



# Sand Canyon Sewer Relocation

## Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration

*prepared by*

**Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency**  
27234 Bouquet Canyon Road  
Santa Clarita, California 91350  
Contact: Amy Anderson, Project Manager

*prepared with the assistance of*

**Rincon Consultants, Inc.**  
250 East 1st Street, Suite 1400  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**March 2024**



RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC. SINCE 1994

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# Initial Study

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## 1. Project Title

Sand Canyon Sewer Relocation Project

## 2. Lead Agency Name and Address

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency  
26521 Summit Circle  
Santa Clarita, California 91350

## 3. Contact Person and Phone Number

Jason Yim, Principal Engineer  
(661) 513-1277  
jyim@scvwa.org

## 4. Project Location

The approximately 2.4-acre project site is located in the eastern portion of Santa Clarita south of State Route 14. The majority of the project site is located in an undeveloped area adjacent to the north of the Santa Clara River. The approximately 0.7-mile sewer line would begin on an overbank adjacent to the north of the Santa Clara River and south of State Route 14. The sewer line would travel generally east to Sand Canyon Road, where it would redirect north along Sand Canyon Road, then redirect and terminate east in two locations near existing commercial uses. Residential uses are also located adjacent to the north of the project site. Figure 1 shows the regional project site location. Figure 2 shows the project site and project components.

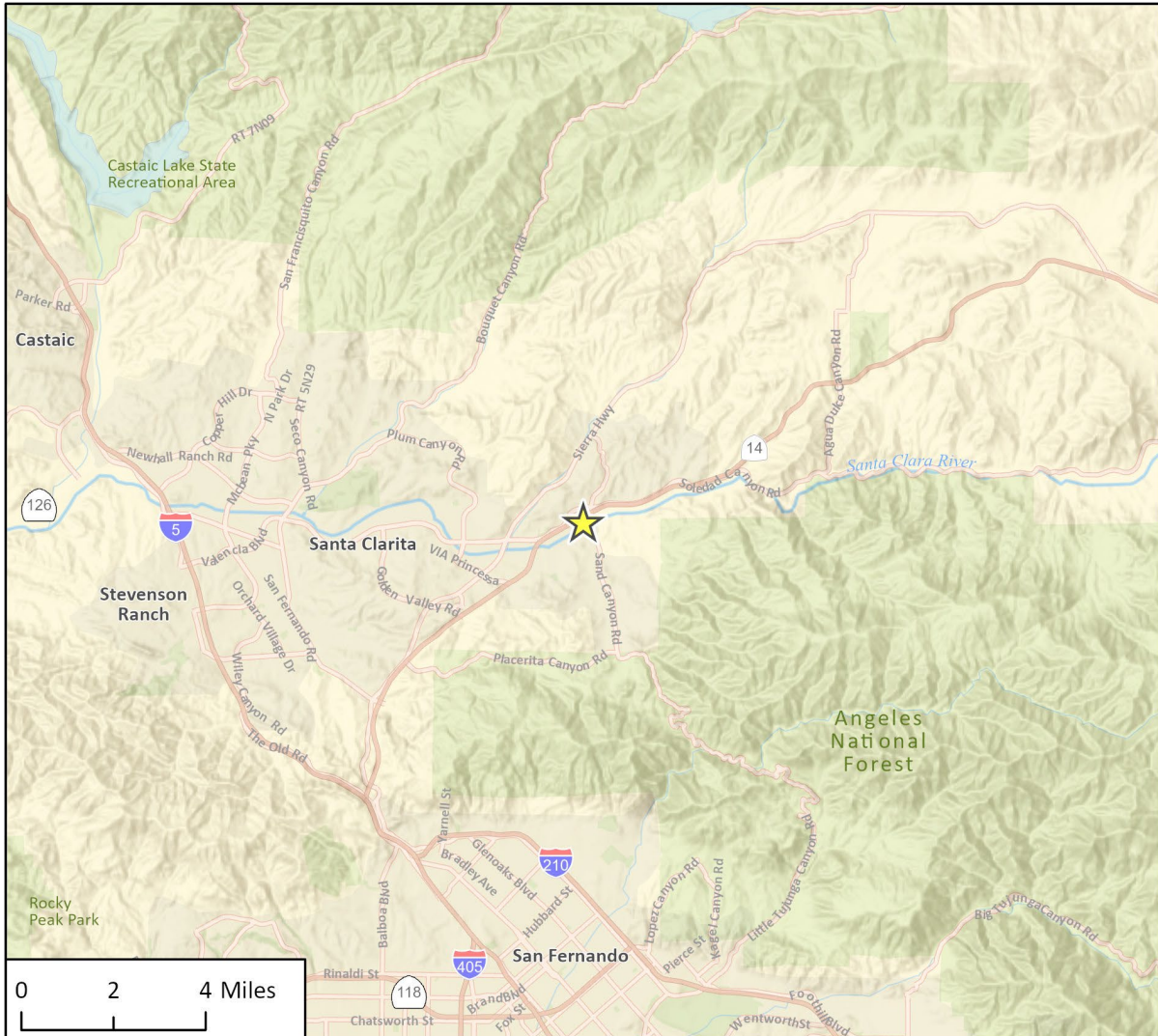
## 5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency  
26521 Summit Circle  
Santa Clarita, California 91350

## 6. General Plan and Zoning Designation

The project site has several General Plan and zoning designations, including Vista Canyon Specific Plan (SP), Urban Residential (UR1) (2 dwelling units/acre), Open Space (OS), and Community Commercial (CC).

**Figure 1 Project Location**



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22-13523 Sand Cnyn Sewer Reloc  
 Fig 1 Regional Location

★ Project Location

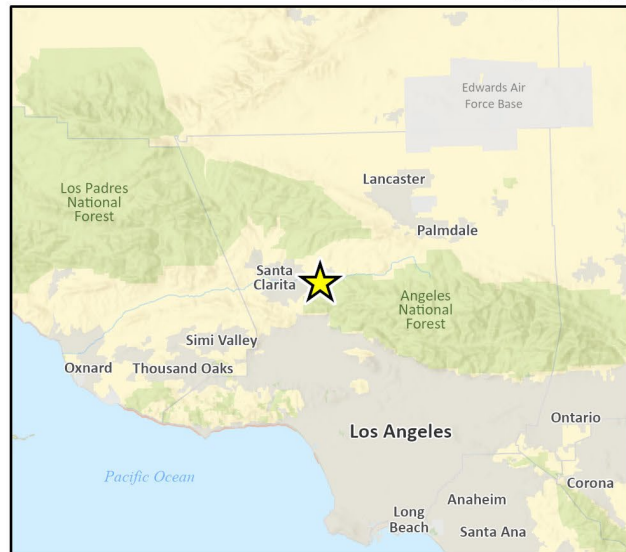
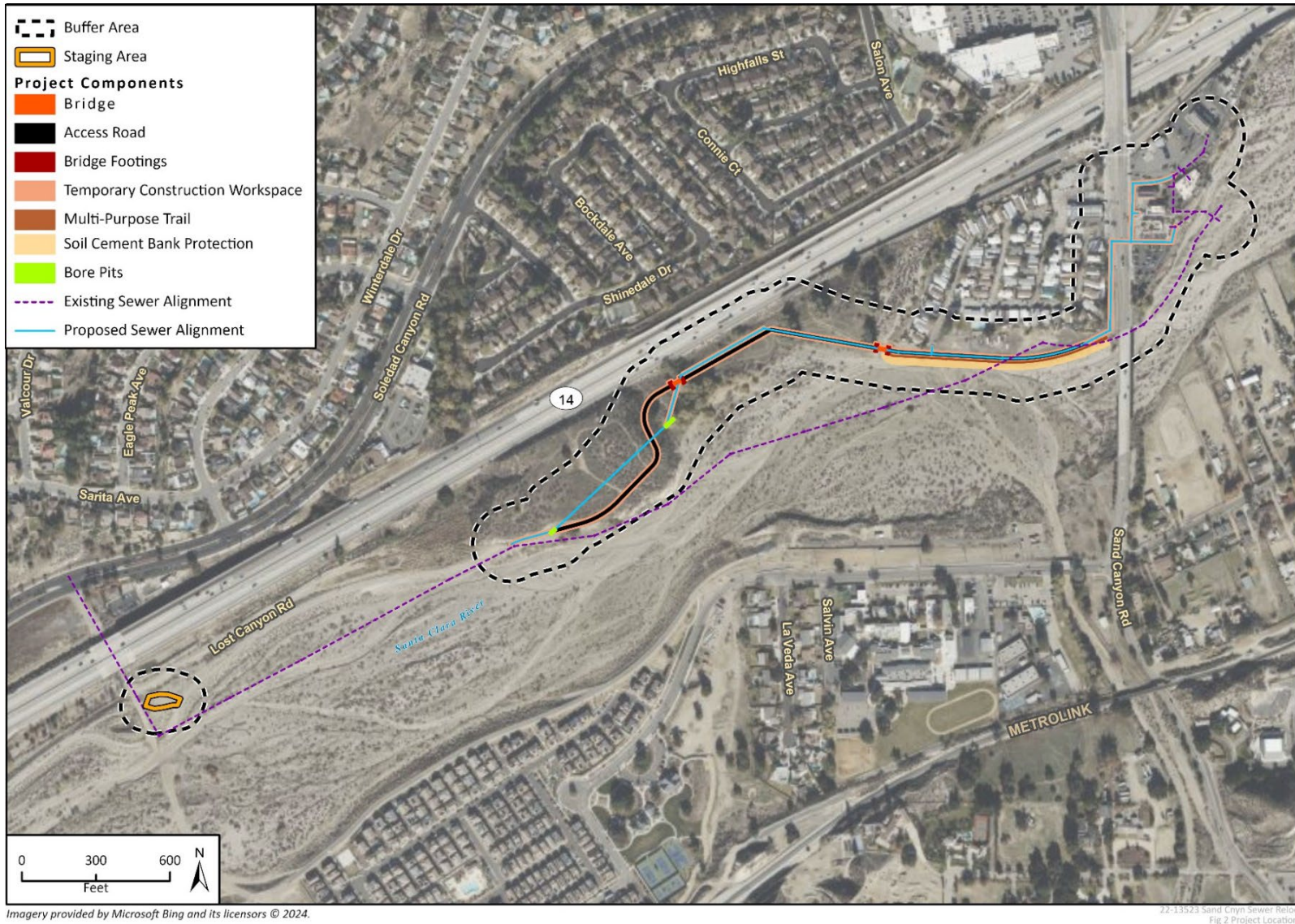


Figure 2 Project Components





## 7. Description of Project

### **Project Background**

In 2014, the Newhall County Water District prepared and approved an Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for a project which involved the replacement of approximately 5,700 linear feet of sewer line present in the active channel of the Santa Clara River (2014 project). As part of the 2014 project, the existing sewer line was proposed to be taken out of operation, capped, and abandoned in place and a new sewer line was approved to be constructed through open trenching and jack and bore methods. In addition, the 2014 project included approximately 900 linear feet of soil cement for flood protection purposes, from the northerly Sand Canyon Road Bridge abutment to the westerly end of the mobile home park. The 2014 project has not been developed, and because modifications to the project location and site design have been proposed by the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (SCV Water), this new Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) has been prepared.

### **Description of Project**

The proposed project includes construction of approximately 3,500 linear feet of new 21-inch and 15-inch sewer pipeline on the north side of the Santa Clara River. An existing sewer line extends east from Vista Canyon Boulevard at the State Route 14 undercrossing within the Santa Clara River, crosses under the Sand Canyon Road bridge, and terminates approximately 600 feet east of the bridge. The purpose of the proposed project is to relocate the existing sewer line from within the flow path of the Santa Clara River into the adjacent overbank.

The easternmost end of the proposed sewer line would be located within Sand Canyon Road and would terminate east of Sand Canyon Road near existing commercial uses. The westernmost end of the sewer line would connect to the existing sewer line west of Mitchell Hill. The estimated area of temporary impact totals approximately 104,000 square feet. The project site, which includes the temporary impact footprint, is depicted in Figure 2. Site plans are included as Appendix A.

The existing sewer line would be abandoned in place. The proposed project also includes a 12-foot paved access road and bank protection for the proposed sewer line. The access road would generally overlap the new pipeline but would deviate from the proposed alignment where jack-and-bore construction is proposed. The access road would also include the installation of two 16-foot-wide bridges across existing drainage features.

Proposed bank protection would consist of an 8-foot wide soil cement<sup>1</sup> section with a varied height. The soil cement bank protection would be exposed, and the bed adjacent to the soil cement would be vegetated with native species.

### **Construction Activities**

Construction would begin in early 2025 and would occur over the course of approximately four months. Construction would occur from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Nighttime construction lighting is anticipated to be used approximately one hour per day for work occurring

---

<sup>1</sup> Soil cement is a highly compacted mixture of native soils, cement, and water. As the cement hydrates, it hardens the compacted soil into a strong, durable, low-permeability material. Soil cement bank protection is a state-of-the-art flood control technique used to protect against flooding, bank erosion, and scouring while allowing natural vegetation to develop in the soil over the soil cement resulting in a "soft bank" solution.

past sunset (4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Construction activities would involve removal of existing pavement, site preparation, grading, trench preparation, pipe laying, and repaving. While open trenching would be used to install most of the sewer line, jack-and-bore would be used to install approximately 500 linear feet of the sewer line along Mitchell Hill. Excavation would range from approximately 6 feet to a maximum of 11 feet in depth and up to 20 feet in width, including for both the pipeline and the jack-and-bore pits. Construction equipment associated with the 12-foot paved access road would temporarily use an additional 8 feet on either side of the proposed road for a total width of 28 feet. Construction equipment associated with pipeline excavation areas that do not underlie the access road would require a work area width of 20 feet. Construction of the single span bridges would entail an approximately 35-foot by 15-foot area for each footing (two footings would be installed per bridge, located on the banks of the drainages and outside of the drainage features).

The proposed project would involve approximately 5,800 cubic yards of cut and 3,400 cubic yards of fill. Approximately 2,400 cubic yards of soil would be exported from the project site and no soil would be imported. Construction activities would require a temporary one-lane closure along northbound Sand Canyon Road. This closure would occur during daytime hours only. Traffic control measures would be implemented during lane closures, including flaggers at both ends. Construction equipment staging and worker parking would occur adjacent to Vista Canyon Boulevard and the northern bank of the Santa Clara River. Construction would result in the removal of up to 19 trees.

Due to anticipated groundwater levels approximately 12 feet below ground surface at the project site, groundwater is not anticipated to be encountered during excavations of up to 11 feet in depth. However, in the event groundwater is encountered, groundwater dewatering may be required during excavation. Dewatered groundwater would either be treated and discharged into the Santa Clara River in accordance with Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's (RWQCB) *Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Groundwater from Construction and Project Dewatering to Surface Waters in Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties* (Order No. R4-2023-0429), treated and discharged to the City's storm drain system in accordance with Los Angeles RWQCB's *Waste Discharge Requirements and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Discharges Within the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties* (Phase I MS4; Order No. R4-2021-0105), or discharged to the existing sanitary sewer system for treatment at the Saugus Water Reclamation Plant.

### *Standard Construction Practices*

SCV Water maintains standard contractor specifications that would be applied to the proposed project. These include:

- **Trench Backfill and Compaction/Soils Test/Geotechnical Reports.** The Developer or Contractor shall engage the services of a geotechnical engineering firm or individual licensed in the State of California to monitor soil conditions during earthwork, trenching, bedding, backfill and compaction operations.
- **Public Safety and Traffic Control.** Requires traffic control plans to be submitted to agencies with jurisdiction, as well as as-needed measures such as signs, lights, flares, barricades, traffic plates, etc.
- **Hazardous Waste and Unknown Physical Conditions.** If hazardous waste is discovered, Contractor shall cease work in the impacted area. If material that may be hazardous waste is

discovered, the Developer shall insure that the appropriate government agencies are contacted prior to any further work being performed and that a solution is implemented.

## **Operation and Maintenance**

Upon completion of construction, the proposed project would not require new operations and maintenance activities or electricity consumption beyond existing operations. The anticipated minimum lifetime of the proposed sewer line is 50 years.

## 8. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

As shown in Figure 2, the project site is surrounded primarily by residential uses, State Route 14, and commercial uses to the north, the Santa Clara River to the south with residential uses beyond, and open space and State Route 14 to the west. The Mitchell-Dyer Family Cemetery, which is a historical landmark, is located north of the westernmost portion of the project site (south of State Route 14).

## 9. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

SCV Water is the lead agency under CEQA for the proposed project. As shown in Table 1, the proposed project would also require approvals from several other agencies.

**Table 1 Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Approval Required</b>
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Streambed Alteration Agreement
City of Santa Clarita	Vegetation Removal Permit, Wet Weather Erosion Control, approval of dewatering discharge into City storm drain or sewer system (if dewatering is required during construction)

## Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

This project would potentially affect the environmental factors checked below, involving at least one impact that is “Potentially Significant” or “Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

## Determination

Based on 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.
- 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 to the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “less than significant with mitigation incorporated” 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.

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency  
**Sand Canyon Sewer Relocation**

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

3-19-24  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

AMY ANDERSON  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

PROJECT MANAGER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

# Environmental Checklist

## 1 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. In non-urbanized 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a. *Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

According to the City of Santa Clarita’s General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, scenic resources include natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes that contribute to a high level of visual quality (City of Santa Clarita 2011). The Conservation and Open Space Element describes scenic resources in the Santa Clarita Valley as mountains and canyons, woodlands, water bodies, and Vasquez Rocks County Park. The City’s General Plan does not specifically define scenic vistas; therefore, there are no designated scenic vistas in the vicinity of the project site.

The project site is adjacent to the Santa Clara River, which qualifies as a scenic resource pursuant to the definition within the Conservation and Open Space Element. While the project site itself contains undeveloped natural land, it is located in an urban setting and is surrounded by residential uses, State Route 14, and commercial uses. Due to existing development, views of the Santa Clara River are largely obscured from travelers on State Route 14 under existing conditions. Construction activities may result in partial obstruction of views of the Santa Clara River from adjacent residential development southwest of Sand Canyon Road and State Route 14; however, construction would be

temporary and would not result in long-term obstruction of views of the Santa Clara River. Because views of the Santa Clara River are obscured at and north of State Route 14, the proposed access road and bridges south of State Route 14 would not result in additional obstructed views of the Santa Clara River. The proposed pipeline would not obstruct views of the Santa Clara River beyond existing conditions because the pipeline would be installed underground. Accordingly, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- b. *Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

The closest state scenic highway is State Route 2, located approximately 17.2 miles southeast (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2018). The project site is not visible from State Route 2. The City of Santa Clarita General Plan does not identify scenic routes or highways in the vicinity of the project site (City of Santa Clarita 2011). Therefore, the project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway or route identified as scenic by the City of Santa Clarita, and no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- c. *Would the project, in non-urbanized 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?*

The project site is within Santa Clarita, which meets the definition of an urbanized area pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21071.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this analysis is based on the potential for the proposed project to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Pursuant to California Government Code 53091, the building and zoning ordinances of a county or city do not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, storage, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency. Therefore, the discussion below is provided solely for informational purposes.

The project site is within areas zoned Vista Canyon Specific Plan (SP), Urban Residential (UR1) (2 dwelling units/acre), Open Space (OS), and Community Commercial (CC). These zones permit public service infrastructure. The proposed project would not interfere with established setbacks in these zones and would not exceed height requirements or otherwise interfere with regulations governing scenic quality in these zones. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning and regulations governing scenic quality, and no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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<sup>2</sup> California Public Resources Code Section 21071 defines an “urbanized area” as an incorporated city that has a population of at least 100,000 persons. The population of Santa Clarita is approximately 230,659 people (California Department of Finance 2023).

- d. *Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?*

During construction, the proposed project would involve staging construction equipment and materials on the site in designated staging areas which may temporarily result in new sources of light or glare in the project area. Nighttime construction is anticipated to be used approximately one hour per day for work occurring past sunset. Light during construction would be temporary and limited to the construction period, expected to be four months, and only occur for a short period of the day. During operation, the new sewer line, access road, bridges, and soil bank protection would not include exterior lighting or be coated with reflective materials that would generate a substantial new source of light or glare. Therefore, the project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**



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## 2 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 maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)); timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526); or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

- 
- a. *Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*
- b. *Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?*
- c. *Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)); timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526); or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?*
- d. *Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

- e. *Would the project 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?*

The project site is located in an area designated as “Urban and Built-Up Land” and “Other Land” by the California Department of Conservation (DOC), and does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (DOC 2022a). The project site is not subject to an existing Williamson Act contract (DOC 2022b). The project site is not zoned for agricultural use, forestland, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No agricultural uses or forest land exists on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact agriculture or forestry resources.

