the work area at project-appropriate intervals to assure that all avoidance and minimization measures are implemented. The amount and duration of monitoring will depend on the timing of project activities, and shall be determined in coordination with the USFWS biologist.
    4. As much as feasible, all activities within 165 feet of the elderberry shrub will be conducted outside the flight season of the VELB (March-July).

5. No insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or other chemicals that might harm the VELB or its host plant shall be used within 100 feet of the elderberry plant with a stem measuring 1.0 inch or greater in diameter at ground level.
6. Mechanical vegetation removal within the dripline of the elderberry shrub shall be limited to the season when adult VELB are not active (August-February) and shall avoid damaging the elderberry.
7. Erosion control will be implemented, and the affected construction area shall be revegetated with appropriate native plants.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-3 and BIO-6 would require consultation with resource agencies; avoidance measures during construction; and habitat restoration, potential impacts to the valley elderberry longhorn beetle would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

### *Giant Garter Snake*

Potentially suitable habitat occurs within Kimball Creek and active rice fields in the project area based on the presence of the three habitat components necessary to support giant garter snake (GGS). The components include aquatic habitat in the summer with emergent vegetation and a prey base, an upland component near aquatic habitat for thermoregulation and summer shelter in burrows, and an upland refugia component for use as winter hibernacula (USFWS 1993). Reeds Creek may also provide potentially suitable habitat for GGS; however, the pipeline will be installed using trenchless techniques under Reeds Creek, and all project activities are set back more than 200 feet from Reeds Creek, and therefore will not impact GGS or its habitat at this location. Other suitable habitat in the study area, including agricultural ditches and rice fields along Forty Mile Road, are in areas where pipeline installation activities are limited to the paved roadway and will avoid impacts to suitable aquatic or upland habitat.

Impacts associated with the construction of Lift Station 22 adjacent to Kimball Creek will impact suitable upland habitat for GGS. Project construction associated with Lift Station 23 will also result in the loss of a small portion of suitable GGS aquatic habitat within the northwest corner of a rice field. The project will result in approximately 0.12-acre of loss of rice field for the construction of Lift Station 23 and 0.10-acre of upland grassland habitat adjacent to Kimball Creek. Because these features provide potentially suitable upland and aquatic habitat for GGS, this would be a significant impact. The following measures will ensure that the GGS would not be adversely impacted by the project.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-7**

Implement the following measures:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, construction staff shall attend an Environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding identification of giant gartersnake and its habitat, protection measures for the species, and procedures to follow if a giant gartersnake or unknown snake is observed.
B. Construction of Lift Station 23 will occur when the rice field is inactive and has been dry for a minimum of 15 days.
C. Construction of Lift Station 22, Lift Station 23, and the HDD installation of pipelines under Kimball Creek, including all activities within 200 feet of Kimball Creek and the rice field at Lift Station 23, shall be restricted to the period between May 1 and October 1. This is the

active period for GGS when the potential for direct mortality is reduced because GGS can actively avoid disturbance.

D. Prior to the start of the Kimball Creek HDD, construction of Lift Station 22, or the construction of Lift Station 23, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for GGS at these locations prior to the initiation of disturbance. Exclusion fencing shall be installed, as directed by the qualified biologist, to isolate the workspace within 200 feet of suitable aquatic habitat and exclude snakes from the work areas. Exclusion fencing will be buried at the base to prevent snakes from moving under the fence into the construction area. Exclusion fencing shall be maintained for the duration of work in these areas and shall be routinely inspected by the qualified biologist to ensure the fencing is intact and effective. The workspace shall be inspected prior to the start of work each day to ensure that no snakes have entered the work area.
E. If a GGS is observed, the USFWS and CDFW shall be notified immediately. Construction will be suspended in the area until the snake leaves the site of its own volition.
F. All excavations within 200 feet of suitable GGS habitat shall be covered or have escape ramps installed to prevent entrapment prior to the end of work each day. These excavations shall be inspected by the qualified biologist prior to the start of work the following day.
G. Erosion control materials shall consist of tightly woven fibers and netting to prevent entanglement of reptiles and amphibians. No monofilament materials will be allowed.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-7 would require the implementation of avoidance measures during construction; monitoring; and consultation with resource agencies if necessary, potential impacts to the giant garter snake would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

***Western Pond Turtle***

The project site has potentially suitable habitat for western pond turtle at the drainage crossings and wetlands in the study area, though suitable basking habitat was limited. Suitable habitat for western pond turtle includes aquatic habitat with basking sites available for thermoregulation and nearby upland breeding habitat. Because of the proximity of the project to potential western pond turtle habitat, there is potential for impact to the western pond turtle. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following measure will ensure that the western pond turtle would not be adversely impacted by the project.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-8**

Implement the following measures:

A. A preconstruction survey for western pond turtle shall be conducted no more than 48 hours prior to the start of construction within 150 feet of the drainages or other suitable wetland habitat. If no western pond turtles are observed, no further mitigation would be necessary.
B. If a western pond turtle is observed within the project area, a qualified biologist shall relocate the individual to a suitable habitat location outside of the construction area.
C. If a pond turtle nest is identified, exclusion fencing shall be placed a minimum of 25 feet around the nest and disturbance to the area will be avoided until the hatchlings have emerged. The nest will be monitored daily by the qualified biologist to ensure nestlings emerge to a suitable habitat area safely outside the construction zone.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-8 would require the implementation of avoidance and relocation measures during construction, potential impacts to the western pond turtle would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

***Swainson's Hawk***

**Nest Disturbance.** The state-threatened Swainson's hawk is known to nest and forage in the project vicinity and suitable nest trees occur within the study area, particularly within riparian habitat, with large trees surrounded by foraging habitat in agricultural fields and grasslands. The project site is in a region that has very high Swainson's hawk nesting activity. There are approximately 73 nesting occurrences within 10 miles of the study area. The nearest occurrence (Occ. # 1529) is from 2003 and is less than 400 feet west of the pipeline alignment on Forty Mile Road (CDFW 2022). This species was not observed during field surveys because surveys were conducted during the winter when Swainson's hawk is not present in California.

Because Swainson's hawk is a State-listed species, and there are known nesting occurrences in the vicinity of the project area, there is the potential that construction near Swainson's hawk nesting areas could disrupt breeding activities if construction occurs during the nesting season. This would be a significant impact.

**Loss of Foraging Habitat**: Swainson's hawks generally forage within 10 miles of their nest tree, and more commonly within five miles of their nest tree (CDFW 1994). According to the CDFW Staff Report regarding Mitigation for Impacts to Swainson's Hawks (CDFW 1994), the following vegetation types are considered small mammal and insect foraging habitat for Swainson's hawks: alfalfa; fallow fields; beet, tomato, and other low-growing row or field crops; dry-land and irrigated pasture; rice land (when not flooded); and cereal grain crops (including corn after harvest). Small disjunct parcels of habitat seldom provide foraging habitat; therefore, infill development in urbanized areas which have less than five acres of foraging habitat and are surrounded by existing urban development would not be considered foraging habitat unless within 0.25-mile of a nest tree (CDFW 1994).

Because Swainson's hawk is a State-listed species, because approximately 0.6-acre of foraging habitat would be removed with construction of Pump/Lift Stations 21 - 25, and due to the abundance of potential nesting habitat in close proximity to the pipeline alignment, this would be a potentially significant impact.

Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would result in the potential for nesting disturbance and the loss of foraging habitat. Compliance with the following mitigation measures would be required to avoid or reduce these potential effects.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-9 (Nest disturbance.)**

A. If construction or vegetation removal work occurs outside of Swainson's hawk nesting season (August 31 to Feb 1), impacts to the Swainson's hawk would be avoided. Surveys would not be required for work conducted during that part of the year, and no further mitigation for nest disturbance would be required.
B. If project activities occur between February 1 to August 31, surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for active Swainson's hawk nests. OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a protocol-level survey in conformance with the "Recommended Timing and Methodology

for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley," Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/survey-protocols#377281284-birds) (May 31, 2000) hereby incorporated by reference. This protocol prescribes minimum standards for survey equipment, mode of survey, angle and distance to tree, speed, visual and audible clues, distractions, notes and observations, and timing of surveys. If the surveys show that there are no active Swainson's hawk nests within 0.25-mile of construction activities, no further mitigation for nest disturbance will be required. If active Swainson's hawk nests are identified near the project area, a 0.25-mile nest protection buffer shall be identified, and the following measures shall be required:

1. Apply a nest protection buffer with a minimum distance of 0.25-mile from an active nest. Postpone project activities within the nest protection buffer until after the young have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest tree. The minimum nest protection buffer may be reduced in coordination with CDFW if existing site conditions, habituation to disturbance, proposed disturbance levels, and nest concealment or barriers between the nest and activities indicate a reduced buffer would be effective.
2. If it is not possible to postpone project activities within the minimum nest protection buffer, construction activities may proceed with CDFW approval and monitoring of the nest by a qualified raptor biologist. If the monitoring biologist observes signs of distress, they shall have the authority to stop construction work and coordinate with CDFW to establish additional protection measures to ensure avoidance of nest abandonment prior to the re-start of project activities.

C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-10 (Foraging habitat.)**

If nesting occurrences of Swainson's hawks occur within 10 miles of the permanent impact areas (e.g., pump station, lift station, and WP sites) mitigation for loss of foraging habitat shall be required. Generally, CDFW requires mitigation for loss of Swainson's hawk foraging habitat based on the presence of active nests within 10 miles of the project. If an active nest site occurs within ten miles of the project, OPUD or its contractor will be required by CDFW to provide off-site foraging habitat management lands at a specified Mitigation Ratio that is based on nest proximity to the project site, as follows:

| **Distance from Project Boundary** | **Mitigation Acreage Ratio*** |
|---|---|
| Within 1 mile | 1.00:1** |
| Between 1 and 5 miles | 0.75:1 |
| Between 5 and 10 miles | 0.50:1 |
| *Ratio means [acres of mitigation land] to [acres of foraging habitat impacted]. **This ratio shall be 0.5:1 if the acquired lands can be actively managed for prey production. | |

CDFW provides options for off-site habitat management by fee title acquisition or conservation easement acquisition with a CDFW-approved management plan, and by the acquisition of comparable habitat. Mitigation credits may be obtained through a CDFW-approved mitigation bank for Swainson's hawk with a service area that covers the project site.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-9 and BIO-10 would require consultation with resource agencies; avoidance measures during construction; and the acquisition of off-site foraging habitat, potential impacts to the Swainson's hawk would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

### *Burrowing Owl*

The burrowing owl, a California Species of Special Concern, is known to occur within grassland habitat in the region. Suitable burrowing owl habitat is present at the southern end of the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) where an extensive California ground squirrel colony was observed on an earthen berm. Within this colony, several of the burrows showed signs of renovation by burrowing owls. Additionally, grassland habitat with ground squirrel burrows present could provide habitat. Due to the proximity of suitable habitat, impact to nesting burrowing owls could occur as a result of construction disturbance. Nest disturbance would be a significant impact, and the following mitigation is identified to avoid or reduce this potential effect.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-11**

A. A pre-construction survey of areas providing suitable burrowing owl habitat within 1,640 feet (500 meters) of construction at the WWTP shall be conducted by a qualified raptor biologist within 14 days prior to ground disturbance. Surveys shall follow guidelines outlined by CDFW in the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). If the required pre-construction surveys show there are no active burrowing owl nests within the 1,640 feet (500 meters) of construction activities, no further mitigation for burrowing owl nest disturbance will be required.

B. If an occupied burrow is discovered during pre-construction surveys, a protective buffer consistent with CDFW guidelines shall be established. Appropriate protective buffers depend on the type of burrowing owl occurrence (nesting or overwinter), level of project disturbance, and time of year that the disturbance occurs. Nest protective buffers consistent with CDFW guidelines are outlined below.

| Location | Time of Year | Level of Disturbance | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Med | High |
| Nesting Site | April 1 – Aug 15 | 200 m | 500 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Site | Aug 16 – Oct 15 | 200 m | 200 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Site | Oct 16 – March 31 | 50 m | 100 m | 500 m |

A reduced buffer may be implemented upon CDFW approval and based upon site specific conditions, nesting phenology, and the recommendation of the qualified biologist.

C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to OPUD and CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

D. If occupied burrows cannot be avoided, OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a survey during the non-nesting season (September 30 through January 31) to identify occupied burrows within the disturbance footprint, exclude burrowing owls from burrows within the disturbance footprint, and then collapse the burrows in accordance with methodology outlined by the CDFW. Burrowing owl exclusion and burrow collapse must be conducted in coordination with CDFW and with the approval of CDFW.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-11 would require consultation with resource agencies; avoidance measures during construction; or exclusion, potential impacts to burrowing owls would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

***Nesting Birds***

Implementation of the project has the potential to impact nesting migratory birds, including special-status species such as tricolored blackbird, Modesto song sparrow, and other species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Suitable habitat for tree and ground-nesting raptors, including special-status species such as northern harrier or white tailed kite, occurs in the project area. Construction disturbance has the potential to impact nesting birds. This would be a significant impact.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-12**

A. If construction or vegetation removal work occurs outside of nesting season (August 31 to Feb 1), impacts would be avoided. Surveys would not be required for work conducted during this part of the year, and no further mitigation for nest disturbance would be required.
B. If vegetation removal or construction activities occur between February 1 to August 31, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist of suitable habitat within 500 feet of worksites and disturbance areas for passerines, and within 0.25-mile of worksites and disturbance areas for raptors. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted within 14 days prior to the start of construction of vegetation removal. If nests are identified, a suitable nest protection buffer shall be recommended by the qualified biologist based on the species, nest phenology, and site-specific conditions. Construction activities shall be prohibited within the established buffer zones until the young have fledged. If a lapse in project-related activities occurs for 14 days or longer during the nesting season, another focused survey shall be conducted before construction activities can be reinitiated.
C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to OPUD and CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

Because implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-11 would require avoidance measures during construction; buffer areas around nests; and consultation with resource agencies, if necessary, potential impacts to nesting birds would be minimized to less-than-significant levels. No additional mitigation would be required.

**Questions (b) and (c) Adverse effect on aquatic resources. Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** The proposed project may result in impacts to aquatic resources at Lift Station 23, several of the HDD workspace areas, and several of the pipeline connection crossings. Additionally, the HDD waterway crossings will involve the use of drilling fluids that present the unlikely potential for inadvertent returns to the waterways. These aquatic resources may be regulated by the Corps under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and/or the CDFW under Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code. These areas were identified and mapped for the purposes of avoidance during biological reconnaissance surveys. See Appendix D, *Biological Technical Report*, Figures 2A-2T. A preliminary aquatic resource delineation was not conducted as part of the reconnaissance surveys and full avoidance of these features may not be feasible; therefore, the following authorizations may be required:

- Clean Water Act Section 404 Discharge/Fill Permit by the Corps;
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification by the CVRWQCB; and,
- Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake/Streambed Alteration Agreement with CDFW.

Construction of the project may result in impacts to regulated aquatic resources. This would be a significant impact, and the following mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-13**

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a preliminary aquatic resource delineation of the project site to define the limits of jurisdictional areas and determine the extent of project impacts. The delineation will be verified by the Corps. The verified delineation will provide OPUD with the impact acreage necessary for preparing a Waters of the US/Wetland Mitigation Plan and/or permit application if impacts to jurisdictional areas cannot be avoided. If the project can fully avoid delineated aquatic resources, no further mitigation would be required. If the project cannot fully avoid delineated aquatic resources, Mitigation Measure BIO-13 B will apply.

B. If project impacts to federal and State jurisdictional areas are identified, OPUD shall obtain all necessary permits for impacts to Waters of the US and wetlands from the Corps and RWQCB and/or for potential impacts to stream features from CDFW prior to project implementation. Implementation of the project shall comply with all permit conditions. Compensatory mitigation must be consistent with the Corps' standards pertaining to mitigation type, location, and ratios, but will be accomplished with a minimum of 1:1 replacement ratio.

   If compensatory mitigation is needed, OPUD may satisfy all or a portion of Waters of the US and wetlands mitigation through the purchase of "credits" at a mitigation bank approved by the Corps, RWQCB, and/or CDFW for compensatory mitigation of impacts to hydrologically similar Waters of the US, or through other means, such as on- or off-site wetland creation, conservation easement, contribution to approved in-lieu habitat fund, etc. The Mitigation Plan must be approved by the permitting agencies, and shall be implemented by OPUD subsequent to plan approval.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-14**

The proposed HDD installations under regulated drainages have a small potential to "frac out" or inadvertently release drilling muds to the surface during drilling operations. Because of the potential for a frac-out to impact waters and wetlands at the drainage crossings, OPUD or its contractor shall prepare and implement an Inadvertent Returns Contingency Plan that outlines the measures that will be taken to prevent inadvertent returns, and outlines the response measures to be employed and response equipment to be maintained on site for use in the unlikely event of an inadvertent return during drilling operations.

With implementation of the above mitigation measures, no additional effects to aquatic resources are expected to occur, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Question (d): Interfere with species movement, wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites. Less-than-significant Impact.** Wildlife migration corridors are generally defined as connections between fragmented habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated wildlife populations. Migration corridors may be local, such as those

between foraging and nesting or denning areas, or they may be regional in extent. Migration corridors are not unidirectional access routes; however, reference is usually made to source and receiver areas in discussions of wildlife movement networks. "Habitat linkages" are migration corridors that contain contiguous strips of native vegetation between source and receiver areas. Habitat linkages provide cover and forage sufficient for temporary inhabitation by a variety of ground-dwelling animal species. Wildlife migration corridors are essential to the regional fitness of an area as they provide avenues of genetic exchange and allow animals to access alternative territories as fluctuating dispersal pressures dictate.

Within the study area there are several natural drainages and riparian corridors that provide suitable migratory corridors for an array of species. These drainages and riparian areas include Reeds Creek, Hutchinson Creek, Kimball Creek, and Virginia Creek and other smaller unnamed waterways. These creeks help to provide access for wildlife to move from foothill habitat areas to valley habitat areas, including the Feather River, Sutter National Wildlife Refuge, and other wildlife areas. At the drainage crossings within the study area, the vegetation communities observed were a mix of natural riparian communities, emergent wetland vegetation, and annual grassland cover types. Signs of mammals moving through the riparian corridors were observed for several species including raccoon, coyote, and mink.

The project is designed to avoid impacts to the drainage crossings and associated riparian corridors using trenchless installation methods for pipeline crossings at these locations. Impacts to wildlife corridors will be limited to indirect temporary disturbance during construction, primarily during daytime hours.

Because the proposed project would result in only temporary impacts that would be restored to pre-project conditions upon completion of the project, impacts to wildlife movement would be short term and temporary, and would not permanently disrupt wildlife movement or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

**Questions (e) and (f) Conflict with policies, ordinances, or plans protecting biological resources. Less-than-significant Impact.** South County Infrastructure Project facilities are not located in an area covered by an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. Yuba County has not adopted a tree preservation ordinance, and the proposed project would be consistent with adopted 2030 General Plan policies that protect biological resources. Therefore, no conflict with any adopted policies, ordinances, or plans protecting biological resources would occur with project implementation. No significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Past development in Yuba County, ranging from conversion of land to agricultural production to recent expansion of urban development, has resulted in a substantial loss of native habitat to other uses. This is a significant cumulative impact. Implementing the 2030 General Plan could result in further loss of special status species and their habitat. Continued development of natural resources areas will result in the incremental decline in the amount of habitat remaining to support special-status species and sensitive natural communities. The 2030 General Plan would contribute to an ongoing decline of special status species and habitats. The 2030 General Plan policies and actions

require avoidance of impacts to special-status species and their habitats. The Natural Resources Element also designates various types of open space, including open space required to protect critical habitat and other important biological resources. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan's contribution to a significant cumulative impact would be reduced by implementing the General Plan policies and actions. However, it may not be feasible to completely avoid direct and indirect impacts while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses, and therefore the 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

In Yuba County, most established riparian vegetation occurs along the largest rivers; the Feather River, Yuba River, and Bear River, and south Honcut Creek. Important riparian corridors also occur along Dry Creek and other tributaries to Honcut Creek and the Yuba River. Riparian vegetation is present in the surrounding region along the Sacramento River and in the Sutter Bypass. Agricultural, residential, and industrial water use and land development have resulted in a significant cumulative reduction in the extent of riparian habitats in the County and surrounding region. The 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The alteration of the hydrologic condition supporting long-term soil saturation and conversion to other uses, primarily agriculture, has resulted in a significant cumulative impact to freshwater emergent wetlands in Yuba County and the surrounding region. Implementing the 2030 General Plan could result in the loss of freshwater emergent wetland and vernal pool complex with vernal pools and swales. Implementing the General Plan policies and actions listed above, along with the additional mitigation measures, is expected to reduce significant impacts on wetland and other Waters of the United States requiring delineation and avoidance of these habitats to the maximum extent feasible, establishment of wetland habitat buffers, and by providing compensation for unavoidable impacts in a manner that would ensure no net loss of overall wetland habitat in the County. Complete avoidance would not be possible while still allowing full build out of the designated land uses. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts, or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on biological resources set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

| V. CULTURAL RESOURCES | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5? | | **X** | | |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5? | | **X** | | |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | | **X** | | |

This analysis includes a review of pertinent literature, a review of regulatory requirements, results of reconnaissance field surveys, and a preliminary analysis of general impacts of project implementation on cultural resources. The evaluation is based on and summarizes the *Cultural Resources Technical Report, Olivehurst Public Utility District South County Infrastructure Project* (Padre 2023b), prepared by Padre Associates, Inc. (Padre) (March 2023).

Records of the known cultural resources found in Yuba County are included in the files of the Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). The North Central Information Center (NCIC), housed at California State University, Sacramento, locally administers these records. Methodology used included literature and records research, including those records in the files of the NCIC, and direct in-field cultural resources sensitivity assessment of the proposed project areas.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

For the purposes of this report, the project Area of Potential Effect (APE) refers to all areas that are considered for construction, access, and staging. The project will consist of the construction of a well site, water plant, pump stations, and lift stations on approximately 2.5 acres of land, and the construction of approximately 26.8 linear miles of new water and sewer lines, primarily within roadways and road shoulders. Improvements to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) will be installed within the existing WWTP limits. Trenchless installations at roadway and waterway crossings will be achieved using attachment to an existing bridge where possible. Horizontal directional drill (HDD) or pipe ramming/auger bore trenchless installation methods are proposed where bridge attachment is not feasible. The project proposes 13 locations for trenchless installation, seven bore crossings for pipeline installation under waterways, and six bore crossings for pipeline installation under highways. See Figures 3, 4, and 8.

In August 2020 the study team ordered an archaeological records search from the NCIC located at California State University, Sacramento. The center is an affiliate of the State of California Office of Historic Preservation and the official state repository of archaeological and historic records and reports for six counties, including Yuba County.

The records search included a review of all recorded historic-era and prehistoric archaeological sites within a 0.25-mile radius of the project APE as well as a review of known cultural resource surveys and technical reports. Records from the State Historic Property Data Files, National Register of Historic Places, National Register of Determined Eligible Properties, California Points of Historic Interest, and the California Office of Historic Preservation Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility also were analyzed.

The records search identified no previously recorded cultural resources within the project APE and five previously recorded cultural resources within the 0.25-mile search radius. The records search also indicated that five cultural resource studies have been completed within the project APE. Additionally, 32 cultural resources studies have been completed within the 0.25-mile search radius.

On February 14 and 15, 2022, environmental staff conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the project APE. Due to most of the project APE crossing through developed residential and urban areas along roadways and road shoulders, a majority of the survey was performed as a "windshield survey." The portions of the project APE within agricultural and rural residential areas were subject to an intensive pedestrian surface survey, and covered on foot in transect intervals not exceeding 10 meters, unless prohibited by terrain, vegetation, access, or safety issues.

In March 2022, environmental staff submitted a request for a Sacred Lands File search to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), to request information about sacred or traditional cultural properties that may be located within the project APE. A search of the Sacred Lands file housed at the NAHC did not indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources within the project boundaries.

The majority of the project APE consists of lands within developed urban areas, disturbed soils along roadway shoulders or in vacant lots, and land within or adjacent to agricultural fields. The agricultural fields in the area are primarily used to produce rice and other grain crops. Proposed pipeline alignments are limited to developed lands within the paved roadway and disturbed shoulder. Workspace associated with HDD crossings are within vacant or agricultural lands. Pump stations and lift stations are within developed and disturbed lands, vacant lots, natural and undeveloped lands, or agricultural lands.

The terrain throughout the project APE is mostly level. Ground visibility ranged between zero to 80 percent with existing roads, gravel, vegetation, and debris accounting for areas of lesser visibility. The soils observed consisted of a silt clay loam and sandy clay loam with gravel and small cobble inclusions. No cultural resources were observed during the survey.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State and federal legislation requires the protection of historical and cultural resources. In 1971, President's Executive Order No. 11593 required that all federal agencies initiate procedures to preserve and maintain cultural resources by nomination and inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1980, Governor's Executive Order No. B-64-80 required that state agencies inventory all "significant historic and cultural sites, structures, and objects under their jurisdiction which are over 50 years of age and which may qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places." Section 15064.5(b)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines specifies that projects that cause "…physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historic resource would be materially impaired" shall be found to have a significant impact on the environment.

# ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump/Lift Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| IX.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Potential for unknown cultural resources |
| IX.b | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Potential for unknown cultural resources |
| IX.c | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Potential for unknown cultural resources |

**Questions (a) through (c) Historical and archaeological resources, human remains: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** No prehistoric or historic resources within the project APE have been reported to the NCIC, and none were observed during surveys of the APE. Thus, the project would not adversely affect any known historic or archaeological resources.

