Aliso Creek Lift Station Improvements Project

Final Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration

prepared by

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Initial Study

1. Project Title

Aliso Creek Lift Station Improvements Project

2. Lead Agency Name and Address

El Toro Water District
24251 Los Alisos Boulevard
Lake Forest, California 92630

3. Contact Person and Phone Number

Hannah T. Ford, P.E., Director of Engineering
(949) 837-7050 x247

4. Project Location

The approximately 0.16-acre project site is located at the existing Aliso Creek Lift Station located at Assessor's Parcel Numbers 621-101-18 and 621-101-04, immediately north of the Avenida Sevilla overcrossing of Aliso Creek in the Laguna Woods Village community in the city of Laguna Woods, Orange County. The project site consists of the existing lift station, a portion of the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail (an alternate path of the Laguna Woods Village United South trail system) located east of the lift station, and a portion of the Avenida Sevilla private right-of-way (including paved roadway and sidewalk). Regional access to the project site is provided via Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route (SR) 73. Local access to the project site is provided via the Laguna Woods Village's Gate 2 at the intersection of Paseo Valencia and Via Estrada and Gate 3 at the intersection of Calle Aragon and Moulton Parkway. Figure 1 shows a map of the regional project site location, and Figure 2 shows the project site in a local context.

5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address

El Toro Water District
24251 Los Alisos Boulevard
Lake Forest, California 92630

6. General Plan Designation

The portion of the project site containing the lift station is designated Community Facilities in the City of Laguna Woods' (City) General Plan. The portion of the project site containing the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail is designated Open Space, and the portion of the project site containing the private right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla is designated Residential Community.

Figure 1 Regional Location

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24-16575 CR
Fig 1 Regional Location

Project Location

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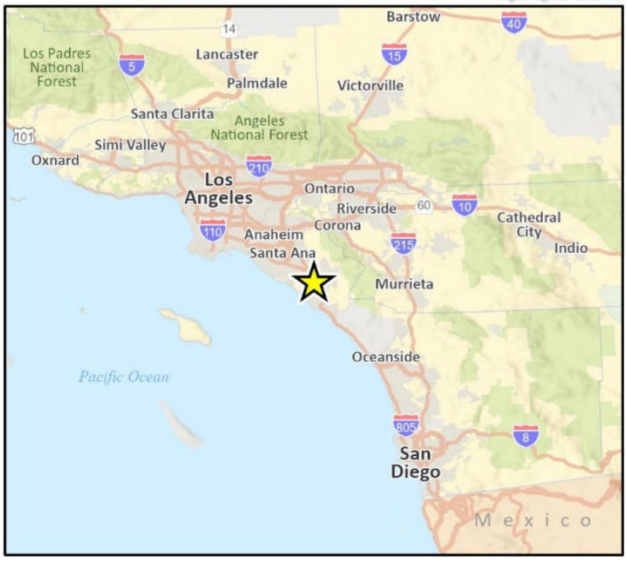

Figure 2 Project Site Location

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24-16575 CR
CRFig 2 Project Site

7. Zoning

The portion of the project site containing the lift station and the private right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla is zoned Community Facilities – Public/Institutional. The portion of the project site containing the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail is zoned Open Space-Passive.

8. Description of Project

Project Background

El Toro Water District (District) owns and operates Aliso Creek Lift Station (ACLS). Constructed in 1965, ACLS collects sewage from the surrounding residential units and from two upstream lift stations, conveying the sewage to the District's Water Recycling Plant. The ACLS consists of a below-ground, reinforced concrete dry pit[1] housing submersible pumps, a wet well,[2] a separate electrical building, an emergency diesel trailer-mounted pump, an emergency diesel generator, a Southern California Edison (SCE) transformer, and a stairwell for access to the dry pit. The dry pit is approximately 324 square feet and approximately 24 feet deep with approximately six inches of the structure appearing aboveground. The upper level of the dry pit includes the discharge header, miscellaneous electrical items, and ventilation equipment. The lower level includes two 127-horsepower submersible pumps with grinders, piping, and valves. The existing lined wet well is approximately 180 square feet and 11 feet deep and is has a 25-square-foot access hatch connected to a 60-inch diameter riser for access to the wet well. The emergency diesel trailer-mounted pump has a capacity of 2,700 gpm and is available to use should the submersible pumps or emergency generator fail.

The existing ACLS is designed at a 4,000 gallons per minute (gpm) capacity, but, due to pump performance, is unable to operate at its design capacity. In addition, the District has experienced leaks to the discharge piping, inoperable isolation valves, and air locking in the discharge piping. Inflow to the existing lift station varies from approximately 300 gpm to a maximum of 3,400 gpm.