**NO IMPACT**

### 3 Air Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Overview of Air Pollution

The federal and State Clean Air Acts (CAA) mandate the control and reduction of certain air pollutants. Under these laws, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for “criteria pollutants” and other pollutants. Some pollutants are emitted directly from a source (e.g., vehicle tailpipe, an exhaust stack of a factory, etc.) into the atmosphere, including carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC)/reactive organic gases (ROG),<sup>3</sup> nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), particulate matter with diameters of ten microns or less (PM<sub>10</sub>) and 2.5 microns or less (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), sulfur dioxide, and lead. Other pollutants are created indirectly through chemical reactions in the atmosphere, such as ozone, which is created by atmospheric chemical and photochemical reactions primarily between VOC and NO<sub>x</sub>. Secondary pollutants include oxidants, ozone, and sulfate and nitrate particulates (smog). Air pollutants can be generated by the natural environment, such as when high winds suspend fine dust particles.

Air pollutant emissions are generated primarily by stationary and mobile sources. Stationary sources can be divided into two major subcategories:

- Point sources occur at a specific location and are often identified by an exhaust vent or stack. Examples include boilers or combustion equipment that produce electricity or generate heat.

<sup>3</sup> CARB defines VOC and ROG similarly as, “any compound of carbon excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate,” with the exception that VOC are compounds that participate in atmospheric photochemical reactions. For the purposes of this analysis, ROG and VOC are considered comparable in terms of mass emissions, and the term VOC is used in this IS-MND.

- Area sources are widely distributed and include such sources as residential and commercial water heaters, painting operations, lawn mowers, agricultural fields, landfills, and some consumer products.

Mobile sources refer to emissions from motor vehicles, including tailpipe and evaporative emissions, and can also be divided into two major subcategories:

- On-road sources that may be legally operated on roadways and highways.
- Off-road sources include aircraft, ships, trains, and self-propelled construction equipment.

## **Air Quality Standards and Attainment**

The project site is located in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), which is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). As the local air quality management agency, SCAQMD is required to monitor air pollutant levels to ensure that the NAAQS and CAAQS are met and, if they are not met, to develop strategies to meet the standards. Depending on whether the standards are met or exceeded, the SCAB is classified as being in “attainment” or “nonattainment.” In areas designated as non-attainment for one or more air pollutants, a cumulative air quality impact exists for those air pollutants. As the local air quality management agency, SCAQMD must monitor air pollutant levels to ensure that the NAAQS and CAAQS are met. If they are not met, the SCAQMD must develop strategies for their region to meet the standards. The strategies to achieve attainment status are included as part of the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). The SCAB is currently designated nonattainment for the ozone NAAQS and CAAQS, the PM<sub>10</sub> CAAQS, and the PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS and CAAQS. The Los Angeles County portion of the SCAB is also designated nonattainment for lead (CARB 2022a). The proposed project is in Los Angeles County which is within the SCAB and under the jurisdiction of the SCAQMD. This nonattainment status results from several factors, the primary ones being the naturally diverse meteorological conditions that limits the dispersion and diffusion of pollutants, the limited capacity of the local airshed to eliminate air pollutants, and the number, type, and density of emission sources within the SCAB. The attainment status for Los Angeles County portion of SCAB is included in Table 2.

**Table 2 Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in Los Angeles County of SCAB**

<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>State Designation</b>	<b>Federal Designation</b>
Ozone	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
PM <sub>10</sub>	Nonattainment	Attainment
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
CO	Attainment	Attainment
NO <sub>2</sub>	Attainment	Attainment
SO <sub>2</sub>	Attainment	Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Nonattainment

Sources: CARB 2022a

### *Air Quality Management Plan*

To meet the NAAQS and CAAQS, the SCAQMD has adopted a series of AQMPs that serve as a regional blueprint to develop and implement an emission reduction strategy that will bring the area into attainment with the standards in a timely manner. The most significant air quality challenge in the Air Basin is to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions to meet the 2037 ozone standard deadline for the non-Coachella Valley portion of the SCAB, as NO<sub>x</sub> plays a critical role in the creation of ozone. The 2022 AQMP includes strategies to ensure the SCAQMD does its part to further the district’s ability to meet the 2015 federal ozone standards (SCAQMD 2022). The 2022 AQMP builds on the measures already in place from the previous AQMPs and includes a variety of additional strategies such as regulation, accelerated deployment of available cleaner technology, best management practices, co-benefits from existing programs, incentives, and other Clean Air Act measures to meet the 8-hour ozone standard.

The SCAQMD’s strategy to meet the NAAQS and CAAQS distributes the responsibility for emission reductions across federal, State, and local levels and industries. The majority of these emissions are from heavy-duty trucks, ships, and other State and federally regulated mobile source emissions that the majority of which are beyond SCAQMD’s control. The SCAQMD has limited control over truck emissions with rules such as Rule 1196. In addition to federal action, the 2022 AQMP relies on substantial future development of advanced technologies to meet the standards, including the transition to zero- and low-emission technologies. The AQMP also incorporates the transportation strategy and transportation control measures from Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)’s 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Connect SoCal) (SCAG 2020).

### *Air Emission Thresholds*

The SCAQMD approved the *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* in 1993. Since then, the SCAQMD has provided supplemental guidance on their website to address changes to the methodology and nature of CEQA. Some of these changes include recommended thresholds for emissions associated with both construction and operation of the project are used to evaluate a project’s potential regional and localized air quality impacts (SCAQMD 2023). Table 3 presents the significance thresholds for regional construction and operational-related criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions being used for the purposes of this analysis.

**Table 3 SCAQMD Regional Significance Thresholds**

<b>Construction Thresholds</b>	<b>Operational Thresholds</b>
75 pounds per day of VOC	55 pounds per day of VOC
100 pounds per day of NO <sub>x</sub>	55 pounds per day of NO <sub>x</sub>
550 pounds per day of CO	550 pounds per day of CO
150 pounds per day of SO <sub>x</sub>	150 pounds per day of SO <sub>x</sub>
150 pounds per day of PM <sub>10</sub>	150 pounds per day of PM <sub>10</sub>
55 pounds per day of PM <sub>2.5</sub>	55 pounds per day of PM <sub>2.5</sub>

VOC: volatile organic compound; NO<sub>x</sub>: nitrogen oxides; CO: carbon monoxide; SO<sub>x</sub>: sulfur oxides; PM<sub>10</sub>: particulate matter measuring 10 microns in diameter or less; PM<sub>2.5</sub>: particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns in diameter or less

Source: SCAQMD 2023

In addition to the above regional thresholds, the SCAQMD has developed Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) in response to concern regarding exposure of individuals to criteria pollutants in local communities. LSTs have been developed for NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> and represent the maximum emissions from a project that will not cause or contribute to an air quality exceedance of the most stringent applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard at the nearest sensitive receptor. LSTs take into consideration ambient concentrations in each source receptor area (SRA), distance to the sensitive receptor, and project size. LSTs have been developed for emissions generated in construction areas up to five acres in size. LSTs only apply to emissions in a fixed stationary location and are not applicable to mobile sources, such as cars on a roadway (SCAQMD 2009).

The project site is within SRA 13 (Santa Clarita Valley). SCAQMD provides LST lookup tables for project sites that measure one, two, or five acres. The project disturbance area is approximately 2.4 acres; therefore, this analysis conservatively utilizes the two-acre LSTs. LSTs are provided for receptors at distances of 82, 164, 328, 656, and 1,640 feet from the project disturbance boundary to the sensitive receptors. The project analysis assumes construction activity would occur immediately adjacent to single-family residence sensitive receptors located approximately 25 feet from the project site to the north. The allowable emissions for the project analysis uses the 82-foot threshold. The LST threshold for construction for the proposed project is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 SCAQMD LSTs for Construction and Operation**

Pollutant	Allowable Emissions for a two-Acre Site in SRA 13 for a Receptor 82 Feet Away (pounds per day)	
	Construction	Operation
Gradual conversion of NO <sub>x</sub> to NO <sub>2</sub>	90.6 <sup>1</sup>	90.6 <sup>1</sup>
CO	877.0	877.0
PM <sub>10</sub>	6.0	2.0
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	3.2 <sup>2</sup>	0.8 <sup>2</sup>

NO<sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxides; NO<sub>2</sub> = nitrogen dioxide; CO = carbon monoxide; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns. CAAQS = California Ambient Air Quality Standards; SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District; USEPA = United States Environmental Protection Agency, NAAQS = National Ambient Air Quality Standards; LST = Localized Significance Threshold

<sup>1</sup> The screening criteria for NO<sub>x</sub> were developed based on the 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> CAAQS of 0.18 ppm. Subsequently to publication of the SCAQMD's guidance the USEPA has promulgated a 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> NAAQS of 0.100 ppm. This is based on a 98th percentile value, which is more stringent than the CAAQS. Because SCAQMD's LSTs have not been updated to address this new standard, to determine if project emissions would result in an exceedance of the 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> NAAQS, an approximated LST was estimated to evaluate the federal 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> standard. The revised LST threshold is calculated by scaling the NO<sub>2</sub> LST for by the ratio of 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> standards (federal/state) (i.e., 163 pounds/day \* (0.10/0.18) = 90.6 pounds/day).

<sup>2</sup> The screening criteria for PM<sub>2.5</sub> were developed based on an Annual CAAQS of 15 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. Subsequently to publication of the SCAQMD's guidance the annual standard was reduced to 12 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. Because SCAQMD's LSTs have not been updated to address this new standard, to determine if project emissions would result in an exceedance of the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> CAAQS, an approximated LST was estimated. The revised LST threshold is calculated by scaling the PM<sub>2.5</sub> LST for by the ratio of 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards (federal/state) (i.e., 4 and 1 pound/day \* (12/15) = 3.2 and 0.8 pound/day).

Source: SCAQMD 2008a

### Toxic Air Containments Thresholds

SCAQMD has developed significance thresholds for the emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs) based on health risks associated with elevated exposure to such compounds. For carcinogenic compounds, cancer risk is assessed in terms of incremental excess cancer risk. A project would result in a potentially significant impact if it would generate an incremental excess cancer risk of 10 in 1 million (1 x 10<sup>-6</sup>) or a cancer burden of 0.5 excess cancer cases in areas exceeding a one-in-one-

million risk. In addition, non-carcinogenic health risks are assessed in terms of a hazard index. A project would result in a potentially significant impact if it would result in a chronic and acute hazard index greater than 1.0 (SCAQMD 2023).

## Methodology

Air pollutant emissions generated by project construction were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. CalEEMod uses project-specific information, including land use, square footage for different uses, and location, to model a project's construction and operational emissions.

Project construction would primarily generate temporary criteria pollutants from on-site construction equipment operation, construction worker vehicle trips to and from the site, and off-site export of materials. Construction of the proposed project was analyzed based on pipeline details provided by SCV Water, which includes constructing 3,500 linear feet (LF) of new 21-inch and 15-inch sewer pipeline. The estimated area of temporary impact totals approximately 104,000 square feet. Project construction would begin in early 2025 and would occur over the course of approximately four months. The proposed project would involve approximately 5,800 cubic yards of cut and 3,400 cubic yards of fill. Approximately 2,400 cubic yards of soil would be exported from the project site and no soil would be imported. Excavation would range from approximately 6 to 11 feet deep. Construction equipment associated with the 12-foot access road would temporarily use an additional 8 feet on either side of the proposed road. The CalEEMod modeling results assume the use of diesel-powered construction equipment, and that the project would comply with applicable regulatory standards. In particular, the project would comply with SCAQMD Rule 403 for dust control measures.

*a. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*

The proposed project would be inconsistent with the SCAQMD 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) if the proposed project would generate population, housing, or employment growth exceeding forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The 2022 AQMP incorporates local general plans and the SCAG's Connect SoCal socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing, and employment growth.

As described in Environmental Checklist Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not cause direct growth as the project does not propose the introduction of new residences, businesses, or other land uses which would generate population growth. The proposed project would not result in indirect growth because the proposed sewer pipeline is intended to replace an existing sewer pipeline rather than serve an undeveloped area. Given the small-scale nature of project construction activities, it is likely construction workers would be drawn from the existing, regional workforce and would not indirectly result in the relocation of people to Santa Clarita. Upon completion of construction, the proposed project would not require additional staff because the proposed project would not require new operations and maintenance activities. Accordingly, the proposed project would not result in population growth and therefore would not have the potential to conflict with or obstruct implementation of the 2022 AQMP. No impact would occur.

### NO IMPACT

*b. Would the project 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?*



## Construction

Project construction would generate temporary air pollutant emissions associated with fugitive dust (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and exhaust emissions from heavy construction equipment and construction vehicles. In addition, construction would release VOC emissions during the drying of the paving phase. Table 5 summarizes the estimated maximum daily emissions of pollutants during project construction. As shown therein, construction-related emissions would not exceed SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, project construction would not 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. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 5 Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions**

Construction	Pollutant (pounds/day)					
	VOC	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	SO <sub>2</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
2025	3	36	35	<1	5	2
<b>SCAQMD Regional Threshold</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>55</b>
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No

pounds/day = pounds per day; VOC = volatile organic compounds; NO<sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO<sub>2</sub> = sulfur dioxide; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

Source: CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix B, see Table 2.3 “Construction Emissions by Year, Mitigated” emissions. Highest of Summer and Winter emissions results are shown for all emissions. The mitigated emissions account for project sustainability features and/or compliance with specific regulatory standards.

## Operation

The project would not require new operations and maintenance activities within the SCV Water service area upon completion of construction activities. Therefore, no new operational emissions would be generated, and project operation would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. No impact would occur.

### LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

- c. *Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

### Sensitive Receptors

According to SCAQMD, sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, long-term healthcare facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes (SCAQMD 2005). Sensitive receptors nearest to the project site consist of single-family residences adjacent to the project site approximately 25 feet to the north, as well as the Sulphur Springs Elementary School, Gorman Learning Center Santa Clarita Resource Center, and single-family residences approximately 0.16 mile south of the project site. Because the project would not result in an increase of operational vehicle trips, this project would not emit the levels of CO necessary to result in a localized hot spot. Therefore, CO hotspots are not discussed further in this document. The project does not include any stationary sources of air pollutant emissions, and once construction is complete, the proposed project would not require additional operation and maintenance activities beyond those already occurring to operate and maintain the SCV Water

system. Therefore, project operation would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and is not discussed further. Localized air quality impacts to sensitive receptors typically result from localized criteria air pollutant emissions and TACs, which are discussed in the following subsections.

*Localized Significance Thresholds*

The *Final LST Methodology* was developed to be used as a tool to analyze localized impacts associated with specific proposed projects. If the calculated emissions for the proposed construction or operational activities are below the LST emission levels found on the LST mass rate look-up tables (Appendix C of *Final LST Methodology*; SCAQMD 2009) and no potentially significant impacts are found to be associated with other environmental issues, then the proposed construction or operation activity is not considered to be a significant impact on air quality. The project analysis assumes construction activity would occur adjacent to the single-family residences to the north. The pipeline installation would occur approximately 25 feet south of the single-family residences and the staging area would be located approximately 70 feet south of the single-family residences. According to the *Final LST Methodology*, projects with boundaries located closer than 82 feet to the nearest receptor would utilize LST thresholds for receptors located at 82 feet. Therefore, the allowable emission for the project utilizes the 82-foot receptor distance, and the project is in SRA 13 (Santa Clarita Valley). Table 6 summarizes the project’s maximum localized daily construction emissions from the proposed project. As shown therein, localized construction emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD LST thresholds and impacts would be less than significant.

**Table 6 Project LST Construction Emissions**

Year	Pollutant (pounds/day)			
	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Maximum Construction On-site Emissions	27.3	29.4	1.2	1.1
<b>SCAQMD LST</b>	<b>90.6</b>	<b>877.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Threshold Exceeded?	No	No	No	No

pounds/day = pounds per day; NO<sub>x</sub> = nitrogen oxide; CO = carbon monoxide; PM<sub>10</sub> = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; PM<sub>2.5</sub> = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns; SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District; LST = Localized Significance Threshold

Notes: Maximum on-site emissions are the highest emissions that would occur on the project site from on-site sources, such as heavy construction equipment and architectural coatings, and excludes off-site emissions from sources such as construction worker vehicle trips and haul truck trips.

Source: CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix B, see Tables 3.1 through 3.8 “Construction Emissions Details” emissions. The highest of Summer and Winter emissions results are shown for all emissions. The mitigated emissions account for project sustainability features and/or compliance with specific regulatory standards.

*Toxic Air Contaminants*

Toxic air contaminants (TACs) are a diverse group of air pollutants that may cause or contribute to an increase in deaths or serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. TACs generally consist of four types: organic chemicals, such as benzene, dioxins, toluene, and perchloroethylene; inorganic chemicals such as chlorine and arsenic; fibers such as asbestos; and metals such as mercury, cadmium, chromium, and nickel. The primary TAC emitted by project implementation would be diesel particulate matter (DPM) generated by heavy-duty equipment and diesel-fueled delivery and haul trucks during construction activities. DPM was identified as a TAC by the CARB in 1998 and is primarily composed of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> exhaust emissions (CARB 2023).

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period of time. Construction of the proposed project would occur over approximately four months. The dose to which the receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the extent of exposure that person has to the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level for the maximally exposed individual. The risks estimated for a Maximally Exposed Individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period of time. According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, health risk assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic emissions, should be based on a 30-year exposure period; however, such assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with the project. Thus, the duration of proposed construction activities (i.e., four months) is less than two percent of the total exposure period used for 30-year health risk calculations. Current models and methodologies for conducting health-risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods of 9, 30, and 70 years, which do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities, resulting in difficulties in producing accurate estimates of health risk (Bay Area Air Quality Management District [BAAQMD] 2023).

Maximum DPM emissions would occur during grading and excavation. DPM emissions would be lower during other construction phases such as paving and site restoration because these phases would require less construction equipment. While the maximum DPM emissions associated with grading and excavation would only occur for approximately 33 days, or 35 percent of the overall construction period, these activities represent the worst-case condition for the total construction period. This would represent less than 0.4 percent of the total exposure period for health risk calculation. The project would install approximately 43 linear feet of pipeline per day,<sup>4</sup> which equates to construction along the boundary of sensitive receptors of approximately 29 construction days<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, project construction activities would not represent the type of long-term TAC emission source exposure that typically subjects sensitive receptors to significant health risk. Furthermore, construction activities would also be subject to and would comply with California regulations limiting the idling of heavy-duty construction equipment to no more than five minutes, which would further reduce nearby sensitive receptors' exposure to temporary and variable DPM emissions. Compliance with the standard construction measures required by the SCAQMD would also further reduce nearby sensitive receptors' exposure to temporary and variable DPM emissions. As such, project construction would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- d. *Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

Project construction could generate odors associated with heavy-duty equipment operation and earth-moving activities. Such odors would be temporary in nature and limited to the duration of construction in the vicinity of the project site. The project contractor(s) would also be required to adhere to SCAQMD Rule 402 (Nuisance), which prohibits discharge of air contaminants or any other material from a source that would cause nuisance to any considerable number of persons or the

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<sup>4</sup> Total pipeline (3,500 linear feet) divide by construction days (82 days) = 42.7 linear feet per day

<sup>5</sup> Estimated pipeline length along the mobile homes east of Sand Canyon Road (1,237 linear feet) divided by 42.7 linear feet installation per construction day = 29 construction days.

public, including odor. The proposed project would not involve the operation of land uses typically associated with odor complaints such as agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food-processing plants, and landfills. The proposed project would not create new sources of odor during operation. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 4 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts to biological resources is informed by the Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc. in February 2024 (Appendix C). The Biological Resources Assessment includes methodology for assessing potential impacts to biological resources and summarizes results of literature review, a field reconnaissance survey conducted August 1, 2023, and a jurisdictional waters delineation.