There are multiple locations in the project APE where pipelines would intersect creeks or rivers. Prehistoric archaeological resources have been found in association with similar streamside environs within Yuba County. Construction activities could result in inadvertent impacts upon buried (subsurface) historic or prehistoric resources. Because construction activities could result in the discovery of previously unknown cultural resources, a significant impact could occur. The following mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure CUL-1:**

A. If buried cultural resources such as chipped or ground stone, midden deposits, historic debris, building foundations, human bone, or paleontological resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop in that area and within 100 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist can assess the significance of the find and, if necessary, develop responsible treatment measures in consultation with Yuba County and other appropriate agencies.

B. If remains of Native American origin are discovered during proposed project construction, it shall be necessary to comply with state laws concerning the disposition of Native American burials, which fall within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). If any human remains are discovered or recognized in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until:

   - The County coroner has been informed and has determined that no investigation of the cause of death is required; and
   - If the remains are of Native American origin:
     - √ The most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans have made a recommendation to the landowner or person responsible for the excavation work for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in PRC 5097.98; or
     - √ The NAHC has been unable to identify a descendant, or the descendant failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified.

C. According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100), and disturbance of Native American

cemeteries is a felony (Section 7052). Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the NAHC.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cultural resources in the Yuba County region generally consist of prehistoric sites, historic sites, historic structures, and isolated artifacts. During the 19th and 20th centuries, localized urbanization and intensive agricultural use in the region caused the destruction or disturbance of numerous prehistoric sites, while many structures now considered to be historic were erected. Development of projects and plans assumed in the cumulative scenario has the potential to result in the discovery of undocumented subsurface cultural resources or unmarked historic-era or prehistoric Native American burial sites. Cumulative gains in population, households, and jobs would require a commensurate increase in infrastructure, capital facilities, services, housing, and commercial uses in Yuba County, its incorporated cities, and areas adjacent counties. The impact on archaeological deposits, human remains, and paleontological resources would be substantial given the past extent of urban development, and anticipated gains in population, jobs, and housing. There is a significant cumulative impact to cultural resources. Full buildout of the 2030 General Plan would involve substantial development and earth disturbance, and the impact is cumulatively considerable.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the envelope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. ). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts, or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. The evaluation of the project's environmental effects on cultural resources set forth in this chapter conclude that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

| VI. ENERGY | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | | **X** | | |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | | | **X** | |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) provides electricity and natural gas to Yuba County. Existing energy use for the project includes existing operations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and pump stations PS-1 and PS-2.

### CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen Code)(California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11) is a part of the California Building Standards Code that comprehensively regulates the planning, design, operation, and construction of newly constructed buildings throughout the state. Both mandatory and voluntary measures are included in the CALGreen Code. Mandatory measures for non-residential structures include standards for light pollution reduction, energy efficiency, and water conservation, among others.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| VI.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction/operation would result in energy use |
| VI.b | | | | | Would not conflict with energy plan |

**Question (a) Wasteful consumption of energy resources: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** Development of the proposed pipeline would entail energy consumption that includes both direct and indirect expenditures of energy. Indirect energy would be consumed by the use of construction materials for the project (e.g., energy resource exploration, power generation, mining and refining of raw materials into construction materials used, including placement). Direct energy impacts would result from the total fuel consumed in vehicle propulsion (e.g., construction vehicles, heavy equipment, and other vehicles using the facility). This would be a significant impact, and the following mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure EN-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures AQ2 (b-f, and p) and AQ-3 (b and c).

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2 (b-f, and p) and AQ-3 (b and c) would reduce emissions from construction equipment and processes and lead to a lessening of energy used during

construction compared to a business as usual scenario. No unusual materials, or those in short supply, are required in the construction of the project.

The proposed project's energy use during operations would include the relatively small amount of energy required by the pump and lift stations to transport wastewater flows, and energy use at the water plant. Operations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) are an existing use, and the proposed modifications to the WWTP would not result in a significant increase in energy use. Further, these long-term energy uses are necessary for effective operation of the project. In addition, with construction of the proposed wastewater transmission facilities from the City of Wheatland to the OPUD WWTP, the existing City of Wheatland WWTP would be decommissioned, and energy use at this facility would no longer occur.

Although energy during the construction phase would be consumed, it would not be consumed in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary manner with the adoption and implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2 (b-f, and p) and AQ-3 (b and c). No additional mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Conflict with state or local energy efficiency plans: Less-than-significant Impact**. The proposed project would not result in unplanned developed land uses or construct structures or facilities that would conflict with State or local plans for renewable energy or efficiency. Compliance with California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards would ensure that the proposed project would implement all necessary energy efficiency regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of promoting renewable energy or energy efficiency, and this would be a less-than-significant impact.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would increase energy demand. New residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses that could be developed under the 2030 General Plan would increase local energy demand. However, the policies and actions of the General Plan that guide growth and development are designed to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy and the impact for the 2030 General Plan is less than significant. Implementation of the2030 General Plan would result in the need to extend services and infrastructure to new users in Yuba County, resulting in significant and unavoidable impacts.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on energy set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

| VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? | | | | **X** |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | | | **X** | |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | | | **X** | |
| iv) Landslides? | | | | **X** |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | | **X** | | |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? | | **X** | | |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? | | **X** | | |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | | | | **X** |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | | **X** | | |

The analysis for the proposed project's geology and soils impacts is based on the Updated Draft Preliminary Geotechnical Basis of Design Report, prepared by Blackburn Consulting (April 2021), included as Appendix E of this Initial Study (bound separately). The analysis within the geotechnical report is based on exploratory borings at various project locations and laboratory testing, and includes relevant information about surface conditions, regional geology, seismicity, and subsurface conditions. The assessment of paleontological resources is based on an in-depth countywide evaluation set forth in the EIR for the Yuba County 2030 General Plan.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Yuba County is located within an area of relatively low seismic activity and is not located within a highly active fault zone. The project does not lie within or adjacent to an Alquist–Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or landslide and liquefaction zone (DOC 2022; Yuba County 2011b). Yuba County is not believed to have experienced ground shaking at a level at which damage to buildings would be expected (at a level of Modified Mercalli Index of VII or greater) between 1800 and 2002 (Yuba County 2011b).

The proposed project is located within an area of the county underlain by Tertiary and Quaternary alluvium. The topography of the project areas is generally flat locally, except near State Routes 65 and 70, where the topography slopes toward the highways. The site elevations, excluding areas near the highways, range between 55 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the western portion of the project

and 75 feet above msl in the easternmost portion of the project. The USDA web soil survey indicates that the project area is underlain primarily by mostly San Joaquin loam, and also Hollenbeck silty clay loam, Conejo Loam, and Oakdale Sandy loam. (Blackburn 2021a)

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Questions | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| VII.a | | | | | No earthquake fault and associated hazards. |
| VII.b | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction would result in potential soil erosion. |
| VII.c | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Geotechnical measures required for soil conditions. |
| VII.d | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Geotechnical measures required for soil conditions. |
| VII.e | | | | | No septic systems involved. |
| VII.f | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Unknown paleontological resources may be present. |

**Question (a.i) Earthquake fault: No Impact.** The project is not located within or near a mapped earthquake fault, and there is no record or evidence of faulting on the project area (DOC 2022). Because no fault traces underlie the project area, no existing hazardous conditions would be exacerbated with implementation of the project. There would be no impact.

**Question (a.ii) Ground shaking: Less-than-significant Impact.** As noted above, the proposed project is located in an area not believed to have experienced ground shaking at a level at which damage to buildings would be expected (Yuba County 2011). Yuba County requires that all new construction comply with the seismic safety requirements of the California Building Code (CBC), which would reduce any potential increase in risks in the areas of the proposed project from seismic ground shaking to levels considered acceptable for the State and region. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation is required beyond compliance with adopted standards.

**Question (a.iii) Ground failure, liquefaction: Less-than-significant Impact.** The proposed project is not located within a mapped liquefaction zone (DOC 2022). Based on the project geotechnical study, the potential for damaging liquefaction at the site is very low (Blackburn 2021a). The proposed project would employ standard pipeline construction practices and comply with CBC requirements for the State of California, which would limit soil liquefaction hazards to levels deemed acceptable in the State and region. Adherence with adopted building and design standards would avoid substantial adverse effects due to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving liquefaction or other seismic-related ground failure. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (a.iv) Landslides: No Impact.** The project areas are generally flat and not located near steep slopes with unstable soils that may be susceptible to landslides. Also, the greater project area is not noted for unstable geologic formations susceptible to landslides (DOC 2022). Implementation of the project would not affect any of these existing conditions that would increase the risk of landslides in the project area. Therefore, the project would not be exposed to potential geologic hazards, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving a landslide. There would be no impact.

**Question (b) Soil erosion: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation** .Development of the proposed project would include construction activities including excavation, grading, trenching, and fill activities for site improvements, which would result in the disturbance of on-site soils. Ground disturbance would be limiting to the areas proposed for grading, trenching, trenchless crossings, and excavation. While construction of the project could result in temporary soil erosion and the loss of top soil due to construction activities, the proposed project areas are generally level from previous road building and grading.

Erosion control measures would be required in accordance with Yuba County Department of Public Works Improvement Standards and Specifications, and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be required for those project components that are within the Olivehurst urban area. Further, all aspects of the South County Infrastructure project would require coverage under the NPDES Construction General Permit requirements, which includes erosion control measures. For a discussion of potential significant effects due to sedimentation during construction of the project, see Section X, *Hydrology and Water Quality*. Compliance with Yuba County requirements and the NPDES Construction Permit would minimize impacts due to soil erosion or loss of topsoil; a less-than-significant impact would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures A HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3 would require compliance with State and Yuba County requirements to avoid or reduce soil erosion during project construction. Use of Best Management Practices and other erosion reductions measure would result in a less-than-significant impact, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Questions (c) and (d) Unstable geologic unit/Expansive Soils: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** Expansive soils are soils that shrink and swell in response to changes in moisture. These volume changes can result in damage over time to building foundations, roads, underground utilities, and structures, if they are not designed and constructed appropriately to resist the changing soil conditions. The project areas are not noted for unstable geologic formations susceptible to landslide or ground failure, and the topography surrounding the proposed project components is generally level; however, moderately expansive clay soils underlay the site (Blackburn 2021a). As set forth in the geotechnical study, the ground conditions at the proposed pipeline alignments, pump and lift stations, wastewater treatment plan, and water plant would be suitable for the planned improvements when constructed in accordance with the project plans, industry standards, and geotechnical recommendations. However, because a final geotechnical engineering report has not yet been prepared, the following mitigation measure would be required to ensure completion of a final report and implementation of finalized geotechnical recommendations.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-2:**

A. In additional to civil drawing for the project, a final geotechnical engineering report for the proposed project shall be produced by a California Registered Civil Engineer or Geotechnical Engineer and submitted to Yuba County for review. The geotechnical engineering report measures shall address construction conditions, including but not limited to: excavation conditions, site clearing specifications, ground and subgrade preparation, general fill placement and compaction, dewatering, and foundations. Following approval in

the geotechnical report by Yuba County, construction shall be completed in accordance with the geotechnical recommendations in the report, Yuba County Standard Specifications, and Cal OSHA requirements. Proof shall be provided for engineering inspection and certification that earthwork has been performed in conformity with recommendations contained in the report. (Preliminary geotechnical recommendations are included in Appendix E of this Initial Study).

B. The Contractor shall retain an engineer to evaluate the impact of construction traffic vibrations, actual soil conditions exposed in the open excavations, seepage and/or groundwater conditions, surcharges adjacent to excavations, proximity of excavations to existing structures, and other factors that may promote excavation wall instability or cause excavation related damage to existing facilities and improvements and adjust excavation sloping/shoring methods accordingly.

With implementation of the above mitigation measures, the proposed project would not result in any adverse changes to soil instability and subsequent landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, or collapse that would affect existing facilities or land uses. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be necessary.

**Question (e) Soils adequately support septic system: No Impact.** The proposed project does not include the installation or expansion of any septic system. Further, the proposed project would improve an existing community wastewater collection and treatment system, and would not require the use of septic systems. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. No impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (f) Paleontological resource / unique geologic feature: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** According to available information, the project is not located in an area known to have produced significant paleontological[3] resources (Yuba 2011b), nor are there any unique geologic features. While no vertebrate fossil sites were reported in the 2030 Yuba County General Plan, vertebrate fossil sites may occur in Yuba County where surveys have not taken place. Pleistocene alluvial deposits in the valley portion of the county could harbor previously unknown paleontological resources. Development in these areas could result in the loss or disturbance of fossils or other paleontological resources. Therefore, while project construction would not result in the destruction or degradation of unique geological features, construction activities associated with the proposed project could disturb previously unknown paleontological resources. This would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-3:**

Consistent with Yuba County 2030 General Plan policies, if potential paleontological resources are found during construction, work shall stop and consultation is required to avoid further impacts. If potential paleontological resources are detected during construction, work shall stop and consultation shall be required to avoid further impacts. Actions after work stoppage will be designed to avoid significant impacts to the greatest extent feasible. These measures should include construction worker education, consultation with a qualified paleontologist, coordination

[3] Paleontological resources are the remains or traces of prehistoric animals and plants (fossils).

with experts on resource recovery and curation of specimens, and/or other measures, as appropriate.

With implementation of the above mitigation measures the proposed project would not result in any adverse effects to unknown paleontological resources. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The fact that vertebrate fossils have been recovered throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys in sediments suggests that there is a potential for uncovering additional similar fossil remains during construction-related earthmoving activities. Development under the cumulative scenario could adversely affect these resources, resulting in a significant cumulative impact. Implementation of the policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan would reduce the impacts of buildout of the 2030 General Plan on paleontological resources. However, the 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on geology and soil resources set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Global Warming is a public health and environmental concern around the world. As global concentrations of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHG) increase, global temperatures increase, weather extremes increase, and increases in air pollutant concentrations. Global warming and climate change have been observed to contribute to poor air quality, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, stronger storms, more intense and longer droughts, more frequent heat waves, increases in the number of wildfires and their intensity, and other threats to human health and safety (IPCC 2013). The years 2013–2021 all rank among the ten warmest years in the 1880–2021 record (142-year record). The global annual temperature has increased at an average rate of 0.08°C (0.14°F) per decade since 1880 and over twice that rate (+0.18°C / +0.32°F) since 1981 (NOAA 2022). Hotter days facilitate the formation of ozone, increases in smog emissions, and increases in impacts to public health and well-being (e.g., heat-related illness, heart and respiratory conditions, increased food-, water-, and vector-borne disease, mental health consequences) (EPA 2021a). Because oceans tend to warm and cool more slowly than land areas, continents have warmed the most. If greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase, climate models predict that the average temperature at the Earth's surface is likely to increase by over 1.5ºC by the year 2100 relative to the period from 1850 to 1900 (IPCC 2013).

### THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT (NATURAL AND ANTHROPOGENIC)

The Earth naturally absorbs and reflects incoming solar radiation and emits longer wavelength terrestrial (thermal) radiation back into space. On average, the absorbed solar radiation is balanced by the outgoing terrestrial radiation emitted to space. A portion of this terrestrial radiation, though, is itself absorbed by gases in the atmosphere. The energy from this absorbed terrestrial radiation warms the Earth's surface and atmosphere, creating what is known as the "natural greenhouse effect." Without the natural heat-trapping properties of these atmospheric gases, the average surface temperature of the Earth would be below the freezing point of water (IPCC 2007). Although the Earth's atmosphere consists mainly of oxygen and nitrogen, neither plays a significant role in this greenhouse effect because both are essentially transparent to terrestrial radiation.

The greenhouse effect is primarily a function of the concentration of water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, and other trace gases in the atmosphere that absorb the terrestrial radiation leaving the surface of the Earth (IPCC 2007). Changes in the atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases can alter the balance of energy transfers between the atmosphere, space, land, and the oceans. Increases in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere produces a warming effect, and will likely contribute to an increase in global average temperature and related climate changes (EPA 2022).

### GREENHOUSE GASES

Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), nitrous oxide ($N_2O$), and ozone ($O_3$). Several classes of halogenated substances that contain fluorine, chlorine, or bromine are also greenhouse gases, but they are, for the most part, emitted solely by human activities. There are also several gases that, although they do not have a direct radiative forcing effect, do influence the formation and destruction of ozone, which does have such a terrestrial radiation absorbing effect. These gases, referred to here as ozone precursors, include carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen ($NO_X$), and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC). Aerosols (extremely small particles or liquid droplets emitted directly or produced as a result of atmospheric reactions) can also affect the absorptive characteristics of the atmosphere.

Carbon is stored in nature within the atmosphere, soil organic matter, oceans, marine sediments and sedimentary rocks, terrestrial plants, and fossil fuel deposits. Carbon is constantly changing form on the planet through a number of processes referred to as the carbon cycle, which includes but is not limited to degradation and burning, photosynthesis and respiration, decay, and dissolution[4]. When the carbon cycle transfers more carbon to the atmosphere this can lead to global warming. Since 1970, carbon dioxide emissions have increased by about 90 percent, with emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributing about 78 percent from 1970 to 2011.

## REGULATORY SETTING

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal agency responsible for implementing the Clean Air Act (CAA). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 2, 2007 that $CO_2$ is an air pollutant as defined under the CAA, and that EPA has the authority to regulate emissions of GHGs. However, there are no federal regulations or policies regarding GHG emissions thresholds applicable to the proposed project at the time of this Initial Study.

The ARB is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California, and for implementing the CCAA. Various statewide and local initiatives to reduce the state's contribution to GHG emissions have raised awareness that, even though the various contributors to and consequences of global climate change are not yet fully understood, global climate change is under way, and there is a real potential for severe adverse environmental, social, and economic effects in the long-term. Because every nation emits GHGs, and therefore makes an incremental cumulative contribution to global climate change, cooperation on a global scale will be required to reduce the rate of GHG emissions to a level that can help to slow or stop the human-caused increase in average global temperatures and associated changes in climatic conditions.

In September 2006, then-Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 32, the California Climate Solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 established regulatory, reporting, and market mechanisms to achieve quantifiable reductions in GHG emissions and a cap on statewide GHG emissions. AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. In 2011, the ARB adopted the cap-and-trade regulation. The cap-and-trade program covers major sources of GHG emissions in the State such as refineries, power plants, industrial facilities, and transportation fuels. The cap-and-trade

[4] Dissolution is the process whereby carbon dioxide from the atmosphere dissolves in water.

program includes an enforceable emissions cap that will decline over time. The State will distribute allowances, which are tradable permits, equal to the emissions allowed under the cap.

As the sequel to AB 32, Senate Bill (SB) 32 was approved by the Governor on September 8, 2016. SB 32 requires the ARB to ensure that statewide greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to 40 percent below the 1990 level by 2030. The 2030 target acts as an interim goal on the way to achieving reductions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, a goal set by former Governor Schwarzenegger in 2005 with Executive Order S-3-05.

Yuba County does not yet have a Climate Action Plan (CAP), but includes General Plan policies to reduce GHG emissions.

### SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLDS

The Feather River Air Quality Management District (FRAQMD) has not established CEQA thresholds of significance for GHG emissions. The FRAQMD recommends that CEQA documents include a quantification of GHG emissions from all project sources, and include measures to minimize and mitigate GHG emissions as feasible.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| VIII.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction and operation would result in GHG emissions |
| VIII.b | | | | | Not inconsistent with GHG reduction plans |

**Question (a) Generate GHG emissions: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** Greenhouse gas emissions would be generated from the proposed project during construction and operation. Temporary GHG emissions would occur during construction activities, predominantly from vehicle and equipment exhaust. Operational GHG emissions would occur from employee maintenance trips, and operation of emergency generators during maintenance and emergency use.

GHG emissions from construction activities were estimated using the SMAQMD Roadway Construction Emissions Model (Version 9.0) and CalEEMod Version 2020.4.0. As noted previously, FRAQMD has not adopted quantitative thresholds of significance for GHG emissions. However, consistent with FRAQMD guidance, the GHG emissions associated with the proposed project have been quantified and included for informational purposes. The estimated construction and operation related GHG emissions are summarized in Table 10. See Appendix C for modeling assumptions and output.

| **Table 10** | **Summary of Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions During Construction and Operation Activities** |
|---|---|
| **Emissions Source** | **GHG Emissions (metric tons $CO_2e$)** |
| **Construction Emissions** | |
| *Phase I (2024)* | 2,401 |
| *Phase II (2025)* | 2,424 |
| *Phase III (2026)* | 2,789 |
| *Phase IV (2027)* | 50 |
| **Total Construction (all years)** | **7,664** |
| Construction Amortized (35 years) | 219 |
| **Operational Emissions** | **6** |

Notes: $CO_2e$ = carbon dioxide equivalent; GHG = greenhouse gas
*Source: Planning Partners 2023. See Appendix C for modeling results.*

Short-term project construction activities would generate an annual maximum of 2,789 metric tons of $CO_2e$ of GHG emissions (see Table 10). Because of the cumulative effect of GHGs, the project's construction emissions were amortized over the operational lifetime of the project to provide a relative comparison. When amortized over the assumed 35-year lifetime of the project, the project's annual construction-related GHG emissions would be 219 metric tons of $CO_2e$. Implementation of FRAQMD rules and regulations applicable to construction activities included in Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3 would reduce GHGs associated with construction of the project. Long term operational emissions associated with the improvements with employee trips and emergency generator use are anticipated to result in six metric tons of $CO_2e$ of GHG emissions per year. This would be a significant impact, and the following mitigation measure would be required:

**Mitigation Measure GHG-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3.

Because the construction-related emissions associated with the proposed project would be reduced with the implementation air quality mitigation measures, and operation-related GHG emissions would be minimal, greenhouse gas emissions would not be expected to be significant, and the project would not be expected to make a substantial contribution to the cumulatively significant impact of global climate change. After implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3, a less-than-significant impact would result, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Conflict with GHG emissions reduction plans: Less-than-significant Impact.** Yuba County has not adopted a climate change or GHG reduction plan with which the proposed project would conflict. The ARB's Climate Change Scoping Plan represents the primary plan to reduce GHG emissions throughout California. The proposed project would not be considered inconsistent with the GHG reduction measures contained in the Scoping Plan. Therefore, the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would comply with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Greenhouse gas emissions have the potential to adversely affect the environment because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. Global climate change has the potential to result in sea level rise (resulting in flooding of low-lying areas), to affect rainfall and snowfall (leading to changes in water supply), to affect temperatures and habitats (affecting biological resources), and to result in many other adverse effects. Global GHG emissions represent a significant cumulative impact.

Because the 2030 General Plan would generate higher GHG emissions per service population than is needed at the State level to achieve the AB 32 target, and since a substantial quantity of GHG emissions would be generated through buildout of the 2030 General Plan, this impact is considered a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative impact of global climate change.

In addition to GHG emissions from implementation of the 2030 General Plan, another cumulative impact of climate change includes increased global average temperatures (global warming) through the intensification of the greenhouse effect, and associated changes in local climatic conditions. This is a significant cumulative impact. Policies and actions in the 2030 General Plan would reduce the extent and severity of climate change-associated impacts by proactively planning for changes in climate and conditions, and providing methods for adapting to these changes. For the purposes of this Initial Study, the impact is considered cumulatively considerable.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

| IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | | **X** | | |
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | | **X** | | |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | | | **X** | |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | | | | **X** |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | | | **X** | |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | | **X** | | |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires? | | | **X** | |

The analysis for the proposed project impacts due to hazards and hazardous materials is based on the *Phase 1 Initial Site Assessment* (ISA) (June 2021) and *Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment* (ESA) (August 2021), both prepared by Blackburn Consulting, included as Appendix F of this Initial Study. The purpose of the Phase 1 ISA is to identify Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC)[5], Historical Recognized Environmental Conditions (HREC), and potential RECs, that may be present within or adjacent to the project areas. The Phase 2 ESA is designed to evaluate whether impacts due to potential contaminants of concern (COC) require mitigation recommendations for construction and/or soil management.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

According to the Phase 1 ISA completed for the project, there is history of hazardous site contamination at several locations within or adjacent to the project area and along public roadways that comprise the proposed pipeline alignments (Blackburn 2021b). The following summarizes the RECs identified within or adjacent to the project limits as identified in the Phase 1 ISA.

[5] The term Recognized Environmental Condition is defined as "The presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property (1) due to any release to the environment, (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment."

- OPUD Wastewater Treatment Facility - Public Utilities District 3908 Mary Avenue - diesel above ground storage tank (AST). There are no indications of a release of diesel to soil or groundwater.
- Four sites located immediately adjacent to the project alignment were identified with high risk RECs (see Section 3.2.2 and Figures 2a-c in Appendix F of this document). Documented impacts to soil or groundwater are present on or have been remediated at these adjacent parcels.
- Five sites located immediately adjacent to the project alignment were identified with medium risk RECs (see Section 3.2.2 and Figures 2a-c in Appendix F of this document). Fuel storage tanks are present on these adjacent parcels. There is no evidence in the records review to suggest releases have occurred from the tanks or hazardous material issues from these sites will impact the project, however, there is a potential to encounter residual contamination at these sites.
- Three sites located north of the project alignment on Olivehurst Avenue were identified with high risk RECs (see Section 3.2.2 and Figures 2a-c in Appendix F of this document). The project limits do not currently extend to these sites. Documented impacts to soil or groundwater are present on or have been remediated at these parcels. There is a potential that impacts from these parcels extend into the right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the parcel.

