

Response to Comments

Final Mitigated Negative Declaration

CEQ 2000024

State Clearinghouse Number: 2023090660

Ramona Water System Improvement Project Anza, California

Public Use Permit (PUP) No.: 200002

Riverside County Planning Department

4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor
Riverside, CA 92502

December 2023

1.0 Introduction

This document contains responses to comments received on the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared by the Riverside County Planning Department for the Ramona Water System Improvement project (State Clearinghouse No. 2023090660). The MND was circulated for public review from October 2, 2023 to November 3, 2023. In addition, the MND was posted on the Riverside County Planning Department's website and CEQAnet. Comments received from agencies and individuals on the MND are listed below. Individual comments are followed by responses. Responses to comments received from public agencies will be provided to those agencies 10 days prior to the initial public hearing. An Errata section is included in the Final MND to clarify the location and status of the existing water transmission main and to provide additional information pertaining to the existing and proposed system wells. The actual comment letters are included in Section 5.0.

2.0 Comments Received

Comments on the Draft MND were received from the following agencies and individuals:

- California Water Boards, State Water Resource Control Board – (November 1, 2023)
- Polly Jane Filanc – (October 22, 2023)

3.0 Response to Comments

California Water Boards, State Water Resources Control Board Comments:

Comment No. 1

Under Section "G. Other Public Agency Involvement and Required Permits" please include the State Water Resources Control Board for possible approval of funding.

Response to Comment No. 1

The State Water Resources Control Board is hereby added to the listing of "Other Public Agency Involvement and Required Permits" for possible approval of funding.

Comment No.2

Please note the IS/MND has identified the wrong agency and funding source for the planning, design, and construction of the project throughout the document. The IS/MND should state "The applicant has applied for the State Water Resources Control Board Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) funding for the planning, design, and construction of the RWS Improvement Project."

Response to Comment No. 2:

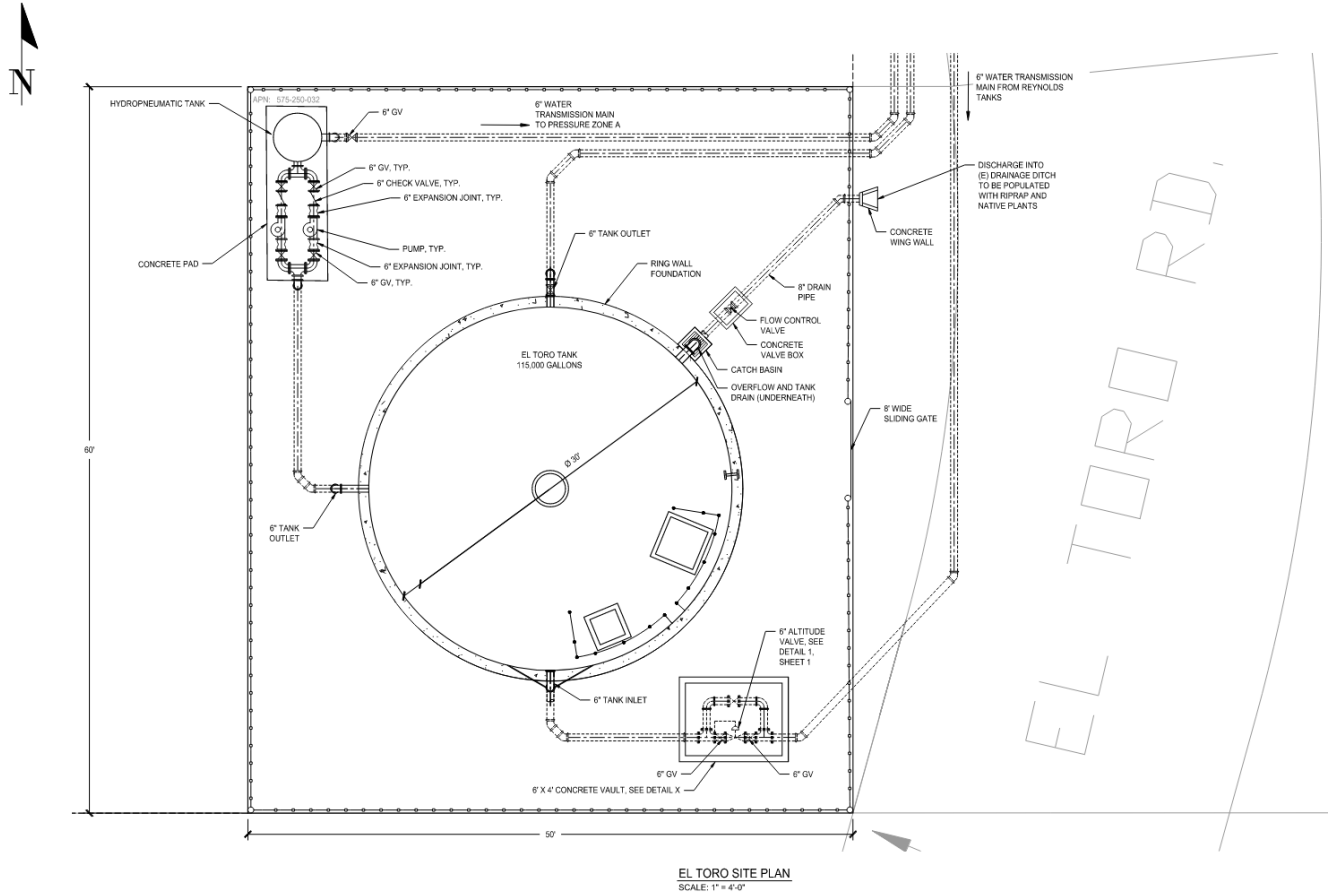
The agency name and funding source has been changed from the “Regional Water Quality Control Board Clean Water State Revolving Fund” to the State Water Resources Control Board Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF).” This change is applicable throughout the MND.