- a. *Would the project 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

### **Special-Status Plant Species**

Based on database and literature review, there are 38 special-status plant species that are known or have the potential to occur within the project site. Of these, three species have a moderate potential to occur (San Fernando Valley spineflower, Parry's spineflower, and slender-horned spineflower), and one has high potential to occur (slender mariposa lily). These species have potential to occur in the chaparral (i.e., chamise chaparral), coastal scrub (i.e., big sagebrush scrub, brittle bush scrub, California buckwheat scrub, California sagebrush – California buckwheat scrub, rubber rabbitbrush scrub, scale broom scrub, California sagebrush scrub, scale broom scrub, and thick-leaved yerba santa scrub), and/or annual grassland/herbaceous habitat (i.e., wild oats and annual brome grasslands and clustered tarweed fields) within the project site. Ground disturbance could directly result in the damage or removal of special-status plants if present at the project site. Indirect impacts could result from habitat modifications, such as by the introduction of invasive plants disseminated from construction equipment, contamination of soils, and habitat degradation due to accidental fuel spills during construction.

San Fernando Valley spineflower, Parry's spineflower, slender-horned spineflower, and slender mariposa lily were not observed during reconnaissance surveys, but they have a moderate to high potential to occur. Given the open cut trenching construction method proposed to install the majority of the new sewer alignment, as well as access road development and soil cement bank protection proposed, individuals of these species, if present, could be removed, damaged, or disturbed by construction of the proposed project. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant, and mitigation is required.

### **Special-Status Wildlife Species**

Based on database and literature review, 31 special-status wildlife species are known or have the potential to occur within the project site. Of the 31 wildlife species evaluated, 12 special-status wildlife species have low potential to occur, 8 have moderate potential to occur, 4 have high potential to occur, and 7 have no potential to occur. No special-status wildlife species were observed during the field survey. California legless lizard, coastal whiptail, California horned lark, and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit have a high potential to occur. Crotch bumble bee (foraging), Santa Ana sucker, unarmored threespine stickleback, arroyo chub, arroyo toad, western spadefoot, coast horned lizard, and Cooper's hawk have a moderate potential to occur. Brief discussions of these species are included below.

### *Special Status Reptiles, Mammals, and Insects*

Most of the special-status wildlife species that have the potential to occur within the project footprint are capable of escaping harm during project construction, while others are potentially vulnerable to direct impacts, including injury and mortality. Special-status species that could be directly impacted include potentially occurring land-dwelling animals, such as the California legless lizard, coastal whiptail, coast horned lizard, and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit.

As Crotch bumble bee is a flying insect species, it would be capable of escaping harm during project construction while foraging. In addition, Crotch bumble does not have a moderate or high potential to nest at the project site because limited rodent dens were observed at the project site, and a large portion of the project site has been previously disturbed. Therefore, direct impacts to this species are not expected to occur as a result of the proposed project.

The project's use of open cut trenching to install the majority of the existing line along and above the northern bank of the Santa Clara River, as well as excavations associated with jack-and-bore pits, access road development, trail development and soil cement bank protection has the potential to directly impact California legless lizard, coastal whiptail, coast horned lizard, and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit. Open trench excavation would consist of excavating the soil to approximately 6 to 11 feet deep, installing a new pipe or a section of new pipe, and then backfilling the trench. Development of the access road would require vegetation clearing, grading the roadway, paving the road, installing bridge footings, and placing pre-cast bridges over intermittent and ephemeral drainage features. Installation of soil cement bank protection along the northern bank of the Santa Clara River would require excavation, grading, and laying of soil cement to the desired grade. These project components have the potential to impact the aforementioned special-status species. Direct impacts could occur via direct strikes to individuals by construction equipment, or entrapment of special-status species in excavation trenches. In addition, indirect impacts could occur through vibrations and dust, which could alter behavioral patterns of land-dwelling special-status wildlife species and cause them to become exposed to predators. Therefore, the proposed project would cause potentially significant impacts to California legless lizard, coastal whiptail, coast horned lizard, and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit, and mitigation is required.

### *Special-Status Fish and Amphibian Species*

There are documented occurrences of unarmored threespine stickleback, Santa Ana sucker, and arroyo chub within a nine-quadrangle search area of the project site. These species have the potential to occur in the low-flow channel of the Santa Clara River. Installation of soil cement bank protection and the multi-purpose trail along the northern bank of the Santa Clara River is expected to occur within the low-flow channel of the Santa Clara River. Direct impacts to unarmored threespine stickleback, Santa Ana sucker, and arroyo chub could occur via direct strikes to individuals by construction equipment. In addition, indirect impacts to these species could occur if project construction occurs when surface and/or standing water is present within the Santa Clara River, and construction spoils or stormwater runoff is deposited into the Santa Clara River. This could result in effects such as increased turbidity, altered pH, and/or decreased dissolved oxygen levels, which could harm special-status fish species. Direct impacts to arroyo toad and western spadefoot could occur during project construction within suitable aquatic habitat (i.e., Santa Clara River channel) and upland habitat (i.e., scrub and grassland habitat) through direct strikes to individuals, should they occur. In addition, indirect impacts could occur through vibrations, noise, lighting, and dust, which could alter behavioral patterns of these individuals and lead to mortality. Therefore, impacts are potentially significant, and mitigation is required.



### *Special-Status and Nesting Birds*

The nests of most native birds and raptors are state and federally protected. It is likely birds use the project site for nesting (generally from early February through late August) given the mix of native and non-native vegetation, as well as the number of bird species and individuals observed during the survey. Implementation of the proposed project could result in direct or indirect impacts to nesting birds, through the direct removal or trimming of shrubs and trees which provide suitable nesting habitat. Project-related noise, vibration, and increased lights can lead to the disturbance of nesting birds which may have a negative impact on the animals. Although temporary, such disturbance can lead to the abandonment of a bird nest.

The proposed project has potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)-designated Species of Special Concern (i.e., Cooper's hawk and California horned lark), and species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503, if they are nesting within the project site and/or immediate vicinity during construction activities. Construction would occur within scrub (California sagebrush – California buckwheat scrub, chamise chaparral, rubber rabbitbrush scrub, thick-leaved yerba santa scrub) and woodland (Fremont cottonwood forest and woodland and tamarisk thickets) vegetation communities that have the potential to support nesting birds and raptors, including Cooper's hawk. Direct impacts from construction activities include ground disturbance and removal of vegetation, which could potentially contain birds' nests. Indirect impacts include construction noise, lighting, and fugitive dust. These impacts could lead to individual mortality or harassment that might reduce nesting success. Therefore, the proposed project would have potentially significant impacts on special-status and nesting birds, and mitigation is required.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *BIO-1 General Best Management Practices*

General requirements which shall be followed by construction personnel are listed below.

- The contractor shall clearly delineate the construction limits and prohibit any construction-related traffic outside those boundaries.
- Project-related vehicles shall observe a 10-mile per hour speed limit within the unpaved limits of construction.
- All open trenches or excavations shall be fenced and/or sloped to prevent entrapment of wildlife species.
- All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps generated during proposed project construction shall be disposed of in closed containers only and removed daily from the project site.
- Project-related vehicles and equipment shall be inspected for weeds prior to entering the project site.
- Project-related materials (e.g., straw wattles) shall be sourced from weed-free materials.
- No deliberate feeding of wildlife shall be allowed.
- No pets shall be allowed on the project site.
- No firearms shall be allowed on the project site.
- If vehicle or equipment maintenance is necessary, it shall be performed in the designated staging areas.

- If construction lighting is used, it shall be shielded and directed downward to minimize the potential for glare or spillover onto adjacent properties and to reduce impacts on local wildlife.
- During construction, heavy equipment shall be operated in accordance with standard best management practices (BMP). All equipment used on-site shall be properly maintained to avoid leaks of oil, fuel, or residues. Provisions shall be in place to remediate any accidental spills.
- While encounters with special-status species are not anticipated, any worker who inadvertently injures or kills a special-status species or finds one dead, injured, or entrapped shall immediately report the incident to the construction foreman or biological monitor. The construction foreman or biological monitor shall immediately notify SCV Water. SCV Water shall follow up with written notification to United States Fish and Wildlife Service and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife within five working days of the incident. All observations of special-status species shall be recorded on CNDDDB field sheets and sent to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife by SCV Water or the biological monitor.

#### *BIO-2 Worker Environmental Awareness Program*

A lead biological monitor shall conduct a pre-project environmental education program for all personnel working at the site, which shall be focused on conditions and protocols necessary to avoid and minimize potential impacts to biological resources. Prior to initiation of construction activities (including staging and mobilization), all personnel associated with project construction shall attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training, conducted by a qualified biologist, to aid workers in recognizing special-status biological resources potentially occurring in the project area. This training shall include information about the special-status species with potential to occur in the project area. The specifics of this program shall include identification of special-status species and habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of special-status resources, and review of the limits of construction and measures required to avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employees, and other personnel involved with construction of the project. All employees working at the project site shall sign a form provided by the trainer documenting they have attended the WEAP and understand the information presented to them. The crew foreman shall be responsible for ensuring crew members adhere to the guidelines and restrictions designed to avoid impacts to special-status species.

#### *BIO-3 Special Status Plant Surveys*

To avoid impacts to special-status plants, surveys for special-status plants shall be completed prior to any vegetation removal, grubbing, or other construction activity within the project site. The surveys shall be floristic in nature, seasonally timed to coincide with the blooming period of the target species (slender mariposa lily, San Fernando Valley spineflower, Parry's spineflower, and slender-horned spineflower), and be conducted by a qualified biologist.

Special-status plant species identified on-site shall be mapped onto a site-specific aerial photograph and topographic map. Surveys shall be conducted in accordance with the most current protocols established by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service. A report of the survey results shall be submitted to SCV Water for review and approval.

*BIO-4 Special-Status Plant Avoidance*

If special-status plants are detected during special-status plant surveys, avoidance of the special-status plants shall occur where feasible and vegetation clearing within 50 feet of any identified rare plant will be conducted by hand, if practicable. Any rare plant occurrence shall have bright orange protective fencing installed at least 50 feet beyond its extent, or another distance as approved by a qualified biologist, to protect it from harm.

If avoidance is not feasible, SCV Water shall offset the proposed loss of individual plants at a minimum 1:1 ratio by on-site restoration (salvage, replanting, and propagation) detailed in Mitigation Measure BIO-5. The open scrub and grassland habitats in the project site are a suitable location for on-site restoration. Compensation for impacts to these species may also be accomplished by preservation of an on-site populations or off-site populations in the vicinity of the site at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio if present.

*BIO-5 Special-Status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan*

If special-status plants are detected and would be impacted by project construction, a Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan that provides for the replacement of the species impacted by the project shall be developed by a qualified restoration specialist. The Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan would be prepared for both on-site and off-site mitigation.

The Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall specify the following:

- A summary of impacts;
- The location of the mitigation site;
- Methods for harvesting seeds or salvaging and transplanting individuals to be impacted;
- Measures for propagating plants or transferring living plants from the salvage site to the mitigation site;
- Site preparation procedures for the mitigation site;
- A schedule and action plan to maintain and monitor the mitigation area;
- Criteria and performance standards by which to measure the success of the mitigation, including replacement of impacted plants at a minimum 1:1 ratio;
- Measures to exclude unauthorized entry into the mitigation areas; and
- Contingency measures such as replanting or weeding if mitigation efforts are not successful.

The performance standards for the Special-Status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be at a minimum the following:

- Within five years after introducing the plants to the mitigation site, the number of established, reproductive plants shall equal the number lost to project construction, and
- Restoration will be considered successful after the success criteria have been met for a period of at least 2 years without any maintenance or remediation activities other than invasive species control.

The Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be prepared prior to development of the project and implemented during project construction and shall continue thereafter for a five-year period. It can also be combined with the Habitat Revegetation, Restoration, and Monitoring Program described under Mitigation Measure BIO-10, below.

Annual reports discussing the implementation, monitoring, and management of the Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to SCV Water. Five years after the start of the mitigation project, a final report shall be submitted, which shall at a minimum discuss the implementation, monitoring, and management of the Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan over the five-year period and indicate whether the Special-status Plant Mitigation and Monitoring Plan has been successful based on established performance standards. Should the success criteria be met before Year Five, the mitigation effort can be deemed complete.

#### *BIO-6 Pre-Activity Survey*

Prior to commencement of ground or vegetation disturbing activities at the project site, a qualified biologist shall conduct two surveys for special-status wildlife species. The first survey shall be conducted no more than fourteen (14) days prior to commencement of project activities and the second survey shall be conducted no more than three (3) days prior to the commencement of project activities. The survey shall incorporate methods to detect the special-status wildlife species that could potentially occur at the site. In addition, prior to commencement of project activities, a qualified biologist shall be retained to conduct focused surveys according to the USFWS Survey Protocol for the Arroyo Toad (USFWS 1999).

If special-status species are observed within the project site during pre-activity surveys, a qualified biologist shall draft a "Species Protection Plan" prior to the initiation of construction. At a minimum, the plan shall include avoidance and minimization measures for each observed species. These measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Species-specific Worker Environmental Awareness Program materials;
- Relocation methods including planned relocation areas for the protection of special-status species; and/or
- Reporting requirements.

To the extent feasible, special-status species shall be avoided. If avoidance is not feasible, the species shall be captured and transferred to an appropriate habitat and location on-site where it would not be harmed by project activities. The biologist shall hold the requisite permits for the capture and handling of the species, if applicable. Prior to commencement of the proposed activity, the methods and results of the surveys and, if a special-status species is found, the measures to be employed to avoid impacts to the species shall be presented in a letter report to SCV Water.

#### *BIO-7 Qualified Biological Monitor*

A qualified biological monitor familiar with special-status species with potential to occur in the project site shall be present during initial ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities. The biological monitor shall have the authority to temporarily stop work if one or more special-status amphibian, reptile, or mammals are observed; the monitor shall then relocate these individuals to suitable undisturbed habitat, outside the areas directly and indirectly affected by ground disturbance activities. The biologist shall hold the requisite incidental take permits or authorizations for the capture and handling of the species, if applicable.

The monitor shall recommend measures to ensure compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures, applicable permit conditions, and any conditions required by SCV Water. When the biological monitor is present on site, they shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring procedures for verifying compliance with environmental mitigation are followed;
- Lines of communication and reporting methods;
- Daily and weekly reporting of compliance;
- Construction crew WEAP training;
- Authority to stop work; and
- Action to be taken in the event of non-compliance.

#### *BIO-8 Dry Season Construction*

To eliminate the potential for impacts to the unarmored threespine stickleback, Santa Ana sucker, arroyo chub, arroyo toad, and western spadefoot and to minimize impacts to wildlife movement corridors, construction associated with soil cement bank protection and multi-purpose trail development along the northern bank of the Santa Clara River shall be restricted to the dry season. This period generally occurs from May 1 to September 15; however, construction can occur outside this window provided no flowing or ponded water associated with the Santa Clara River is present within 50 feet of any work area. In addition, surface elevations within Ephemeral Drainage 1 and Intermittent Drainage 1 shall be returned to preconstruction conditions prior to the end of the dry season.

#### *BIO-9 Nesting Birds*

Project-related activities shall occur outside of the bird breeding season (generally February 1 to August 31) to the extent practicable. If construction must occur within the bird breeding season, then no more than seven days prior to initiation of ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal, a nesting bird pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within the disturbance footprint plus a 100-foot buffer (300-feet for raptors), where feasible. If the proposed project is phased or construction activities stop for more than one week, a subsequent pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be required prior to each phase of construction during the nesting season.

Pre-construction nesting bird surveys shall be conducted during the time of day when birds are active and shall factor in sufficient time to perform this survey adequately and completely. A report of the nesting bird survey results, if applicable, shall be submitted to SCV Water for review and approval prior to ground and/or vegetation disturbance activities.

If nests are found, their locations shall be flagged. An appropriate avoidance buffer ranging in size from 25 to 50 feet for passerines and up to 300 feet for raptors, depending upon the species and the proposed work activity, shall be determined and demarcated by a qualified biologist with bright orange construction fencing or other suitable flagging. Active nests shall be monitored at a minimum of once per week until it has been determined the nest is no longer being used by either the young or adults. No ground or vegetation disturbance shall occur within this buffer until the qualified biologist confirms the breeding/nesting is completed and all the young have fledged. If project activities must occur within the buffer, they shall be conducted at the discretion of the qualified biologist. The nesting bird buffer zones may also be extended at the discretion of the qualified biologist based on field observations of nesting bird behavior. If no nesting birds are observed during pre-construction surveys, no further actions would be necessary.

## **Significance After Mitigation**

SCV Water would implement Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5 which would reduce potential impacts to special-status plant species to a less-than-significant level by requiring worker education program, pre-project botanical surveys, avoidance measures, and compensatory mitigation requirements, if applicable.

Potential impacts to special-status reptiles, mammals, and insects would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, and BIO-7, which require sloping or fencing of trenches to prevent wildlife entrapment, pre-construction surveys for special-status wildlife species, and construction monitoring. Additionally, potential impacts to federally- and state-listed wildlife species, if present, would require incidental take authorizations from the USFWS and CDFW.

Potential impacts to special-status fish and amphibian species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-7, and BIO-8. These mitigation measures require implementation of construction BMPs, pre-construction surveys for western spadefoot and arroyo toad, as well as construction monitoring.

SCV Water would implement Mitigation Measures BIO-6, BIO-7, and BIO-9. Potential impacts to special-status and nesting birds would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-6, BIO-7, and BIO-9. These mitigation measures would identify and protect any special-status bird species (i.e., Cooper's hawk and California horned lark) and require a pre-construction nesting bird survey and protective buffers if nesting birds are found.

### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- b. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

Three CDFW-designated sensitive plant communities are located within the area analyzed in the Biological Resources Assessment: clustered tarweed fields, Fremont cottonwood forest and woodland, and scale broom scrub. Of these, temporary and permanent impacts to sensitive plant communities would be limited to the Fremont cottonwood forest and woodland community (0.18-acre of temporary impacts and 0.07-acre of permanent impacts). Direct impacts to Fremont cottonwood forest and woodland include vegetation removal within the project footprint in order to install the sewer pipeline and access road. Indirect impacts could also occur through introduction of invasive plant species, which could negatively impact sensitive plant communities. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 includes the use of weed-free construction materials (e.g., straw wattles) and inspecting construction-related vehicles and equipment for weeds prior to entering the project site. This would reduce the potential for indirect impacts to sensitive plant communities to a less-than-significant level. However, direct impacts to Fremont cottonwood forest and woodland would still occur, even with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1. Therefore, impacts would be potentially significant, and additional mitigation is required.

## **Mitigation Measures**

*BIO-10 Habitat Revegetation, Restoration, and Monitoring Program*

Impacts to sensitive plant communities shall be avoided to the greatest extent feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, mitigation for unavoidable impacts to sensitive plant communities can be accomplished either through on-site restoration, off-site restoration, or purchase of credits through an approved Mitigation Bank. Compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to sensitive plant communities shall be accomplished at a minimum ratio of 1:1. If on-site or off-site restoration occurs, a Habitat Revegetation, Restoration, and Monitoring Program shall be prepared and submitted for approval to SCV Water prior to initiating impacts. At minimum, the Habitat Revegetation, Restoration, and Monitoring Program shall include the following:

- A description of the purpose and goals of the restoration
- Identification of success criteria and performance standards
- Methods of site preparation
- Irrigation plan and schedule
- BMPs
- Maintenance and monitoring program
- Adaptive management strategies
- Key stakeholders and responsible parties
- Funding
- Contingencies

*BIO-11 Jurisdictional Habitat Best Management Practices*

The following best management practices for construction within jurisdictional habitat shall be followed by construction personnel:

- Materials shall be stored on impervious surfaces or plastic ground covers to prevent any spills or leakage and shall be at least 50 feet from drainage features. Construction materials and spoils shall be protected from stormwater runoff using temporary perimeter sediment barriers such as berms, silt fences, fiber rolls, covers, sand/gravel bags, and straw bale barriers, as appropriate.
- All vehicles and equipment shall be in good working condition and free of leaks. The contractor shall prevent oil, petroleum products, or any other pollutants from contaminating the soil or entering a watercourse (dry or otherwise). When vehicles or equipment are stationary, mats or drip pans shall be placed below vehicles to contain fluid leaks.
- All re-fueling, cleaning, and maintenance of equipment will occur at least 50 feet from potentially jurisdictional waters.
- Adequate spill prevention and response equipment shall be maintained on-site and readily available to implement to ensure minimal impacts to the aquatic and marine environments.
- Compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts to the Santa Clara River and the two unnamed drainages (Ephemeral Drainage 1 and Intermittent Drainage 1) can be accomplished either through purchase of credits through an approved Mitigation Bank or through SCV Water sponsored mitigation (e.g., on-site restoration). Compensatory mitigation shall be determined and approved by CDFW, USACE and RWQCB prior to impacting state- or federally-regulated waters. If on-site restoration would occur, it would be accomplished through implementation of a Habitat Revegetation, Restoration, and Monitoring Program as contained in Mitigation Measure BIO-10.