Additional potential contamination issues within the project include:

- Yellow traffic stripes are known to contain heavy metals, such as lead and chromium, at concentrations in excess of the hazardous waste thresholds established by the California Code of Regulations and may produce toxic fumes when heated.
- Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) has been found to occur in soils adjacent to highways and high use roadways. The lead is presumably from the historical use of leaded gasoline and subsequent exhaust emissions. Some of these roadways have been present in various alignments since at or before 1910 and, therefore, have the potential to be impacted with ADL.
- Union Pacific Railroad is an active railroad adjacent to the east side of Rancho Road. Soils located adjacent to railroad tracks may be impacted by on-going railroad operations. Potential contaminants at these locations commonly include petroleum hydrocarbons, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOC), heavy metals, and pesticides.
- Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) and Lead in Buildings Materials. Structures constructed pre-1989 have the potential to contain ACM/Lead materials. Aerial photographs identify structures along the project alignment as developed prior to 1989.
- Pole-mounted transformers and power lines were observed within the existing ROW.
- Historical topographic maps from 1947 and 1949 depict an orchard in the southeastern 1/2-mile alignment of Rancho Road that may be a source of residual Organochlorine Pesticides (OCP). (Blackburn 2021b)

There are several schools in Olivehurst located within one-quarter mile of the proposed project pipeline, including Olivehurst Elementary School and Johnson Park Elementary School (Google Earth 2023).

The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties has developed the Yuba County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The nearest airport to the project areas is the Yuba County Airport, approximately 0.5 miles west of the SSO project improvements. Portions of project in the Olivehurst urban area are located in the Airport Influence Area. The westerly area of the wastewater treatment plant is located within Safety Zone 4, while portions of wastewater pipeline routes in Mary Avenue and McGowan Parkway are located within Safety Zone 6. Wastewater facilities such as PS-1, PS-2, and PS-26, and the forcemains associated with them are located in Safety Zone 6. According to the Yuba County ALUCP Table 2, Safety Compatibility Criteria, wastewater treatment facilities such as the WWTP and associated pump stations are normally compatible in both Safety Zones 4 and 6. No South County Infrastructure Project facilities are located a noise impact zone. (SACOG 2011)

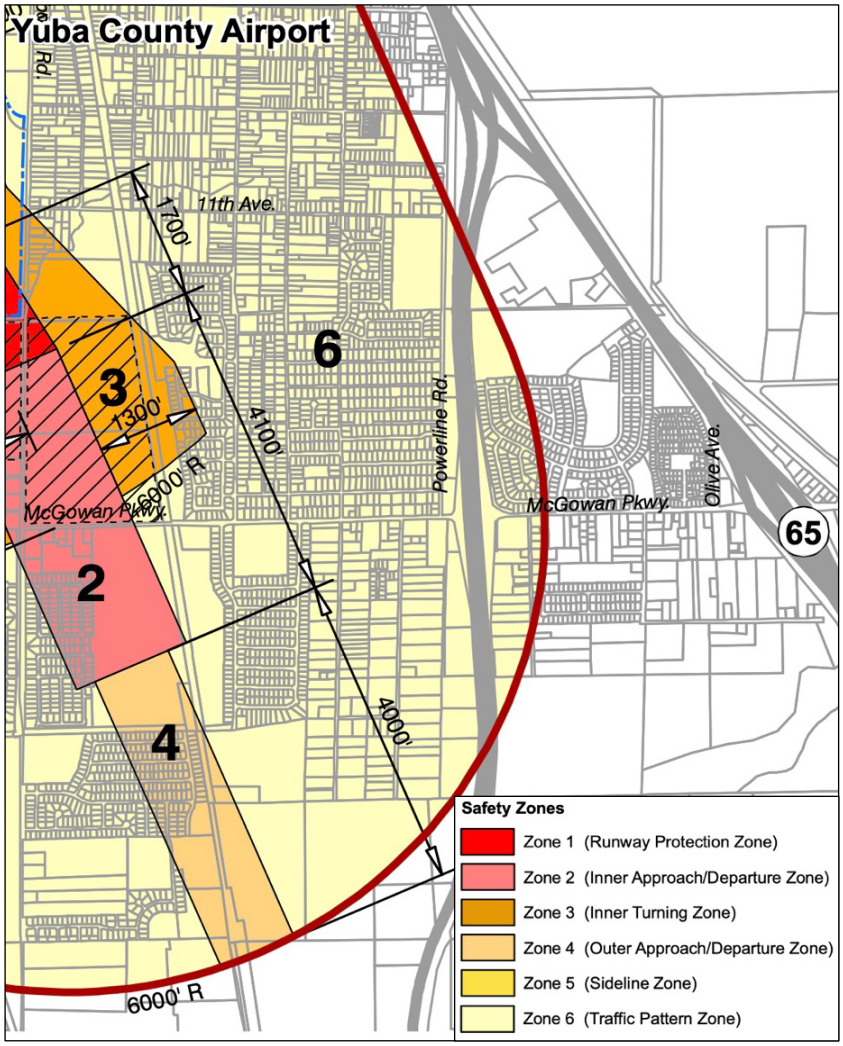



Figure 11 Airport Safety Zones

*Source: Yuba County ALUCP, 2010.*

The Yuba County Office of Emergency Services (OES) uses evacuation zones during emergencies, alerting affected residents and providing information regarding evacuations and road closures (Yuba County OES 2019). Freeways and major county roads according to zone would be used as primary evacuation routes in the event of a natural hazard, technological hazard, or domestic security threat.

Wildfire risk in Yuba County varies by location, and wildfire hazard is greatest in the foothill and mountain areas of the county (Yuba County 2021b). According to California Fire and Resource Management Program Fire Hazard Severity Zone map, the proposed project area is within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) (CalFIRE 2007; Yuba County 2021b). The Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) map for Yuba County indicates that the project areas are located in three Fire Hazard Severity Zones: Non-Wildland/Non-Urban; Urban Unzoned; and limited areas designated as Moderate (Yuba County 2021). The project would be located in areas where the threat of wildland

fire has been determined to be unlikely to moderate (CalFIRE 2007). No project components are located within or near a state responsibility area or within lands with a very high FHSZ.

No asbestos is mined in Yuba County, but small areas of potentially asbestos-bearing ultramafic rock are located in foothills and mountain portions of the County (Yuba County 2011b). The proposed project is not in an area identified by the California Geological Survey as having soils that are likely to contain naturally occurring asbestos (USGS 2011). Therefore, no naturally occurring asbestos is expected in on-site soils that could be disturbed during construction, and this issue will not be discussed further.

## REGULATORY SETTING

Both federal and state laws include provisions for the safe handling of hazardous substances. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) administers requirements to ensure worker safety. Construction activity must also be in compliance with the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| IX.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction would include the use of hazardous materials. |
| IX.b | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Phase 1 and Phase 2 identified potentially hazardous materials in the vicinity of project facilities. |
| IX.c | | | ✓ | ✓ | There are schools within 0.25 miles of proposed PS-1 and its associated pipeline. |
| IX.d | | | | | Not located on a list of hazardous materials. |
| IX.e | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Portions of the project located within an airport land use plan. |
| IX.f | | | ✓ | ✓ | Proposed facilities could disrupt local circulation. |
| IX.g | | | | | Not located in an area of high risk for wildland fires. |

### Question (a) Transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the proposed project would include the use, storage, transport, and disposal of oil, diesel fuel, paints, solvents, and other hazardous materials. If spilled, these substances could pose a risk to the environment and to human health. Both federal and state laws include provisions for the safe handling of hazardous substances. According to federal health and safety standards, applicable federal OSHA requirements would be in place to ensure worker safety. Construction activity must also comply with the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations (Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970). In the event of an accidental release of a hazardous material during construction, the contractors would be required to notify the Yuba County Division

of Environmental Health, who would then provide appropriate technical assistance for the remediation of hazardous conditions. Because of the toxicity of materials that could be used during construction and the sensitivity of resources along Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road, spillages of these materials could pose a risk to the environment. This would be a significant impact and implementation of the following mitigation would be required.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1:**

a. Prohibit or restrict equipment refueling, fluid leakage, equipment maintenance, and road surfacing activities near wetlands and other sensitive areas. Require placement of fuel storage and refueling sites in safe areas well away from wetlands and other sensitive habitats. Safe areas include paved or cleared roadbeds, within contained areas such as lined truck beds, or other appropriate fuel containment sites. Inspect equipment and vehicles for hydraulic and oil leaks regularly. Require the use of drip pans below equipment stored onsite. Require that vehicles and construction equipment are in good working condition, and that all necessary onsite servicing of equipment be conducted away from wetlands or other sensitive areas.

b. Require all contractors to possess, and all vehicles to carry, emergency spill containment materials. Absorbent materials should be on hand at all times to absorb any minor leaks and spills.

**OPERATIONS**

The proposed project would provide new sewer conveyance system improvements. While wastewater discharges from the sewer conveyance system could contain pollutants that have the potential to create a significant hazard to the public, a portion of the proposed project is designed to assist in the mitigation of sanitary sewer overflows in OPUD's existing service area of Olivehurst. Further, the proposed improvements would be engineered and designed to prevent leaking or rupture of pipelines or at pump and lift stations. In the event of a minor spill or leak, OPUD maintains a Sewage System Management Plan (SSMP) as required by the RWQCB, reviewed and updated every two years, that outlines procedures during an overflow emergency. These procedures include sending out a field crew, containing the spill, fixing the problem, cleaning up the spill, and reporting to appropriate agencies. Therefore, the proposed project would reduce the occurrence of SSOs in Olivehurst. Additionally, compliance with OPUD's SSMP would ensure that operations of the proposed project wastewater conveyance system improvements would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during operations. During the operational period this would be a less-than-significant impact, and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

**Question (b) Accident conditions related to hazardous materials: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** As discussed previously, the Phase 1 ISA report revealed a history of hazardous site contamination at several locations within or adjacent to the project area. The Phase 1 ISA identified two RECs located at adjacent sites that warranted further assessment in the Phase 2 ESA. The RECs included historic releases of petroleum to soil and groundwater at Tower Mart #60 along McGowan Parkway, and releases of diesel to soil at the PG&E North Valley Materials facility along Rancho Road. Potential contaminants of concern include total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel (TPH-d), gasoline (TPH-g), and motor oil (TPH-mo), metals, and benzene/toluene/ethylbenzene/xylene (BTEX). The Phase II ESA also assessed potential contamination issues related to yellow traffic striping, aerially deposited lead along the roadways,

Union Pacific Railroad, and OCPs at the historical orchard. For an in-depth discussion of data collection, testing, and evaluation of results of the assessment, see Appendix F.

To evaluate appropriate soil management for the lead impacted soil, samples were tested from Rancho Road and McGowan Parkway. One sample along McGowan Parkway and 13 samples along Rancho Road exceeded the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Residential Soil Screening Level of 80 mg/kg (DTSC 2022). Due to the potential for disturbance of ADL during construction, the following mitigation is required:

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-2:**

> The contractor shall conduct all grading operations in accordance with the Department of Toxic Substances, Caltrans Soil Management Agreement for Aerially Deposited Lead-Contaminated Soils (Agreement), June 30, 2016, and with the awareness that lead impacted soils are present on McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road. Construction project documents shall include a site-specific Health and Safety Plan and special Soil Management Plan (SMP) to address elevated levels of lead along McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road. The SMP shall be in accordance with all applicable Cal/OSHA requirements and, at a minimum, the SMP shall include measures to control worker exposure to soil, airborne dust, and control runoff along both McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road.

Because none of the detected metals other than lead exceeded screening levels, special construction considerations are not required for these metals. In addition, no special construction considerations are required for Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons. Testing concentrations of Organochlorine Pesticides, Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds, Volatile Organic Compounds, and pH values were below screening levels and laboratory limits. (Blackburn 2021b)

While lead and chromium from traffic striping were not detected above their respective laboratory reporting limits, the following mitigation measure would be required to minimize the potential for toxic fumes from construction activities:

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-3:**

> The contractor shall use general dust controls during paint striping removal on McGowan Parkway Road. In addition, the contractor shall include measures to minimize dust or debris leading to or near storm drains, waterways, and other sources of water during construction activities that include removal of paint striping.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 and HAZ-2, potential impacts to construction workers due to accidental discovery of hazardous materials would be reduced to less-than-significant levels, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Question (c) Hazardous emissions or materials near a school: Less-than-significant Impact.** While there are several schools in Olivehurst located within 0.25 miles of the proposed project pipelines and pump stations (PS-1, PS-26), the pipelines within Olivehurst Avenue and McGowan Parkway would be located underground and would be designed to comply with local, state, and federal safety requirements as discussed under Question (a) above. The two cited pump stations would be enclosed within locked, fenced areas and, except for fuel for the emergency generators, no hazardous or potentially hazardous chemicals or other materials would be stored at either of the two

stations. Therefore, while the proposed wastewater pipeline would transport potential pollutants that have the potential to create a significant hazard to the public within 0.25 miles of an existing school, the potential risk of upset or release of these hazardous materials that could affect an existing or proposed school is considered minimal. The impact to those attending nearby existing schools would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (d) Included on list of hazardous materials sites: No Impact.** According to environmental records search completed for the Phase 1 ISA (Blackburn 2021b), the proposed water distribution and wastewater collection system improvements would not pass through a site identified on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5. While there are RECs located adjacent to the project limits as discussed in Question (b) above, there are no records or indications of a hazardous materials site within project boundaries, and, as a result, implementation of the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. No impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (e) Safety hazard or excessive noise near airports: Less-than-significant Impact.** While portions of the project are located in an Airport Influence Area of the Yuba County Airport (SACOG 2011), proposed above-ground project facilities (such as the WWTP and three pump stations) within Safety Zones would be compatible with airport operations (SACOG 2011). Thus, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area due to aircraft over-flight and a less-than-significant impact would occur.

For an analysis of the potential noise effects related to construction and operation of the proposed project, see Section XIII, *Noise*.

**Question (f) Impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response/evacuation plan: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** The proposed pipeline would be placed within existing public ROW within Yuba County. Freeways and major county roads would be used as primary evacuation routes in the event of emergency. During construction and installation of underground pipeline within local roads and the public ROW, there may be temporary lane closures that could cause delays in traffic and emergency response. However, emergency vehicles would be expedited through the construction zone, and emergency service providers would be informed of the project so they could choose alternate routes as needed. All impacts related to lane closures would cease after project completion. Further, the proposed project would not result in an increased concentration of large numbers of persons in an at-risk location. As described in Section XVII, *Transportation*, a Traffic Control Plan would be prepared for construction to minimize traffic conflicts.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-4:**

Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1.

Other roads in the vicinity of the proposed project offer alternative routes for evacuation, and construction effects on emergency circulation would be temporary and well managed. With implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1, this would be a less-than-significant impact, and no additional mitigation would be required.

**Question (g) Exposure to risk involving wildland fires: Less-than-significant Impact.** The Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for Yuba County indicates that project components are located in

the Non-Wildland / Non-Urban, Urban Unzoned, and with limited areas in the Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones (Yuba County 2021). The pipeline alignment traverses areas designated as a Local Responsibility Area (CalFIRE 2007). The project would be located in areas where the threat of wildland fire has been determined to be unlikely to moderate (CalFIRE 2007). Implementation of the proposed water and wastewater improvements project would not affect wildland fire risk or hazards. Therefore, a less-than-significant hazard would occur related to risk of loss, injury, or death due to wildland fire with implementation of the proposed project. No mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Land uses and development consistent with the 2030 General Plan would allow development of new residential, commercial, and industrial uses. New residential development would result in increased use, storage, and disposal of household hazardous materials. New commercial and industrial development would also result in increased use, storage, and/or disposal of hazardous materials during routine operations. The amount of hazardous materials transported through the County on main local and regional routes, the UPRR, and state routes (i.e., SRs 20, 65, and 70) is likely to increase as a result of new development accommodated under the 2030 General Plan and regional growth. Transportation of hazardous materials on area roadways is regulated by CHP and Caltrans, and use of these materials is regulated by DTSC, as outlined in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) (through the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act), and other regulatory agencies (including the California Public Utilities Commission for natural gas transmission lines) provide standards designed to avoid releases including provisions regarding securing materials and container design. Facilities developed under the 2030 General Plan that would use hazardous materials on-site would be required to obtain permits and comply with appropriate regulatory agency standards designed to avoid hazardous waste releases and protect the public health.

Projects potentially developed under the General Plan that would involve the use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials are subject to regulations that are designed to protect the public health. The above 2030 General Plan policies also require consideration of hazardous materials issues in the land use planning process. Implementation of current state and federal regulations, as well as the policies of the 2030 General Plan may not prevent all potential releases of hazardous materials, but would serve to minimize both the frequency and the magnitude, if such a release occurs. In combination with existing federal and State regulations, these policies would also reduce the potential impacts of the routine transportation of hazardous materials in the County. This impact would be less than significant.

The California Department of Education enforces school siting requirements, and new facilities would not be constructed within 1/4 mile of facilities emitting or handling materials based on these requirements. Furthermore, permitting requirements for individual hazardous material handlers or emitters, including enforcement of Public Resources Code Section 21151.4, would require evaluation and notification where potential material handling and emission could occur in proximity to schools. The 2030 General Plan ensures that state laws regarding the location of school sites are followed during new development. In addition, consideration is made of land uses potentially handling hazardous materials, which would further ensure that such land uses are not developed in proximity to schools. In addition, enforcement of California Department of Education school siting regulations, permitting requirements for individual hazardous material handlers and emitters, and enforcement of Public Resources Code Section 21151.4 during project-level environmental review

for projects developed under the General Plan would prevent future conflicts between hazardous materials handling and emissions and schools. This impact would be less than significant.

Ground disturbance associated with development at sites listed on a known hazardous materials site list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List) could potentially result in the exposure of construction workers, the public, and the environment to hazards associated with contaminated soil and/or groundwater if not properly remediated and/or monitored. The vast majority of planned development under the 2030 General Plan is not expected to occur in areas listed in the Envirostor database. For areas with existing hazardous materials issues, 2030 General Plan policies and actions, in addition to application of current regulations would not absolutely prevent exposure to hazards and hazardous materials, but would use existing facility information to identify areas of hazardous materials use. In combination with existing required federal and State regulations pertaining to hazardous site cleanup, these policies would also reduce the potential impacts of development on listed hazardous materials sites in the County under the 2030 General Plan. Ongoing remediation activities combined with the implementation of required federal and State regulations and the 2030 General Plan policies and action listed about would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.

Implementation of the 2030 General Plan could result in land uses and development located near airports within Yuba County. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) serves as the County ALUC, which is empowered by State law to prepare the CLUP for airports located in the County. SACOG ensures the orderly development of airports and the adoption of land use measures to minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports, to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses. Development in the vicinity of airports would be subject to discretionary review as well as review by the County ALUC, in this case, SACOG. Projects would be required to comply with the ALUC's adopted CLUP, which provides safety, noise, and compatibility standards that reduce the likelihood of accidents affecting land uses on the ground. This, along with the policies and actions from the 2030 General Plan listed above, would ensure that incompatible land uses are not placed in areas with a higher risk of aircraft crashes and that all applicable regulations are implemented, ensuring that this impact would be less than significant.

The County participates in updates and implementation of Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans, which are designed to mitigate against the hazards that affect Yuba County, protecting the lives and property of all of its citizens, as well as reducing the costs to the County. However, the focus of General Plan policy, given the County's jurisdiction and the role of general plans, is on the location of development, design of circulation systems, and other physical elements that are required for emergency response, as opposed to programmatic elements of emergency preparedness and response. An efficient roadway and circulation system is vital for the evacuation of residents and the mobility of fire suppression, emergency response, and law enforcement vehicles. Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would create additional traffic and develop new residences and businesses requiring evacuation in case of an emergency. In addition to the operation of the Yuba County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and implementation of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, implementation of the 2030 General Plan policies and action listed above would ensure that future development would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation plans, thereby protecting County residents from adverse effects in the event of a disaster. This impact is considered less than significant.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the County-wide cumulative impacts described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects related to hazards or hazardous materials set forth in this section concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant after mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

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

## PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project consists of five components. For project components that are above ground, such a pump and lift stations, and the water and wastewater treatment plants, there is the potential for impacts to hydrology and water quality. Table 11 illustrates the details of the project components that could generate potential impacts to hydrology or water quality. For more information regarding each project component, refer to Section 2, *Project Description*, and Appendix A of this Initial Study.

**Table 11 Potential for Hydrology or Water Quality Effects by Project Component**

| Component No. | Component | Location | Above/Below Ground | Stormwater Discharge | Within Special Flood Hazard Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | SSO reduction measures | Olivehurst | Below | n/a | n/a |
| | Mary Ave/McGowan Pkwy/Olivehurst Ave pipelines | Olivehurst | Below | n/a | n/a |
| | PS-1 | Olivehurst | Above | Existing storm drain | No |
| | PS-2 | Olivehurst | Above | Existing storm drain | No |
| | PS-26 | Olivehurst | Above | Existing storm drain | No |
| | SR 70 HDD Crossing | Olivehurst | Below | n/a | n/a |

| Table 11 | Potential for Hydrology or Water Quality Effects by Project Component | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Component No.** | **Component** | **Location** | **Above/Below Ground** | **Stormwater Discharge** | **Within Special Flood Hazard Area** |
| 2 | Modify WWTP | Olivehurst | Above | Existing and expanded onsite facilities | No |
| 3 | Rancho Rd/Forty Mile Rd wastewater pipelines | Olivehurst | Below | n/a | n/a |
| | PS-21 | Rural | Above | Roadside ditch w/ energy dissipation | No |
| | LS-22 | Rural | Above | Roadside ditch w/ energy dissipation | Possible |
| | LS-23 | Rural | Above | Roadside ditch w/ energy dissipation | No |
| | LS-24 | Rural | Above | Roadside ditch w/ energy dissipation | No |
| | PS-25 | Rural | Above | Connection to in-process storm drain | Yes |
| | SR 65 HDD Crossing | Olivehurst | Below | n/a | n/a |
| | SR 65 HDD Crossing | Rural | Below | n/a | n/a |
| 4 | Water Plant | Rural | Above | Connection to in-process storm drain | No |
| | Water pipelines | Rural | Below | n/a | n/a |
| 5 | City of Wheatland connection pipelines | Rural | Below | n/a | n/a |
| General | Appurtenant Facilities | Urban | Above | To be designed | No |
| | | Rural | Above | To be designed | Potentially |

*Source: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2023, Planning Partners 2023.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Yuba County is located in the northern portion of California along the eastern edge of the Sacramento Valley within the Sacramento River Basin, which is one of the largest basins in California, encompassing approximately 26,500 square miles. The County occupies portions of California's Central Valley and Sierra Nevada geomorphic provinces. The County is predominantly drained by the Feather, Yuba, and Bear Rivers, which flow into the Sacramento River and ultimately into the Pacific Ocean through San Francisco Bay.

The valley area, encompassing the western portion of Yuba County, is dominated by agriculture (e.g., field and tree crops, rice), urbanized areas, and Beale Air Force Base. Elevations within the western county range from approximately 30 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the Feather River, increasing easterly to approximately 250 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the western Sierra Nevada foothill area.

### SURFACE WATER

Yuba County's boundaries are marked by its major rivers. In the project vicinity, the western boundary of Yuba County is formed by the Feather River. The Bear River flows along the southern boundary. The nearest proposed project facility at the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is located 2.2 miles east of the Feather River; the Bear River is located 3.6 miles south of the terminus

of the Wheatland wastewater pipeline near the intersection of Rancho Road and SR 65. Several intermittent streams transect the project area, including Reeds Creek, Hutchison Creek, Kimball Creek and Virginia Creek. The WWTP discharges tertiary treated water into the Clark Lateral, that then flows through the Western Pacific Interceptor Canal (WPIC) through Reeds Creek, through the Bear River, to the Feather River. At multiple locations along the pipeline alignments, roadside ditches and depressions are present that support a range of hydrologic characteristics.

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires that California report on the quality of its surface waters every two years. California surface waters are assessed to determine if they contain pollutants at levels that exceed protective water quality standards. Both the Feather River and Bear River in southwestern Yuba County have been identified as streams with identified water quality exceedances by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Identified pollutants listed for the Bear River include copper, chlorpyrifos (a pesticide used in agriculture), and mercury. Pollutants that adversely affect water quality in the Feather River are mercury, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), chlorpyrifos, Group A pesticides, and toxicity (SWRCB 2023). No streams or other surface water features within the South County Infrastructure project boundaries have been identified as being impaired.

## GROUNDWATER

The valley floor is underlain by an alluvial aquifer system that contains significant quantities of groundwater, while the foothill and mountain areas are underlain by a fractured rock aquifer. Historically, groundwater flows from the eastern boundary of Yuba County toward the western boundary of the county. The hydraulic gradient dips steeply from the Sierra Nevada Mountain front, which abuts the eastern boundary of the County and gradually flattens out toward the west, eventually discharging into the Feather River. Groundwater in Yuba County is divided into two subbasins of the larger Sacramento Valley Groundwater Basin: the North Yuba Subbasin and the South Yuba Subbasin. The community of Olivehurst, the service area of OPUD, and the components of the South County Infrastructure Project are located within the South Yuba Subbasin.