Comment No. 3:

The Project includes the construction of a 115,000-gallon reservoir. Please discuss if a detention basin will be required on the El Toro Tank site to address emergency tank discharge and tank discharge maintenance. If so, please include the detention basin in the Project Description and address environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the detention basin. If a detention basin will not be installed at the El Toro Tank site, please explain if there is an existing offsite detention basin the discharges will be sent to or if there are other plans to address these discharges. If there is an off-site discharge basin be sure to include the main to the detention basin as part of the Project description and address any impacts related to the main’s installation.

Response to Comment No. 3:

The El Toro Tank will be equipped with an overflow and drain that will both flow into a catch basin and be directed to an outlet on the side of El Toro Rd (see the drawing, below), into an existing drainage ditch. Riprap and native vegetation will be installed in the drainage area around the outlet to protect against erosion.



It is not anticipated that the full volume of El Toro Tank will need to be drained, except in the event of an emergency. Under normal operating conditions, and in the case of required maintenance, El Toro Tank will be drained by supplying water to the distribution system. The supply line will drain approximately 107,070 gallons of water (outlet 18 inches from the tank bottom), leaving 7,930 gallons to be drained to the environment through the tank drain. The outlet will be equipped with a flow control valve to control the flow at which the water is released to the environment. Water will be dechlorinated in the catch basin prior to discharge.

It is highly unlikely that draining the entire tank will be required, however, if the tank is required to be drained without feeding water to the distribution system, it will be drained in the same manner as described above, slowly releasing water to the environment. In the event of an emergency that requires draining the entire tank, the existing 100,000 gallon tank, located at the Patterson site will be used as a backup to El Toro Tank and supply water to the upper pressure zones as the tank is slowly drained to the environment. Reynolds Tanks and Red Shank Tank have the capacity to supply the lower pressure zones.