## Significance After Mitigation

SCV Water would implement Mitigation Measure BIO-11. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-10 and BIO-11 would require compensation for sensitive plant communities and riparian habitat, as well as require additional construction measures to minimize the introduction of pollutants to sensitive plant communities and riparian habitat. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-10, and BIO-11, impacts to sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

### LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

- c. *Would the project 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?*

The Santa Clara River and two unnamed drainages are potentially subject to the jurisdiction of United States Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles RWQCB, and/or the CDFW. Project construction would involve the installation of a new sewer line along the northern bank of the Santa Clara River and would include soil cement bank protection for the proposed sewer line where the Santa Clara River bank is unstable and subject to scouring. The project also includes the development of an access road across the unnamed drainages. Two pre-cast arch design bridges and bridge footings would be installed where the access road crosses these drainage features. Table 7 and Table 8 show the acreages of temporary and permanent impacts, respectively, the proposed project would have on these potentially jurisdictional features.

**Table 7 Temporary Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas**

Feature	USACE Jurisdiction		RWQCB Jurisdiction		CDFW Jurisdiction
	Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres/linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres)	Non-Wetland Waters of the State (acres/linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the State (acres)	Streambed and Associated Riparian Habitat (acres/linear feet)
Santa Clara River	0/0	0	0/0	0	0.167/949
Intermittent Drainage 1	0/0	0.021	0/0	0.021	0.143/474
Ephemeral Drainage 1	0/0	0	<0.01/22	0	0.044/201
<b>Total</b>	<b>0/0</b>	<b>0.021</b>	<b>0.007/22</b>	<b>0.021</b>	<b>0.354/1,624</b>



**Table 8 Permanent Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas**

Feature	USACE Jurisdiction		RWQCB Jurisdiction		CDFW Jurisdiction
	Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres/linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres)	Non-Wetland Waters of the State (acres/linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the State (acres)	Streambed and Associated Riparian Habitat (acres/linear feet)
Santa Clara River	0.16/625	0	0.16/625	0	0.71/1,974
Intermittent Drainage 1	0/0	0	0/0	0	0.05/114
Ephemeral Drainage 1	0/0	0	<0.01/9	0	0.03/352
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.16/625</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.16/634</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.79/2,440</b>

Prior to ground disturbance activities that could impact these features, SCV Water would consult with the appropriate regulatory agencies (United States Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles RWQCB, and/or CDFW) anticipated to assert jurisdiction over the features. The project is anticipated to require a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW, a Water Quality Certification under Clean Water Act Section 401 from the Los Angeles RWQCB, and verification from the United States Army Corps of Engineers under Nationwide Permit 58. Based on such consultation, any required permits must be obtained prior to disturbance of jurisdictional resources. In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-10 and BIO-11 would require SCV Water to provide compensatory mitigation for wetland habitat, as well as require additional construction measures to minimize the introduction of pollutants to wetlands. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-10 and BIO-11, potential impacts to state and federally protected wetlands would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- d. *Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

The Santa Clara River provides a valuable movement and migration corridor for many types of wildlife, including terrestrial, semi-aquatic, and aquatic species. Construction activities would not occur within the bed of the Santa Clara River, as project components only occur along the northern bank (i.e., soil cement bank protection) or above the northern bank (i.e., sewer line installation, access road development). Additionally, construction activities would be short-term and would only occur during the daytime. Project construction would not result in a decrease in the function of the corridor for wildlife movement, as the optimal path for wildlife movement (i.e., Santa Clara River) would remain intact during implementation of the project. Migrating wildlife would have the ability to traverse around the work area (i.e., to the south) during construction and continue migrating through the Santa Clara River channel. However, construction could introduce temporary lighting to the area and include activities which may result in temporary disturbances to fish in the Santa Clara River. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-8 would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level by implementing measures to prevent wildlife entrapment (e.g., sloping trenches), shielding/directing light downward, and requiring construction along the northern bank of the Santa Clara River bed to occur only when the river is dry.

Project operation would not increase activities that could impact wildlife movement beyond existing conditions. The sewer pipeline would be located below ground and would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- e. *Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

**City of Santa Clarita General Plan and Vista Canyon Specific Plan**

The objectives and policies of the City of Santa Clarita General Plan and Vista Canyon Specific Plan focus on conservation of existing natural areas; restoration of damaged natural vegetation; protection of wetlands, oak trees, and other indigenous woodlands and endangered or threatened species and habitat; and protection of biological resources in significant ecological areas and significant wildlife corridors. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-11, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant and the project would not conflict with policies protecting biological resources in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan and Vista Canyon Specific Plan. Impacts would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

**City of Santa Clarita Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance and Parkway Trees Ordinance**

One coast live oak tree was documented to the northeast of the easternmost bore pit location. This tree, including its protected zone, does not occur within any proposed work area, and would not be impacted by the project. Additionally, the majority of the project site occurs within private property where the City's Parkway Trees Ordinance does not apply. A small component of the project site along an unpaved access road in the western portion of the project site occurs within public property, and no trees protected by the City's Parkway Trees Ordinance occur in this area. As such, the project would not conflict with the City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance and Parkway Trees Ordinance.

**Significant Ecological Areas**

Project construction would potentially affect the Santa Clara River Significant Ecological Area and its biological resources due to construction activity. The project would not be subject to the City's building and zoning ordinances (Santa Clarita Municipal Code Titles 17 and 18) pursuant Government Code Section 53091, which include Santa Clarita Municipal Code Section 17.38.080. Section 17.38.080 requires a conformance review for development within a Significant Ecological Area. Although the proposed project would be exempt from this requirement, SCV Water would voluntarily comply with the City's code through the implementation of measures to reduce impacts (refer to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-11) such that the project would be compliant with the City's code. As such, the proposed project would not result in a substantial impact to the Santa Clara River Significant Ecological Area and would not conflict with the City of Santa Clarita's intent of protecting the Santa Clara River Significant Ecological Area.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- f. Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

The project site is not within an area subject to a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

# 5 Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
g. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Background

This section provides an analysis of the project’s impacts on cultural resources, including historical and archaeological resources, as well as human remains. CEQA requires a lead agency to determine whether a project may have a significant effect on historical resources (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21084.1) and tribal cultural resources (PRC Section 21074 [a][1][A-B]). A historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR); a resource included in a local register of historical resources; or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript a lead agency determines to be historically significant (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5[a][1-3]).

A resource shall be considered historically significant if it:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition, if it can be demonstrated that a project would cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. PRC Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information;

2. Has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (PRC Section 21083.2[a-b]).

The impact analysis included here is organized based on the cultural resources thresholds included in *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G: Environmental Checklist Form. Threshold A broadly refers to historical resources. To more clearly differentiate between archaeological and built environment resources, the analysis under criterion (a) is limited to built environment resources. Archaeological resources, including those that may be considered historical resources pursuant to Section 15064.5 and those that may be considered unique archaeological resources pursuant to Section 21083.2, are considered under criterion (b).

## **Methodology and Results of Cultural Resources Assessment**

The analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts to cultural resources is informed by the Cultural Resources Technical Report prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc. in February 2024 (Appendix D). The Cultural Resources Technical Report summarizes the methods and results of a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search through the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search through the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), a geoarchaeological review, a pedestrian field survey, and Extended Phase I (XPI) excavations.

The SCCIC records search was performed to identify previously recorded cultural resources as well as previously conducted cultural resources studies within the project site and a 0.5-mile radius. Rincon also reviewed the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), CRHR, the California Historical Landmarks list, and the Built Environment Resources Directory, as well as its predecessor the California State Historic Property Data File, and Archaeological Determination of Eligibility list. The SCCIC search identified six previously recorded cultural resources within the 0.5-mile radius surrounding the project site. Of these six cultural resources, two resources (P-19-001077 and P-19-004355) are located within the project site. Resource P-19-001077 is a multicomponent archaeological resource containing both historic-period (structural remnants) and prehistoric (artifact scatter) components. Resource P-19-004355 is a multicomponent resource consisting of a prehistoric archaeological site containing surficial and subsurface elements, and a historic-period cemetery. Both resources were previously recommended as CRHR-eligible.

Rincon contacted the NAHC on January 13, 2023, to request a search of the SLF. The NAHC responded on January 27, 2023, stating that the results of the SLF search were positive. The NAHC provided a list of 19 Native American contacts who may have knowledge of cultural resources of Native American origin within the area of potential effects. Potential project impacts to tribal cultural resources are discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*.

Resources P-19-001077 and P-19-004355 were intensively inspected as part of the pedestrian survey. Historic-period or modern elements were documented within P-19-001077 including two milled lumber poles, a concrete slab, and concrete debris. No prehistoric artifacts or features were noted within the locus. A historic-period cemetery associated with P-19-004355 was inspected and found to contain 18 headstones, most of which were comprised of simple concrete markers.

Artifacts documented associated with the site's prehistoric component included one slab metate fragment, one mano fragment, and one chert flake, all located within the resource's southeastern portion.

The XPI excavations conducted within P-19-001077 and P-19-004355 were conducted to determine if subsurface archaeological deposits associated with the resources are located within portions of the project site where ground disturbing activities would occur. As a result of the XPI excavations, no subsurface deposits were identified within the portions of the two resources that would be subject to project-related ground disturbance.

- a. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?*

A historic-period cemetery on Mitchell Hill is present approximately 115 feet north of the project site. The cemetery has not been previously evaluated for inclusion in the CRHR and, therefore, has the potential to qualify as a historical resource pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5. Although the cemetery is in proximity to the project site, project ground disturbance would not intrude into the cemetery or its immediate vicinity. Operation of the proposed project would not require disturbance of the cemetery or other historical resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. No impact would occur.

#### **NO IMPACT**

- b. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?*

As noted above, two CRHR-eligible cultural resources, P-19-001077 and -004355, are present within the project site. As a result of the XPI excavations, both CRHR-eligible cultural resources were found to lack subsurface deposits within the portions of the resources that would be subject to project-related ground disturbance. Although no subsurface archaeological deposits were identified, P-19-004355 is known to have CRHR-eligible archaeological deposits outside of the project footprint, and the western locus of P-19-001077 may also have intact CRHR-eligible archaeological deposits outside of the project footprint. Although project implementation would not impact known subsurface archaeological deposits, inadvertent discoveries of subsurface archaeological deposits during construction remain a possibility. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant, and mitigation is required.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

##### *CUL-1 Preconstruction Cultural Resources Sensitivity Training*

Prior to the start of project-related ground disturbing activities, a cultural resources specialist working under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology (NPS 1983) shall conduct cultural resources sensitivity training for all construction personnel. Construction personnel shall be informed of the types of archaeological resources that may be encountered, and of the proper procedures to be enacted in the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological resources or human remains. SCV Water shall ensure that construction personnel attend the training and retain documentation demonstrating attendance.

### *CUL-2 Cultural Resources Monitoring*

An archaeological monitor working under the direct supervision of a qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor shall observe project-related ground-disturbing activities during construction. The qualified archaeologist, in coordination with SCV Water, may reduce or discontinue monitoring if it is determined that the possibility of encountering buried archaeological deposits is low based on observations of soil stratigraphy or other factors. Archaeological monitoring shall be conducted by an archaeologist familiar with the types of archaeological resources that could be encountered within the project site. The Native American monitor shall be selected from the Native American groups identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as having affiliation with the project site. The archaeological monitor and Native American monitor shall be empowered to halt or redirect ground-disturbing activities away from the vicinity of an unanticipated discovery until the qualified archaeologist has evaluated the discovery and determined appropriate treatment. The archaeological monitor shall keep daily logs detailing the types of activities and soils observed, and any discoveries. After monitoring has been completed, the qualified archaeologist shall prepare a monitoring report that details the results of monitoring. The report shall be submitted to SCV Water and any Native American groups who request a copy. A copy of the final report will be filed at the South Central Coastal Information Center.

### *CUL-3 Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources*

In the event archaeological resources are unexpectedly encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 50 feet of the find shall halt and the qualified archaeologist shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the resource. If the resource is determined by the qualified archaeologist to be prehistoric, then a Native American representative shall also be contacted to participate in the evaluation of the resource. If the qualified archaeologist and/or Native American representative determines it to be appropriate, archaeological testing for California Register of Historical Resources eligibility shall be completed. If the resource proves to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and significant impacts to the resource cannot be avoided via project redesign, the qualified archaeologist shall prepare a data recovery plan tailored to the physical nature and characteristics of the resource, per the requirements of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C). The data recovery plan shall identify data recovery excavation methods, measurable objectives, and data thresholds to reduce any significant impacts to cultural resources related to the resource. Pursuant to the data recovery plan, a qualified archaeologist and Native American representative, as appropriate, shall recover and document the scientifically consequential information that justifies the resource's significance. SCV Water shall review and approve the treatment plan and archaeological testing as appropriate, and the resulting documentation shall be submitted to the regional repository of the California Historical Resources Information System, per CCR Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C).

## **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3 require cultural resource training to be provided to construction personnel, ongoing construction monitoring by an archaeologist and Native American monitor and sets forth a procedure in the event archaeological resources are unexpectedly encountered during ground-disturbing activities. With implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-3, the proposed project's potential impacts to archaeological resources would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

## **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- c. *Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

A historic-period cemetery on Mitchell Hill is present approximately 115 feet north of the project site and, therefore, human remains are known to be adjacent to the project site. If human remains are encountered during project-related ground disturbing activities, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the County Coroner must be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant. The Most Likely Descendant has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the Most Likely Descendant does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from subsequent disturbance. With adherence to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to the disturbance of human remains.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**



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# 6 Energy

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*
- b. *Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

Energy would be consumed during construction of the proposed project in the form of petroleum-based fuels used to power off-road construction vehicles and equipment on the project site, construction worker travel to and from the project site, and vehicles used to transport materials to and from the site. Energy use during construction would be temporary in nature, and construction equipment used would be typical of similar-sized construction projects in the region. In addition, construction contractors would be required to comply with the provisions of CCR Title 13 Sections 2449 and 2485, which prohibit diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles and off-road diesel vehicles from idling for more than five minutes and would minimize unnecessary fuel consumption. Construction equipment would be subject to the USEPA Construction Equipment Fuel Efficiency Standard, which includes the use of energy efficient construction equipment. These practices would result in efficient use of energy necessary to construct the proposed project. The proposed project would not require new operations and maintenance activities or electricity consumption beyond existing operations. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not consume additional energy beyond existing conditions. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*This page intentionally left blank.*

# 7 Geology and Soils

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
1. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a.1. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving 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?*

The project site does not partially or fully intersect an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (DOC 2021). Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the risk of loss, injury, or death involving fault rupture of an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- a.2. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?*

The project site could be subject to seismic ground shaking during an earthquake triggered by nearby fault zones, including the San Gabriel Fault Zone located approximately 4.2 miles west of the project site and the Sierra Madre Fault Zone located approximately 6.0 miles south of the project site (DOC 2021). The proposed project involves installation of an underground pipeline, access road, bridges, and would not involve habitable structures. Design and construction of the proposed project would consider the seismic environment and would comply with applicable seismic design standards. A large seismic event, such as a fault rupture, seismic shaking, or ground failure could result in breakage of the proposed pipeline, failure of joints, and/or underground leakage from the pipeline. In the event an earthquake compromised project components during operation, SCV Water would temporarily shut off the facility and conduct emergency repairs as soon as possible. Therefore, while the proposed project would be located in a seismically active area, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- a.3. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*
- a.4. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?*
- c. Would the project 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?*

The project site is located in a liquefaction hazard zone, as delineated by the DOC (DOC 2021). The project site is not within a landslide hazard area delineated by the DOC (DOC 2021). Proposed project activities would not create substantial gradients or otherwise increase the risk of landslide at the project site. However, because the project would involve replacement of an existing sewer pipeline, the project would not introduce new risks associated with lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse beyond existing conditions. As discussed in criterion (a.2) the proposed pipeline and bridges would be constructed in accordance with applicable seismic design standards. In the event of project components are compromised during operation due to lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse, SCV Water would temporarily shut off the facility and conduct emergency repairs as soon as possible. This would ensure the proposed project would not cause

impacts related to soil stability or increase the potential for on- or off-site lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*b. Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*

Excavation and other ground-disturbing activities associated with construction of the proposed project have the potential to result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Construction activities would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, which requires the development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP includes project-specific BMPs to control erosion, sediment release, and otherwise reduce the potential for discharge of pollutants from construction into stormwater. Typical BMPs would include, but would not be limited to, use of silt fences, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances/exits, storm drain inlet protection, wind erosion control, stockpile management, and materials storage and vehicle and equipment cleaning, fueling, and maintenance procedures that minimize the discharge of spills and leaks. Erosion from construction activities would thus be controlled through implementation of BMPs outlined in the SWPPP required by the NPDES Construction General Permit and by SCV Water's standard construction practices. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

The proposed project would not require new operations or maintenance activities beyond existing conditions. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Furthermore, the proposed project would include bank protection consisting of an 8-foot-wide soil cement section which would be vegetated with native plant species. This bank protection would reduce the potential erodibility of the northern bank of the Santa Clara River during operation. Overall, this impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. Would the project 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?*

Expansive soils are soils with high shrink-swell potential. The shrink-swell potential is low if the soil has a linear extensibility of less than three percent (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2017). The project site is underlain by a mix of Cortina sandy loam, Hanford sandy loam, Ojai loam, sandy alluvial land, and riverwash (USDA 2024). These soils all have a linear extensibility rating of 1.5 percent, indicating a low shrink-swell potential (USDA 2024). In addition, the project does not include construction of habitable structures and would be unmanned during operation. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people to risks related to expansive soils. The proposed project would not be located on expansive soils and would not introduce risk to life or property as a result of expansive soils. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*e. Would the project 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?*

The proposed project involves the replacement of a sewer line. The proposed project does not include the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact would occur.