The South Yuba Subbasin has ground water levels that range from about 25 feet msl along portions of the Highway 70 to 140 feet msl at the edge of the subbasin near the Yuba River and Beale AFB. Near the center of the subbasin, groundwater is found at about 45 feet msl (Yuba 2011a). Groundwater levels in the South Yuba Subbasin have historically exhibited a well-developed regional cone of depression since as early as the 1940s. The cone of depression starts on the western side of Beale AFB and continues into the central region (west of Beale AFB) of the subbasin (Yuba 2011a). In 1960, nearly all water levels in the subbasin were well below adjacent river levels on the Bear, Feather, and Yuba Rivers because of reliance on groundwater pumping. (YWCA 2019)

By 1984, water levels in the center of the South Yuba cone of depression had fallen to 30 feet below sea level. The water level contours adjacent to the Bear and Yuba Rivers indicated a large gradient and seepage from the rivers (DWR, 2006b). Groundwater levels in the South Yuba Subbasin have recovered since the introduction of surface water deliveries to the subbasin in 1983. (YCWA 2022)

Similar to most groundwater basins in the state, groundwater levels typically decline in summer and recover in the fall and winter. This follows patterns of use and recharge. More groundwater use

occurs in the summer to irrigate fields and water lawns, and more recharge occurs in the winter from precipitation and higher streamflow.

During Water Year (WY) 2021, the recorded precipitation in Yuba County was 7.16 inches, representing 35.1% of long-term average precipitation (WY 1948 – 2021), as measured at Marysville. Yuba River flow at Smartsville for the same period was 600,000 acre-feet, representing about 24% of the long-term average flow (WY 1901 – 2021) at that location. (YCWA 2022) During WY 2021, groundwater use was estimated at 155,860 acre-feet (AF) for the South Yuba Subbasin (146% of average since 2013). This compares to recent annual groundwater use (since 1990 in the South Yuba Subbasin between 69,000 (in 2019) and 160,000 AF (in 1991). Surface water use during WY 2021 is estimated at 73,760 AF for the South Yuba Subbasin (78% of average since 2013).

Based on estimates using the Yuba Groundwater Model (YGM), from beginning to end of WY 2021, the South Yuba Subbasin saw a decrease in storage of approximately 81,000 AF. Though groundwater in storage decreased in the South Yuba Subbasin during WY 2021, cumulative change in storage since WY 1961 was approximately +151,000 AF by WY 2021 in the South Yuba Subbasin. This represents a long-term improvement to conditions in the South Yuba Subbasin. (YCWA 2022)

Groundwater level data were collected by the Yuba County Water Agency at 18 representative monitoring wells in the South Yuba Subbasin during WY 2021. Comparing March 2021 measurements to established sustainable management criteria, groundwater levels were above the minimum threshold and local management level at all representative monitoring wells (higher levels are better for groundwater levels) within the South Yuba Subbasin. Groundwater levels were above the measurable objective at 16 wells in the South Yuba Subbasin. Groundwater levels were at or above the historically full aquifer levels at 6 wells in the South Yuba Subbasin. (YCWA 2022)

The evaluation of groundwater level data in the South Yuba Subbasin conducted for water supply studies in OPUD's service area also show large groundwater level declines prior to 1983 and a similar amount of recovery since 1983. The magnitude of the declines and subsequent recovery ranged from 10 feet or less at the edges of the basin to 85 feet in the center of the cone of depression. By 2005, water levels in most wells had recovered to 1950s levels or higher, and the cone of depression was no longer present. The water level data show no indication of overdraft occurring in the subbasin at present. (OPUD 2022)

The South Yuba Subbasin is also not expected to become overdrafted in the future based on projected groundwater pumpage and surface water deliveries. Unlike many medium- and high-priority basins and subbasins managed under Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP), groundwater extraction in the Yuba Subbasins does not exceed the sustainable yield, and the average annual groundwater storage is stable or increasing under all scenarios, suggesting sustainable conditions. Therefore, the South Yuba Subbasin is expected to be reliable in all years and over the 25-year planning horizon of the OPUD 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). (OPUD 2022)

Regional groundwater quality in the South Yuba Subbasin is considered good to excellent for municipal, domestic, and agricultural uses and does not have a significant adverse impact on the beneficial uses of groundwater in the subbasin. There is naturally occurring arsenic, iron, and manganese in some areas that may have concentrations that exceed the associated drinking water thresholds, although such occurrences are limited. Instances with elevated concentrations may be

addressed through treatment, blending, use of supplies at different depths or locations, or through non-potable uses not sensitive to the constituent. Beale Air Force Base and other localized contaminated sites are present in the subbasin but are under remediation overseen by the State and federal regulatory agencies. (Yuba County 2011b)

## NEAR SURFACE GROUNDWATER

Trenching to construct both water and wastewater pipelines and excavation to construct wet wells at pump and lift stations could approach 30 feet in depth. At this depth, there is the potential to intercept perched, near surface groundwater. In support of the development engineering for the South County Infrastructure Project, soil borings were completed to determine soil conditions. These borings also identified the presence or absence of near-surface groundwater and the depth that it could be encountered. Tables 12-15 present the results of this testing. Based on this information, the depth to groundwater across the project areas typically ranges from 20 to 30 feet, although it occasionally is measured above 20 feet or below 30 feet.

**Table 12 Pipeline Depth to Groundwater**

| Street | Boring Depth (feet) | Approximate Depth to Groundwater (feet) |
|---|---|---|
| Mary Avenue | 21.5 | Not Encountered |
| McGowan Parkway | 15.0 – 61.5 | 23 - 36 |
| McGowan Parkway/Olive Avenue | 16.5 – 51.5 | 29-31 |
| SR 65 Median | 41.5 | 25.0 |
| Rancho Road | 15-51.5 | 15 – 27.5 |
| Rancho Road | 14.5 – 51.5 | 14 - 25 |
| Rancho Road | 21.0 – 41.5 | 28 |
| Rancho Road | 16.5 – 51.5 | 36 |
| Rancho Road | 21.5 – 41.5 | 40 |
| Rancho Road | 15 | Not encountered |
| Forty Mile Road | 15 – 51.4 | 26 – 37.5 |
| Forty Mile Road | 21.5 – 51.5 | 17 – 32 |
| Forty Mile Road | 14.5 – 16.5 | Not encountered |
| Forty Mile Road | 15 | Not encountered |
| Rosser Rd to Shimer Road | 41.5 | 21.5 – 35.0 |
| Olivehurst Avenue | 16.5 – 41.5 | Not encountered |

*Source: Blackburn Consulting, 2021a.*

**Table 13 Freeway Crossings Depth to Groundwater**

| HDD Location | Boring Depth (feet) | Approximate Depth to Groundwater (feet) |
|---|---|---|
| McGowan Parkway under SR 70 | 6.15 | 31 – 36 |
| Olive Ave to Ranch Road Under SR 65 | 41.5 – 51.5 | 25 – 31 |
| Rosser Rd to Shimer Road Under SR 65 | 41.5 | 21.5 - 35 |

*Source: Blackburn Consulting, 2021a.*

**Table 14 Waterway Trenchless Crossings Depth to Groundwater**

| Waterway | Boring Depth (feet) | Approximate Depth to Groundwater (feet) |
|---|---|---|
| Rancho Road under Reeds Creek | 51.5 | 14 – 23 |
| Rancho Road under Hutchinson Creek | 51.5 | 25 |
| Rancho Road under Kimball Creek | 51.5 | 24 |
| Rancho Road under Virginia Creek | 51.0 | 36 – 38.5 |
| Forty Mile Road under Kimball Creek | 51.5 | 17 - 24 |

*Source: Blackburn Consulting, 2021a.*

**Table 15 Pump Stations/Lift Stations Depth to Groundwater**

| Pump/Lift Station | Boring Depth (feet) | Approximate Depth to Groundwater (feet) | Depth of Wet Well (feet) |
|---|---|---|---|
| PS-1 – Olivehurst Avenue | 41.5 | 23 | 24 - 33 |
| PS-2 – McGowan Parkway | | To be determined | To be determined |
| PS-26 – McGowan Parkway | 41.5 | 23 | 40.5 |
| PS-21 – Rancho Rd/Shimer Road | 41.5 | 23 | 41.3 |
| LS-22 - Rancho Rd/Kimball Creek | 41.5 | 19 | 23.4 |
| LS-23 – Rancho Rd/Virginia Creek | 41.5 | 40 | 27.2 |
| LS-24 – Forty Mile Road | 41.5 | 37.5 | 40.7 |
| PS-25 – Forty Mile Road | 41.2 | 27 | 37 |

*Source: Blackburn Consulting, 2021a.*

## FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

Flooding within the South County Infrastructure Project areas is complex. Flood events can occur on both a regional basis and locally. Within the community of Olivehurst, many streets and areas lack developed storm drainage facilities and are subject to nuisance flooding during rain events. Yuba County is pursuing a program to construct and improve stormwater drainage within the area in a multi-facility program of improving roads, providing curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, and storm drain facilities. Additionally, OPUD, through the South County Infrastructure project SSO components, is seeking to avoid or reduce pollution during storm events due to overflowing sewers.

On a regional basis, Olivehurst and the South County Infrastructure Project are exposed to a number of sources of flooding from the Feather River, Bear River, backflow from the Bear River, and local streams such as Reeds Creek, Hutchison Creek, Kimball Creek or Virginia Creek. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified areas exposed to flooding within the project areas. See Figure 12. As determined by FEMA, pipelines installed within Rancho Road between Reeds and Hutchinson Creeks and on Forty Mile Road and Rancho Road in the vicinity of Kimball Creek would be developed in a special hazard flood area subject to inundation during a 100-year (1 %) flood. Lift station 22 and pump station 25 may also be located within a special hazard flood area.

# REGULATORY SETTING

## FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### CLEAN WATER ACT

Administered by the EPA; implemented by the SWRCB and the nine RWQCBs in California; Section 303(d) requires states to develop and maintain lists of water bodies that don't attain water quality standards; Section 402 sets standards for pollutant discharges; Section 404 regulates the placement of dredge and fill materials in waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

### NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE ACT

Administered by FEMA; authorizes FEMA to develop regulations and establish requirements for floodplain management; includes requirements for obtaining flood insurance.

## STATE OF CALIFORNIA LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### CONSTRUCTION STORM WATER GENERAL PERMIT

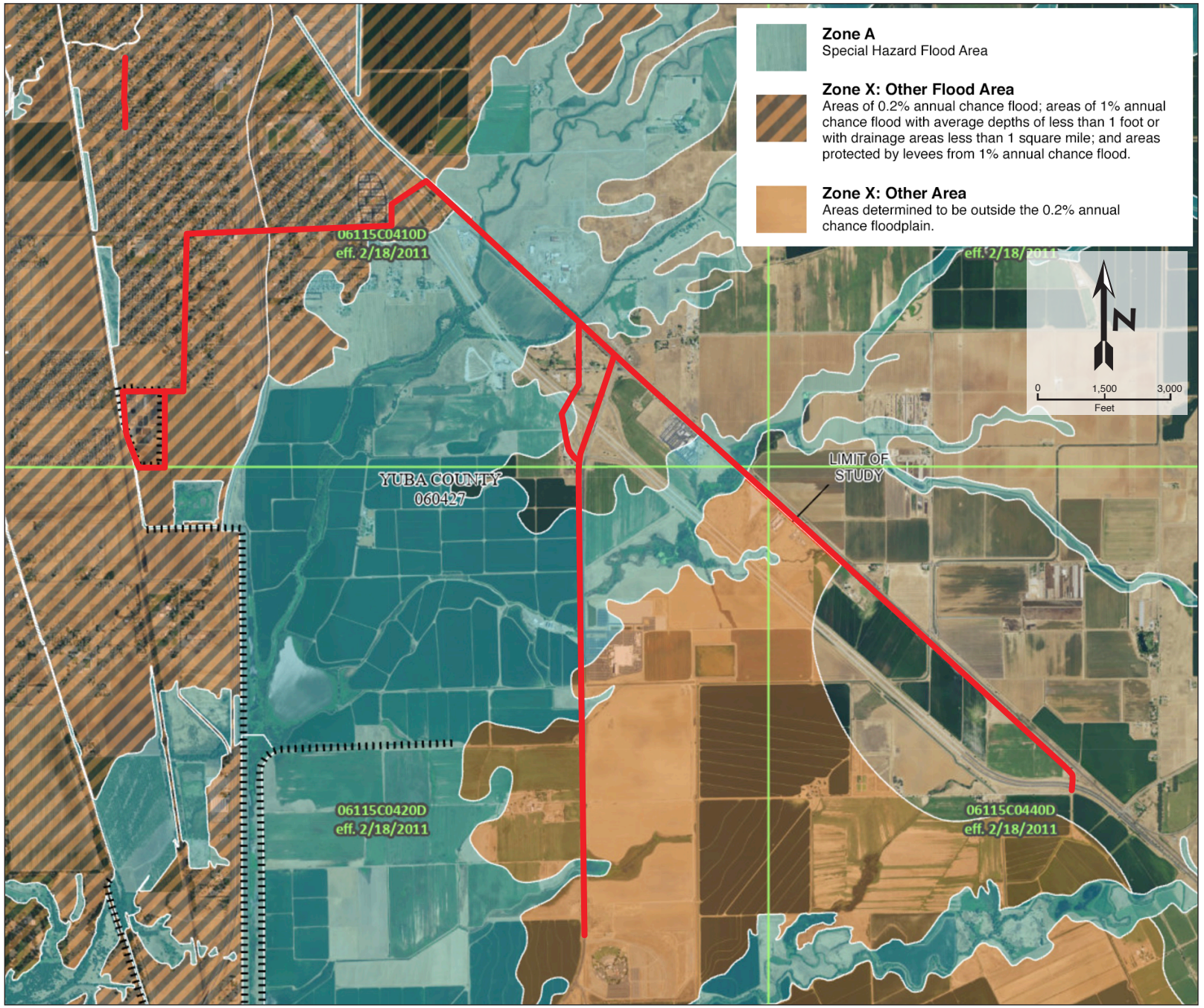
Dischargers whose project disturbs one or more acres of soil, or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction General Permit Order NO. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

### CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 404 PERMIT

If the project will involve discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACE, the Central Valley Water Regional Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards.

### CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 PERMIT – WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

If a USACE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit, Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the CVRWQCB prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications.




*South County Infrastructure Project*

SOURCE: Federal Emergency Management Agency 2023; Planning Partners 2023

**Figure 12**

FEMA Flood Zones

### WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS – DISCHARGES TO WATERS OF THE STATE

If USACE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., "non-federal" waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by CVRWQCB. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation.

Projects involving excavation or fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the state may be eligible for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004).

### DEWATERING PERMIT

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under the State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

### LIMITED THREAT GENERAL NPDES PERMIT

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be covered under the General Order for Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Water (Limited Threat General Order). A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under the Limited Threat General Order.

### NPDES PERMIT

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a NPDES permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the CVRWQCB to obtain a NPDES permit.

## YUBA COUNTY LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### YUBA COUNTY STORMWATER QUALITY ORDINANCE

Chapter 7.50 of the Yuba County Code of Ordinances establishes the County's stormwater management regulations. The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure that Yuba County is compliant with State and federal laws, and fulfills its requirements to: protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Yuba County; enhance and protect the quality of waters of the State in Yuba County by reducing pollutants in stormwater discharges to the maximum extent practicable and controlling non-stormwater discharges to the storm drain system; and to cause the use of best

management practices by the County and its citizens that will reduce the adverse effects of polluted runoff discharges on waters of the state.

The ordinance is intended to assist in the protection and enhancement of the water quality of watercourses, water bodies and wetlands in a manner pursuant to and consistent with the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Sections 1251 et seq.) and any subsequent amendments thereto, by reducing pollutants in storm water discharges to the maximum extent practicable and by prohibiting non-storm water discharges into the storm drain system. The ordinance is also intended to assist in meeting the requirements of the California State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ and any subsequent amendments thereto.

The ordinance seeks to promote these purposes by: prohibiting illicit discharges to the storm drain system; establishing authority to adopt requirements for stormwater management, including source control requirements, reducing pollution to the maximum extent practicable; establishing authority to adopt requirements for development projects to reduce stormwater pollution and erosion both during construction and after the project is complete; and establishing authority that will enable the County to implement and enforce any stormwater management plan adopted by the County.

Subject to the authority granted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the County Public Works Director, the following discharge shall not be prohibited except as otherwise provided by this ordinance to any discharge regulated under a NPDES permit issued to the discharger and administered by the State, provided that the discharger is in compliance with all requirements of the permit and other applicable laws.

#### YUBA COUNTY FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE

Chapter 10.30 of the Yuba County Code of Ordinances provides the County's floodplain management regulations. The purpose of the ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by legally enforceable regulations applied uniformly throughout the community to all publicly and privately owned land within flood-prone, mudslide, or flood related erosion areas. The ordinance provides direct and specific requirements for development within the floodplain, including that all building pad elevations must be raised to at least one foot above the Base Flood Elevation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| X.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction impacts – LTS after mitigation |
| X.b | | | | | No project use of groundwater or interference with recharge |
| X.c | | ✓ | | | No adverse effects on existing streams or waterways, or capacities of stormwater infrastructure |
| X.d | | | | | No increased exposure to flooding or other hazards |
| X.e | | | | | No conflict with GSP or Basin Plan |

**Question (a) Water quality: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** Construction of the various project components could adversely affect surface water quality during storm events or via construction dust control measures. Table 16 sets forth the activities and sources of surface water contamination.

**Table 16 Potential Project Actions Leading to Hydrology or Water Quality Effects**

| Component No. | Component | Potential Water Quality Effects |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | SSO reduction measures | |
| | Mary Ave/McGowan Pkwy/Olivehurst Ave pipelines | Trench spoils storage/reuse/disposal |
| | PS-1 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | PS-2 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | PS-26 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Wells/Paving |
| | SR 70 HDD Crossing | Pit excavation/Drill spoils |
| 2 | Modify WWTP | Grading/Excavation |
| 3 | Rancho Rd/Forty Mile Rd wastewater pipelines | Trench spoils storage/reuse/disposal |
| | PS-21 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | LS-22 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | LS-23 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | LS-24 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | PS-25 | Grading/Excavation of Dry Well/Paving |
| | SR 65 HDD Crossing (Olive Ave.) | Pit excavation/Drill spoils |
| | SR 65 HDD Crossing (Shimer Rd.) | Pit excavation/Drill spoils |
| 4 | Water Plant | Grading/Water well development/Paving |
| | Water pipelines | Trench spoils storage/reuse/disposal |
| 5 | City of Wheatland connection pipelines | Trench spoils storage/reuse/disposal |
| General | Appurtenant Facilities | Grading/Equipment maintenance/Construction chemical and fuel storage |

*Sources: Jacobs Engineering, Inc. 2022, Planning Partners 2023.*

Each of these project activities has the potential to release sediment, chemicals, and other materials used in construction either accidentally or through construction operations.

## CONSTRUCTION

### ALL PROJECT COMPONENTS

Project construction activities have the potential to affect water quality and contribute to localized violations of water quality standards if impacted stormwater runoff from construction activities enters waterways in the project vicinity, including Reeds Creek, Hutchinson Creek, Kimball Creek, Virginia Creek, or other unnamed intermittent streams in the project areas. Urban stormwater collection and management facilities within the community of Olivehurst vary from formal stormwater collection and treatment facilities to unmaintained roadside ditches. The discharges from construction activities within the Olivehurst urban area could adversely affect stormwater quality in the community.

Soils exposed by construction activities have the potential to affect water quality in two ways: 1) suspended soil particles and sediments transported through runoff; or 2) sediments transported as dust that eventually reach local water bodies. Spills or leaks from heavy equipment and machinery, staging areas, or building sites also have the potential to affect runoff water quality. Typical pollutants include, but are not limited to, petroleum and heavy metals from equipment and products such as paints, solvents, and cleaning agents, which could contain hazardous constituents. Drilling muds (bentonite and/or polymers) would be used during horizontal drilling operations. Sediment from erosion of graded or excavated surface materials, leaks or spills from equipment, or inadvertent releases of building products could result in water quality degradation if runoff containing the sediment or contaminants should enter receiving waters in sufficient quantities. Discharge of polluted stormwater or non-stormwater runoff could violate waste discharge requirements. However, in general, impacts from construction-related activities would be short-term and of limited duration at any one location.

Erosion control measures would be required in accordance with Yuba County Department of Public Works Improvement Standards and Specifications, and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be required for those project components that are within the Olivehurst urban area.

Because the proposed project would disturb more than one acre, OPUD or its contractor would be required to obtain a General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit from the SWRCB for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities. This permit would require the implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP must contain Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce soil erosion and protect stormwater runoff. In addition, a Notice of Intent (NOI) would be filed with CVRWQCB and Yuba County.

Development of the SWPPP would include plans to treat stormwater runoff in accordance with the standards of the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) Stormwater BMP Handbook for New Development and Redevelopment. Yuba County Code of Ordinances Section 11.23.050 requires applications for grading permits to provide evidence of coverage under the NPDES Program.

Non-stormwater management and material management controls reduce non-sediment-related pollutants from potentially leaving the construction site. The Construction General Permit prohibits the discharge of materials other than stormwater and authorized non-stormwater discharges (such as pipe flushing and testing). Non-stormwater BMPs tend to be management practices with the purpose of preventing stormwater from coming into contact with potential pollutants. Examples of non-stormwater BMPs include preventing illicit discharges, and implementing good practices for vehicle and equipment maintenance, cleaning, and fueling operations, such as using drip pans under vehicles. Waste and materials management BMPs include implementing practices and procedures to prevent pollution from materials used on construction sites. Examples of materials management BMPs include the following:

- Good housekeeping activities such as storing of materials covered and elevated off the ground, in a central location;
- Securely locating portable toilets away from the storm drainage system and performing routine maintenance;
- Providing a central location for concrete washout and performing routine maintenance;

- Providing several dumpsters and trash cans throughout the construction site for litter/floatable management; and
- Covering and/or containing stockpiled materials and overall good housekeeping on the site.

While the final materials management BMPs to be used during construction of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project are currently unknown, the project would likely include a combination of the BMP examples listed above. Final BMPs for the proposed project construction would be chosen in consultation with the CASQA Stormwater BMP Handbook for New Development and Redevelopment, and implemented by the project contractor.

In accordance with the Construction General Permit, the project site would also be inspected during construction before and after storm events and every 24 hours during extended storm events in order to identify maintenance requirements for the implemented BMPs and to determine the effectiveness of the implemented BMPs. The site-specific SWPPP that would be prepared for the proposed project would be modified as construction activities progress. A Qualified SWPPP Practitioner (QSP) would ensure compliance with the SWPPP through regular monitoring and visual inspections during construction activities. The QSP for the project would amend the SWPPP and revise project BMPs as determined necessary through field inspections to protect against substantial erosion or siltation on- or off- site.

Construction of the various South County Infrastructure Project components may not occur as a single construction project, but rather as a series of individual components that could be constructed over an unknown period of time. Additionally, because a SWPPP has not yet been prepared for the entire project or individual project components, the proposed project could result in a significant impact related to short-term construction-related water quality. To ensure implementation of stormwater requirements to avoid siltation or other adverse effects and ensure that State and local requirements to protect water quality would occur, the following mitigation measure would be required.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1:**

A. OPUD or its contractor shall submit Permit Registration Documents (PRD) for the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ to the State Water Resources Control Board, and comply with, and implement, all requirements of the permit. A Legally Responsible Person (LRP) shall electronically submit PRDs prior to commencement of construction activities in the Storm Water Multi-Application Report Tracking System. PRDs consist of the Notice of Intent, Risk Assessment, Post-Construction Calculations, a Site Map, the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), a signed certification statement by the LRP, and the first annual fee. Following submittal of a Notice of Intent package and development of a SWPPP in accordance with the Construction General Permit, OPUD or its contractor will receive a Waste Discharge Identification Number from the SWRCB. All requirements of the site-specific SWPPP, including any revisions, shall be included in construction documents for the project. Prior to the initiation of any construction, proof of registration shall be submitted to the Yuba County Director of Public Works for review and approval and shall remain on the project site during all phases of construction.

B. For those project components within the Olivehurst urban area, OPUD or its contractor will apply for and obtain an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan in accordance with Yuba

County Department of Public Works Improvement Standards and Specifications, and implement all identified erosion control measures set forth in the Plan.

With implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-1, the proposed project is not expected to violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements during construction. Compliance with applicable requirements would minimize project impacts to water quality. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

#### ENCOUNTERED SHALLOW GROUND WATER DURING CONSTRUCTION

As described in Tables 12 to 15, shallow groundwater can be encountered between 14 and 42 feet below the ground surface (bgs) in the areas that would be affected by the construction of the project components. Although groundwater was present at the time depths were calculated, the depth to perched groundwater varies with the time of year, with the lowest levels present in the fall.

Generally, trenching for the installation of wastewater force mains and water pipelines would not be expected to encounter perched groundwater. However, along Rancho Road in the vicinity of lift stations LS-22 and LS-23, because of the depth of the sanitary sewer pipelines, groundwater could be intercepted. Similarly, based on current information, the construction of wet wells at four of the lift/pump stations could encounter groundwater (PS-1, PS-26, PS-21, and PS-25). The Geotechnical Basis of Design Report prepared for the project identified the potential to encounter groundwater for facilities greater than approximately 15 feet bgs at the WWTP and 20 bgs for the lift/pump stations (Blackburn 2021a). Dewatering would be required if the construction of project components encountered perched groundwater. The discharge of groundwater, especially to roadside ditches in rural areas of the project, could contribute to pollution of existing surface waters with sediments. This would be a significant impact. To avoid encountering perched groundwater or avoid the release of pollutants should groundwater be encountered and require dewatering, implementation of the following mitigation would be required.