Polly Jane Filanc Comments:

Comment No. 1

From the information you (County of Riverside) sent me in the mail it looks like the water transmission pipes go right through my properties in Anza, CA. This is totally unacceptable. I am protesting against it. This has nothing to do with the water tower positioning, but with the invasion of my personal property

which do plan to develop. Please forward the map and plans to my email: pjfilanc@verizon.net. I want to forward this information to my family and attorney.

Response to Comment No. 1:

Western Water Conservation, a non-profit, California public-benefit corporation, is in receipt of your concerns for your five listed properties that are adjacent to an existing underground water transmission pipe on Everett Road. The existing transmission line is located in Everett Road paralleling the electric and telephone lines and does not cross the commentor's property. Further research has determined that the existing pipeline is located in Everett Road adjacent to and north of the commentor's property in an east-west direction and within Tweedie Trail (north-south direction). Figure 1 has been updated (see errata section) to show the correct location of the existing transmission line. The applicant's understanding is that the existing transmission pipe was installed sometime in the 1980s in the first iteration of property owners. That existing transmission pipe is no longer in use and is not included in any construction plans for the proposed rehabilitation of the Ramona water system. The existing transmission line is expected to be connected to at some point to the proposed system to convey water from the Patterson site to the downstream proposed transmission and distribution lines.

The applicant has discussed the issues raised by the commentor with her directly. She understands now that the project will not have an impact on her property. She requested a written explanation, map, and assurance from the applicant to her, her brother, and her son. The applicant has complied with her request and continues communication with her to ensure that she understands the map.

4.0 Errata

Existing Transmission Line Location

During the MND public review period, questions arose with regards to the existing transmission line located between the Patteson site and the connection point south of the El Toro site. This existing transmission main is currently unused and was originally installed as part of the area water system in the 1980s that connected the existing Patterson tank to the downstream locations and facilities. The location of the existing transmission line is described in Response to Comment 1 and does not bisect private property. The proposed project intends to connect to that existing transmission line at some point in the phased development of the water system to convey water from the Patterson site to the proposed transmission line.

Updated Figure 1 in the MND also shows the conceptual location of the distribution lines that will connect to the transmission lines to distribute potable water to existing homes in the service area. Further research has determined that the existing transmission line is located as described in Response to Comment 1.

The conceptual location of proposed distribution lines are shown in Figure 1, but were not specifically depicted in the engineering plans, as they are primarily located within the same trench as the transmission mains. The distribution mains are part of the proposed project and Public Use Permit, and were evaluated in the MND. The ultimate size and location of the distribution lines will be determined in final engineering.