## **NO IMPACT**

- f. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

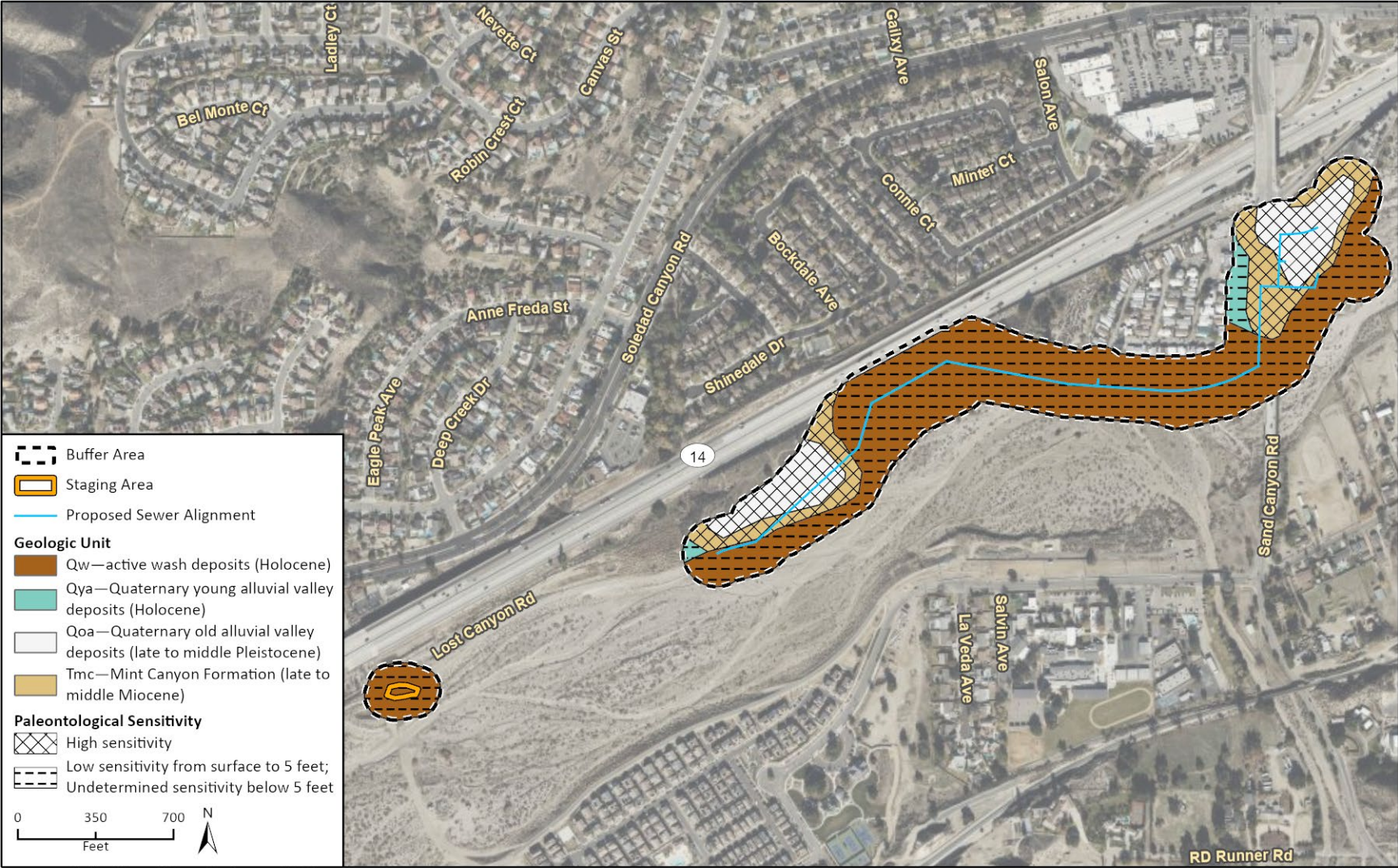
Paleontological resources, or fossils, are the evidence of once-living organisms preserved in the rock record. They include both the fossilized remains of ancient plants and animals and the traces thereof (e.g., trackways, imprints, burrows, etc.). Paleontological resources are not found in “soil” but are contained within the geologic deposits or bedrock that underlies the soil layer. Typically, fossils are greater than 5,000 years old (i.e., older than middle Holocene in age) and are typically preserved in sedimentary rocks. Although rare, fossils can also be preserved in volcanic rocks and low-grade metamorphic rocks under certain conditions (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP] 2010). Fossils occur in a non-continuous and often unpredictable distribution within some sedimentary units, and the potential for fossils to occur within sedimentary units depends on several factors. It is possible to evaluate the potential for geologic units to contain scientifically important paleontological resources, and therefore evaluate the potential for impacts to those resources and provide mitigation for paleontological resources if they are discovered during construction of a development project.

Rincon evaluated the paleontological sensitivity of the geologic units that underlie the project site to assess the project’s potential for significant impacts to scientifically important paleontological resources. The analysis was based on the results of a review of existing information in the scientific literature regarding known fossils within geologic units mapped at the project site. According to the SVP (2010) classification system, geologic units can be assigned a high, low, undetermined, or no potential for containing scientifically significant nonrenewable paleontological resources. Following the literature review, a paleontological sensitivity classification was assigned to each geologic unit mapped within the project site. This criterion is based on rock units within which vertebrate, or significant invertebrate fossils have been determined by previous studies to be present or likely to be present. The potential for impacts to significant paleontological resources is based on the potential for ground disturbance to directly impact paleontologically sensitive geologic units.

The project site is situated in the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province, one of the eleven geomorphic provinces in California (California Geological Survey 2002). The Transverse Ranges extend approximately 275 miles west-east from Point Arguello in Santa Barbara County, east to the San Bernardino Mountains, and south to the Anacapa-Santa Monica-Hollywood-Raymond-Cucamonga fault zone (Yerkes and Campbell 2005). Specifically, the project site is located in Soledad Canyon, a long, narrow valley that contains the upper Santa Clara River. Soledad Canyon is bordered by the San Gabriel Mountains to the south and Sierra Pelona Mountains to the north, which are both underlain primarily by Mesozoic crystalline basement rocks but also contain some Cenozoic volcanic and sedimentary strata.

The project site is located in the Mint Canyon, California, United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. The geology of the region surrounding the project site was mapped by Bedrossian and Roffers (2012) and Campbell et al. (2016), who identified four geologic units within the project site: active wash deposits, Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits, Quaternary old alluvium, and Mint Canyon Formation (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 Geologic Map and Paleontological Sensitivity of Project Site**



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2024.  
 Geology information provided by Bedrossian & Roffers 2012; Campbell et al. 2016

22-13523 Paleo  
 CRFig X Geologic Paleo Sensitivity



Active wash deposits underlie the central part of the project site (Figure 3). Active wash deposits consist of unconsolidated gravel and sand that have been deposited by active or recently active rivers or streams, in this case the Santa Clara River (Bedrossian and Roffers 2012; Campbell et al. 2016). Since active wash deposits are actively undergoing deposition, they are generally considered too young (i.e., less than 5,000 years old) to preserve paleontological resources (SVP 2010). Therefore, active wash deposits have low paleontological sensitivity.

Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits do not directly underlie the proposed sewer alignment (Figure 3). However, they may still be impacted by project construction due to slight mapping inaccuracies or by underlying active wash deposits. Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits consist of unconsolidated to slightly consolidated clay, silt, sand, and gravel, deposited in small valleys and on larger floodplains (Bedrossian and Roffers 2012; Campbell et al. 2016). Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits are Holocene in age and generally considered too young (i.e., less than 5,000 years old) to preserve paleontological resources (SVP 2010). Therefore, Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits have low paleontological sensitivity.

Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits underlie small portions of the eastern and western ends of the project site (Figure 3). Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits consist of slightly to moderately consolidated clay, silt, sand, and gravel, deposited in small valleys and on larger floodplains (Bedrossian and Roffers 2012; Campbell et al. 2016). Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits are late to middle Pleistocene in age. Pleistocene-aged alluvial sediments are known to produce scientifically significant paleontological resources in Soledad Canyon and Los Angeles County, including taxa such as mammoth (*Mammuthus*), mastodon (*Mammut*), horse (*Equus*), other mammals, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates (Jefferson 2010; Paleobiology Database [PBDB] 2024; University of California Museum of Paleontology [UCMP] 2024). Given the fossil-producing history of similar sediments in the region, Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits have high paleontological sensitivity.

The Mint Canyon Formation underlies small portions of the eastern and western ends of the project site (Figure 3). The Mint Canyon Formation is late to middle Miocene in age and is represented by several lithologically distinct facies (Campbell et al. 2016). The project site is underlain by lacustrine deltaic facies, which consist of cross-bedded, fine- to coarse-grained sandstone with interbedded gravelly sandstone, gray or brown siltstone, and tuffaceous beds. The Mint Canyon Formation as a whole, and these facies in particular, are known to preserve scientifically significant fossils including horse (*Hipparion*), pronghorn (*Merycodus*), camel (Camelidae), dog (Canidae), rhinoceros (*Rhinocerotidae*), and invertebrate fossils (Campbell et al. 2016; PBDB 2024; UCMP 2024). Given this fossil-producing history, the Mint Canyon Formation has high paleontological sensitivity.

Holocene-aged geologic units, such as active wash deposits and Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits, may be underlain by older, potentially higher-sensitivity geologic units in the subsurface. Based on the nearby exposures of Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits and Mint Canyon Formation (Figure 3), it is likely that one or both of these high-sensitivity geologic units underlie the Holocene-aged sediments within the project site, possibly at depths as shallow as 5 feet. However, this 5-foot transition depth is an estimate, so the active wash deposits and Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits are assigned low sensitivity from the surface to 5 feet below the surface and undetermined sensitivity below the surface.

Ground-disturbing activities within previously undisturbed sediments with high paleontological sensitivity could result in significant impacts to paleontological resources. Impacts would be significant if construction activities result in the destruction, damage, or loss of scientifically important paleontological resources and associated stratigraphic and paleontological data. Ground-disturbing activities during construction of the proposed project would include open-cut trenching

and excavation of jack-and-bore pits. These excavations are anticipated to total 5,800 cubic yards and reach 6 to 11 feet below the surface. Therefore, these excavations have the potential to damage paleontological resources both in areas mapped as high-sensitivity geologic units (Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits and Mint Canyon Formation) and Holocene-aged geologic units (i.e., active wash deposits and Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits), if fossils are present within the sediments underlying the project site. Accordingly, the proposed project's impacts to paleontological resources would be potentially significant and mitigation is required.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *GEO-1 Paleontological Resources Monitoring and Mitigation*

Prior to the start of construction, the following measures shall be implemented:

- **Qualified Professional Paleontologist.** Prior to excavation, SCV Water shall retain a Qualified Professional Paleontologist, as defined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP 2010). The Qualified Professional Paleontologist shall direct all mitigation measures related to paleontological resources.
- **Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program.** Prior to excavation, the Qualified Professional Paleontologist or their designee shall conduct a paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction personnel regarding the appearance of fossils and procedures for notifying paleontological staff should fossils be discovered by construction personnel.
- **Paleontological Monitoring.** Full-time paleontological monitoring shall occur during excavations occurring in areas mapped as Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits or Mint Canyon Formation. Initial part-time monitoring (i.e., spot-checking) shall be conducted for all ground-disturbing activities during excavations greater than 5 feet below the surface within areas mapped as active wash deposits and Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits to check for the presence of Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits or Mint Canyon Formation. The monitor shall be present on the first day that excavations reach greater than 5 feet below the surface in areas mapped as active wash deposits and Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits. If the monitor observes that only active wash deposits and/or Quaternary young alluvial valley deposits are being impacted by excavations, then spot-checking shall continue on a weekly basis unless excavations would occur that are anticipated to reach a greater depth than was observed by the monitor, in which case the monitor shall be present for those excavations. If, during the initial spot-check or subsequent spot-checks, the monitor observes that the excavations are in Quaternary old alluvial valley deposits or Mint Canyon Formation, then full-time paleontological monitoring shall ensue during all excavations reaching that depth to ensure that potential impacts to paleontological resources remain less than significant. Paleontological monitoring shall be conducted by a paleontological monitor with experience with collection and salvage of paleontological resources and who meets the minimum standards of the SVP (2010) for a Paleontological Resources Monitor.

In the event of a fossil discovery by the paleontological monitor or construction personnel, all construction activity within 50 feet of the find shall cease, and the Qualified Professional Paleontologist shall evaluate the find. If the fossil(s) is (are) not scientifically significant, then construction activity may resume. If it is determined that the fossil(s) is (are) scientifically significant, the following shall be completed:

- **Fossil Salvage.** The paleontological monitor shall salvage (i.e., excavate and recover) the fossil to protect it from damage/destruction. Typically, fossils can be safely salvaged quickly by a single paleontological monitor with minimal disruption to construction activity. In some cases, larger fossils (such as complete skeletons or large mammal fossils) require more extensive excavation and longer salvage periods. Bulk matrix sampling may be necessary to recover small invertebrates or microvertebrates from within paleontologically sensitive deposits. After the fossil(s) is (are) salvaged, construction activity may resume.
- **Fossil Preparation and Curation.** Fossils shall be identified to the lowest (i.e., most-specific) possible taxonomic level, prepared to a curation-ready condition, and curated in a scientific institution with a permanent paleontological collection along with all pertinent field notes, photos, data, and maps. Fossils of undetermined significance at the time of collection may also warrant curation at the discretion of the Qualified Professional Paleontologist.
- **Final Paleontological Mitigation Report.** Upon completion of ground-disturbing activities (or laboratory preparation and curation of fossils, if necessary), the Qualified Professional Paleontologist shall prepare a final report describing the results of the paleontological monitoring efforts. The report shall include a summary of the field and laboratory methods employed; an overview of project geology; and, if fossils were discovered, an analysis of the fossils, including physical description, taxonomic identification, and scientific significance. The report shall be submitted to SCV Water and, if fossil curation occurred, the designated scientific institution.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level through the recovery, identification, and curation of previously unrecovered fossils. With implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1, the proposed project's impact on paleontological resources and unique geologic features would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

## 8 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Overview of Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period of time. Climate change is the result of numerous, cumulative sources of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions contributing to the “greenhouse effect,” a natural occurrence which takes place in Earth’s atmosphere and helps regulate the temperature of the planet. The majority of radiation from the sun hits Earth’s surface and warms it. The surface, in turn, radiates heat back towards the atmosphere in the form of infrared radiation. Gases and clouds in the atmosphere trap and prevent some of this heat from escaping into space and re-radiate it in all directions.

GHG emissions occur both naturally and from human activities, such as fossil fuel burning, decomposition of landfill wastes, raising livestock, deforestation, and some agricultural practices. GHGs produced by human activities include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Different types of GHGs have varying global warming potentials (GWP). The GWP of a GHG is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere over a specified timescale (generally, 100 years). Because GHGs absorb different amounts of heat, a common reference gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of the gas emitted, referred to as “carbon dioxide equivalent” (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which is the amount of a specific GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP. Carbon dioxide has a 100-year GWP of one. By contrast, methane has a GWP of 30, meaning its global warming effect is 30 times greater than CO<sub>2</sub> on a molecule per molecule basis (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2021).

The United Nations IPCC expressed that the rise and continued growth of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations is unequivocally due to human activities in the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (2021). Human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land, which has led the climate to warm at an unprecedented rate in the last 2,000 years. It is estimated that between the period of 1850 through 2019, that a total of 2,390 gigatons of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> was emitted. It is likely that anthropogenic activities have increased the global surface temperature by approximately 1.07

degrees Celsius between the years 2010 through 2019 (IPCC 2021). Emissions resulting from human activities are thereby contributing to an average increase in Earth's temperature. Potential climate change impacts in California may include loss of snowpack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more high ozone days, more large forest fires, and more drought years (California Natural Resource Agency 2019).

## **Significance Thresholds**

The majority of individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to directly influence climate change. However, physical changes caused by a project can contribute incrementally to cumulative effects that are significant, even if individual changes resulting from a project are limited. The issue of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards an impact would be cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064[h][1]).

According to the *CEQA Guidelines*, projects can tier from a qualified GHG reduction plan, which allows for project-level evaluation of GHG emissions through the comparison of the proposed project's consistency with the GHG reduction policies included in a qualified GHG reduction plan. This approach is considered by the Association of Environmental Professionals (2016) in its white paper, *Beyond Newhall and 2020*, to be the most defensible approach presently available under CEQA to determine the significance of a project's GHG emissions. SCV Water and the City of Santa Clarita have not adopted a numerical significance threshold for assessing impacts related to GHG emissions, but the City of Santa Clarita has adopted a CAP for reduction of GHG emissions. The SCAQMD, California Office of Planning and Research, CARB, CAPCOA, or any other state or applicable regional agency have not adopted a numerical significance threshold for assessing GHG emissions that is applicable to the proposed Project.

In the absence of any adopted numeric threshold, the significance of the proposed project's GHG emissions is evaluated consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(b) by considering whether the proposed project complies with applicable plans, policies, regulations, and requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions.

Therefore, the significance of the proposed project's potential impacts regarding GHG emissions and climate change is evaluated based on consistency with plans and policies adopted for the purposes of reducing GHG emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change. The most directly applicable adopted regulatory plans to reduce GHG emissions are CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan, the City of Santa Clarita General Plan, and SCV Water's Sustainability Plan. GHG emissions from the construction and operation of the proposed project are provided for informational purposes.

## **Methodology**

GHG emissions associated with project construction and operation were estimated using CalEEMod, version 2022.1, with the assumptions described under Methodology in Environmental Checklist Section 3, *Air Quality*. Construction emissions occur for a limited period of a project's lifetime; as a standard practice, GHG emissions from construction are amortized over a presumed project lifetime. A project lifetime of 30 years is recommended by SCAQMD (2008).

- a. *Would the project generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*
- b. *Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

Plans and policies have been adopted to reduce GHG emissions in the Southern California region, including the SCV Water Sustainability Plan, City of Santa Clarita General Plan, and CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan. The following policies apply to the proposed project:

- **SCV Water Sustainability Plan: Measure CR-1:** Reduce construction emissions 15% by 2030 through decarbonization of construction machinery.
  - **Action CR-1-1:** Include electric and zero emission equipment in the preferred procurement policy for all applicable off-road equipment.
- **City of Santa Clarita General Plan: Conservation and Open Space Element Goal CO 1:** A balance between the social and economic needs of Santa Clarita Valley residents and protection of the natural environment, so that these needs can be met in the present and in the future.
  - **Objective CO 1.3:** Conserve and make more efficient use of non-renewable resource systems, such as fossil fuels, minerals, and materials.
    - **Policy CO 1.3.1:** Explore, evaluate, and implement methods to shift from using non-renewable resources to use of renewable resources in all aspects of land use planning and development.
    - **Policy CO 1.3.2:** Promote reducing, reusing, and recycling in all Land Use designations and cycles of development.
- **2022 Scoping Plan Goal:** Support climate adaptation and biodiversity that includes protection of the state's water supply, water quality, and infrastructure to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible (CARB 2022b).

The proposed project would improve the reliability and resiliency of the existing SCV Water sewer system, and thus the local sewer distribution network. Furthermore, SCV Water would implement Sustainability Plan Action CR-1-1 during the construction equipment procurement phase of the project, which would aid in achieving the goals and policies of the Santa Clarita General Plan referenced above, by increasing the use of electric and zero emission construction equipment during construction. Although the project would generate temporary construction emissions, the project would ultimately be consistent with the goals of the SCV Water Sustainability Plan, City of Santa Clarita General Plan, and the 2022 Scoping Plan. The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plans, policies, or regulations to reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, impacts related to GHG emissions would be less than significant.

### **Quantified GHG Emissions for Information Purposes**

Construction of the project would generate GHG emissions. Since the project would not include new operational activity, this analysis considers the GHG emissions from construction for informational purposes. Calculations of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are provided to identify the magnitude of potential project effects.

Project construction would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily from the operation of construction equipment on site, as well as from vehicles transporting construction workers to and

from the project site and heavy trucks to transport materials. As shown in Table 9, construction associated with the project would generate 303 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Amortized over a 30-year period pursuant to SCAQMD guidance, construction associated with the project would generate 10 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

**Table 9 Construction GHG Emissions**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Emissions (MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>
2025	303
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Amortized over 30 years</b>	<b>10</b>

MT = metric tons; CO<sub>2</sub>e = carbon dioxide equivalents

Source: Table 2.3 "Construction Emissions by Year, Mitigated" emissions. Annual emissions results are shown for all emissions. The mitigated emissions account for project sustainability features and/or compliance with specific regulatory standards. See CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix B.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

# 9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. For a project located in 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- a. *Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

Project construction would temporarily increase the transport and use of hazardous materials at the project site through the operation of vehicles and equipment. Such substances include diesel fuel, oil, solvents, and other similar materials brought onto the construction site for use and storage during the construction period. These materials would be contained within vessels specifically engineered for safe storage and would not be transported, stored, or used in quantities that would pose a significant hazard to the public or construction workers themselves. Furthermore, construction would require the excavation and transport of paving materials and soils which could possibly be contaminated by vehicle-related pollution (e.g., oil, gasoline, diesel, and other automotive chemicals). All such paving and soils removed during construction would be transported and disposed of in accordance with applicable codes and regulations to minimize potential hazards to construction workers or the surrounding community, including the Hazardous Material Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Materials Management Act, and California Code of Regulations Title 22.

Project operation would involve the conveyance of wastewater and would not require a change in the use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials from existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- b. *Would the project 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?*

The use, transport, and storage of hazardous materials during construction of the project (e.g., diesel fuel, oil, solvents, and other similar materials) could introduce the potential for an accidental spill or release to occur. As discussed under criterion a, above, operation and maintenance of the proposed project would not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, potential impacts are limited to the construction period.