### Mitigation Measure HYD-2

Groundwater elevations were taken during the geotechnical exploration phase of the project design, and noted in the Geotechnical Data Report. However, groundwater elevations in the project areas will vary by season, and it is known that overall groundwater elevations in the South Yuba Basin are trending to rising slightly since surface water has been substituted for groundwater for agricultural use in the project area. OPUD or its contractor shall monitor groundwater and conduct construction operations in a manner intended to avoid pumping for groundwater control, using one or more of the following sub-measures:

A. Monitor groundwater elevations on a seasonal basis, and construct improvements (for all project components, but specifically auger bores, pump and lift station wet wells, and pipelines) during those time periods when pumping for groundwater control can be avoided.
B. If possible, given the depth of encountered groundwater, tremie concrete could be used in the bottom of pump and lift station wet wells, or
C. In the event that groundwater pumping is to be pursued by OPUD or its contractor, OPUD or the contractor shall apply for and obtain a Low Threat Discharge Permit and any other permits necessary for such pumping. Permits that may be required include NPDES permit requirements and CVRWQCB requirements, which may include the approval of a Dewatering Permit. Appropriate groundwater handling and disposal would be ensured as

part of the SWPPP for the project and would include collection and treatment measures prior to discharge.

**WELL DEVELOPMENT**

Development of the water plant includes drilling a production water well. The well construction process requires the use of water during drilling and construction. For the South County Improvements Project water plant (WP), construction water would be provided by an existing agricultural well located southwest of the WP site. Construction water would be delivered by a temporary above-ground pipeline. During well development and pump testing of the well, discharge water would be disposed of in such a manner as to cause the least impact to the site and vicinity. During well development and construction, water containing solids[6], including sand and silts, would be transported via a 12-inch above-ground pipe to an adjacent settling basin east of the project site. Water in the 500,000 gallon capacity settling basin would be allowed to percolate into the ground or evaporate. The project contractor would provide temporary earth berms as necessary to retain water within the basin to prevent the water from entering any local waterways. After well development and testing have been completed, berms would be removed and the settling basin would be reclaimed.

Because of the turbidity of the water produced during well development and the lack of developed stormwater collection and treatment in the project vicinity, this would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the chance that local waterways would be adversely affected by well development.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-3**

A. Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1 and include the proposed water well and its settling basin within the NPDES permit.
B. In coordination with Yuba County, all construction activities shall implement stormwater pollution prevention Best Management Practices (BMP) designed to reduce potential impacts to water quality during construction of the water well, including, but not limited to:
    1. Protecting adjacent properties and waterways from the discharge of sediment or other contaminants from the well construction site,
    2. Scheduling as much project work as possible during the dry season,
    3. Using other BMPs as necessary, including applying rainy season erosion controls, managing stockpiles, disposing of well development water properly, and correctly managing and disposing of construction wastes,
    4. Maintaining all Best Management Practices, and
    5. Stabilizing the site after construction is complete, including removing sediment from the settling basin.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure HYD-3 and compliance with applicable requirements would minimize well development impacts to water quality. After mitigation, a less-than-significant impact would result, and no additional mitigation would be necessary.

[6] Turbid development water discharged to the settling basin would have a turbidity value defined by Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU) of 100-500 NTU.

**OPERATIONS**

During operation, implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not adversely affect groundwater or surface water quality. All pipelines would be placed underground, and all pump and lift stations, though located above-ground would be isolated by the wastewater collection system from surface water and groundwater. No adverse effects due to decreased water quality would occur. Therefore, the impact to water quality from operations would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Groundwater supply: Less-than-significant Impact.** The only project components that would influence the use of groundwater are the South County Infrastructure water plant and associated water mains. This component of the overall project is intended to provide municipal and industrial water in the future to land uses developed consistent with the land use policies of the Yuba County 2030 General Plan. No groundwater would be used by the SSO, Wheatland, or wastewater components of the project. Since no land uses have been proposed for the South County Service Area, the proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies, nor interfere with groundwater recharge. Impacts would be considered less than significant, and no mitigation would be necessary. For further information regarding the impacts of future urban development within the South County Service Area, see Sections XI, Land Use and Planning, and XIV, Population and Housing, of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.

**Questions (c.i) (c.ii) (c.iv) Drainage patterns: Less-than-significant Impact:** Installation of below ground water and wastewater pipelines would not interfere with drainage patterns in areas affected by the project. Pipelines installed within Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road would cross under existing waterways using directional drilling techniques. There would be no effect on the bed or banks of Reeds Creek, Hutchinson Creek, Kimball Creek, or Virginia Creek within the project area. Impervious surfaces within five lift stations and pump stations located in rural areas of the project would average 9,200 square feet each in paved area. This would result in a minor increase in impervious area over the 825 acre nominal project area.

The proposed pipelines would be constructed within the paved sections of public roadways within the project area. After the pipelines are installed, the ground surface above the pipe would be restored to its original condition (e.g., repaved within streets or backfilled with native soil in areas outside of paved roadways). Therefore, implementation of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would not modify surface water drainage patterns, and would not cause localized off-site migration of runoff, erosion, and/or impede or redirect flood flows. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (c.iii) Exceedance of Capacity: Less-than-significant Impact:** The OPUD WWTP discharges tertiary treated water (consisting of filters and ultraviolet light (UV) disinfection) into the Clark Lateral. The treated water then flows through the Western Pacific Interceptor Canal (WPIC), through Reeds Creek, through the Bear River, to the Feather River. As a result of the proposed project, peak wet weather flow (PWWF) discharges from the OPUD WWTP would increase, thereby increasing the peak effluent flowrate discharged to the Clark Lateral and the WPIC. The proposed SSO mitigation work (project Component 1) would add an additional 3 mgd to the WWTP influent flowrate. Additionally, the City of Wheatland would send their sewage to the OPUD WWTP for treatment and disposal The combination of these two sources would thereby increasing overall influent flowrates.

With implementation of Component 2 of the proposed project, the peak wet weather capacity of the OPUD tertiary treatment plant would be increased by 3 mgd. Additionally, an Emergency Storage Basin of approximately 8 million gallons would be constructed to assist in storing peak flowrates received at the WWTP until storms have subsided. Therefore, total plant effluent capacity increases as a result of this component would be 3 mgd of additional flow to be discharged to the Clark Lateral and the WPIC.

Discharged sewage effluent would travel downstream in the Clark Lateral and the WPIC until it reached the South Olivehurst Detention Basin. The South Olivehurst Detention Basin,owned and operated by Yuba County, was constructed approximately 18 years ago as a storm-water detention basin and pumping station that was intended to reduce the threat of flooding to the community of Olivehurst. Prior to the construction of the Detention Basin, flooding in Olivehurst was due in part to high water levels in the Bear River that would back up in the WPIC into Olivehurst. The South Olivehurst Detention Basin was constructed to block this water from reaching the community. Flap gates (one-way gates that do not allow water from the Bear River to enter into the community of Olivehurst when the Bear River is at flood stage) were installed on the WPIC, and a detention basin was installed upstream of those gates. As high water from the Bear River backs up to the gate location, the gates automatically close, thereby blocking water passage on the WPIC into Olivehurst. Upstream stormwater from Olivehurst flows into the detention basin where pumps pass the upstream stormwater over the gates and into the downstream reach of the WPIC. The storage capacities of the detention basin and the installed pumps would be sufficient to manage the predicted incoming stormwater and sewage effluent discharged from the WWTP during peak flows. If the combination of upstream stormwater and sewage effluent from the OPUD WWTP were greater than the capabilities of the detention basin and pumps to handle, the detention basin could reach capacity and overtop.

The designer of the South Olivehurst Detention Basin (MHM, Inc) has advised that up to 20 cfs of sewage effluent can be discharged to the WPIC without impacting the ability of the South Olivehurst Detention Basin to function properly. With implementation of the proposed project, the total discharge of sewage effluent to the WPIC is not anticipated to exceed 15.5 cfs of peak wet weather discharge, an amount that would be less than the capacity of the Detention Basin and pumps. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a discharge during storm events that would exceed the capacity of the South Olivehurst Detention Basin to manage flows. This would be a less-than-significant impact and no mitigation would be necessary.

**Question (d) Flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones: Less-than-significant Impact.** While the proposed pipeline alignments run through areas located within the FEMA designated 100-year or 500-year floodplains, following installation of the pipeline, areas disturbed by construction would be returned to their original condition. The proposed project area is located over 100 miles from the Pacific Ocean at elevations ranging between 55 feet msl and 75 feet msl and distant from any lakes (Google Earth 2023). Therefore, the proposed project would not be exposed to inundation hazards related to a seiche or tsunami. Implementation of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would not increase existing flood risks, nor would it act to increase exposure of existing land uses and activities to seiche or tsunami. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (e) Conflict with water quality or sustainable groundwater management plans: Less-than-significant Impact.** The current Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Yuba Subbasins was adopted in 2019. As noted above under Question a, the proposed project would be required to implement a SWPPP during construction, and proposed project operations would not result in waste discharges to surface or groundwater resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not include any waste discharges that could conflict with the Basin Plan.

Regional groundwater in Yuba County is composed of two subbasins: the North Yuba Subbasin and the South Yuba Subbasin. The project area is located within the South Yuba Subbasin. The South Yuba Subbasin is not expected to become overdrafted in the future based on projected groundwater pumpage and surface water deliveries. Unlike many medium- and high-priority basins and subbasins managed under GSPs, groundwater extraction in the Yuba Subbasins does not exceed the sustainable yield, and the average annual groundwater storage is stable or increasing under all scenarios, suggesting sustainable conditions. As noted above under Question b, the proposed South County Infrastructure Project, in and of itself, would not result in an increase in groundwater use.

Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the water quality control plan or a sustainable groundwater management plan, and the potential impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would potentially combine with development in the region to create significant cumulative hydrologic and water resource impacts. However, the General Plan's Public Health & Safety Element policies are designed to reduce the rate of runoff, filter out pollutants, and/or facilitate groundwater infiltration. Implementation of existing regulations and laws, along with the policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan, would reduce the 2030 General Plan's contribution to this potentially significant cumulative impact to water quality. The 2030 General Plan would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to water quality impacts assuming application of existing regulations and policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan.

Development and land use change in Yuba County and in the surrounding region could result in additional impervious surfaces, and the diversion of groundwater to surface water through subsurface drainage features or localized dewatering measures. As a result, levels of groundwater recharge in the underlying groundwater basin would decline. Reductions in groundwater recharge in a given area could affect groundwater levels and the yield of hydrologically connected wells. This is considered a significant cumulative impact. 2030 General Plan policies would be implemented in coordination with the Yuba County Groundwater Management Plan on a regional level to ensure conjunctive use, perennial yield, and avoidance of groundwater overdraft within the County and in surrounding areas that are hydrologically connected to it. The impact is less than cumulatively considerable.

Much of the floodplain area of Yuba County and adjacent Sutter County is protected by levees along the Feather River, Yuba River, Bear River, and Honcut Creek. Riverine flooding can overwhelm the integrity of the local or regional levee system. This is a potentially significant cumulative impact. Adoption and implementation of the proposed policies in the 2030 General Plan, as well as existing State and local regulations, would reduce the risk for people and structures involving flooding that

could result from failure of a levee. With implementation of the 2030 General Plan policies and actions, the 2030 General Plan would have a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on hydrology and water quality set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Much of the overall project area where water and wastewater pipelines would be constructed consists of roadways traversing rural areas of Yuba County or within the town of Olivehurst. These roadways include Mary Avenue, Olivehurst Avenue, McGowan Parkway, Olive Avenue, Rancho Road, and Forty Mile Road. Land uses along these roads for each South County Infrastructure Project component are set forth below.

**Components 1 and 2 - SSO Reduction Measures/WWTP Modifications.** These components are located within the existing urbanized community of Olivehurst. See Figures 3 and 8. All pipelines associated with Component 1 would be constructed within the paved travel lanes of Olivehurst Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Mary Avenue. Improvements and modifications to OPUD's wastewater treatment plant would take place within the existing plant site located at the westerly terminus of Mary Avenue (3908 Mary Avenue) (see Figure 7). Land uses adjacent to Component 1 consist primarily of single family residences on Olivehurst Avenue and Mary Avenue, and a mixture of commercial, single-family residences, and multi-family residences adjacent to McGowan Parkway. Improvements to be constructed with implementation of Component 2 would be sited within the boundaries of the existing wastewater treatment plant.

**Components 3, 4, and 5 – South County Wastewater Collection/Water Supply and Delivery/Wheatland Wastewater Pipeline Connector.** Facilities of Components 3, 4, and 5 to be constructed with implementation of the proposed project are located primarily in an undeveloped area south of the existing community of Olivehurst (see Figures 3, 4, and 8). Pipelines associated with Components 3, 4, and 5 would be constructed primarily within the paved travel lanes of Forty Mile Road, Rosser Road, Shimer Road, Rancho Road, Olive Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Mary Avenue. The Wheatland Connector pipeline would be constructed within Rancho Road. Five wastewater pump or lift stations would be constructed adjacent to Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road. As part of Component 4, a new water well and water plant would be constructed east of Forty Mile Road. The existing land use within the area of Components 3, 4, and 5 primarily consists of irrigated agriculture. Developed uses include an amphitheater, a casino, SR 65, Union Pacific railroad tracks, confined animal agriculture, and heavy commercial and light industrial uses, especially along Rancho Road. Rancho Road, north of McGowan Parkway and Olive Avenue, is characterized by single family residences on large parcels.

Land adjacent to the project along Rancho Road is zoned as agricultural industrial and light industrial, with General Plan land use designations of Employment, Employment Village, and Natural Resources. Land adjacent to Forty Mile Road is zoned for agricultural use and sports entertainment, with a land use designation of Employment and Natural Resources. Land near the

OPUD Wastewater Treatment Plant on Mary Avenue is zoned for use as public utilities land, with a land use designation of Valley Neighborhood (Yuba County 2021a; Yuba County 2011b).

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XI.a | | | | | Project would be constructed within or adjacent to existing roadways, or at existing WWTP |
| XI.b | | | | | Would comply with existing land use plans, policies, or regulations. |

**Question (a) Physically divide established community: Less-than-significant Impact.** Pipelines associated with the proposed South Yuba Infrastructure Project would be constructed within or adjacent to existing roadways within the community of Olivehurst or nearby rural areas of Yuba County. Roadways disturbed by pipeline installation would be restored to their original condition after the installation of water and wastewater pipes. No division of an established community would occur since the disruption of roadways would be temporary. For activities at the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant facilities in Olivehurst, all new construction would take place within the plant's existing site. The Water Plant would be constructed adjacent to existing and under construction parking lots serving the Hard Rock Casino. Because all roadways would be returned to their original condition, and there are not communities that would be affected at the Wastewater Treatment Plant or the Water Plant, the South County Infrastructure Project would not alter land use in a manner that would divide an established community; a less-than-significant effect would result, and no mitigation would be necessary.

**Question (b) Conflict with land use plans or policies: Less-than-significant Impact.** As discussed previously, the project area south of Olivehurst is designated for future growth and development by the Yuba County General Plan. The proposed South County Infrastructure Project would provide community utility services to future employment-generating land uses consistent with Yuba County General Plan policies as set forth in the project description. No General Plan amendment or rezone would be required for the proposed South County Infrastructure Project.

The activities associated with the construction of the proposed water and wastewater improvements would be required to comply with all applicable regulations set forth at the federal, State, and local level to prevent potential environmental impacts as outlined in this document. Since the proposed project is consistent with the existing and planned uses of the area and would comply with applicable plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, this would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Regional growth could displace existing housing and population, requiring the construction of housing elsewhere, representing a significant cumulative impact. The 2030 General Plan does not propose to remove existing housing or displace existing population or housing units. However, it is

possible that some housing could be removed during buildout. The 2030 General Plan could have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on community division set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XII. MINERAL RESOURCES | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | | | | **X** |
| b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? | | | | **X** |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

There are many areas that produce mineral resources in Yuba County, with most of the gravel and sand extraction areas located along the Yuba River. There are gold and silver mines and dredge tailings from historic mining activities along the Yuba River, in the foothills, and in the mountain portions of the County (Yuba County 2011b). No significant Mineral Resource Zones or mineral resource production areas are located in the project area. Known mineral resources in the MRZ-2 zone[7] are located along the Yuba River, extending from Marysville on the west to Smartsville on the east (Yuba County 2011b). The California Geological Survey indicates that the proposed project is not within an Aggregate Production Area (CGS 2018b).

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XII.a | | | | | Not in mineral resource zone. |
| XII.b | | | | | Not in mineral resource zone. |

**Questions (a) and (b) Loss of mineral resources of value and/or delineated on land use plans: No Impact.** No important mineral deposits, significant Mineral Resource Zones, or existing or previous mines are located on the project sites. Because there are no mineral resources or resource protection zones in the vicinity of the project sites, there would be no loss of availability of known mineral resources. No adverse effect would result, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative loss of access to mineral resources is a significant cumulative impact resulting from encroachment by development into areas with mineral resources. Implementation of the proposed policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan and implementation of existing regulations for SMARA Mineral Resource Zones would reduce the impacts of buildout of the 2030 General Plan on mineral resources. Nonetheless, it is possible that development of the County's Rural Community Boundary Areas could preclude extraction of important County mineral resources along the Yuba River. One of the key objectives of the 2030 General Plan is to proactively guide development of rural areas of the County, including those that could be within areas of important

[7] The MRZ-2 zone indicates the presence of significant mineral deposits or where there is a high likelihood for their presence.

mineral resources. The County has included all feasible mitigation as a part of the 2030 General Plan. The 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact. All feasible mitigation is included as policies and actions of the 2030 General Plan.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on mineral resources set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be no impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XIII. NOISE | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project result in: | | | | |
| a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | | **X** | | |
| b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels? | | | **X** | |
| c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | | | **X** | |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

### CHARACTERISTICS OF NOISE

Noise consists of any sound that may produce physiological or psychological damage and/or interfere with communication, work, rest, recreation, or sleep. Several noise measurement scales exist that are used to describe noise in a particular location. A decibel (dB) is a unit of measurement that indicates the relative intensity of a sound. The 0 point on the dB scale is based on the lowest sound level that the healthy, unimpaired human ear can detect. Changes of 3 dB or less are only perceptible in laboratory environments. Sound levels in dB are calculated on a logarithmic basis. An increase of 10 dB represents a 10-fold increase in acoustic energy, while 20 dB is 100 times more intense, and 30 dB is 1,000 times more intense. Each 10 dB increase in sound level is perceived as approximately a doubling of loudness; and similarly, each 10 dB decrease in sound level is perceived as half as loud. Sound intensity is normally measured through the A-weighted sound level (dBA). This scale gives greater weight to the frequencies of sound to which the human ear is most sensitive. The A-weighted sound level is the basis for 24-hour sound measurements that better represent how humans are more sensitive to sound at night.

As noise spreads from a source, it loses energy so that the farther away the noise receiver is from the noise source, the lower the perceived noise level would be. Geometric spreading causes the sound level to attenuate or be reduced, resulting in a 6 dB reduction in the noise level for each doubling of distance from a single point source of noise to the noise-sensitive receptor of concern.

Many ways are available to rate noise for various time periods, but an appropriate rating of ambient noise affecting humans also accounts for the annoying effects of sound. Equivalent continuous sound level ($L_{eq}$) is the total sound energy of time varying noise over a sample period. However, the predominant rating scales for human communities in the State of California are the $L_{eq}$, the community noise equivalent level (CNEL), and the day-night average level ($L_{dn}$) based on A-weighted decibels (dBA). CNEL is the time varying noise over a 24-hour period, with a 5 dBA weighting factor applied to the hourly $L_{eq}$ for noises occurring from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (defined as relaxation hours) and 10 dBA weighting factor applied to noise occurring from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (defined as sleeping hours). $L_{dn}$ is similar to the CNEL scale, but without the adjustment for events occurring during the evening relaxation hours. CNEL and $L_{dn}$ are within one dBA of each

other and are normally interchangeable. The noise adjustments are added to the noise events occurring during the more sensitive hours.

## EXISTING NOISE ENVIRONMENT

The area surrounding the wastewater treatment plant and several existing pump stations (PS-1/PS-2) is primarily urban within the community of Olivehurst, and is exposed to typical urban noises such as traffic, outdoor maintenance such as lawn mowing, and aircraft operations from the Yuba County Airport. The general area of the proposed water plant is under development as a regional recreation center, but is otherwise rural; at the current time, intermittent construction noise sources predominate in this area. The primary project pipeline alignments and the proposed sites of five pump/lift stations would be located within Rancho Road, Forty Mile Road, Shimer Road, and Rosser Road; these roads traverse rural areas of Yuba County. Noise sources within these areas include traffic noise on the roadways and from State Route 65, noise from agricultural activities, and several light industrial uses along Rancho Road. Within Olivehurst, pipelines and a new pump station (PS-26) would be constructed along Olivehurst Avenue, Mary Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Olive Avenue.

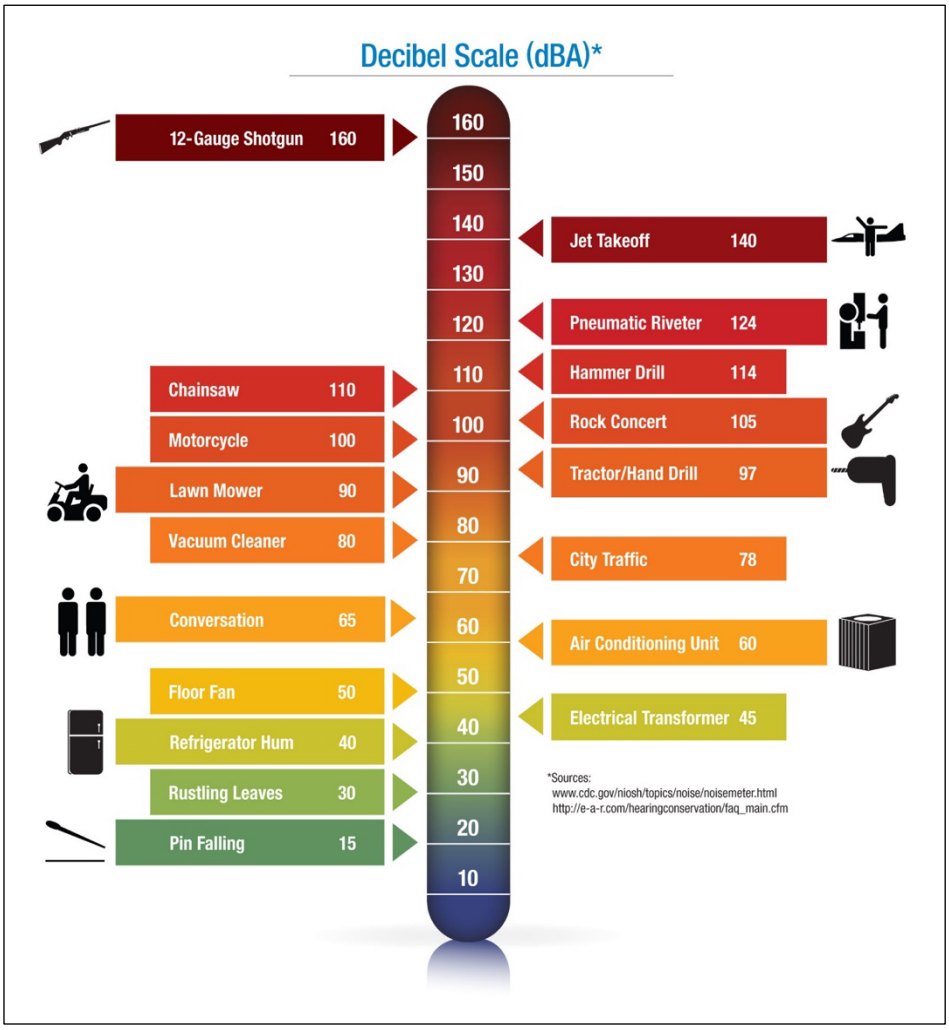



Figure 13 Noise Levels Associated with Common Noise Sources
*Source: Bollard Acoustical Consulting, Inc., 2022.*

Noise sensitive land uses are locations where people reside or where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of the land. Residences, schools, hospitals, guest lodging, libraries, churches, nursing homes, auditoriums, concert halls, amphitheaters, playgrounds, and parks are considered noise-sensitive uses. Sensitive land uses immediately surrounding the project components include single-family and multi-family residences, primarily in the community of Olivehurst.

The Yuba County Airport is located in the community of Olivehurst, approximately 0.5 miles west of the SSO project component improvements. Portions of project in the Olivehurst urban area are located in the Airport Influence Area (SACOG 2011).

## REGULATORY SETTING

The 2030 Yuba County General Plan provides a basis for local policies to control and abate environmental noise, and to protect the citizens of Yuba County from excessive noise exposure (Yuba County 2011a). Yuba County General Plan Policy HS10.5 generally requires the maximum noise level for non-transportation noise sources to not exceed the noise levels shown in Table 17, below, as measured at outdoor activity areas of any affected noise-sensitive land use. Further, General Plan Policy HS10.6 requires that new developments provide all feasible noise mitigation to reduce construction noise and vibration impacts, and Policy HS10.7 requires that construction equipment is properly maintained and equipped with noise control components, such as mufflers, in accordance with manufacturers' specifications.