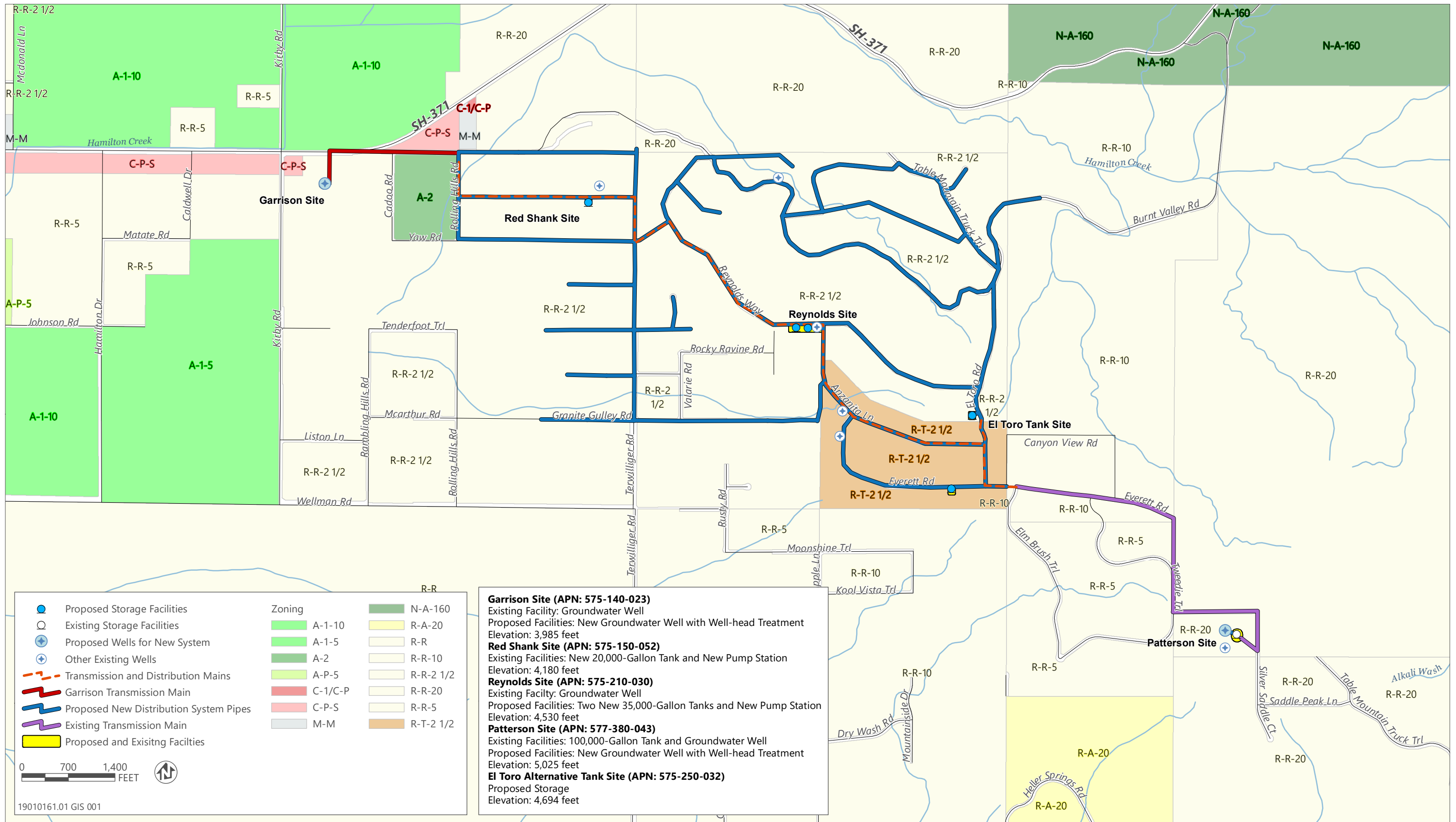
The engineering parcel base mapping has been updated to more accurately show the specific location and connection points of the existing and proposed transmission main lines throughout the project area. All of the existing and proposed transmission lines are located within dedicated road right-of-way or within established easements. None of the existing or proposed transmission or distribution lines are located within private property. None of the information in the Errata section requires that the MND be recirculated.

Project Effect on Groundwater Basin and Existing Wells

An additional issue arose during the MND public review period regarding the potential effect of the proposed water system on the existing groundwater basin. The groundwater basin in the project area (Table Mountain) is approximately 700 feet deep (USGS) and is composed of basement rock (crushed gravel) that allows for the constant inflow and movement of groundwater from the surrounding alluvial areas. The contribution of that portion of the Table Mountain area of the Santa Margarita watershed to the alluvial basin of the Anza Valley has never been quantified. The Anza alluvial basin has been quantified but the inflow sources for the alluvial basin have not. There is a USGS hypothesis that the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults may be underground conduits for moving water to the Table Mountain area and that someday the connection might be verified and measured. Due to the extent (area, depth, and recharge) of the groundwater basin, the proposed project is not expected to have any substantial effect on the existing private wells in the project area or the groundwater basin overall.