The presence of hazardous materials during project construction activities, including but not limited to ground-disturbing activities such as trenching and excavation, could result in an accidental upset or release of hazardous materials if they are not properly stored and secured. Hazardous materials used during construction would be disposed of off-site in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to the California Fire Code, as well as regulations of the federal and state Occupational Safety and Health Administrations. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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, and this impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- c. *Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?*

The closest school to the project site, Sulfur Springs Elementary, is located approximately 0.2 mile south of the project site. Construction may involve the temporary transport, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. The management of hazardous materials is governed by several

federal, state, and local regulations described in criterion a, above. Compliance with these laws and regulations would minimize impacts related to hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous materials during construction near schools to a less-than-significant level. During operation, the proposed project would not require the transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and would not result in hazardous emissions. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

d. *Would the project be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

The following resources were reviewed in December 2023 to determine if the project site is located on a site included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5:

- California Department of Toxic Substance Control’s EnviroStor database (California Department of Toxic Substance Control 2023)
- List of “active” Cease and Desist Orders (CDO) and Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAO) from Regional Water Quality Control Boards (California Environmental Protection Agency 2023a)
- List of Solid Waste Disposal Sites with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2023b)
- State Water Resources Control Board’s [SWRCB] GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2023a)

Based on these results, the eastern portion of the project site contains three former Leaking Underground Storage Tank cleanup sites adjacent to Sand Canyon Road: Shell Service Station (T060373172), ARCO #6006 (T0603704535), and Circle K SS (Former Mobil #18-LMQ) (T0603702307) (SWRCB 2023b, 2023c, 2023d). These cases were determined to be “Completed-Case Closed” in 2007, 1999, and 2015, respectively, meaning remedial action had been undertaken and following remedial action the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) determined the sites no longer pose substantial risk related to hazardous materials.

Although these sites have been classified as “Completed-Case Closed” by Los Angeles RWQCB, there is still a risk that hazardous materials from these sites may have infiltrated the underlying soils. During excavation, there is a possibility of encountering hazardous materials sites during construction from potentially contaminated soil or groundwater, which could expose construction workers to hazards or result in discharge of hazardous materials to the Santa Clara River if improperly handled or disposed. Accordingly, this impact is potentially significant, and mitigation is required.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

##### *HAZ-1 Soil and Groundwater Management Plan*

Prior to commencement of construction activities at the project site, SCV Water shall retain a qualified consultant (i.e., Professional Geologist [PG] or Professional Engineer [PE]) to prepare a Soil and Groundwater Management Plan (SGMP). The SGMP, or equivalent document, shall be prepared to address on-site handling and management of impacted soils, groundwater, or other impacted wastes, and reduce hazards to construction workers and off-site receptors during construction. The SGMP shall establish remedial measures and/or soil and groundwater management practices to

ensure construction worker safety, the health of future workers and visitors, and prevent the off-site migration of contaminants from the site. These measures and practices may include, but are not limited to:

- Stockpile management, including stormwater pollution prevention and the installation of BMPs;
- Collection of groundwater samples during dewatering;
- Proper transportation and disposal procedures of impacted materials in accordance with applicable regulations, including California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 22;
- Monitoring and reporting; and
- A health and safety plan for contractors working at the site that addresses the safety and health hazards of each phase of site construction activities with the requirements and procedures for employee protection and outlines proper soil and groundwater handling procedures and health and safety requirements to minimize worker and public exposure to hazardous materials during construction.

SCV Water shall review and approve the SGMP and shall ensure the construction contractor implements the SGMP prior to and during construction.

#### *HAZ -2 Subsurface Investigation*

If odorous or visually stained soils or groundwater, other indications of unanticipated piping or equipment (including hydrocarbon piping or equipment), or debris are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work in the immediate area shall be halted and SCV Water shall retain a qualified consultant (i.e., PG or PE) to conduct a subsurface investigation in the potentially impacted area. Work may continue on other parts of the project while impacted soil or groundwater investigation and/or remediation takes place. The subsurface investigation may include, but is not limited to, completion of soil and/or groundwater sampling and analysis for total petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, organochloride pesticides, and/or metals.

The PG or PE shall prepare a subsurface investigation report, which will be submitted to SCV Water for review and approval. As part of the subsurface investigation, analytical results shall be screened against the most recent San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFB RWQCB) Environmental Screening Levels (ESL; SFB RWQCB 2023).<sup>6</sup> The ESLs are risk-based screening levels for direct exposure of construction workers, residential land use, and commercial/industrial land use. The subsurface investigation report shall include recommendations to address identified hazards and indicate when to apply those recommended actions in relation to project activities.

If contaminants are detected at the project site, SCV Water shall implement the recommendations specified in the subsurface investigation report, and appropriate steps shall be undertaken by SCV Water to protect site workers during project construction. This could include preparation of an updated SGMP (see Mitigation Measure HAZ-1) and/or remediation, if required (see Mitigation Measure HAZ-3).

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<sup>6</sup> Although established by the SFB RWQCB, the SFB RWQCB ESLs are accepted and used throughout the state by other RWQCBs and state agencies.

### *HAZ-3 Disposal and Remediation*

If the subsurface investigation (see Mitigation Measure HAZ-2) identifies that contaminants are present within the construction limits at chemical concentrations exceeding ESLs and/or hazardous waste screening thresholds for contaminants in soil and groundwater (CCR Title 22, Section 66261.24), SCV Water shall retain a qualified consultant (i.e., PG or PE) to utilize the project site analytical results for waste characterization purposes prior to off-site transportation or disposal of potentially impacted soils, groundwater or other impacted wastes. The qualified consultant (i.e., PG or PE) shall provide disposal recommendations and arrange for proper disposal of the waste soils, groundwater or other impacted wastes (as necessary), and/or provide recommendations for remedial engineering controls, if appropriate.

Remediation of impacted soils, groundwater, or other impacted wastes and/or implementation of remedial engineering controls may require additional delineation of impacts; additional analytical testing per landfill or recycling facility requirements; soil excavation; and off-site disposal or recycling. Remediation shall be conducted within the construction footprint/areas of soil disturbance to screening levels implemented by the Los Angeles RWQCB.

SCV Water shall review, approve, and implement the project site disposal recommendations for soil, groundwater, or other impacted wastes prior to transport of impacted soils off-site, and review, approve, and implement remedial engineering controls, prior to construction.

### **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3 during project construction would reduce potential hazardous material impacts to a less-than-significant level by implementing additional investigation and remedial measures, transportation of impacted materials, and /or soil and groundwater management practices to ensure construction worker health and safety.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- 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?*

The closest airport to the project site, the Agua Dulce Airport, is located approximately 8.5 miles northeast of the project site. The project site is located outside of the jurisdiction of an airport land use plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area. No impact would occur.

#### **NO IMPACT**

- f. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The City of Santa Clarita maintains a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) that is updated and adopted every five years (City of Santa Clarita 2021). The City's LHMP sets forth hazard mitigation strategies along with action items to help mitigate and combat various threats such as wildfire, drought, earthquakes, landslides, extreme heat, cyber-attacks, energy disruption, floods, and terrorism. SCV Water also maintains an LHMP which sets forth mitigation strategies to prevent damage to SCV Water infrastructure or interruption of SCV Water services (SCV Water 2023). The proposed project would not impair existing SCV Water infrastructure or cause interruption of SCV

Water services. Construction activities would require a temporary one-lane closure along northbound Sand Canyon Road which could potentially interfere with evacuation and emergency response procedures identified by the City's LHMP. However, pursuant to SCV Water's standard construction practices, a traffic control plan would be submitted to the City for review and approval. Traffic control measures would be implemented during lane closures, including flaggers at both ends. Implementation of the traffic control plan would ensure construction of the proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Operational activities associated with the proposed project would occur solely on the project site and would not interfere with emergency response. Therefore, the proposed project would not interfere with implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- b. Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

The project site is not within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) but is located approximately one mile west of the nearest Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2024). The project site contains vegetation which is considered combustible. The location of the project site in the wildland-urban interface could potentially expose construction workers to a risk involving wildland fires. Potential ignition sources may include sparks from exhaust pipes, discarded cigarette butts, contact of mufflers with dry grass, other sources of sparks or flame, and spills or releases of flammable materials such as gasoline. Construction equipment would be subject to standard operating procedures that would limit sources of ignition that could generate a wildland fire. All construction activities on the project site require fire safety protocols, including, but not limited to, on-site fire extinguishing equipment. Compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations related to the proper use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition from the use of hazardous materials during construction activities. As such, construction would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, and impacts would be less than significant. During operation, the proposed project would not require operational activities beyond existing conditions and therefore would not increase risk to people or structures involving wildland fires beyond existing conditions. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

# 10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

Soil disturbance would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation. If construction activities occur during the rainy season, or in the event of heavy storms, soils from the site could be eroded and transported off-site or to downstream receiving waters. Additionally, spills, leakage, or improper handling and storage of substances such as oils, fuels, chemicals, metals, and other substances from vehicles, equipment, and materials used during project construction could contribute to stormwater pollutants.

Construction projects that disturb one acre or more of soil are subject to the requirements of the SWRCB's Construction Stormwater General Permit, which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP and BMPs to control the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, into surface water drainages. Construction of the proposed project would disturb approximately 2.4 acres; therefore, SCV Water would be required to obtain coverage under the Construction Stormwater General Permit and prepare and implement a SWPPP that specifies the stormwater monitoring and construction BMPs required to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. Typical BMPs would include, but would not be limited to, use of silt fences, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances/exits, storm drain inlet protection, wind erosion control, stockpile management, and materials storage and vehicle and equipment cleaning, fueling, and maintenance procedures that minimize the discharge of spills and leaks. In addition to Construction Stormwater General Permit requirements, pursuant to Section 19.90.030 of the City's Municipal Code, which SCV Water has elected to voluntarily comply with, if the City Engineer determines grading activities would not be completed prior to November 1, SCV Water must submit a Wet Weather Erosion Control Plan to the City Engineer which requires specific BMPs to minimize erosion, flooding, or the deposition of mud, debris, or construction related pollutants during the wet season. With adherence to regulatory requirements, project construction would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality, and impacts would be less than significant.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) maintains the Water Data Library, which contains groundwater level data for wells in California. One such well, located approximately 650 feet south of the project site on the southern end of the Santa Clara River, is currently active and as of November 15, 2023, estimated groundwater in the area at approximately 12 feet below ground surface (DWR 2024a). Excavation would range from approximately 6 to 11 feet below ground surface, and therefore is not anticipated to encounter groundwater. However, if groundwater is encountered, groundwater dewatering may be required from some excavation activities, which could be discharged into the Santa Clara River, the City's storm drain system, or the City's sewer system. As described in Initial Study Section 7, *Description of Project*, dewatered groundwater discharged to the Santa Clara River would be carried out in compliance with the Los Angeles RWQCB's *Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Groundwater from Construction and Project Dewatering to Surface Waters in Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties* (Order No. R4-2023-0429). Dewatered groundwater discharged to the City's storm drain system would be carried out in compliance with the Phase I MS4 permit. These permits require testing and treatment, as necessary, of groundwater prior to its release into surface waters or a storm drain system to prevent exceedances of effluent limitations and discharge flow rates. Dewatered groundwater discharged into the City's sewer system would be treated at the Saugus Water Reclamation Plant.

The project also would be required to implement a SGMP if contamination is encountered pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, subsurface investigation pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, and remediation and disposal pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 in the event contaminated groundwater is encountered. Remedial activities pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would require contaminated groundwater to be remediated under screening levels implemented by the Los Angeles RWQCB prior to transportation or disposal of contaminated groundwater. Thus, Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3 would ensure water is evaluated and meets the necessary quality standards before being reintroduced into the Santa Clara River and the underlying groundwater basin, discharged to the City's storm drain system, or discharged into the City's sanitary sewer system. Therefore, construction would not violate any water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade water quality. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Upon completion of construction, the potential for unexpected leaks and/or breakages of existing infrastructure, which could affect water quality, would be reduced compared to the existing conditions due to pipeline replacement. Therefore, operation of the project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge or treatment requirements. Impacts would be less than significant.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- b. Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

The project site overlies the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin, which is a high-priority basin as defined by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR 2024b). As discussed in criterion a, groundwater dewatering may be required during excavation activities. Extraction of groundwater can temporarily lower the groundwater table. Dewatered groundwater would be discharged to the Santa Clara River, City's storm drain system, or the City's sanitary sewer system. Dewatering activities would be temporary and short-term as pipeline construction activities move along the alignment. The dewatering activities would affect shallow groundwater levels over a maximum of four months and would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or impede sustainable groundwater management.

The proposed project includes a 12-foot paved access road which would increase impervious surfaces on the project site. However, runoff flows would be directed into the Santa Clara River which would allow for water to percolate back into the groundwater basin. The proposed sewer pipeline would not interfere with groundwater recharge as the pipeline would be installed underground. Accordingly, the proposed project would not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. As stated in Environmental Checklist Section 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, the proposed project would not increase the demand for water because no structures that would directly or indirectly induce growth and require additional water supply would be constructed. Accordingly, the proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**



- c.(i) Would the project 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 result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?*

Construction of the proposed project would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation. However, as described in criterion a, construction activities would be required to comply with the Construction Stormwater General Permit, the City Municipal Code, as well as implementation of the required SWPPP and construction BMPs would minimize pollutant discharge in stormwater runoff. Adherence to these regulatory requirements would ensure erosion during construction would be minimized. Operation of the proposed project would generally preserve drainage patterns on site, and the proposed pipeline would be located belowground. Furthermore, the proposed project would include bank protection consisting of an 8-foot-wide soil cement section which would be vegetated with native plant species. This bank protection would reduce the potential erodibility of the northern bank of the Santa Clara River during operation. Accordingly, the proposed project would not cause substantial erosion or siltation. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- c.(ii) Would the project 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 substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?*

As discussed in criterion c(i), construction of the proposed project would comply with the requirements of the Construction Stormwater General Permit, including the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP would include construction BMPs to control and direct on-site surface runoff. Therefore, construction activities would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. Operation of the proposed project would generally preserve drainage patterns on site, and the proposed pipeline would be located belowground. The paved access road and proposed bridges result in a nominal increase of impervious surfaces to the project site. However, runoff would be directed to the Santa Clara River similar to existing conditions and therefore would not result in substantial on-site flooding. Because runoff would be directed toward Santa Clara River, the minimally increased surface runoff from the paved access road and proposed bridges would not risk substantial off-site flooding at the adjacent mobile homes. Accordingly, the proposed project would not cause substantial flooding. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- c.(iii) Would the project 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 that would 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?*

As discussed in criterion c(i), the proposed project would comply with several regulations intended to control stormwater runoff and reduce pollutants and ensure construction activities would not result in substantial runoff water which would exceed the capacity of the Santa Clara River. These include the required SWPPP and construction BMPs that would direct and manage stormwater to

minimize impacts to the capacity of Santa Clara River. This would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*c.(iv) Would the project 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 impede or redirect flood flows?*

As designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the project site is located within Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE, and the Santa Clara River regulatory floodway (Federal Emergency Management Agency 2024). The proposed pipeline would be located underground and therefore would not add impervious surfaces. The proposed project includes a 12-foot paved access road which would increase impervious surfaces on the project site. However, runoff flows would be directed into the Santa Clara River, similar to existing conditions. The portion of the proposed access road that overlies drainages to the Santa Clara River would be constructed of two pre-cast bridges. The bridges would be constructed above Zone AE and would therefore not interfere with or redirect flood waters. Therefore, the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows at the project site. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

*d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

The project site is approximately 28 miles north of the Pacific Ocean, and therefore is not subject to tsunami risk. The nearest inland surface water body that may be subject to risk of seiche is Castaic Reservoir, approximately 11.6 miles northwest of the project site. Given the distance to this water body, the project site is not subject to seiche. In addition, the project site is outside of the dam failure inundation zone for both Castaic Reservoir and Bouquet Reservoir (DWR 2024c).

As stated in criterion c(iv), the project site is located within Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE, and the Santa Clara River regulatory floodway (Federal Emergency Management Agency 2024). Section 10.06.050(B) of the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code requires all new and replacement sanitary sewage systems located in special flood hazard areas to be designed to minimize or eliminate the infiltration of floodwaters into the systems and the discharge from the systems into floodwaters. The purpose of the proposed project is to relocate the existing sewer line from within the flow path of the Santa Clara River into the adjacent overbank which would reduce the potential the sewer line could be inundated compared to existing conditions. The proposed project would be designed and constructed to minimize the potential for pollutant release and therefore be consistent with Section 10.06.050(B) of the Municipal Code. As discussed in criterion a, the potential for unexpected leaks and/or breakages of existing infrastructure, which could affect water quality, would be reduced compared to the existing conditions due to pipeline replacement. In addition, the portion of the proposed access road that overlies the Santa Clara River would be constructed of two pre-cast bridges that would not be at risk of inundation as the bridges would be constructed above the flood hazard zones of the Santa Clara River. Therefore, project design would minimize the potential for pollutant release due to inundation in a flood hazard zone, and this impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- e. *Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

### **Water Quality Control Plan**

The Los Angeles RWQCB Basin Plan designates beneficial uses for surface waters in the Los Angeles region and associated water quality objectives to fulfill such uses. The project site is within the Santa Clara River watershed and drains to Reach 7 of the Santa Clara River. Reach 7 and all downstream reaches have designated beneficial uses of Municipal and Domestic Supply (potential), Industrial Service Supply, Industrial Process Supply, Agricultural Supply, Groundwater Recharge, Freshwater Replenishment, Warm Freshwater Habitat, Wildlife Habitat, Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species, Wetland Habitat, Water Contact Recreation, and Non-contact Water Recreation (Los Angeles RWQCB 2020). Reach 7 of the Santa Clara River is listed on the Los Angeles RWQCB's 303(d) list of impaired and threatened waters due to the presence of indicator bacteria (Los Angeles RWQCB 2024).

As described above in criterion a, the project would implement stormwater BMPs to minimize potential temporary construction-related water quality impacts pursuant to the Construction Stormwater General Permit. However, there is potential for dewatering of groundwater to occur, which, if not disposed of properly, could result in pollutants entering the Santa Clara River. Accordingly, there is potential the proposed project could conflict with the Los Angeles RWQCB Basin Plan. However, the discharge of dewatered groundwater into the Santa Clara River would occur in accordance with the Los Angeles RWQCB Order No. R4-2023-0429 and discharge of dewatered groundwater into the City's storm drain system would occur in accordance with the Phase I MS4 permit. These permits require testing and treatment, as necessary, of groundwater prior to its release into surface waters or a storm drain system to prevent exceedances of effluent limitations and discharge flow rates. In addition, SCV Water would implement Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3 to reduce potential impacts associated with contaminated groundwater. SCV Water would be required to implement a SGMP pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, subsurface investigation pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-2, and remediation pursuant to Mitigation Measure HAZ-3. If the water collected from the dewatering process is discharged back to the riverbed, Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3 would ensure the water is evaluated and meets the necessary quality standards before being reintroduced into the Santa Clara River and the underlying groundwater basin, discharged to the City's storm drain system, or discharged into the City's sanitary sewer system. With adherence to existing permit requirements and implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, construction of the proposed project would not impair beneficial uses identified in the Basin Plan, and the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Project operation would not involve ground disturbance that would contribute to runoff of sediment or sediment-bound pollutants, and the project does not involve septic systems, pet parks, agricultural land, or other land uses commonly associated with high concentrations of nutrients, indicator bacteria, or chemical toxicity. No chemicals would be stored on site. Therefore, operation of the project would not exacerbate existing impairments to the Santa Clara River and would not impair existing or potential beneficial uses of nearby water bodies. This impact would be less than significant.

## **Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan**

The project site overlies the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin. The Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency oversees management of the subbasin, guided by the Santa Clara River Valley East Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, adopted in January 2022.

Construction of the proposed project could involve dewatering activities during pipeline installation. Dewatering activities would be temporary and short-term as pipeline construction activities move along the alignment within the Santa Clara Riverbed. Dewatering activities would not remove substantial volumes of groundwater from the subbasin such that a substantial decrease in groundwater supplies would occur.