**Table 17 Yuba County General Plan Noise Standards: Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure from Non-Transportation Noise Sources at Noise-Sensitive Land Uses**

| Noise Level Descriptor | Daytime (7 a.m.-10 p.m.) | Nighttime (10 p.m.-7 a.m.) |
|---|---|---|
| Hourly $L_{eq}$ | 60 dBA | 45 dBA |
| $L_{max}$ | 75 dBA | 65 dBA |

Notes: dBA = A-weighted decibel; $L_{eq}$ = energy-equivalent noise level; $L_{max}$ = maximum noise level.
*Source: 2030 Yuba County General Plan, 2011a.*

The County also enforces its Noise Regulations (Chapter 8.20) in the County Code. Maximum noise levels during project construction may be higher than Chapter 8.20.140 of the Yuba County Code would normally allow (60 dB - 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm.; 65 dB - 7:00 am to 7:00 pm). However, according to County Code (Chapter 8.20.310), the County prohibits any person within a residential zone, or within a radius of 500 feet of a residential zone, from operating equipment or performing any outside construction or repair work on buildings, structures, or projects, or from operating any piledriver, power shovel, pneumatic hammer, derrick, power hoist, or any other construction-type device between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. the following day in such a manner that a reasonable person of normal sensitiveness residing in the area would be caused discomfort or annoyance. Any construction during prohibited hours in areas zoned for residential uses or within 500 feet of such zones would require a permit from the Community Development and Services Agency's Director of the Planning Department.

| Table 18 Yuba County Zoning Districts Surrounding Project Components | |
|---|---|
| **Road Affected by Project** | **Zoning Designations** |
| 11th Avenue/Olivehurst Avenue | RS – Single Family Residential District<br>RM – Medium Density Residential District |
| 11th Avenue to 14th Street | RS – Single Family Residential District<br>RM – Medium Density Residential District |
| Mary Avenue | RS – Single Family Residential District |
| Mary Avenue/McGowan Parkway | NMX – Neighborhood Mixed Use District |
| McGowan Parkway – Mary Avenue to Rancho Rd | RS – Single Family Residential District<br>RM – Medium Density Residential District<br>NMX – Neighborhood Mixed Use District*<br>Public Facilities District |
| Olive Avenue – McGowan Parkway to 500 feet north | RM – Medium Density Residential District<br>NMX – Neighborhood Mixed Use District* |
| Rancho Rd/Forty Mile Rd/Shimer Rd/Rosser Rd | Non-residential Zoning Designations |

Notes:
* Residential uses permitted within zoning district
*Source: Planning Partners 2023.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | Applicable to Issue Area? | | | | |
| XIII.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction noise could exceed noise standards |
| XIII.b | | | | | No vibration effects that would exceed standards |
| XIII.c | | | | | No exposure of sensitive receptors to aircraft noise |

**Question (a) Generate a noise increase in excess of local plan standards: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** Potential noise impacts can be categorized as those resulting from construction and those from operational activities. Construction noise would have a short-term effect; operational noise would continue throughout the lifetime of the project.

## CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Construction of the South Yuba Infrastructure project may result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels. Construction activities would be considered an intermittent noise impact throughout the construction period of the project, and no single sensitive receptor would be exposed to continuous noise over the construction period, since the construction noise only occurs when construction is nearby. These activities could result in various effects on sensitive receptors, depending on the construction phase and the type and amount of equipment used at the construction site, and on the presence of intervening barriers or other insulating materials.

The noise generation of various construction activities is provided in Table 19. Not all of the equipment listed in Table 19 would be required for this project construction, but it generally illustrates that maximum noise levels ranging from 70 to 90 dBA can be expected at a distance of 50 feet from the operating equipment.

| **Table 19 Typical Construction Equipment Noise** | |
|---|---|
| **Equipment Description** | **Maximum Noise Level at 50 feet, dBA** |
| Auger drill rig | 85 |
| Backhoe | 80 |
| Bar bender | 80 |
| Boring jack power unit | 80 |
| Chain saw | 85 |
| Compactor (ground) | 80 |
| Compressor (air) | 80 |
| Concrete batch plant | 83 |
| Concrete mixer truck | 85 |
| Concrete pump truck | 82 |
| Concrete saw | 90 |
| Crane (mobile or stationary) | 85 |
| Dozer | 85 |
| Dump truck | 84 |
| Excavator | 85 |
| Flatbed truck | 84 |
| Front end loader | 80 |
| Generator (25 kilovoltamperes [kVA] or less) | 70 |
| Generator (more than 25 kVA) | 82 |
| Grader | 85 |
| Hydra break ram | 90 |
| Jackhammer | 85 |
| Mounted impact hammer (hoe ram) | 90 |
| Paver | 85 |
| Pickup truck | 55 |
| Pneumatic tools | 85 |
| Pumps | 77 |
| Rock drill | 85 |
| Scraper | 85 |
| Soil mix drill rig | 80 |
| Tractor | 84 |
| Vacuum street sweeper | 80 |
| Vibratory concrete mixer | 80 |
| Welder/Torch | 73 |

*Source: Federal Highway Administration, 2006.*

Based on typical construction equipment noise emission levels shown in Table 19 above, noise levels produced during construction could potentially reach 90 dBA at 50 feet from construction. Because the proposed project could generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels at noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the project during construction activities, and to comply

with Yuba County General Plan policies and County regulations, the following mitigation measures would be required.

**Mitigation Measure NSE-1:**

To reduce the effects of construction noise on affected residents, the project contractor shall implement the following measures for all project components:

A. All work necessary to implement the project components will be performed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday.
B. All equipment will be equipped with appropriate muffler devices to reduce the noise impacts of the construction operations.
C. Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor shall consult with the Yuba County Community Development and Services Agency (CDSA) to determine whether proposed construction activities would require an exemption permit pursuant to Chapter 8.20.710 of the Yuba County Code. If it is determined that such a permit would be necessary or beneficial, OPUD or its contractor will submit a permit application to the CDSA and abide by the terms of the permit.

The construction noise generation of this project would be generally comparable to other water and wastewater construction projects within Yuba County. The General Plan EIR concluded that, with the implementation of General Plan Policies HS10.6 and HS10.7, a less-than-significant impact related to construction noise would occur. Implementation of the foregoing mitigation measure would reduce the potential for construction noise to cause annoyance to nearby neighbors or workers, and this would be a less-than-significant impact.

## OPERATIONAL NOISE

Since the proposed water and wastewater pipelines would be buried underground, no new or increased noise levels would be generated from the proposed pipelines. All pump and lift stations would include 11-foot tall sound attenuating walls (See Table A-2 in Appendix A). While the pump and lift station and water plant emergency generators would require periodic testing, it is assumed this would occur 30 minutes per month, and the generators would be in 75 dB sound attenuating enclosures. Therefore, there would not be a permanent increase in ambient noise with the proposed emergency generators. The small increase in traffic associated with minimal maintenance trips associated with the proposed project would not lead to a perceptible change in noise levels. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Ground-borne vibration or noise: Less-than-significant Impact.** The project would generate temporary groundborne vibrations from heavy equipment operation at the project site, though it would represent a short-term minor increase compared to existing conditions. Further, the Yuba County Code of Ordinances Section 11.26.060 exempts vibrations from temporary construction and construction vehicles that enter and leave affected parcels from County restrictions. Operation of the proposed lift and pump stations may result in minor groundborne vibrations, though it would not be anticipated to be discernible at nearby residential sensitive receptors. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (c) Excessive noise levels near airports: Less-than-significant Impact.** While portions of the project are located in an Airport Influence Area of the Yuba County Airport (SACOG 2011), the proposed project would be consistent with all applicable regulations and standards, and would not promote urban development in agricultural areas in locations where urban uses are not identified by the 2030 General Plan (SACOG 2011). While a small portion of the project is within a compatibility zone with limited use restrictions, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Traffic noise levels will increase along major regional roadway corridors as a result of the additional traffic generated by buildout of the 2030 General Plan, coupled with regional growth. This represents a significant cumulative impact. The primary factor for a cumulative noise impact analysis is the consideration of future traffic volumes. Implementation of the 2030 General Plan, along with regional growth and traffic conditions, would cause changes in traffic noise levels over existing traffic noise levels. The 2030 General Plan would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the County-wide cumulative impacts described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on the construction and operational noise levels set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant after mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | | | **X** | |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | | | | **X** |

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XIV.a | | | | | The proposed project implements the 2030 General Plan. Any growth induced by the project would be planned and consistent with the General Plan. |
| XIV.b | | | | | No aspect of the project would displace people or housing. |

**Question (a) Induce unplanned population growth: Less-than-significant Impact.** The proposed infrastructure project would serve to meet the wastewater services and water supply needs of planned future development in the South County Service Area consistent with Yuba County 2030 General Plan. See Figures 3, 4, and 5. The project would also accommodate wastewater from the City of Wheatland, including existing and planned growth in the City. The City's existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) would be decommissioned with completion of the project. Because the proposed improvements would be sized to accommodate planned urban development in the South County Service Area, and also to provide capacity for wastewater from the City of Wheatland, it is not anticipated that the proposed project would induce unplanned population growth in the area. The proposed project is consistent with Yuba County land use plans, and no modification of land use and development policies would be necessary to accommodate the proposed project.

The South County Infrastructure Project, by itself, does not propose or authorize any changes in land use or urban development within the project areas. Future land uses within the South County Service Area that occur pursuant to the adopted Yuba County 2030 General Plan would be required to conform to all applicable regulations, performance standards, and design standards of the General Plan, zoning code, and all other environmental regulations and requirements set forth in the County Code. The South County Infrastructure Project would not permit land uses of greater density or height than permitted under the 2030 General Plan, and would not allow new development in areas where such development is prohibited under the 2030 General Plan.

Construction of the proposed project would be considered temporary, beginning in early 2024 and continuing over the course of several years. Construction employee trips and construction deliveries would be considered temporary construction traffic. Following implementation of the proposed project, project operations would result in approximately two trips per month for maintenance and

generator operations at the pump and lift stations, and two trips per month for maintenance and generator testing at the water plant.

Construction of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project is anticipated to take several years to complete. Construction activities would result in increased employment opportunities associated with the proposed project. In December 2022, the labor force in Yuba County totaled 30,800 persons, with an official unemployment rate of 5.6 percent (or 1,700 unemployed persons) (EDD 2023). The increased labor needs of the project could be accommodated by this existing workforce within Yuba County and would not require the importation of workers. Similarly, any additional housing demands caused by project employees could be accommodated by existing and planned housing resources within Yuba County.

Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial direct or indirect population growth, and a less-than-significant impact would occur. No mitigation would be necessary.

**Question (b) Displace substantial numbers of people or housing: No Impact.** Construction of the pipeline alignments would take place within existing roadways and rights of way. Also, the project's associated pump and lift stations would be constructed on undeveloped land, and the WWTP improvements would be located within the existing WWTP facility. The Water Plant would be constructed adjacent to existing and under construction parking lots serving the Hard Rock Casino. Because no people or housing would be displaced, and no construction of replacement housing would be needed, there would be no impact. No mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

General plans in the region, along with specific plans that are outside the development assumptions from local general plans, would potentially accommodate substantially greater population and employment growth compared to regional forecasts and planning efforts. Population and employment growth beyond those included in local and regional land use and transportation plans could induce population growth, which could have a significant cumulative impact.

The County has designed the 2030 General Plan to balance land uses in order to avoid growth inducement elsewhere. However, the 2030 General Plan could accommodate a substantially greater population and employment growth than is included in existing forecasts and plans. The 2030 General Plan would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

Regional growth could displace existing housing and population, requiring the construction of housing elsewhere, representing a significant cumulative impact. The 2030 General Plan does not propose to remove existing housing or displace existing population or housing units. However, it is possible that some housing could be removed during buildout. The 2030 General Plan could have a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond

those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on growth inducement or the displacement of persons or housing set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XV. PUBLIC SERVICES | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives of any of the public services: | | | | |
| a) Fire protection? | | | **X** | |
| b) Police protection? | | | **X** | |
| c) Schools? | | | **X** | |
| d) Parks? | | | **X** | |
| e) Other facilities? | | | **X** | |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The closest fire station to proposed project facilities is the Olivehurst Fire Department, located in Olivehurst. There are numerous schools and parks in Olivehurst. The Yuba County Sheriff's Department provides police protection in the unincorporated areas of Yuba County. Utility services are discussed in more detail in *Section XVII, Utilities and Service Systems.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Questions | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XV.a | | | | | No aspect of the proposed project would require modifications to, or create the need, for new governmental facilities. |
| XV.b | | | | | |
| XV.c | | | | | |
| XV.d | | | | | |
| XV.e | | | | | |

**Questions (a) through (e) New or physically altered governmental public service facilities: Less-than-significant Impact.** Project construction would not result in any effects to existing governmental facilities except for roadways. The proposed project does not include new housing, and following construction, public roadways would be returned to their original condition. Construction of the proposed project would not be expected to result in an increase in demand for fire or police protection, schools, parks, or health services that would lead to the construction of new or physically altered facilities.

Because no new residences would be constructed, needed employees would be drawn from the local labor pool, and no substantial increase in population is expected to result from the proposed project, there would be no increase in the demand for public services that would require the construction of new facilities or physically altered facilities. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The County will ensure that new development projects provide impact fees, land dedication, school construction, or other measures acceptable to local school districts to ensure adequate educational facilities. New development is required by state law to pay school impact fees to school districts and provide sites for new schools. As new development occurs, new schools will be developed to accommodate the growth. Therefore, no cumulative impact to public educational services would occur. Therefore, the 2030 General Plan does not have any cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant cumulative impact. The impact is less than significant.

The 2030 General Plan provides an overall guide for development and conservation in the County over the long-term, including ensuring adequate access to the full range of public services, facilities, and infrastructure. To support the County's goal for fire protection, the 2030 General Plan includes policies intended to maintain adequate levels of service for fire protection for both existing and new residents.

Implementing actions contained in the 2030 General Plan will require the County to maintain a planning and entitlement review process that documents compliance with State and local standards for fire safety, and to update zoning, development, improvement standards, and building standards, as necessary, to maintain compliance with relevant fire codes, including those maintained by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

However, the County does not directly control whether and when facilities to serve new growth would be constructed; these decisions are made by the local fire protection service providers. Local demand, therefore, would be served through local expansion of services, and could perhaps involve construction of additional facilities, but this would not combine with effects in neighboring areas to create any cumulative impact. There is no significant cumulative impact, therefore, the 2030 General Plan would make no cumulatively considerable contribution.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on public services set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XVI. RECREATION | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | | | | **X** |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | | | | **X** |

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Within the communities of Olivehurst and Plumas Lakes, the Olivehurst Public Utility District (OPUD) provides parks and recreational activities. These include 50 acres of parklands within 20 park sites, none of which are in the vicinity of any South County Infrastructure Project component (OPUD 2023). Outside of the Olivehurst community, Yuba County plans for and maintains some local parks, and provides regional parks and facilities, such as Hammon Grove Park, Sycamore Ranch, and Star Bend Boat Ramp (Yuba County 2023).

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XVI.a | | | | | Project would not increase use of recreational facilities. |
| XVI.b | | | | | Project would not include recreational facilities. |

**Questions (a) and (b) Increase park use, construct or expand recreational facilities: No Impact.** The proposed project would consist of public water and wastewater facilities, including wastewater treatment plant improvements, a water plant, and associated wastewater and water pipelines and pump and lift stations. Implementation of the project would not directly affect the provision or demand for any recreation resource. There would be no increase in the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities that would cause or accelerate the physical deterioration of such facilities. The proposed project does not include recreational facilities, nor does it require the construction or expansion of such facilities. Thus, no significant adverse impacts to recreation would occur with implementation of the proposed project, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Development and operation of new parks that may be needed to serve additional population accommodated under the General Plan could result in adverse impacts on the physical environment. The 2030 General Plan establishes the overall parkland standard as "a diversity of park types at a ratio of at least 5 acres for every 1,000 residents." Implementation of this standard will require land dedication and/or fees and planning for parkland of different types that is integrated into new growth areas, as well as redevelopment areas. The County, however, is not the primary provider of developed park facilities or recreational programming for all unincorporated areas. Because the

County cannot guarantee the full implementation of parkland and recreational policies and actions, and because it is possible that parkland and recreational facilities may not be provided at an adequate rate to avoid overuse of existing facilities, a potentially significant cumulative impact related to park facilities would occur. The 2030 General Plan would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on the provision of, or need for, parks set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

# XVII. TRANSPORTATION

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project is located within and adjacent to the community of Olivehurst. The proposed facilities would be constructed along several roadways, including Forty Mile Road, Rosser Road, Shimer Road, Rancho Road, Olive Avenue, McGowan Parkway, and Mary Avenue. There are several regional highways in the project vicinity: State Route 70 runs north-south through the center of the project area and State Route 65 runs southeast adjacent to Rancho Road.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| **Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question** | **Project Component** | | | | **Discussion** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Water Plant** | **WWTP** | **Pipelines** | **Pump Stations** | |
| | ***Applicable to Issue Area?*** | | | | |
| XVII.a | | | | | Existing facilities would be restored after project construction |
| XVII.b | | | | | No meaningful increase in vehicle miles travelled |
| XVII.c | | | | | Existing facilities would be restored after project construction |
| XVII.d | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Project construction could interfere with emergency access |

**Question (a) Conflict with local circulation plans: Less-than-significant Impact.** The project includes installation of approximately 26.8 miles of wastewater and water pipeline, construction of eight (8) pump and lift stations along the pipeline route, wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) improvements, including enlarging an existing emergency storage basin, and a new water plant. The proposed pipeline would be located predominantly within or across public roadways.

Construction of the proposed project would be considered temporary, beginning in early 2024 and continuing over the course of several years. Construction employee trips and construction deliveries would be considered temporary construction traffic. Following implementation of the proposed project, project operations would result in approximately two trips per month for maintenance and generator operations at each of the pump and lift stations, and two trips per month for maintenance and generator testing at the water plant. There would be no additional operational trips at the existing WWTP as a result of the proposed improvements.

The proposed project use would be considered consistent with existing General Plan land use designations in Yuba County (see Section XI, *Land Use and Planning* of this Initial Study). Because minimal new trips would be generated by the proposed project, and the proposed project would be consistent with existing Yuba County General Plan land use designations and would not result in a more intense use than previously considered, the proposed project would not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system.

Because the proposed pipeline would be constructed underground, no feature of these improvements would result in the modification of any bicycle or pedestrian travel route. Construction of the WWTP, water plant, and pump and lift stations would be located adjacent to project roadways, and would not result in the modification of any bicycle or pedestrian travel route. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (b) Conflict with CEQA Guidelines regarding analysis of transportation impacts: Less-than-significant Impact.** Section 15064.3, subdivision (b) of the CEQA Guidelines describes criteria for analyzing transportation impacts. The proposed project would result in approximately eighteen trips per month for maintenance and generator testing. Many local agencies have developed screening thresholds to indicate when detailed analysis is needed. As set forth in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (December 2018), "absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of vehicle miles traveled, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact." Because the project would be considered consistent with the Yuba County General Plan, and the project would not generate a significant number of trips and associated vehicle miles traveled, a less-than-significant impact would occur, and no mitigation would be required.

**Question (c) Increase hazards due to geometric design feature: Less-than-significant Impact.** Following completion of construction, any roadway disturbed by trenching or other construction activities would be returned to its original condition. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any permanent changes to the design features or uses of project roadways, or construction of new roadways. There would be no increase to hazards related to a geometric design feature, or due to incompatible uses. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

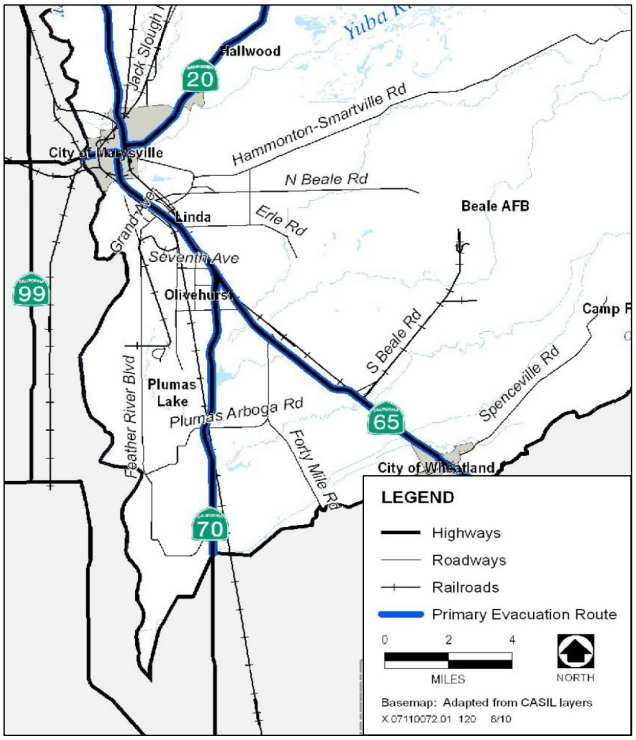



Figure 14 Emergency Evacuation Routes
*Source: Yuba County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2021.*

**Question (d) Inadequate emergency access: Less-than-significant Impact with Mitigation.** As stated above, the proposed water and wastewater pipelines would be placed within or adjacent to existing public roadways within Yuba County. Encroachment Permits

issued by Yuba County and Caltrans would be required for construction of proposed pipeline within public roadways, or by Caltrans for work crossing state highways. During construction and installation of underground pipelines within public roadways, or for construction of proposed facilities adjacent to project roadways, there may be temporary lane closures that could cause delays and queuing of vehicle traffic, and thereby interfere with emergency services. However, emergency vehicles would be expedited through the construction zone, and emergency service providers would be informed of the project so they could choose alternate routes as needed. All impacts related to lane closures would cease after project completion. This would be a significant impact.

Should it be determined that lane closures are necessary, a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) will be required to detail how the project OPUD or its contractor will manage roadway access for both emergency and public use, and will include Best Management Practices such as covering the trenched areas after work hours. To ensure implementation of a TCP, the following mitigation measure will be required:

**Mitigation Measure TR-1:**

> Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor will obtain encroachment permits from Yuba County and Caltrans for work within the County and State rights of way. The project OPUD or its contractor will prepare a Traffic Control Plan/Plans that meets the requirements of Yuba County and Caltrans. For Yuba County, the TCP shall meet the current TCP Checklist and TCP Conditions of Acceptance requirements of Yuba County. The TCP shall include all required topics, including: traffic handling during each stage of construction, maintaining emergency service provider access by, if necessary, providing alternate routes, repositioning emergency equipment, or coordinating with nearby service providers for coverage during construction closures, and covering trenches during the evenings and weekends. A component of the TCP will involve public dissemination of construction-related information through notices to the nearby residences, press releases, and/or the use of changeable message signs. The project contractor will be required to notify all affected residents, post the construction impact schedule, and place articles and/or advertisements in appropriate local newspapers regarding construction impacts and schedules.

While construction of portions of the proposed pipeline would occur within public right-of-way, the pipeline routes would be restored to their original condition after installation of the pipelines. With implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-1, because construction effects on traffic and emergency circulation for the project would be temporary and well-managed, there would be a less-than-significant impact to emergency access.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Regional population and employment growth is anticipated to result in traffic volumes along regional roadways, such as SR 70, that could exceed acceptable levels of service. This represents a significant cumulative impact. While the 2030 General Plan includes various policies to reduce traffic demand and mitigation for roadway segments and intersections, traffic is anticipated to exceed level of service standards at certain roadway segments and intersections. The 2030 General Plan would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to this significant cumulative impact.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on transportation set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be no impact, and no mitigation would be required.

| XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would the project: | | | | |
| Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: | | | | |
| a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or | | | **X** | |
| 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 Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | | | **X** | |

## REGULATORY SETTING

Effective July 1, 2015, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) amended CEQA to require that: 1) a lead agency provide notice to any California Native American tribes that have requested notice of projects proposed by the lead agency; and 2) for any tribe that responded to the notice within 30 days of receipt with a request for consultation, the lead agency must consult with the tribe. Topics that may be addressed during consultation include Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR), the potential significance of project impacts, type of environmental document that should be prepared, and possible mitigation measures and project alternatives.

Section 21074(a) of the Public Resource Code (PRC) defines TCRs for the purpose of CEQA as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

a. included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; and/or
b. included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1; and/or
c. 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

"Substantial evidence" is defined in Section 21080 of the Public Resources Code as "fact, a reasonable assumption predicated upon fact, or expert opinion supported by fact."

The criteria for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) are as follows [CCR Title 14, Section 4852(b)]:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States; and/or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history; and/or
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; and/or
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition, the resource must retain integrity, which is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association [CCR Title 14, Section 4852(c)].

# ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

## RECORDS SEARCH

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted to request an examination of their Sacred Lands Files to determine whether the project is located on sacred land. A current list of Native American tribal representatives who may have concerns regarding the proposed project was also requested. The search was completed and no Sacred Lands files were identified for the vicinity of the proposed project. The NAHC provided a consultation list of tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed pipeline alignment.

## PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

On February 14 and 15, 2022, a Padre Staff Archaeologist conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the proposed Area of Proposed Effect (APE). Due to most of the Project APE crossing through developed residential and urban areas along roadways and road shoulders, a majority of the survey was performed as a "windshield survey". The portions of the Project APE within agricultural and rural residential areas were subject to an intensive pedestrian surface survey and covered on foot in transect intervals not exceeding 10 meters, unless prohibited by terrain, vegetation, access, or safety issues.

The majority of the Project APE consists of lands within developed urban areas, disturbed soils along roadway shoulders or in vacant lots, and land within or adjacent to agricultural fields. The agricultural fields in the area are primarily used to produce rice and other grain crops. Proposed pipeline alignments are limited to developed lands within the paved roadway and disturbed shoulder. Workspace associated with HDD crossings are within vacant or agricultural lands. Pump stations and lift stations are within developed and disturbed lands, vacant lots, natural and undeveloped lands, or agricultural lands. No cultural resources were observed during the survey.

## NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

As of the date of this Initial Study (March 2023), no tribes have previously requested consultation with the Olivehurst Public Utility District (OPUD) regarding tribal cultural resources (Tillotson pers. comm. 2023). Although no tribes have requested consultation with OPUD for proposed projects within its service area, letters describing the proposed project and requesting information regarding Native American concerns were sent to each tribal representative on the list provided by the NAHC.