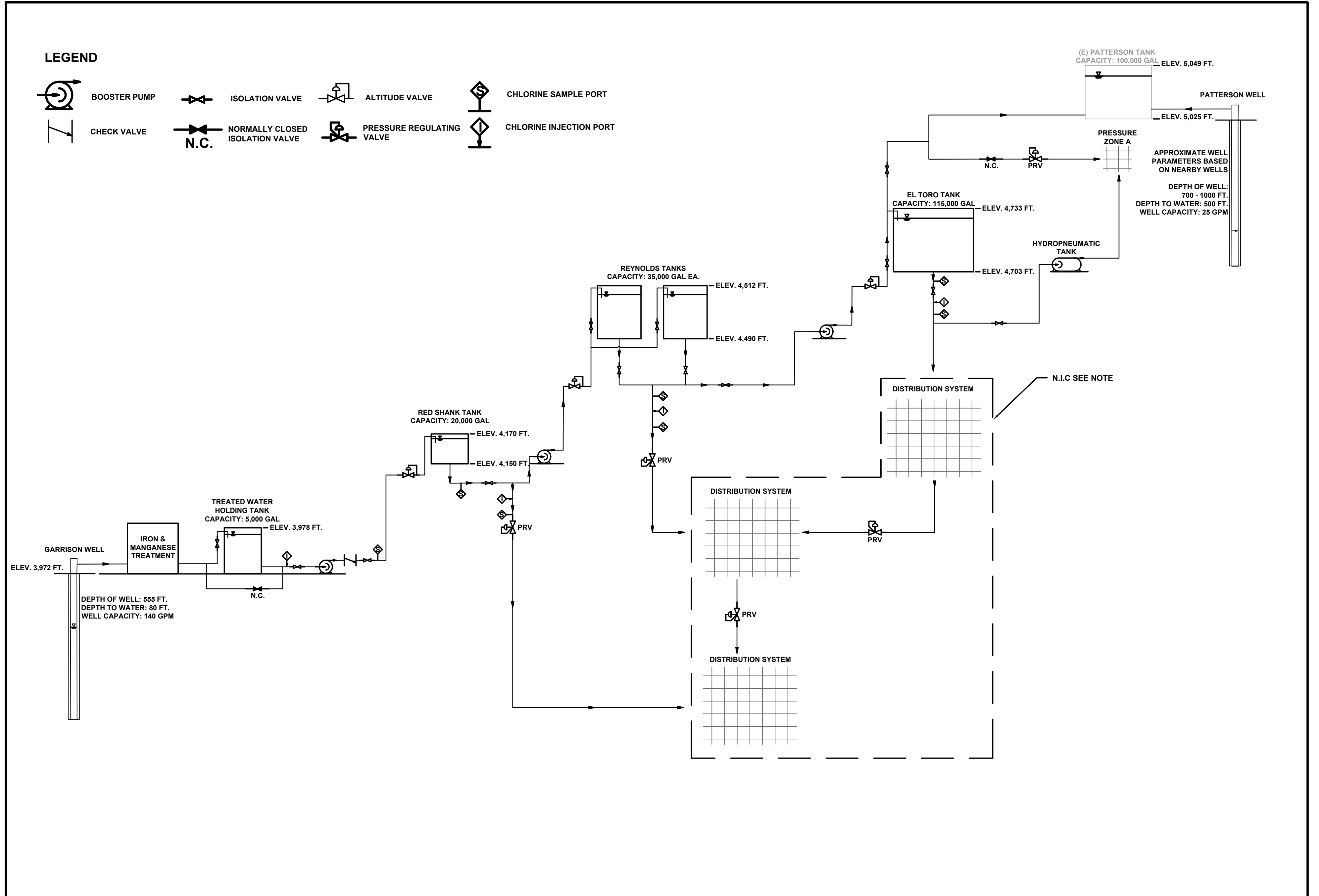
Additional well information has been provided as well. The ground surface elevation at the existing Garrison well is approximately 3,972 feet msl and the well is 555 feet deep. The existing Garrison well is expected to produce 140 gallons per minute (GPM). The ground surface elevation at the Patterson well site is 5,025 feet msl and the well is planned to be at least 700 feet deep, and anticipated to produce 25 GPM.