The project does not propose residential, commercial, industrial, or other land uses that would increase water demand and require additional water supply. As such, operation of the project would not increase groundwater extraction beyond previous operating conditions and, therefore, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

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# 11 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*a. Would the project physically divide an established community?*

The proposed project would replace an existing sewer pipeline at the overbank of the Santa Clara River. The proposed project would not occur within an established community or otherwise include features that could physically divide an established community. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

*b. Would the project 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?*

Pursuant to California Government Code 53091, the building and zoning ordinances of a county or city do not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, storage, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency. The project would entail the construction and operation of a replacement sewer pipeline. Therefore, the building and zoning ordinances of the City of Santa Clarita would not apply to the proposed project. The project is evaluated here for consistency with the City of Santa Clarita General Plan.

The City of Santa Clarita General Plan identifies objectives and policies to maintain public infrastructure and provide clean water for Valley residents and businesses. The proposed project’s consistency with applicable General Plan goals, objectives, and policies is described in Table 10. As shown therein, the proposed project would actively support the City’s goals, policies, and objectives related to providing conveyance and treatment of wastewater. Therefore, the project would not 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, and no impact would occur.

**Table 10 General Plan Consistency**

General Plan Goal or Policy	Proposed Project Consistency
<p><b>Policy CO 4.4.4.</b> Promote the extension of sanitary sewers for all urban uses and densities, to protect groundwater quality, where feasible.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> The proposed project would enable SCV Water to continue to provide reliable wastewater services.</p>
<p><b>Policy LU 7.3.4.</b> Implement best management practices for erosion control throughout the construction and development process.</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 8, <i>Geology and Soils</i>, and Section 9, <i>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</i>, the proposed project would implement erosion control BMPs and cease work in the event contaminated soils or groundwater are discovered.</p>
<p><b>Goal LU 9:</b> Adequate public facilities and services, provided in a timely manner and in appropriate locations to serve existing and future residents and businesses.</p>	<p><b>Consistent:</b> Through the replacement of an existing sewer pipeline, the proposed project would ensure the reliability and longevity of the sewer system.</p>

Source: City of Santa Clarita 2011

**NO IMPACT**

# 12 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*
- b. *Would the project 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?*

According to the Santa Clarita General Plan’s Conservation and Open Space Element, the project site is within the Mineral Resource Zone 2 (MRZ-2) area (City of Santa Clarita 2011). MRZ-2 includes areas where adequate information indicates mineral deposits are present, are concentrated along waterways, such as the Santa Clara River, as well as east of Sand Canyon Road. The project would not include mineral extraction and would not affect the availability of minerals in this MRZ-2 area. The site is not located in a zone of oil and natural gas extraction and production (City of Santa Clarita 2011). No mines or quarries exist at the project site. Accordingly, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or a locally important mineral resource recovery site. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**



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# 13 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Noise Overview

The unit of measurement used to describe a noise level is the decibel (dB). However, the human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies within the sound spectrum. Therefore, a method called “A weighting” is used to filter noise frequencies which are not audible to the human ear. A-weighting approximates the frequency response of the average young ear when listening to most ordinary everyday sounds. A person’s relative judgment of the loudness or annoyance of a sound correlates well with the “A-weighted” levels of those sounds. Therefore, the A-weighted noise scale is used for measurements and standards involving the human perception of noise. In this analysis, all noise levels are A-weighted, and “dBA” is understood to identify the A-weighted decibel.

Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale which quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used for earthquake magnitudes. A 10 dB increase represents a 10-fold increase in sound intensity, a 20 dB change is a 100-fold difference, 30 dB is a 1,000-fold increase, etc. Thus, a doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as doubling of traffic volume, would increase the noise level by 3 dB; a halving of the energy would result in a 3 dB decrease.

Human perception of noise has no simple correlation with acoustical energy. The perception of noise is not linear in terms of dBA or in terms of acoustical energy. Two equivalent noise sources combined do not sound twice as loud as one source. It is widely accepted that the average healthy ear can barely perceive changes of 3 dBA; a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible; and an increase of 10 dBA sounds twice as loud.

### *Descriptors*

The impact of noise is not a function of loudness alone. The time of day when noise occurs, and the duration of the noise are also important. In addition, most noise that lasts for more than a few seconds is variable in its intensity. Consequently, a variety of noise descriptors has been developed. The noise descriptors used for this analysis are the one-hour equivalent noise level ( $L_{eq}$ ). The  $L_{eq}$  is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period. Typically,  $L_{eq}$  is equivalent to a one-hour period, even when measured for shorter durations as the noise level of a 10- to 30-minute period would be the same as the hour if the noise source is relatively steady.  $L_{max}$  is the highest Root Mean Squared (RMS) sound pressure level within the sampling period, and  $L_{min}$  is the lowest RMS sound pressure level within the measuring period.

### *Propagation*

Sound from a small, localized source (approximating a “point” source) radiates uniformly outward as it travels away from the source in a spherical pattern, known as geometric spreading. The sound level decreases or drops off at a rate of 6 dBA for each doubling of the distance. Traffic noise is not a single, stationary point source of sound. Over time, the movement of vehicles makes the source of the sound appear to emanate from a line (line source) rather than a point. The drop-off rate for a line source is 3 dBA for each doubling of distance.

The propagation of noise is also affected by the intervening ground, known as ground absorption. A hard site (such as parking lots or smooth bodies of water) receives no additional ground attenuation and the changes in noise levels with distance (drop-off rate) are simply the geometric spreading of the source. A soft site (such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees) receives an additional ground attenuation value of 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance.

Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures; the amount of attenuation provided by this “shielding” depends on the size of the object and the frequencies of the noise levels. Natural terrain features such as hills and dense woods, and man-made features such as buildings and walls, can significantly alter noise levels. Generally, any large structure blocking the line of sight will provide at least a 5-dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2011).

## **Vibration Overview**

Vibration levels are usually expressed as a single-number measure of vibration magnitude in terms of velocity or acceleration, which describes the severity of the vibration without the frequency variable. The peak particle velocity (PPV) is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration signal, usually measured in inches per second. Since it is related to the stresses experienced by buildings, PPV is often used in monitoring and controlling construction vibration. Although PPV is appropriate for evaluating the potential of building damage, it is not suitable for evaluating human response. It takes some time for the human body to respond to vibrations. In a sense, the human body responds to an average vibration amplitude (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2018). Because vibration waves are oscillatory, the net average of a vibration signal is zero. Thus, the RMS amplitude is used to describe the “smoothed” vibration amplitude (FTA 2018). The RMS of a signal is the square root of the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, usually measured in inches per second. The average is typically calculated over a one-second period. The RMS amplitude is always less than the PPV and is always positive. Decibel notation is used to

compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. The abbreviation “VdB” is used in this analysis for “vibration decibels” to reduce the potential for confusion with sound decibels.

### Sensitive Receptors

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. Noise-sensitive land uses are those in which persons occupying the uses are particularly sensitive to the effects of noise, including housing, schools, medical facilities, libraries, social care facilities, and similar facilities. Vibration-sensitive receptors, which are similar to noise-sensitive receptors, include residences and institutional uses, such as schools, churches, and hospitals. However, vibration-sensitive receptors also include buildings where vibrations may interfere with vibration-sensitive equipment that is affected by vibration levels that may be well below those associated with human annoyance (e.g., recording studios or medical facilities with sensitive equipment). The closest sensitive receptors are residences at the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park located directly west of Sand Canyon Road, with the closest residences located as close as 20 feet from the proposed sewer line alignment. Additional sensitive receptors include the single-family residences located approximately 270 feet north of the project site across from Antelope Valley Freeway (State Route [SR] 14), single-family residences located approximately 740 feet south of the project site along La Veda Avenue, and Sulphur Springs Elementary School located approximately 1,025 feet south of the project site along Lost Canyon Road.

### Project Noise Setting

The primary noise source in the vicinity of the project site is vehicular traffic along Antelope Valley Freeway (SR 14) and Sand Canyon Road. In addition, noise is generated by residents at the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park.

To characterize ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors near the project area, two short-term (15-minute) noise level measurements were conducted on January 25, 2024, using an Extech Model 407780A, ANSI Type 2 integrating sound level meter. The sound level meter was calibrated prior to collecting noise measurements. Noise measurement locations are shown on Figure 4. Short-term noise measurement (ST) 1 was conducted near the mobile home located at the southwestern corner of the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park and ST 2 was conducted at the mobile homes located along Sand Canyon Road. Table 11 provides descriptions of the noise measurement locations and summarizes the results of the noise measurements.

**Table 11 Short-Term Noise Measurement Results**

Measurement Location	Measurement Location	Sample Times <sup>1</sup>	L <sub>eq</sub> (dBA)	L <sub>min</sub> (dBA)	L <sub>max</sub> (dBA)
ST 1	Southwestern corner of Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park	9:54–10:09 a.m.	68.4	48.6	79.4
ST 2	Eastern boundary of Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park, along Sand Canyon Rd	10:14–10:29 a.m.	61.1	49.0	79.6

Note: dBA = A-weighted decibels; L<sub>eq</sub> = equivalent noise level; L<sub>min</sub> = minimum noise level, L<sub>max</sub> = maximum noise level

<sup>1</sup> All short-term measurements were collected on January 25, 2024.

Figure 4 Short-Term Noise Measurement Locations



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22-13523 Sand Cnyn Sewer Reloc  
Fig X Noise Measurement Locations

## Significance Thresholds

The Santa Clarita Municipal Code (SCMC) addresses construction noise in the following section:

**SCMC Section 11.44.080.** No person shall engage in any construction work which requires a building permit from the City on sites within 300 feet of a residentially zoned property except between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 AM. To 6:00 PM. On Saturday. Further, no work shall be performed on the following public holidays: New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. Emergency work [defined as “...work made necessary to restore property to a safe condition following a public calamity, or work required to protect persons or property from an imminent exposure to danger, or work by private or public utilities when restoring utility service” in SCMC Section 11.44.020(D)] is permitted at all times. The Department of Community Development may issue a permit for work to be done “after hours;” provided that containment of construction noises is provided.

The SCMC does not provide a quantitative construction noise threshold. Therefore, based on FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (2018) criteria, construction noise would be significant if noise levels exceed 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$  for an 8-hour period at residential uses or construction is conducted outside the allowable hours for construction as stated in Section 11.44.080.

The SCMC also does not provide a quantitative vibration threshold. Therefore, vibration limits used in this analysis to determine a potential impact to local land uses are based on guidelines for vibration damage potential contained in Caltrans’ (2020) *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual*, shown in Table 12. According to the values presented in Table 12, construction vibration impact would be significant if vibration levels exceed 0.2 in/sec PPV for fragile buildings at the nearest mobile homes.

**Table 12 Caltrans Vibration Damage Potential Threshold Criteria**

Type of Situation	Transient Sources (in/sec PPV)	Continuous/Frequent Intermittent Sources (in/sec PPV)
Extremely fragile historic buildings, ruins, and ancient monuments	0.12	0.08
Fragile buildings	0.2	0.1
Historic sites and some old buildings	0.5	0.25
Older residential structures	0.5	0.3
New residential structures	1.0	0.5
Modern industrial/commercial buildings	2.0	0.5

in/sec = inches per second; PPV = peak particle velocity

Source: Caltrans 2020

- a. *Would the project result in 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?*

## **Construction**

Temporary noise levels caused by construction activity would be a function of the noise generated by construction equipment, the location and sensitivity of nearby land uses, and the timing and duration of noise-generating activities. For a construction noise assessment, construction equipment can be considered to operate in two modes: stationary and mobile. As a rule, stationary equipment operates in a single location for one or more days at a time, with either fixed-power operation (e.g., pumps, generators, and compressors) or variable-power operation (e.g., pile drivers, rock drills, and pavement breakers). Conversely, mobile equipment moves around the construction site with power applied in cyclic fashion, such as bulldozers, graders, and loaders (FTA 2018). Noise impacts from stationary equipment are assessed from the center of the equipment, while noise impacts from mobile construction equipment are assessed from the center of the equipment activity area (e.g., construction site).

Construction noise was estimated using the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM). Typical construction projects have long-term noise averages that are lower than louder short-term noise events due to equipment moving from one point to another on the site, work breaks, and idle time. Each phase of construction has a specific equipment mix depending on the work to be carried out during that phase. Accordingly, each phase also has its own noise characteristics; some will have higher continuous noise levels than others, and some may have discontinuous high-impact noise levels. The maximum hourly  $L_{eq}$  of each phase is determined by combining the  $L_{eq}$  contributions from each piece of equipment used in that phase (FTA 2018). Project construction phases would include grubbing and land clearing, grading and excavation, infrastructure installation (drainage, utilities, and sub-grading), and paving. It is assumed that diesel engines would power all construction equipment. For assessment purposes, the loudest phase (grading and excavation) was modeled under the conservative assumption that an excavator, tractor, grader, roller, and backhoe would be operating simultaneously.

Construction would occur from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and would therefore not conflict with the SCMC. Pipeline construction activities would be mobile and would be constantly moving in a linear path along the pipeline alignment. Construction equipment would travel linearly along the pipeline alignment, therefore exposure to the nearest sensitive receptors would be temporary, and the distance to the receptors would vary over the course of a construction day. It was assumed the nearest sensitive receptors (the residences located at the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park) would be exposed to construction noise at an average distance of approximately 25 feet throughout a typical construction workday. Table 13 shows the results of the noise modeling from RCNM.

**Table 13 Construction Noise Levels at Sensitive Receptors During Loudest Construction Phase (Grading and Excavation)**

Sensitive Receptor	Distance (feet)	Noise Level (dBA $L_{eq}$ )
Distance at which construction noise threshold is exceeded	101	81
Mobile homes along Sand Canyon Road	25	93
Mobile home at southwest corner of Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park	40	89
Single-family homes to the north across Antelope Valley Freeway (SR 14)	270	72
Single-family homes to the south along La Veda Avenue	740	63
Sulphur Springs Elementary School	1,025	60

Note: Noise levels were calculated assuming that an excavator, tractor, grader, roller, and backhoe would be operating simultaneously. Distances are measured from the central alignment of the project site to account for the variable movement of mobile construction equipment.

See Appendix E for construction noise modeling output.

As shown in Table 13, construction noise levels would exceed 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at sensitive receptors located 101 feet and closer to construction activity. Therefore, construction noise would reach up to 93 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the mobile homes along Sand Canyon Road (located 25 feet from proposed construction activities) and 89 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the mobile home at the southwestern corner of the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park (located 40 feet from proposed construction activities). Construction noise levels at these sensitive receptors would therefore exceed the FTA’s 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$  threshold, resulting in temporary construction noise impacts that would require mitigation.

Conversely, construction noise levels at sensitive receptors located more than 101 feet from proposed construction activities would be 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$  and below; therefore, construction noise levels at the single-family homes to the north across Antelope Valley Freeway (SR 14), the single-family homes to the south along La Veda Avenue, and the Sulphur Springs Elementary School would be below 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$ . Temporary construction noise impacts at these sensitive receptors would be less than significant and would not require mitigation.

## Operation

Because the project consists of an underground pipeline, project operation would not generate noise at the aboveground sensitive receptors. In addition, the project would not require new maintenance activities that would generate noise. Therefore, no operational noise impacts would occur.

## Mitigation Measures

### *NOI-1 Construction Management Plan*

Prior to the start of ground-disturbing construction activities, a Construction Management Plan shall be created that includes the following:

- Prior to the initiation of construction activities at the project site that occur within 101 feet of nearby sensitive receptors, the contractor shall install temporary noise barriers/blankets between the construction boundary and these sensitive residential receptors. More specifically, temporary noise barriers/blankets shall be installed along the property line between the construction boundary and the residences at the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park. The temporary barriers/blankets shall have a minimum height of 10 feet to block the line of sight



between the construction source and the adjacent residential receptors to the north and east of the proposed pipeline alignment. Barriers shall be constructed with a solid material that has a density of at least 1 pound per square foot with no gaps from the ground to the top of the barrier and be lined on the construction side with acoustical blanket, curtain or equivalent absorptive material rated STC 32 or higher.

- At least 10 days prior to the start of construction activities, a sign shall be posted at the construction site, or other conspicuous location, which includes a telephone number for project information, and a procedure in which a construction manager will respond to and investigate noise complaints and take corrective action, if necessary, in a timely manner.
- At least 21 days prior to the start of construction activities, businesses and residents within 500 feet of the project site shall be notified of the planned construction activities. The notification shall include a brief description of the project, the activities that would occur, the hours when construction would occur, and the construction period's overall duration. The notification shall include the telephone numbers of SCV Water's and contractor's authorized representatives that are assigned to respond in the event of a noise complaint.
- If a construction noise complaint is registered, SCV Water shall retain a qualified noise consultant to conduct noise measurements at the properties that registered the complaint. The noise measurements shall be conducted for a minimum of one hour. The consultant shall prepare a letter report for code enforcement summarizing the measurements, calculation data used in determining impacts, and potential measures to reduce noise levels to the maximum extent feasible.
- Prior to the start of and for the duration of construction, the contractor shall properly maintain and tune all construction equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations to minimize noise emissions.
- Prior to use of any construction equipment, the contractor shall fit all equipment with properly operating mufflers, air intake silencers, and engine shrouds no less effective than as originally equipped by the manufacturer.
- Staging and delivery areas shall be located as far as feasible from existing residences.
- Material hauling and deliveries shall be coordinated by the construction contractor to reduce the potential of trucks waiting to unload for protracted periods of time.
- To the extent feasible, hydraulic equipment shall be used instead of pneumatic impact tools, and electric-powered equipment shall be used instead of diesel-powered equipment.
- Stationary noise sources (e.g., generators) shall be located as far from sensitive receptors as practicable, and they shall be muffled and enclosed within temporary sheds, or insulation barriers with a minimum STC rating of 32.
- The use of bells, whistles, alarms, and horns shall be restricted to safety warning purposes only.
- Signs shall be posted at the job site entrance(s), within the on-site construction zones, and along queueing lanes (if any) to reinforce the prohibition of unnecessary engine idling. All other equipment shall be turned off if not in use for more than five minutes. The construction manager shall be responsible for enforcing this.

SCV Water shall require implementation of the above noise reduction measures as part of the construction contract and shall confirm the above noise reduction measures are implemented by the construction contractor at the beginning of the construction period, and as needed during the construction period.

## Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1, including the use of temporary noise barriers, would reduce construction noise levels by 15 to 20 dBA (Bies, Hansen, and Howard 2018; Harris and Cyril 1991). Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would result in mitigated construction noise levels of 73 to 78 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the mobile homes nearest to project construction activity and construction noise impacts would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation.

The temporary barriers/blankets would block the line of sight between Santa Clara River and the adjacent residential receptors to the north and east of the proposed pipeline alignment. However, as discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 1, *Aesthetics*, construction activities, including the use of temporary noise barriers, would not result in the long-term obstruction of views from the Santa Clara River. Therefore, the use of temporary noise barriers/blankets would not result in a significant impact to scenic vistas.

### LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

- b. *Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

## Construction

Construction activities known to generate excessive groundborne vibration, such as pile driving, would not be conducted as part of the project. Therefore, the greatest known sources of vibration during project construction activities may be a vibratory roller and large bulldozer during the grading and excavation phase, which may be used as close as approximately 14 and 15 feet, respectively, to the nearest mobile home along Sand Canyon Road. A vibratory roller would generate a vibration level of approximately 0.210 in/sec PPV at a distance of 25 feet (Caltrans 2020), which would equate to a vibration level of approximately 0.501 in/sec PPV at 14 feet.<sup>7</sup> As a result, use of the vibratory roller would exceed 0.2 in/sec PPV at fragile buildings, the threshold at which structural damage occurs to older/fragile residential structures. Therefore, temporary vibration impacts associated with use of the roller would require mitigation.

Conversely, a large bulldozer would generate a vibration level of approximately 0.089 in/sec PPV at 25 feet, which would equate to a vibration level of approximately 0.191 in/sec PPV at 15 feet. Therefore, vibration generated by a large bulldozer (and similar equipment) would not exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV threshold at nearby sensitive receptors and temporary construction vibration impacts associated with this type of equipment would be less than significant.

## Operation

Operation of the project would involve the operation of an underground pipeline and would therefore not include any operational sources of vibration. No operational vibration impacts would occur.