As of the date of preparation of this Initial Study, no responses have been received from any of the tribes who had been contacted.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XVIII.a | | | | | No known TCRs in project area. |
| XVIII.b | | | | | No known TCRs in project area. |

AB 52 established that a substantial adverse change to a TCR has a significant effect on the environment. In assessing substantial adverse change, OPUD must determine whether or not substantial evidence of a TCR exists within the project area. If substantial evidence of a TCR exists, OPUD would then determine whether or not the project would adversely affect the qualities of the known tribal cultural resource.

**Questions (a) and (b) Affect CRHR resources, significant California Native American Tribe resource: Less-than-significant Impact.** A sacred lands file search was conducted by the NAHC, and no sacred lands were identified for the vicinity of the project site. Additionally, Northern California Information Center (NCIC) records searches for cultural resources found no known prehistoric archaeological resources within the project alignment. No tribes have previously requested consultation with OPUD regarding tribal cultural resources, and the tribal responses to the letter sent to local tribes provided no new information regarding known sacred lands or cultural resources in the area of the proposed project.

Because no known tribal cultural resources were identified that are listed/eligible for listing on the CRHR, or are otherwise deemed significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, implementation of the proposed project would not cause a significant adverse change in significance of a TCR determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. A less-than-significant impact would result, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The County received a letter on the NOP for the 2030 General Plan EIR from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) dated August 23, 2007. This letter offered guidance and direction to the County regarding cultural resource regulations and consultation. The NAHC letter identified Native American contacts for the County to use in consultation. The County used this same contact list (based on correspondence from NAHC earlier in the General Plan process) to circulate a letter providing the opportunity to participate in the local land use planning process to ensure consideration of cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy. As of December 7, 2010, none of the Native American contacts responded.

As set forth in the 2030 General Plan EIR, cultural resources in the Yuba County region generally consist of prehistoric sites, historic sites, historic structures, and isolated artifacts. During the 19th

and 20th centuries, localized urbanization and intensive agricultural use in the region caused the destruction or disturbance of numerous prehistoric sites, while many structures now considered to be historic were erected. Implementation of projects and plans pursuant to the 2030 General Plan assumed in the cumulative scenario have the potential to result in the discovery of undocumented subsurface cultural resources or unmarked historic-era or prehistoric Native American burials. Cumulative gains in population, households, and jobs would require a commensurate increase in infrastructure, capital facilities, services, housing, and commercial uses in Yuba County, its incorporated cities, and areas adjacent counties. The impact on archaeological deposits, human remains, … would be substantial given the past extent of urban development, and anticipated gains in population, jobs, and housing. There is a significant cumulative impact to cultural resources. Full buildout of the 2030 General Plan would involve substantial development and earth disturbance and the impact is cumulatively considerable.

The proposed South County Infrastructure project is consistent with, and implements the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the envelope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on cultural resources set forth in this Initial Study conclude that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the imposition of identified mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less than significant impact, and no mitigation beyond that set forth in this chapter would be required.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XIX.a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | The project would provide water and wastewater infrastructure. |
| XIX.b | ✓ | | ✓ | | The project includes water infrastructure to accommodate planned development. |
| XIX.c | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | The project includes wastewater infrastructure to accommodate planned development. |
| XIX.d | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Construction waste would be managed in compliance with State and local standards. |
| XIX.e | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

**Questions (a) through (c) Construct or relocate new service system facilities, sufficient water supply, adequate wastewater treatment capacity: Less-than-significant Impact.** The purpose of the proposed project is to expand OPUD's wastewater collection system to provide capacity for wastewater from the City of Wheatland and for planned urban development in the recently annexed South Yuba County Service Area. The project also includes an extension of the District's water service to the South County Service Area. The project includes installation of approximately 26.8 miles of wastewater and water pipeline, construction of eight (8) pump and lift stations along the pipeline route, wastewater treatment plant improvements, including enlarging an existing emergency storage basin, and a new water plant. Thus, the proposed project would construct water and sewer conveyance system infrastructure improvements, and the environmental impacts from implementation of the project are evaluated in this Initial Study. Where potentially significant impacts have been identified, mitigation measures have been included in this document to

reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. For a listing of all mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, see Chapter XXI, Mandatory Findings of Significance.

No community wastewater collection or treatment facilities currently exist within the South County Service Area. On-site wastewater collection and treatment systems serve individual commercial and residential uses along Rancho Road and Forty Mile Road, as well as a casino and amphitheater (see Figure 8). The proposed facilities included in the South County Infrastructure Project assessed in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration were proposed to provide the wastewater collection and treatment facilities to serve future urban development of the South Yuba County Service Area. Similarly, upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant were designed to serve flows from the City of Wheatland, reduce storm-generated overflows within the treatment plant and existing facilities in Olivehurst, and provide services to future urban development. In designing the South County Infrastructure Project as proposed, OPUD has made a determination that existing capacity within the wastewater collection and treatment systems, with the addition of the proposed South County Infrastructure Project wastewater components, would be adequate to serve existing and future demands within the District's service area.

Similarly, no community water supply, treatment, or distribution facilities currently exist within the South County Service Area. The proposed water plant would include a new water well, well pump, reservoir, booster station, and chorine feed system. The size of the water distribution system is based on the projected demands from future urban uses within the South County Service Area. However, no urban development is proposed as part of the South County Infrastructure Project. The South County Infrastructure Project, by itself, does not propose or authorize any changes in land use or urban development within the project areas. Future land uses within the South County Service Area that occur pursuant to the adopted Yuba County 2030 General Plan would be required to conform to all applicable regulations, performance standards, and design standards of the Yuba County 2030 General Plan, zoning code, and all other environmental regulations and requirements set forth in the County Code. The South County Infrastructure Project would not permit land uses of greater density or intensity than permitted under the 2030 General Plan and would not allow new development in areas where such development is prohibited under the 2030 General Plan. For a discussion of water supply, see Section X, *Hydrology and Water Resources*, of this Initial Study.

The limited drainage impacts resulting from impervious surfaces at the proposed pump and lift stations and water plant would not require construction of expanded stormwater drainage infrastructure. Stormwater generated at the existing wastewater treatment plant would continue to be retained on site. Following completion of construction, the areas of the pipeline components would be returned to their original condition, including any modification of roadside ditches in the rural areas of the project. Therefore, no adverse effects to storm drainage are expected, and no needs for, or modifications to, storm drainage systems in the project vicinity would be necessary. For more information regarding stormwater drainage, see Section X, *Hydrology and Water Resources*, above.

Electricity would be provided by PG&E at the proposed pump and lift stations, and at the water plant. For the most part, PG&E currently serves the project areas in Olivehurst and along Forty Mile and Rancho Roads. Due to the rural nature of these roads, electricity services would need to be extended to serve several pump and lift stations adjacent to these roadways. These extensions would be minor, and no new or expanded major infrastructure would be required.

With respect to existing infrastructure in areas that could be affected by South County Infrastructure Project construction, the project is being designed to avoid all existing facilities, including establishing a minimum distance of one foot between existing and new project facilities. In meeting the requirements of Yuba County Standard Plans & Specifications, the proposed plans show all existing underground utilities that could be affected by construction activities. The construction contractor will be required to protect existing utilities from damage during construction.

Other than avoiding and protecting existing underground natural gas, telecommunications, or other facilities, implementation of the proposed project would not affect the ability of these utilities to serve.

Based on the information above, implementation of the proposed would not result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

The proposed project would consist of the construction of wastewater and water conveyance infrastructure, which could cause significant environmental effects, as identified and evaluated in the various sections of this Initial Study.

**Question (d) and (e) Solid waste: Less-than-significant Impact.** Operation of the proposed infrastructure project would not result substantially increase the generation of solid waste, as there is no significant source of operational waste. In accordance with California Green Building Standards Code, the proposed project would be required to comply with recycling and reuse requirements for construction waste. Therefore, the project would not 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. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

**Exceed Wastewater Treatment Requirements**. Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would result in the development of new residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses, which would increase local demand for wastewater treatment facilities. It is possible that land use change could exceed the capacity of wastewater treatment facilities. It is possible that, depending on the specific uses developed under the 2030 General Plan, wastewater treatment requirements may be exceeded. The County implemented measures that ensure the availability of adequate wastewater collection and removal systems for land development projects in the unincorporated county under the 2030 General Plan. Implementation of the mitigation would assist in ensuring that sufficient service capacity is available to serve future growth projected in the 2030 General Plan and avoid issues related to wastewater treatment requirements. By adhering to the policies proposed in the 2030 General Plan, mitigation and existing regulations, the impact is considered less than significant.

**Construction of New or Expanded Water or Wastewater Facilities.** Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would result in the development of new residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses, which would increase local demand for water conveyance and wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment facilities. In addition, implementation of the 2030 General Plan could accommodate development in areas that currently are not served by water systems or a wastewater treatment provider. Construction of new or expanded water and wastewater facilities could have

adverse effects on the physical environment. By adhering to the policies proposed in the 2030 General Plan, as well as all applicable requirements pertaining to water supply, wastewater treatment, and septic systems, the County could minimize impacts associated with construction of new wastewater treatment facilities or extension of existing facilities or infrastructure. The 2030 General Plan includes policies and actions, and the 2030 General Plan EIR includes mitigation measures, where necessary, to reduce or avoid impacts. Despite mitigating policies and actions and the application of necessary mitigation measures, construction and operation of new or expanded water delivery and wastewater conveyance and treatment infrastructure may result in significant environmental effects. The impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

**New or Expanded Storm Water Drainage Facilities.** Buildout of the 2030 General Plan would accommodate an expansion of the urbanized landscape and construction of new impermeable surfaces that would generate additional stormwater runoff compared to baseline conditions. New land uses would be expected to include residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses. Each of these land uses could involve addition of impermeable surfaces, with associated increases in stormwater runoff. The construction of new facilities and conveyance infrastructure or the expansion of existing facilities and infrastructure to handle this runoff could generate significant environmental effects. By adhering to the policies proposed in the 2030 General Plan, as well as all applicable requirements pertaining to drainage systems, the County could minimize impacts. The 2030 General Plan includes policies and actions, and the 2030 General Plan EIR includes mitigation measures, where necessary, to reduce or avoid impacts. However, as with all ground disturbing construction, there is the potential for impacts to previously unidentified resources. In addition, other natural resources within the footprint of an expanded stormwater drainage network may be adversely affected. Despite mitigating policies and actions and the application of necessary mitigation measures, construction and operation of new or expanded drainage facilities and infrastructure may result in significant environmental effects. The County has included throughout the 2030 General Plan all feasible measures available to mitigate such impacts. The impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

**Insufficient Water Supplies to Meet the Future Water Demand in Unincorporated Areas Served by the County.** Implementation of the 2030 General Plan would designate land uses that, if developed to full buildout, would increase water demand. Reductions in agricultural cultivation caused by conversion of agricultural land would decrease water consumption within Yuba County. Existing regulations require additional water conservation measures in new development and for large developments to demonstrate ongoing reliable water supply. Considering existing regulations that require conservation and demonstration of water supply and that the overall change in water demand compared to existing supply is not substantial, the impact is considered less than significant.

**Increased Demand for Solid Waste Disposal and Compliance with Solid Waste Requirements.** Buildout of the 2030 General Plan would accommodate an increase in population and commerce. This would result in an associated increase in solid waste streams of approximately 82,125 tons of solid waste per year, conservatively estimated. Because available capacity can meet this demand, no new facilities would need to be constructed to serve 2030 General Plan buildout. For these reasons this impact would be less than significant.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the County-wide cumulative impacts described above include the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the

2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on utilities and service systems set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant after mitigation. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Proposed project facilities are located within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) (CalFIRE 2007). Within LRAs, fire protection is under the jurisdiction of local fire departments, not CalFire. Fire protection services within the community of Olivehurst are provided by the Olivehurst Fire Department. Fire protection services in the project areas are provided by the Olivehurst Fire Department and the Plumas Brophy Fire Protection District. (LAFCo 2012)

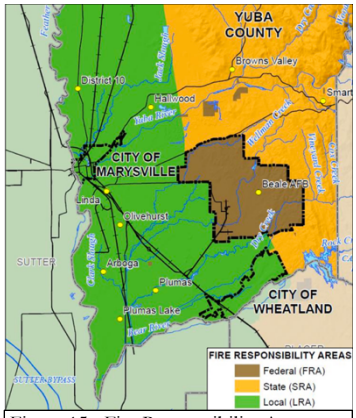


Figure 15 Fire Responsibility Areas

The Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) map for Yuba County indicates that the project areas are located in three Fire Hazard Severity Zones: Non-Wildland/Non-Urban; Urban Unzoned; and limited areas designated as Moderate (Yuba County 2021b). The project would be located in areas where the threat of wildland fire has been determined to be unlikely to moderate (CalFIRE 2007). No portion of the project is located within or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as being with a very high FHSZ.

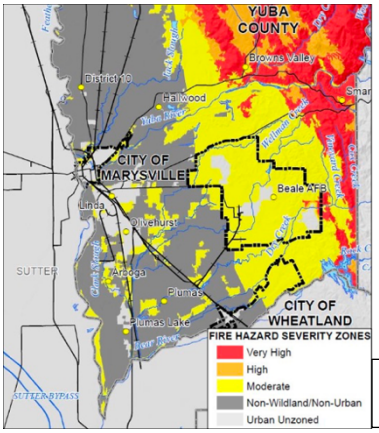


Figure 16
Fire Hazard Severity Zones

| Issue Area CEQA Appendix G Question | Project Component | | | | Discussion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water Plant | WWTP | Pipelines | Pump Stations | |
| | *Applicable to Issue Area?* | | | | |
| XX.a | | | | | Not located within or adjacent to a very high fire hazard severity zone. |
| XX.b | | | | | |
| XX.c | | | | | |
| XX.d | | | | | |

Primary emergency evacuation routes within or adjacent to the project areas are State Routes 65 and 70. The proposed wastewater pipelines would cross these highways at three locations. However, these crossings would be constructed using horizontal directional drilling (HDD). This process would be completely underground, and would not interfere with normal travel or evacuation in the event of an emergency.

**Questions (a) through (d) Wildfire: No Impact.** Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not interfere with a primary evacuation route during an emergency. The project area is not located in or near State Responsibility Areas, or lands classified as a very high fire hazard severity zone. South County Infrastructure Project components are located in an area where the threat of wildland fire has been determined to be unlikely to moderate (CalFIRE 2007). Because the proposed project is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area nor on lands classified as a very high fire hazard severity zone, no impact would occur and no mitigation would be required. For additional information regarding emergency access to the site, see Section XVII, *Transportation*.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

**Exposure of People and Structures to Urban and Wildland Fires.** Development of the 2030 General Plan throughout Yuba County, including the project areas, could potentially increase risk to fire for both people and property. However, implementation of 2030 General Plan policies and actions, along with existing regulations would ensure that people and structures would not be exposed to a significant risk of loss of injury involving fires.

Implementation of 2030 General Plan policies and actions and existing regulations would ensure that people or structures would not be exposed to a significant risk of loss of injury involving fires. County policies and County and State regulations ensure adequate emergency access and evacuation in the case of fire; installation of sprinkler systems, where needed, as well as other building and fire code requirements designed to protect the public health; inclusion of defensible space in areas prone to wildfire; and other mechanisms, as described in Chapter 4.8 of the 2030 General Plan EIR and in the regulatory setting portion of the EIR section. With the incorporation of these policies and regulations, this impact is considered less than significant.

The proposed South County Infrastructure Project is consistent with, and implements, the 2030 General Plan. Thus, the County-wide cumulative impact described above includes the proposed project within the scope of General Plan land uses and supporting infrastructure assessed in the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Implementation of the South County Infrastructure Project would not result in new cumulative impacts or increase the magnitude of cumulative impacts beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. Additionally, the evaluation of the project's environmental effects on the exposure to wildfire set forth in this chapter concludes that all identified impacts would be less than significant. For these reasons, the proposed infrastructure project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to the cumulative impacts of implementing the 2030 General Plan beyond those assessed in the 2030 General Plan EIR. This would be a less-than-significant impact, and no mitigation would be required.

## XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | | **X** | | |
| b) 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) | | | **X** | |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | | | **X** | |

Based on the analysis provided within, the Initial Study/Negative Declaration has concluded that adoption of the proposed project would not result in new cumulatively significant impacts on the environment that have not been previously examined or adequately addressed in the Yuba County 2030 General Plan Program EIR. Thus, this Initial Study/Negative Declaration has focused on the project-specific effects of implementing the South County Infrastructure project. The environmental evaluation contained herein has found that there would be potential impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and transportation. The assessment further found that all identified impacts could be reduced below a level of significance with the implementation of mitigation identified in this Initial Study/Negative Declaration.

**Question (a) Degrade quality of the environment:** As discussed above, the project has the potential to result in impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and transportation. With the implementation of mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study and listed at the end of this section, all potential impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. No significant or potentially significant impacts would remain.

**Question (b) Cumulatively considerable impacts: Less-than-significant Impact.** While the proposed project could contribute to cumulative impacts associated with increased development in the region, these impacts have previously been evaluated by the County and considered in development of the County's 2030 General Plan. The 2030 General Plan EIR comprehensively evaluated the potential environmental effects, including the potential countywide and cumulative impacts, of implementing the 2030 General Plan. As set forth in the preceding discussion of tiering, the General Plan EIR is hereby incorporated by reference into this Initial Study pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15150 as though fully set forth herein.

As discussed in this Initial Study, the South County Infrastructure Project has the potential to result in project-specific impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and

soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and transportation. As set forth in the appropriate topical discussions of this Initial Study, effects to these issue areas are all subject to the proposed mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study, State, Federal, and County standards and regulations, and 2030 Yuba County General Plan policies and programs designed to avoid, reduce, or mitigate such effects.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the installation of water and wastewater infrastructure facilities. As viewed within the context of the overall growth and development in the County as outlined in the 2030 Yuba County General Plan, the potential impacts of the proposed project are individually limited and not considered "cumulatively considerable." Additionally, after mitigation, the project has been determined not to have significant project level or cumulative level effects for any environmental issue. Therefore, construction and operation of the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts, and would result in a less-than-significant impact when viewed in connection to the effects of past and probable future projects.

**Question (c) Adversely affect human beings: Less-than-significant Impact.** As demonstrated in the detailed evaluation contained in this Initial Study, because of existing site conditions, Yuba County standards, Yuba County 2030 General Plan programs and policies, and the regulation of potential environmental impacts by other agencies, in addition to mitigation measures included in this Initial Study, the proposed South County Infrastructure Project would not have the potential to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. This would be a less-than-significant impact.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

**Mitigation Measure AQ-1:**

Prior to construction, OPUD or its contractor shall provide to the County a receipt of a FRAQMD approved Dust Control Plan or Construction Notification form in compliance with Rule 3.16 Fugitive Dust. Further, OPUD or its contractor shall obtain an Authority to Construct (ATC) and Permit to Operate (PTO) for the proposed emergency generators above 50 horsepower in accordance with Regulation IV: Stationary Emission Sources Permit System and Registration. Additional applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations may include: Rule 3.0: Visible Emissions, Rule 3:15: Architectural Coatings, and Rule 7:10: Indirect Source Fee. OPUD or its contractor will be required to implement measures of applicable FRAQMD Rules and Regulations as determined by the FRAQMD.

**Mitigation Measure AQ-2:**

OPUD will implement, or its construction contractors will implement, the following measures as established by the Standard Construction Mitigation Measures provided in the FRAQMD's Indirect Source Review Guidelines (2010) and FRAQMD Construction Phase Mitigation Measures (FRAQMD 2016) in order to reduce emissions during construction.

A. Develop and submit a fugitive dust control plan to minimize fugitive dust emissions during project construction to FRAQMD for approval.
B. Construction equipment exhaust emissions shall not exceed FRAQMD Regulation Ill, Rule 3.0, Visible Emissions limitations (40 percent opacity or Ringelmann 2.0).

C. The contractor shall be responsible to ensure that all construction equipment is properly tuned and maintained prior to and for the duration of on-site operation.
D. Limit idling time to five minutes
E. Utilize existing power sources (e.g., line power) or clean fuel generators rather than temporary power generators.
F. Develop a traffic plan to minimize traffic flow interference from construction activities. The plan may include advance public notice of routing, use of public transportation, and satellite parking areas with a shuttle service. Schedule operations affecting traffic for off-peak hours. Minimize obstruction of through-traffic lanes. Provide a flag person to guide traffic properly and ensure safety at construction sites.
G. Portable engines and portable engine-driven equipment units used at the project work site, with the exception of on-road and off-road motor vehicles, may require California Air Resources Board (CARB) Portable Equipment Registration with the State or a local district permit. The owner/operator shall be responsible for arranging appropriate consultations with the CARB or FRAQMD to determine registration and permitting requirements prior to equipment operation at the site.
H. All grading operations on a project should be suspended when winds exceed 20 miles per hour or when winds carry dust beyond the property line despite implementation of all feasible dust control measures.
I. Work areas shall be watered or treated with Dust Suppressants as necessary to prevent fugitive dust violations.
J. An operational water truck should be available at all times. Apply water to control dust as needed to prevent visible emissions violations and off-site dust impacts. Travel time to water sources should be considered and additional trucks used if needed.
K. On-site dirt piles or other stockpiled material should be covered, wind breaks installed, and water and/or soil stabilizers employed to reduce wind-blown dust emissions. Incorporate the use of approved non-toxic soil stabilizers according to manufacturer's specifications to all inactive construction areas.
L. All transfer processes involving a free fall of soil or other particulate matter shall be operated in such a manner as to minimize the free fall distance and fugitive dust emissions.
M. Apply approved chemical soil stabilizers according to the manufacturers' specifications, to all- inactive construction areas (previously graded areas that remain inactive for 96 hours) including unpaved roads and employee/equipment parking areas.
N. To prevent track-out, wheel washers should be installed where project vehicles and/or equipment exit onto paved streets from unpaved roads. Vehicles and/or equipment shall be washed prior to each trip. Alternatively, a gravel bed may be installed as appropriate at vehicle/equipment site exit points to effectively remove soil buildup on tires and tracks to prevent/diminish track-out.
O. Paved streets shall be swept frequently (water sweeper with reclaimed water recommended; wet broom) if soil material has been carried onto adjacent paved, public thoroughfares from the project site.
P. Provide temporary traffic control as needed during all phases of construction to improve traffic flow, as deemed appropriate by the Department of Public Works and/or Caltrans and to reduce vehicle dust emissions.
Q. Reduce traffic speeds on all unpaved surfaces to 15 miles per hour or less and reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic by restricting access. Provide appropriate training, on-site enforcement, and signage.

R. Reestablish ground cover on the construction site as soon as possible and prior to final occupancy, through seeding and watering.

**Mitigation Measure AQ-3:**

OPUD and its construction contractors shall implement the following measures to reduce, track, and offset construction-related project emissions, consistent with established FRAQMD Construction Phase Mitigation Measures (FRAQMD 2016).

A. Prior to beginning construction activities, OPUD shall assemble a comprehensive inventory list (i.e., make, model, engine year, horsepower, emission rates) of all heavy-duty off-road (portable and mobile) equipment (50 horsepower and greater) that will be used an aggregate of 40 or more hours for the construction project.
B. OPUD and its construction contractors shall provide a plan for approval by FRAQMD demonstrating that the heavy-duty (equal to or greater than 50 horsepower) off-road equipment to be used in the construction project, including owned, leased and subcontractor vehicles, will achieve a project wide fleet-average 5 percent ROG reduction, 20 percent NOx reduction and 45 percent particulate reduction compared to the most recent CARB fleet average at time of construction. A Construction Mitigation Calculator (MS Excel) may be downloaded from the SMAQMD website to perform the fleet average evaluation http://www.airquality.org/ceqa/index.shtml. Acceptable options for reducing emissions may include use of late model engines (Tier 4), CARB Approved low-emission diesel products, alternative fuels, engine retrofit technology (Carl Moyer Guidelines), after-treatment products, voluntary off-site mitigation projects, provide funds for air district off-site mitigation projects, and/or other options as they become available. The FRQAMD should be contacted to discuss alternative measures.

   The results of the Construction Mitigation Calculator shall be submitted and approved by the District PRIOR TO BEGINNING WORK. OPUD and its construction contractors shall provide a monthly summary of heavy-duty off-road equipment usage to the FRQAMD throughout the construction of the project.

C. OPUD may also contribute to the FRAQMD's Off-Site Mitigation Program to reduce project emissions to less than significant. OPUD shall compile a list of all emission sources and consult with the FRAQMD staff to implement this mitigation measure. The project contractors shall track emissions generated from equipment and vehicles throughout construction of the project. If determined necessary by the FRAQMD and before construction activities begin, OPUD shall pay a deposit to FRAQMD for contribution to the FRAQMD Off-site Mitigation Fund. This deposit will be held by FRAQMD and applied toward the final off-site mitigation amount to be paid after project construction is complete. Total construction emissions shall be calculated at the end of construction activities. Using these calculations, OPUD shall make a final payment to the FRAQMD Off-Site Mitigation Fund, if necessary, to further offset construction pollutant emissions that exceeded FRAQMD thresholds. (*Personal communications* with Sondra Spaethe, FRAQMD 2023)

**Mitigation Measure BIO-1**

Pre-construction special-status species plant surveys shall be conducted by OPUD or its contractor in all impact areas that provide potentially suitable habitat for special-status plants prior to initiating project construction activities. All surveys shall be conducted in accordance

with agency-approved survey protocols during the appropriate blooming period. If no special-status species are identified in protocol surveys, no additional mitigation is required. If surveys determine that special-status species occur within impact areas, Mitigation Measure BIO-2 shall apply.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-2**

If special-status plants are identified within project impact areas, one of the following measures shall apply:

A. If feasible, the project shall be adjusted to avoid impacts to special-status plants. If modifications can be made to avoid special-status species, the installation of protective fencing may be necessary to prevent accidental encroachment. If adjustment of construction areas or methods is not feasible, Mitigation Measure BIO-2B shall apply.