None of the information in the Errata section requires that the MND be recirculated.



Source: Data received from SRT Consultants and downloaded from Riverside County in 2019

Figure 1 - Proposed Ramona Water System Improvements



Source: Image produced by SRT Consultants in 2020, adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2023

Figure 2. Proposed Ramona Water System Improvement Project Elevation Profile

5.0 Comment letters

From: POLLY FILANC <pjfilanc@verizon.net>
Subject: project location of pup200002
Date: October 22, 2023 at 4:14:15 PM PDT
To: kmitcchell@riven.org

Dear Kathleen,

From the information you sent me in the mail it looks like the water transmission pipes go right through my properties in Anza, CA. This is totally unacceptable. I am protesting against it. This has nothing to do with the water tower positioning, but with the invasion of my personal property which do plan to develop. Please forward the map and plans to my e mail:pjfilanc@verizon.net. I want to forward this information to my family and attorney.

Yours truly,
Polly Jane Filanc

State Water Resources Control Board

Ms. Kathleen Mitchell
Riverside County Planning Department
P.O. Box 1409
Riverside, CA 92502-1409

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND) FOR RIVERSIDE COUNTY (COUNTY); RAMONA WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (PROJECT); RIVERSIDE COUNTY; STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2023090660

We understand that Western Water Conservation is pursuing Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) financing for this Project on behalf of the Ramona Water Company. As a funding agency and a state agency with jurisdiction by law to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is providing the following water quality comments on the IS/MND circulating for the Project.

The State Water Board, Division of Financial Assistance, is responsible for administering the DWSRF Program (Program). The primary purpose for the Program is to implement the Safe Drinking Water Act and various state laws by providing financial assistance for drinking facilities improvements to provide clean potable drinking water, and thereby protect and promote health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the state.

All applicants seeking funding must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provide appropriate documents to the State Water Board so that it can fulfill its CEQA responsibilities, see [CEQA Requirements](#). In addition, because the Program is partially funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency additional federal environmental documentation (cross-cutters) may be required. For additional Program information, the complete environmental application package and instructions, please visit:

[Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Forms and Instructions](#).

Following are specific comments on the County's draft IS/MND:

1. Under Section "G. Other Public Agency Involvement and Required Permits" please include the State Water Resources Control Board for possible approval of funding.
2. Please note the IS/MND has identified the wrong agency and funding source for the planning, design, and construction of the project throughout the

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | EILEEN SOBECK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- document. The IS/MND should state “The applicant has applied for the State Water Resources Control Board Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) funding for the planning, design, and construction of the RWS Improvement Project.”
3. The Project includes the construction of a 115,000-gallon reservoir. Please discuss if a detention basin will be required on the El Toro Tank site to address emergency tank discharge and tank discharge maintenance. If so, please include the detention basin in the Project Description and address environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the detention basin. If a detention basin will not be installed at the El Toro Tank site, please explain if there is an existing offsite detention basin the discharges will be sent to or if there are other plans to address these discharges. If there is an off-site discharge basin be sure to include the main to the detention basin as part of the Project description and address any impacts related to the main’s installation.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the County’s draft IS/MND. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (916) 449-5285, or by email at Lori.Schmitz@waterboards.ca.gov or contact Mrs. Bridget Binning at (916) 449-5641, or by email at Bridget.Binning@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Lori Schmitz
Environmental Scientist
Division of Financial Assistance
Special Project Review Unit
1001 I Street, 16th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

cc: State Clearinghouse

Bridget Binning, Division of Financial Assistance

Robyn Mendoza, Division of Financial Assistance

Lawrence Sanchez, Division of Financial Assistance