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<sup>7</sup>  $PPV_{Equipment} = PPV_{Ref} (25/D)^n$  (in/sec),  $PPV_{Ref}$  = reference PPV at 25 feet,  $D$  = distance, and  $n = 1.1$

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *NOI-2 Alternative Construction Equipment*

In order to reduce vibration levels generated at nearby sensitive receptors at the Sand Canyon Mobile Home Park, the following measures shall be included as notes on all construction plans:

- Construction phases that utilize a roller within 26 feet of nearby structures shall be conducted with a static or pneumatic roller in lieu of a vibratory roller.

## **Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would require the use of a static or pneumatic roller so as not to generate vibration levels exceeding the 0.2 in/sec PPV at fragile buildings threshold at residences near the project area. A static or pneumatic roller generates a vibration level of 0.05 in/sec PPV at 25 feet (IR McIver 2012), which would result in a vibration level of 0.12 in/sec PPV at 14 feet. Therefore, use of a static or pneumatic roller during project construction would result in vibration levels below the threshold for structural damage, and temporary impacts associated with construction vibration would be less than significant.

### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- 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?

The closest public or public use airport to the project site is the Agua Dulce Airport (L70), located approximately 8.5 miles northeast of the project site. The project site is not located within the noise contours for the airport according to the Agua Dulce Airport Influence Area Map developed by the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (Los Angeles County ALUC 2003). Therefore, project construction workers would not be exposed to temporary and short-term airport noise. No impact would occur.

### **NO IMPACT**

# 14 Population and Housing

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project 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)?*

The proposed project would not cause direct growth because the proposed project does not propose the introduction of new residences, businesses, or other land uses which would generate population growth. The proposed project involves the installation of a sewer pipeline; however, the sewer pipeline is intended to replace an existing sewer pipeline rather than serve an undeveloped area. Therefore, the proposed project would not introduce infrastructure that would indirectly result in population growth. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- b. *Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

No residences are located within the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the displacement of existing people or housing. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

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# 15 Public Services

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
1 Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2 Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3 Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4 Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5 Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a.1. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

A.2. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered police protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

A.3. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered schools, or the need for new or physically altered schools, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?*

a.4. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks, or the need for new or physically altered parks, the*

*construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?*

- a.5. *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of other new or physically altered public facilities, or the need for other new or physically altered public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?*

The proposed project involves the installation and operation of a new sewer pipeline to replace an existing sewer line. The proposed project would not introduce new infrastructure, such as residences or businesses, requiring additional fire or police protection services. As described in Environmental Checklist Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project does not include development of infrastructure that would directly or indirectly increase the population of Santa Clarita; therefore the proposed project would not necessitate new or expanded park facilities or result in substantial physical deterioration of existing library or other community facilities. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

# 16 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 and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*
- b. *Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

As described in Environmental Checklist Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not increase the population of Santa Clarita; therefore, the proposed project would not increase the use of existing parks and recreational facilities. The proposed project does not include or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**



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# 17 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a. *Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

Construction-related vehicle trips would include construction workers traveling to and from the project site, haul trucks (including for soil import), and other trucks associated with equipment and material deliveries. Given the minimal number of trips generated and the limited impact to public transit and pedestrian facilities, the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs addressing the circulation system, including public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities.

Regional and local plans and policies addressing the circulation system include the City of Santa Clarita General Plan Circulation Element and the SCAG 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (City of Santa Clarita 2011; SCAG 2020). The proposed project involves the installation and operation of a sewer pipeline, which would not conflict with the City’s or SCAG’s adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Construction traffic would be temporary and limited to the duration of the construction schedule. After construction is complete, no changes to existing transportation patterns would occur because the pipeline would be located underground, and no new operation and maintenance activities would be required for the project. The proposed project would not impede the long-term use of existing transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and would construct an access road that would be available for bicycle use. The proposed project would not require new operations beyond existing sewer operations; therefore, operation of the proposed project would not result in additional vehicle use inconsistent with the City’s or SCAG’s adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- b. *Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) identifies criteria for evaluating transportation impacts. Specifically, the guidelines state VMT exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. According to Section 15064.3(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may include a qualitative analysis of operational and construction traffic. A VMT calculation is typically conducted on a daily or annual basis, for long-range planning purposes. Increases in VMT from construction would be short-term, minimal, and temporary. Project operation would not involve any new maintenance activities compared to existing conditions. Therefore, operational VMT in the project area would not be increased. In addition, as stated in the City of Santa Clarita's Transportation Analysis Updates guidance, projects that generate less than 110 daily trips are presumed to result in less than significant VMT impacts absent substantial evidence to the contrary (City of Santa Clarita 2020). Project construction would not result in substantial vehicle trips and would stay below the 110 trips per day threshold. The project would involve no new operation and maintenance activities compared to existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not generate any operational VMT. Impacts associated with VMT would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- c. *Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?*

The proposed project would include the construction of an access road generally overlapping the proposed pipeline and two pre-cast bridges. The access road and bridges would be utilized by SCV Water staff for maintenance activities and would be used by the public as a bicycle route. No sharp curves or dangerous intersections with existing roads are proposed. The proposed project would not introduce incompatible uses, such as farm equipment, onto roadways. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. No impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- d. *Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?*

Construction activities would require a temporary one-lane closure along northbound Sand Canyon Road. However, pursuant to Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency's standard construction practices, a traffic control plan would be submitted to the City for review and approval. Traffic control measures would be implemented during lane closures, including flaggers at both ends. Although construction of the proposed project would temporarily increase heavy vehicle trips to and from the project site, these trips would be localized and temporary and would not have potential to impede emergency access at the project site, as construction equipment staging and worker parking would occur adjacent to Vista Canyon Boulevard and the northern bank of the Santa Clara River. Operational activities associated with the proposed project would not be greater than existing maintenance and therefore would not result in deficiencies in emergency access beyond existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

# 18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in a Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or 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:

- |  |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?</p>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>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 I 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.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PRC Section 21074 (a)(1)(A-B) defines tribal cultural resources as “sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe” and is:

1. Listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or
2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in PRC Section 5024.1(c). In applying these criteria, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Assembly Bill (AB) 52 also establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding those resources. Under AB 52, lead agencies are required to “begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the

proposed project.” Native American tribes to be included in the process are those that have requested notice of projects proposed within the jurisdiction of the lead agency. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be adopted/certified.

The NAHC was contacted to request a SLF search on January 23, 2023. On January 27, 2023, the NAHC stated the results of the SLF search were negative.

As part of AB 52 consultation, SCV Water sent consultation letters to the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FBTMI), the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, and the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians on February 1, 2024. FBTMI responded with a request for consultation on February 12, 2024. SCV Water met with FBTMI on February 27, 2024.

- a. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?*
- b. *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code 21074 that is 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?*

No tribal cultural resources have been identified with the project site. The NAHC SLF search was returned with negative results, meaning the NAHC did not identify potentially sensitive tribal cultural resources within the United States Geological Service quadrangle in which the project site is located. As outlined in Environmental Checklist Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, Mitigation Measure CUL-3 requires implementation of procedures for the unanticipated discovery of archaeological resources, including those of Native American origin. In addition, Mitigation Measures TCR-1, TCR-2, and TCR-3 have been included in response to the FBTMI’s request for Native American monitoring of ground-disturbing activities, unanticipated discovery of tribal cultural resources, and compliance with existing regulations outlined in California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 should human remains be inadvertently discovered during construction, respectively. With implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-3, TCR-1, TCR-2, and TCR-3, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

## **Mitigation Measures**

### *TCR-1 Tribal Cultural Resources Construction Monitoring*

SCV Water shall retain a professional Tribal Monitor procured by the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians to observe all ground-disturbing activities including, but not limited to, clearing, grubbing, grading, excavating, digging, trenching, plowing, drilling, tunneling, quarrying, leveling, driving posts, auguring, blasting, stripping topsoil or similar activity. The Tribal Monitor does not need to observe pipe placement or backfill. Tribal Monitoring Services will continue until confirmation is received from SCV Water, in writing, that all scheduled activities pertaining to Tribal Monitoring are complete. If the project’s scheduled activities require the Tribal Monitor to leave the project for a period of time and return, confirmation shall be submitted to the Tribe by SCV Water, in writing, upon completion of each set of scheduled activities and 5 days’ notice (if possible) shall

be submitted to the Tribe by SCV Water, in writing, prior to the start of each set of scheduled activities. If cultural resources are encountered, the Tribal Monitor will have the authority to request that ground-disturbing activities cease within 60 feet of discovery and a qualified archaeologist meeting Secretary of Interior standards retained by SCV Water as well as the Tribal Monitor shall assess the find.

*TCR-2 Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources*

SCV Water shall, in good faith, consult with the FTBMI on the disposition and treatment of any Tribal Cultural Resource encountered during ground disturbing activities.

*TCR-3 Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains*

If human remains or funerary objects are encountered during any activities associated with the Project, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to State Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and that code shall be enforced for the duration of the project.

Inadvertent discoveries of human remains and/or funerary object(s) are subject to California State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and the subsequent disposition of those discoveries shall be decided by the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), as determined by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), should those findings be determined as Native American in origin.

**Significance After Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-3, and TCR-1 through TCR-3 during ground-disturbing activities would reduce potential tribal cultural resource impacts to a less-than-significant level by implementing a Tribal Monitor, consultation with FTBMI, and procedures for the unanticipated discovery of human remains.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

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# 19 Utilities and Service Systems

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a. *Would the project 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?*
- c. *Would the project 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?*



## **Water**

The proposed project would involve the construction and operation of a sewer pipeline. The proposed project does not include or require the construction of additional water infrastructure and would not cause direct or indirect growth which could increase water demand. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities. No impact would occur.

## **Wastewater**

The proposed project would involve the construction and operation of a sewer pipeline, the environmental effects of which are evaluated within this IS-MND. The purpose of the proposed sewer pipeline is to relocate the existing sewer line from within the flow path of the Santa Clara River into the adjacent overbank, rather than increase wastewater treatment capacity. No additional customers would be served as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded wastewater facilities. No impact would occur.

## **Stormwater Drainage**

As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed project would generally preserve existing drainage patterns on-site, which convey stormwater to the Santa Clara River. The increase of impervious surfaces from the proposed project would be nominal, and stormwater runoff from the project site would be discharged to the Santa Clara River. Potential dewatering activities would not require substantial discharge of stormwater such that additional stormwater infrastructure would be required. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded stormwater facilities. No impact would occur.

## **Electric Power and Natural Gas**

The proposed project is a sewer pipeline that would not require additional electricity consumption beyond existing operations. The proposed project would not require natural gas service. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric or natural gas facilities. No impact would occur.

## **Telecommunications**

The proposed sewer pipeline would not require telecommunications to operate. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded telecommunications facilities. No impact would occur.

## **NO IMPACT**

- f. b. Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

As described in the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency's Urban Water Management Plan, Santa Clarita would be provided adequate water supplies to meet demand through 2050 (Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency 2021). During construction, the proposed project would require the temporary and minimal use of water during construction for dust suppression activities in areas of the project site where ground-disturbing activities would occur. During operation, the proposed project would

not increase the demand for water because no structures that would directly or indirectly induce growth in Santa Clarita would be constructed. Accordingly, the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies available, and no impact would occur.

**NO IMPACT**

- d. *Would the project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?*
- e. *Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

Construction activities may temporarily generate solid waste, including soils and construction waste, which would be disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Cut soil generated during construction, totaling approximately 2,400 cubic yards, is anticipated to be disposed of at Chiquita Canyon Sanitary Landfill. Chiquita Canyon Sanitary Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 12,000 tons per day and a remaining capacity of approximately 60,408,000 cubic yards (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery 2023). Due to the temporary nature of construction and minimal amount of construction waste anticipated to require disposal, the proposed project would not generate quantities of solid waste that would account for a substantial percentage of the total daily regional permitted capacity available at the Chiquita Canyon Sanitary Landfill. Furthermore, at least 50 percent of solid waste would be diverted from disposal in landfills, pursuant to AB 939. Once operational, the proposed project would not generate solid waste. Therefore, solid waste generated during construction activities would not exceed the available capacity of the landfills serving Santa Clarita, and the proposed project would comply with solid waste reduction regulations. These impacts would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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## 20 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 evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The project site is not within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone but is located approximately one mile west of the nearest Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2024).

- a. *If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The City of Santa Clarita’s and SCV Water’s LHMPs set forth hazard mitigation strategies related to a variety of threats, including wildfire. Strategies towards mitigating wildfire included in the City’s LHMP include working with the Los Angeles Fire Department to enhance emergency service and increase the efficiency of response times, enhancing outreach and education programs on wildfires, encouraging and increasing communication among wildland/urban interface property owners, and enhancing the City’s ability to manage wildfire events. Strategies towards mitigating the impacts of wildfire included in SCV Water’s LHMP include vegetation clearance, providing regional emergency water storage, and fostering enhanced communication with local and regional fire departments.

As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the proposed project would not conflict with either of the LHMPs. As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 17, *Transportation*, the proposed project would not impede access to emergency services, and pursuant to Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency's standard construction practices, a traffic control plan would be submitted to the City for review and approval. Traffic control measures would be implemented during lane closures, including flaggers at both ends. Although construction of the project would increase heavy vehicle trips to and from the project site, such effects would be localized and temporary, and would not impede emergency access in the project area. Consequently, the proposed project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan in fire hazard areas. This impact would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- b. *If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project, 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?*

As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, project operation would not involve potentially flammable activities. However, the wildland-urban interface could pose the potential for incidents of fire during project construction. Potential ignition sources may include sparks from exhaust pipes, discarded cigarette butts, contact of mufflers with dry grass, other sources of sparks or flame, and spills or releases of flammable materials such as gasoline. Compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations related to the proper use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition from the use of hazardous materials during construction activities. Therefore, impacts related to wildland fires during project construction would be less than significant.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- c. *If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*
- d. *If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?*

The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a sewer pipeline. As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 19, *Utilities and Service Systems*, the proposed project would not result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities beyond the pipeline alignment evaluated in this analysis. The proposed project would not include fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other aboveground utilities that would exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. While the proposed project does include a paved access road, this road would not include associated utilities or other components which could exacerbate fire risk. Furthermore, the proposed project does not include habitable structures and as described in Environmental Checklist Section 7, *Geology and Soils*, the project site

is not in an area susceptible to landslides. The proposed project would include the construction of two pre-cast bridges; however, as described in Environmental Checklist Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the pre-cast bridges would not result in substantial flooding as the bridges would be located above the flood hazard zones identified within the Santa Clara River.

For the reasons described above, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to exposure of people to significant risks as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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# 21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Does the project:

- |  |                          |                                     |                                     |                          |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>a. 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?</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>b. 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)?</p>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>c. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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?*

Potential impacts to biological resources are addressed in Environmental Checklist Section 4, *Biological Resources*. As described therein, there is moderate to high potential for certain special-status wildlife species to occur on the project site, including six species of special concern: arroyo chub, arroyo toad, western spadefoot, California legless lizard, coastal whiptail, and coast horned lizard. However, the project site is limited in size, as compared to the total size of habitats supporting fish and wildlife species, and the project would only result in temporary impacts to special-status species during construction, as the proposed pipeline would be located underground



and would not affect any species during operation. Due to the local scale of the proposed project, the proposed project would not 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. This impact would be less than significant.

As discussed in Environmental Checklist Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, the proposed project would not require disturbance of the historic-period cemetery or its immediate vicinity, and therefore the proposed project would not cause a substantial change in the significance of a historical resource. Project implementation would not impact known subsurface archaeological deposits, and SCV Water and the construction contractor for the proposed project would implement the standard procedures for evaluation, consultation, avoidance, and data recovery of unanticipated archaeological resources, if discovered during construction. Because the proposed project would not eliminate known important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory, this impact would be less than significant.

#### **LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

- 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)?*

As described in the discussion of Environmental Checklist Sections 1 through 20, with respect to all environmental issues, the proposed project would not result in significant and unmitigable impacts to the environment. All anticipated impacts associated with project construction and operation would be either less than significant or less than significant with mitigation incorporated. This is largely due to the fact project construction activities would be temporary and project operation would result in minimal changes to the environmental baseline condition. Additionally, where it was determined the project would have no impact (i.e., agriculture and forestry resources, energy, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, and recreation) no cumulative impacts would be exacerbated as a result of the proposed project. In addition, certain resource areas (e.g., cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and tribal cultural resources) are by their nature specific to a project location such that impacts at one location do not add to impacts at other locations, and therefore would not result in cumulative impacts.

Cumulatively considerable impacts could occur if the construction of other projects occurs at the same time as the proposed project and in the same vicinity, such that the effects of similar impacts of multiple projects combine to expose adjacent sensitive receptors to greater levels of impact than would occur under the proposed project. For example, if the construction of other projects in the area occurs at the same time as construction of the proposed project, potential impacts associated with noise and traffic to residents in the project area may be more substantial. There are two projects in proximity to the project site that could combine with the proposed project to result in cumulative construction-related impacts (City of Santa Clarita 2024):

- Sand Canyon Plaza, located approximately 0.20-mile north of the project site. This project involves the construction of 580 residential units, an assisted living facility, and a 140,000-square foot commercial center. This project is entitled by the City but has not yet been constructed.

- Vista Canyon Ranch, located approximately 0.15-mile south of the project site. This project involves the construction of 1,100 residential units; 950,000 square feet of commercial uses and parking; open space, parks, and trails; new transit stations; and a bridge. This project is currently under construction.

The project would result in no change to existing operations and maintenance activities at the project site and therefore would not contribute to cumulative impacts during operation, including long-term increases in waste use, wastewater generation, solid waste generation, or VMT. As discussed in Environmental Checklist Sections 3, *Air Quality*, and 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the significance of project-specific air quality and GHG emissions impacts are dependent on a project's potential to contribute considerably to cumulative air quality and GHG emissions. Therefore, the potential for the project to result in cumulative air quality and GHG emissions impacts are evaluated in Environmental Checklist Sections 3 and 8. As discussed therein, the proposed project would not generate cumulatively considerable criteria air pollutant emissions in excess of SCAQMD thresholds or GHG emissions that would conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations to reduce GHG emissions. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative air quality and GHG emissions impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Overlapping project construction in the vicinity of the project site could generate cumulatively considerable construction noise and vibration impacts. However, the proposed project would implement Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and NOI-2 which would reduce the proposed project's construction noise and vibration in accordance with applicable regulatory standards. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute considerably to potential cumulative noise impacts.

Construction of the proposed project in conjunction with Vista Canyon Ranch could result in a cumulative water quality impact in the event the cumulative amount of stormwater pollutants that enter the Santa Clara River result in impairment of the river. These cumulative projects would be required to adhere to the Stormwater Construction General Permit and implement an SWPPP and construction BMPs, as well as additional City requirements such as implementation of a Wet Weather Erosion Control Plan, which would reduce the generation of cumulative stormwater pollutants. With adherence to existing regulations to protect water quality, it is anticipated cumulative water quality impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute considerably to cumulative water quality impacts.

Similar to the proposed project, cumulative development could also result in impacts to biological resources and would be subject to similar regulatory requirements as the proposed project, including the federal Endangered Species Act, California Endangered Species Act, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These regulations are designed to protect individual species and their habitats. Cumulative projects would be required to abide by the provisions of these regulations and could potentially be subject to review from agencies including, but not limited to, CDFW and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to ensure potential impacts to species or habitat are minimized. However, existing regulatory requirements alone cannot guarantee species loss, habitat loss, or other impact to biological resources due to cumulative development. The proposed project would incorporate Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-11 to reduce potential impacts to special-status species, nesting birds, sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat, and the Santa Clara River to a less-than-significant level. As a result, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts on biological resources.

For the reasons discussed above, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

- c. *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

Adverse effects on human beings are typically associated with air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise impacts. These impacts are addressed in Environmental Checklist Sections 3, *Air Quality*; 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*; and 13, *Noise*. As discussed in detail in Environmental Checklist Section 3, the proposed project would have less than significant impacts on air quality. As discussed in detail in Environmental Checklist Sections 9 and 13 the proposed project would implement Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, NOI-1, and NOI-2 which would require implementation of a soil and groundwater management plan and subsequent soil remediation, if applicable, and implementation of noise reduction and vibration reduction measures. Implementation of these measures would reduce impacts hazards and noise impacts to a less-than-significant level. With incorporation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on human beings.

**LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED**

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