B. If there is no feasible alternative to avoid special-status plant species impacts, OPUD shall mitigate for impacts to special-status plants. A Mitigation Plan shall be prepared and implemented that provides for plant salvage, transplantation, seed collection and replanting, and/or topsoil collection and replacement as appropriate for the species identified within the project impact area. Transplantation or seed placement shall be within suitable or restored habitat after completion of construction for temporary impacts, or within off-site habitat at a mitigation site for permanent impacts. The Mitigation Plan shall include monitoring requirements to ensure successful establishment of special-status plants, that established performance criteria are achieved, and that no net loss of special-status plants has occurred after the prescribed monitoring period.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-3 (Both direct and indirect impacts.)**

Section 7 Consultation with USFWS shall be conducted to analyze the direct and indirect effects on listed wildlife species and to obtain regulatory permits and authorizations for impacts to listed species and loss of habitat. Measures and requirements outlined in agency authorizations may supersede the following measures.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-4 (Indirect impacts.)**

Trench excavation and stockpiling for pipeline installation shall be entirely located within the paved roadway or disturbed shoulder on Rancho Road in areas where seasonally wet ditches and depressions were mapped adjacent to the roadway. Equipment staging and trench excavation in these areas will be limited to designated workspace areas in the paved roadway and shoulder. To reduce the potential for indirect impacts to seasonally inundated ditches and depressions in close proximity to construction activities, but where no direct impacts will occur, the following measures shall apply:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, crews shall attend an environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding the potential presence of listed branchiopod species and the importance of avoiding impacts to these species and their habitat.
B. All work shall be conducted during the dry season when potential habitat features on or near the proposed pipeline installation areas are dry.
C. Fencing shall be placed and maintained to delineate the approved work areas and prevent encroachment on seasonally inundated ditch and depression features. A qualified biologist

shall oversee the installation of fencing. Once fencing is installed, a biologist will inspect fencing weekly to ensure its integrity and effectiveness.

D. All excavation, construction staging, and stockpiles shall be limited to paved roadways, disturbed shoulder, and approved work areas.
E. Storm water BMPs (silt fencing and straw waddles) shall be placed around construction disturbance and dirt stockpiles to reduce potential for erosion and sedimentation into potential branchiopod habitat features.
F. No application of water (e.g., dust suppression) shall occur in seasonally inundated ditch or depression features without additional measures (such as barriers and/or use of low flow water truck nozzles) in place to keep water out of potential or known VPB habitat features during the dry season.
G. Any groundwater encountered within the trench excavation shall not be discharged to areas where seasonally inundated ditch or depression features are located.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-5 (Direct impacts.)**

If avoidance of habitat features as described in BIO-4 is not feasible and direct impacts (temporary or permanent) will occur to seasonally inundated ditch and depression features, compliance with one of the following mitigation measures (5A or 5B) shall be required:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, surveys conducted in accordance with USFWS protocols shall be conducted in all potentially suitable habitat to be impacted. If protocol surveys determine that the seasonally inundated ditch and depression features are not occupied by federally listed vernal pool branchiopod species, no further mitigation is required for impact to species habitat (mitigation for jurisdictional aquatic features consistent with Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 may still apply). If protocol surveys detect the presence of federally listed species, then the following measures shall be implemented:

    1. Prior to the initiation of construction, construction crews shall attend an Environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding the potential presence of listed vernal pool branchiopod species and the importance of avoiding impacts to these species and their habitat.
    2. All work shall be conducted during the dry season when potential habitat features on or near the proposed pipeline installation areas are dry.
    3. Fencing shall be placed and maintained around any avoided (preserved) seasonally inundated ditch and depression features to prevent encroachment. A qualified biologist shall oversee the installation of fencing. Once fencing is installed, a biologist will inspect fencing weekly to ensure its integrity and effectiveness.
    4. A USFWS approved biologist shall monitor construction activities in known or potential vernal pool branchiopod habitat that results in temporary or permanent impacts.
    5. For temporary impacts that will be restored after construction, a Site Restoration Plan outlining requirements for topsoil collection, preservation, and restoration will be prepared and approved by the USFWS. Implementation of the approved Plan shall include the following requirements at minimum. Prior to excavation in locations with potential or known vernal pool branchiopod habitat, the uppermost soil layer that may contain branchiopods eggs (cysts) shall be collected, labelled, and stored under appropriate climatic conditions until construction in temporary impact areas is

complete. Once construction is complete, topsoil shall be placed back in the feature from which it was collected.

6. For permanent impacts, loss of vernal pool branchiopod habitat shall be mitigated through the purchase of mitigation credits at a USFWS approved mitigation bank in accordance with mitigation ratios approved by the USFWS.

B. If OPUD or its contractor chooses not to conduct protocol-level surveys, they may assume presence of listed vernal pool branchiopod species within seasonally inundated ditch and depression features that provide potentially suitable habitat. If presence of listed species is assumed, then measures BIO-5A (1) through (6) as set forth above shall apply to mitigate impacts to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-6**

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, implement Mitigation Measure BIO-3. Measures and requirements outlined in agency authorizations may supersede the following measures.

B. A 20-foot exclusion zone extending from the dripline of the shrub shall be maintained during construction in all directions away from the pavement. The exclusion zone will be reduced on the pavement side of the shrub to the edge of gravel roadway shoulder so that the fencing will not interfere with the roadway. Consistent with measures outlined by the USFWS to mitigate potential impacts to VELB, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. Fence and flag the elderberry shrub to be avoided and provide a minimum setback of at least 20 feet from the dripline of the elderberry plant for ground disturbance activities (e.g., trenching) to ensure that activities will not damage or kill the elderberry shrub. Due to its location at the edge of pavement on Forty Mile Road, the 20-foot setback will be adjusted (reduced) consistent with the edge of the gravel road shoulder so that fencing does not interfere with the paved roadway.
3. Prior to the initiation of any construction, environmental training shall brief the contractors and key employees of the need to avoid any impacts to elderberry plants, and to advise them of penalties associated with damage or destruction of the plants. The work crew shall be instructed regarding the status of the VELB and the need to protect its elderberry host plant, and possible penalties for non-compliance with avoidance and minimization measures.
4. A qualified biologist shall monitor the work area at project-appropriate intervals to assure that all avoidance and minimization measures are implemented. The amount and duration of monitoring will depend on the timing of project activities, and shall be determined in coordination with the USFWS biologist.
5. As much as feasible, all activities within 165 feet of the elderberry shrub will be conducted outside the flight season of the VELB (March-July).
6. No insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or other chemicals that might harm the VELB or its host plant shall be used within 100 feet of the elderberry plant with a stem measuring 1.0 inch or greater in diameter at ground level.
7. Mechanical vegetation removal within the dripline of the elderberry shrub shall be limited to the season when adult VELB are not active (August-February) and shall avoid damaging the elderberry.
8. Erosion control will be implemented, and the affected construction area shall be revegetated with appropriate native plants.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-7**

Implement the following measures:

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, construction staff shall attend an Environmental Awareness Training Program that will include information regarding identification of giant gartersnake and its habitat, protection measures for the species, and procedures to follow if a giant gartersnake or unknown snake is observed.
B. Construction of Lift Station 23 will occur when the rice field is inactive and has been dry for a minimum of 15 days.
C. Construction of Lift Station 22, Lift Station 23, and the HDD installation of pipelines under Kimball Creek, including all activities within 200 feet of Kimball Creek and the rice field at Lift Station 23, shall be restricted to the period between May 1 and October 1. This is the active period for GGS when the potential for direct mortality is reduced because GGS can actively avoid disturbance.
D. Prior to the start of the Kimball Creek HDD, construction of Lift Station 22, or the construction of Lift Station 23, a qualified biologist shall conduct a preconstruction survey for GGS at these locations prior to the initiation of disturbance. Exclusion fencing shall be installed, as directed by the qualified biologist, to isolate the workspace within 200 feet of suitable aquatic habitat and exclude snakes from the work areas. Exclusion fencing will be buried at the base to prevent snakes from moving under the fence into the construction area. Exclusion fencing shall be maintained for the duration of work in these areas and shall be routinely inspected by the qualified biologist to ensure the fencing is intact and effective. The workspace shall be inspected prior to the start of work each day to ensure that no snakes have entered the work area.
E. If a GGS is observed, the USFWS and CDFW shall be notified immediately. Construction will be suspended in the area until the snake leaves the site of its own volition.
F. All excavations within 200 feet of suitable GGS habitat shall be covered or have escape ramps installed to prevent entrapment prior to the end of work each day. These excavations shall be inspected by the qualified biologist prior to the start of work the following day.
G. Erosion control materials shall consist of tightly woven fibers and netting to prevent entanglement of reptiles and amphibians. No monofilament materials will be allowed.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-8**

Implement the following measures:

A. A preconstruction survey for western pond turtle shall be conducted no more than 48 hours prior to the start of construction within 150 feet of the drainages or other suitable wetland habitat. If no western pond turtles are observed, no further mitigation would be necessary.
B. If a western pond turtle is observed within the project area, a qualified biologist shall relocate the individual to a suitable habitat location outside of the construction area.
C. If a pond turtle nest is identified, exclusion fencing shall be placed a minimum of 25 feet around the nest and disturbance to the area will be avoided until the hatchlings have emerged. The nest will be monitored daily by the qualified biologist to ensure nestlings emerge to a suitable habitat area safely outside the construction zone.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-9 (Nest disturbance.)**

A. If construction or vegetation removal work occurs outside of Swainson's hawk nesting season (August 31 to Feb 1), impacts to the Swainson's hawk would be avoided. Surveys would not be required for work conducted during that part of the year, and no further mitigation for nest disturbance would be required.

B. If project activities occur between February 1 to August 31, surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for active Swainson's hawk nests. OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a protocol-level survey in conformance with the "Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley," Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/survey-protocols#377281284-birds) (May 31, 2000) hereby incorporated by reference. This protocol prescribes minimum standards for survey equipment, mode of survey, angle and distance to tree, speed, visual and audible clues, distractions, notes and observations, and timing of surveys. If the surveys show that there are no active Swainson's hawk nests within 0.25-mile of construction activities, no further mitigation for nest disturbance will be required. If active Swainson's hawk nests are identified near the project area, a 0.25-mile nest protection buffer shall be identified, and the following measures shall be required:

    1. Apply a nest protection buffer with a minimum distance of 0.25-mile from an active nest. Postpone project activities within the nest protection buffer until after the young have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest tree. The minimum nest protection buffer may be reduced in coordination with CDFW if existing site conditions, habituation to disturbance, proposed disturbance levels, and nest concealment or barriers between the nest and activities indicate a reduced buffer would be effective.
    2. If it is not possible to postpone project activities within the minimum nest protection buffer, construction activities may proceed with CDFW approval and monitoring of the nest by a qualified raptor biologist. If the monitoring biologist observes signs of distress, they shall have the authority to stop construction work and coordinate with CDFW to establish additional protection measures to ensure avoidance of nest abandonment prior to the re-start of project activities.

C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-10 (Foraging habitat.)**

If nesting occurrences of Swainson's hawks occur within 10 miles of the permanent impact areas (e.g., pump station, lift station, and WP sites) mitigation for loss of foraging habitat shall be required. Generally, CDFW requires mitigation for loss of Swainson's hawk foraging habitat based on the presence of active nests within 10 miles of the project. If an active nest site occurs within ten miles of the project, OPUD or its contractor will be required by CDFW to provide off-site foraging habitat management lands at a specified Mitigation Ratio that is based on nest proximity to the project site, as follows:

| **Distance from Project Boundary** | **Mitigation Acreage Ratio*** |
|---|---|
| Within 1 mile | 1.00:1** |
| Between 1 and 5 miles | 0.75:1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Between 5 and 10 miles | 0.50:1 |
| *Ratio means [acres of mitigation land] to [acres of foraging habitat impacted].<br>**This ratio shall be 0.5:1 if the acquired lands can be actively managed for prey production. | |

CDFW provides options for off-site habitat management by fee title acquisition or conservation easement acquisition with a CDFW-approved management plan, and by the acquisition of comparable habitat. Mitigation credits may be obtained through a CDFW-approved mitigation bank for Swainson's hawk with a service area that covers the project site.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-11**

A. A pre-construction survey of areas providing suitable burrowing owl habitat within 1,640 feet (500 meters) of construction at the WWTP shall be conducted by a qualified raptor biologist within 14 days prior to ground disturbance. Surveys shall follow guidelines outlined by CDFW in the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). If the required pre-construction surveys show there are no active burrowing owl nests within the 1,640 feet (500 meters) of construction activities, no further mitigation for burrowing owl nest disturbance will be required.

B. If an occupied burrow is discovered during pre-construction surveys, a protective buffer consistent with CDFW guidelines shall be established. Appropriate protective buffers depend on the type of burrowing owl occurrence (nesting or overwinter), level of project disturbance, and time of year that the disturbance occurs. Nest protective buffers consistent with CDFW guidelines are outlined below.

| Location | Time of Year | Level of Disturbance | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Med | High |
| Nesting Site | April 1 – Aug 15 | 200 m | 500 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Site | Aug 16 – Oct 15 | 200 m | 200 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Site | Oct 16 – March 31 | 50 m | 100 m | 500 m |

A reduced buffer may be implemented upon CDFW approval and based upon site specific conditions, nesting phenology, and the recommendation of the qualified biologist.

C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to OPUD and CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

D. If occupied burrows cannot be avoided, OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a survey during the non-nesting season (September 30 through January 31) to identify occupied burrows within the disturbance footprint, exclude burrowing owls from burrows within the disturbance footprint, and then collapse the burrows in accordance with methodology outlined by the CDFW. Burrowing owl exclusion and burrow collapse must be conducted in coordination with CDFW and with the approval of CDFW.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-12**

A. If construction or vegetation removal work occurs outside of nesting season (August 31 to Feb 1), impacts would be avoided. Surveys would not be required for work conducted during this part of the year, and no further mitigation for nest disturbance would be required.

B. If vegetation removal or construction activities occur between February 1 to August 31, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist of suitable habitat within 500 feet of worksites and disturbance areas for passerines, and within 0.25-mile of worksites and disturbance areas for raptors. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted within 14 days prior to the start of construction of vegetation removal. If nests are identified, a suitable nest protection buffer shall be recommended by the qualified biologist based on the species, nest phenology, and site-specific conditions. Construction activities shall be prohibited within the established buffer zones until the young have fledged. If a lapse in project-related activities occurs for 14 days or longer during the nesting season, another focused survey shall be conducted before construction activities can be reinitiated.
C. A written report summarizing the pre-construction survey results shall be provided to OPUD and CDFW within 30 days of survey completion.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-13**

A. Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor shall conduct a preliminary aquatic resource delineation of the project site to define the limits of jurisdictional areas and determine the extent of project impacts. The delineation will be verified by the Corps. The verified delineation will provide OPUD with the impact acreage necessary for preparing a Waters of the US/Wetland Mitigation Plan and/or permit application if impacts to jurisdictional areas cannot be avoided. If the project can fully avoid delineated aquatic resources, no further mitigation would be required. If the project cannot fully avoid delineated aquatic resources, Mitigation Measure BIO-13 B will apply.
B. If project impacts to federal and State jurisdictional areas are identified, OPUD shall obtain all necessary permits for impacts to Waters of the US and wetlands from the Corps and RWQCB and/or for potential impacts to stream features from CDFW prior to project implementation. Implementation of the project shall comply with all permit conditions. Compensatory mitigation must be consistent with the Corps' standards pertaining to mitigation type, location, and ratios, but will be accomplished with a minimum of 1:1 replacement ratio.

   If compensatory mitigation is needed, OPUD may satisfy all or a portion of Waters of the US and wetlands mitigation through the purchase of "credits" at a mitigation bank approved by the Corps, RWQCB, and/or CDFW for compensatory mitigation of impacts to hydrologically similar Waters of the US, or through other means, such as on- or off-site wetland creation, conservation easement, contribution to approved in-lieu habitat fund, etc. The Mitigation Plan must be approved by the permitting agencies, and shall be implemented by OPUD subsequent to plan approval.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-14**

The proposed HDD installations under regulated drainages have a small potential to "frac out" or inadvertently release drilling muds to the surface during drilling operations. Because of the potential for a frac-out to impact waters and wetlands at the drainage crossings, OPUD or its contractor shall prepare and implement an Inadvertent Returns Contingency Plan that outlines the measures that will be taken to prevent inadvertent returns, and outlines the response measures to be employed and response equipment to be maintained on site for use in the unlikely event of an inadvertent return during drilling operations.

**Mitigation Measure CUL-1:**

A. If buried cultural resources such as chipped or ground stone, midden deposits, historic debris, building foundations, human bone, or paleontological resources are inadvertently discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop in that area and within 100 feet of the find until a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist can assess the significance of the find and, if necessary, develop responsible treatment measures in consultation with Yuba County and other appropriate agencies.

B. If remains of Native American origin are discovered during proposed project construction, it shall be necessary to comply with state laws concerning the disposition of Native American burials, which fall within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). If any human remains are discovered or recognized in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until:

- The County coroner has been informed and has determined that no investigation of the cause of death is required; and
- If the remains are of Native American origin:
  - √ The most likely descendants of the deceased Native Americans have made a recommendation to the landowner or person responsible for the excavation work for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in PRC 5097.98; or
  - √ The NAHC has been unable to identify a descendant, or the descendant failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified.

C. According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100), and disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony (Section 7052). Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the NAHC.

**Mitigation Measure EN-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures AQ2 (b-f, and p) and AQ-3 (b and c).

**Mitigation Measure GEO-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-2:**

A. In additional to civil drawing for the project, a final geotechnical engineering report for the proposed project shall be produced by a California Registered Civil Engineer or Geotechnical Engineer and submitted to Yuba County for review. The geotechnical engineering report measures shall address construction conditions, including but not limited to: excavation conditions, site clearing specifications, ground and subgrade preparation, general fill placement and compaction, dewatering, and foundations. Following approval in the geotechnical report by Yuba County, construction shall be completed in accordance with the geotechnical recommendations in the report, Yuba County Standard Specifications, and Cal OSHA requirements. Proof shall be provided for engineering inspection and

certification that earthwork has been performed in conformity with recommendations contained in the report. (Preliminary geotechnical recommendations are included in Appendix E of this Initial Study).

B. The Contractor shall retain an engineer to evaluate the impact of construction traffic vibrations, actual soil conditions exposed in the open excavations, seepage and/or groundwater conditions, surcharges adjacent to excavations, proximity of excavations to existing structures, and other factors that may promote excavation wall instability or cause excavation related damage to existing facilities and improvements and adjust excavation sloping/shoring methods accordingly.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-3:**

Consistent with Yuba County 2030 General Plan policies, if potential paleontological resources are found during construction, work shall stop and consultation is required to avoid further impacts. If potential paleontological resources are detected during construction, work shall stop and consultation shall be required to avoid further impacts. Actions after work stoppage will be designed to avoid significant impacts to the greatest extent feasible. These measures should include construction worker education, consultation with a qualified paleontologist, coordination with experts on resource recovery and curation of specimens, and/or other measures, as appropriate.

**Mitigation Measure GHG-1**

Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1:**

The contractor shall conduct all grading operations in accordance with the Department of Toxic Substances, Caltrans Soil Management Agreement for Aerially Deposited Lead-Contaminated Soils (Agreement), June 30, 2016, and with the awareness that lead impacted soils are present on McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road. Construction project documents shall include a site-specific Health and Safety Plan and special Soil Management Plan (SMP) to address elevated levels of lead along McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road. The SMP shall be in accordance with all applicable Cal/OSHA requirements and, at a minimum, the SMP shall include measures to control worker exposure to soil, airborne dust, and control runoff along both McGowan Parkway and Rancho Road.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-2:**

The contractor shall use general dust controls during paint striping removal on McGowan Parkway Road. In addition, the contractor shall include measures to minimize dust or debris leading to or near storm drains, waterways, and other sources of water during construction activities that include removal of paint striping.

**Mitigation Measure HAZ-3:**

Implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1:**

A. OPUD or its contractor shall submit Permit Registration Documents (PRD) for the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ to the State Water Resources Control Board, and comply with, and implement, all requirements of the permit. A Legally Responsible Person (LRP) shall electronically submit PRDs prior to commencement of construction activities in the Storm Water Multi-Application Report Tracking System. PRDs consist of the Notice of Intent, Risk Assessment, Post-Construction Calculations, a Site Map, the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), a signed certification statement by the LRP, and the first annual fee. Following submittal of a Notice of Intent package and development of a SWPPP in accordance with the Construction General Permit, OPUD or its contractor will receive a Waste Discharge Identification Number from the SWRCB. All requirements of the site-specific SWPPP, including any revisions, shall be included in construction documents for the project. Prior to the initiation of any construction, proof of registration shall be submitted to the Yuba County Director of Public Works for review and approval and shall remain on the project site during all phases of construction.

B. For those project components within the Olivehurst urban area, OPUD or its contractor will apply for and obtain an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan in accordance with Yuba County Department of Public Works Improvement Standards and Specifications, and implement all identified erosion control measures set forth in the Plan.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-2**

Groundwater elevations were taken during the geotechnical exploration phase of the project design, and noted in the Geotechnical Data Report. However, groundwater elevations in the project areas will vary by season, and it is known that overall groundwater elevations in the South Yuba Basin are trending to rising slightly since surface water has been substituted for groundwater for agricultural use in the project area. OPUD or its contractor shall monitor groundwater and conduct construction operations in a manner intended to avoid pumping for groundwater control, using one or more of the following sub-measures:

A. Monitor groundwater elevations on a seasonal basis, and construct improvements (for all project components, but specifically auger bores, pump and lift station wet wells, and pipelines) during those time periods when pumping for groundwater control can be avoided.
B. If possible, given the depth of encountered groundwater, tremie concrete could be used in the bottom of pump and lift station wet wells, or
C. In the event that groundwater pumping is to be pursued by OPUD or its contractor, OPUD or the contractor shall apply for and obtain a Low Threat Discharge Permit and any other permits necessary for such pumping. Permits that may be required include NPDES permit requirements and CVRWQCB requirements, which may include the approval of a Dewatering Permit. Appropriate groundwater handling and disposal would be ensured as part of the SWPPP for the project and would include collection and treatment measures prior to discharge.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-3**

A. Implement Mitigation Measure HYD-1 and include the proposed water well and its settling basin within the NPDES permit.

B. In coordination with Yuba County, all construction activities shall implement stormwater pollution prevention Best Management Practices (BMP) designed to reduce potential impacts to water quality during construction of the water well, including, but not limited to:
    1. Protecting adjacent properties and waterways from the discharge of sediment or other contaminants from the well construction site,
    2. Scheduling as much project work as possible during the dry season,
    3. Using other BMPs as necessary, including applying rainy season erosion controls, managing stockpiles, disposing of well development water properly, and correctly managing and disposing of construction wastes,
    4. Maintaining all Best Management Practices, and
    5. Stabilizing the site after construction is complete, including removing sediment from the settling basin.

**Mitigation Measure NSE-1:**

To reduce the effects of construction noise on affected residents, the project contractor shall implement the following measures for all project components:

A. All work necessary to implement the project components will be performed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday.
B. All equipment will be equipped with appropriate muffler devices to reduce the noise impacts of the construction operations.
C. Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor shall consult with the Yuba County Community Development and Services Agency (CDSA) to determine whether proposed construction activities would require an exemption permit pursuant to Chapter 8.20.710 of the Yuba County Code. If it is determined that such a permit would be necessary or beneficial, OPUD or its contractor will submit a permit application to the CDSA and abide by the terms of the permit.

**Mitigation Measure TR-1:**

Prior to the initiation of construction, OPUD or its contractor will obtain encroachment permits from Yuba County and Caltrans for work within the County and State rights of way. OPUD or its contractor will prepare a Traffic Control Plan/Plans that meets the requirements of Yuba County and Caltrans. For Yuba County, the TCP shall meet the current TCP Checklist and TCP Conditions of Acceptance requirements of Yuba County. The TCP shall include all required topics, including: traffic handling during each stage of construction, maintaining emergency service provider access by, if necessary, providing alternate routes, repositioning emergency equipment, or coordinating with nearby service providers for coverage during construction closures, and covering trenches during the evenings and weekends. A component of the TCP will involve public dissemination of construction-related information through notices to the nearby residences, press releases, and/or the use of changeable message signs. The project contractor will be required to notify all affected residents, post the construction impact schedule, and place articles and/or advertisements in appropriate local newspapers regarding construction impacts and schedules.

# 6. PREPARERS OF THE INITIAL STUDY / MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

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# 7. LITERATURE CITED

The following documents were referred to as information sources during preparation of this document. They are available for public review at the web addresses shown after the listing. All documents without an Internet address are available at the Olivehurst Public Utilities District, 915 1970 9th Street, Olivehurst, California 95961.

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ARB, see California, State of, Air Resources Board

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## 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 NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

X 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 Olivehurst Public Utility District. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

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

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

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

Signature Date

3-7-23

John Tillotson, General Manager
Olivehurst Public Utility District