Project Components

The Aliso Creek Lift Station Improvements Project (herein referred to as "project" or "proposed project") includes the following components:

- Demolition and removal of the existing electrical building, wet well access hatch, various components of the dry pit (including electrical components, valves, and access stairs), access driveway, access gate, air release manhole, concrete containment curbs, and various piping and electrical conduits within the existing lift station;
- Abandonment and backfilling of the existing wet well in place;
- Relocation of the existing emergency bypass pump and emergency diesel pump;
- Reconfiguration of electrical equipment;
- Conversion of the existing dry pit into emergency storage;

[1] A dry pit is the mechanical room where pumps and other equipment are installed to pump wastewater out of an adjacent wet well.
[2] A wet well is a storage container used in sewage pumping stations that collects water from an inlet structure and transports the collected water to a treatment facility. A wet well acts as a buffer for any sudden influxes in water flow, preventing the downstream system from becoming overloaded.

- Construction of a new 12-foot-diameter, 30-foot-deep wet well with a 16-foot-diameter foundation;
- Construction of a new approximately 250-square-foot, 13-foot-tall electrical building;
- Installation of two new 48-inch-diameter emergency discharge manholes;
- Replacement of the existing 350-kilowatt (kW) emergency generator with a new 500-kW emergency diesel generator and yard piping;
- Installation of a new connection to the existing downstream 14-inch force main;
- Installation of a new, 20-foot-wide access driveway perpendicular to Avenida Sevilla with rolling access gate and restoration of sidewalk, curb, and gutter in location of existing driveway;
- Replacement of the existing concrete masonry unit (CMU) block wall along the southeast boundary of the existing lift station facing the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail with an eight-foot-tall wall of similar materials; and
- Removal of approximately 15 trees along the northwestern, northeastern, and southwestern sides of the existing lift station and planting of approximately three new, 24-inch box trees along the southwestern boundary of the project site.

The proposed project would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries, and proposed project activities would not extend beyond the limits of the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail into the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. Figure 3 shows the proposed layout of the site with project components.

The purposes of the project are increase pump performance to allow the ACLS to operate at a 4,100-gpm design capacity, address the maintenance issues of the existing piping and equipment, simplify maintenance activities, and accommodate existing flows as well as the additional wastewater flows anticipated to be generated by the planned Village at Laguna Hills development, proposed within the District's existing service area.[3] This critical improvement project is necessary not only to improve the reliability of the ACLS but also to reduce the potential for unexpected leaks and/or overflows to affect nearby environmental resources such as Aliso Creek.

Construction

Project construction is anticipated to begin as early as July 2026 and last approximately 18 months. Project construction would occur primarily on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., consistent with the City's permitted hours of construction. During most of project construction, the existing lift station would continue to convey wastewater; however, for a period of approximately three weeks, the existing lift station would be temporarily shut off. When this limited shutdown occurs, aboveground, diesel-fueled bypass sewage pumps would be operated 24 hours per day, seven days a week within the project site in order to continue conveying sewage through the District's existing infrastructure and maintain reliability of operations. The District would require any temporary construction lighting to be directed downwards to minimize light disturbance.

Project construction would proceed in phases to allow for continued operation of the existing lift station. Phase 1 would involve site modifications to allow for interim operation of existing lift station infrastructure, such as demolishing the existing access gate, block wall, portions of the electrical

[3] The Village at Laguna Hills development was introduced as part of the City of Laguna Hills' 2009 General Plan. The City of Laguna Hills prepared and certified a Program Environmental Impact Report in 2009 for the General Plan (State Clearinghouse #2008081100), which specifically evaluated the environmental impacts of the buildout of the Village at Laguna Hills development. Five subsequent Addenda to the 2009 Program Environmental Impact Report have been adopted for the project, with the most recent adopted in March 2021.

room; relocating the emergency bypass pump; and temporarily relocating the emergency generator to outside the existing block wall. Phase 2 would primarily involve construction of the new wet well and electrical building. Phase 3 would include installation of pipeline connections and startup of the new infrastructure. Phase 4 would involve modifications to the existing lift station, such as abandonment of the existing dry well and conversion of the existing dry pit, installation of the replacement emergency generator, and final site improvements, such as installation of the block wall and access driveway/gate. Due to site constraints, approximately one to two pieces of heavy-duty construction equipment would be in use on any given day in addition to a tool truck.

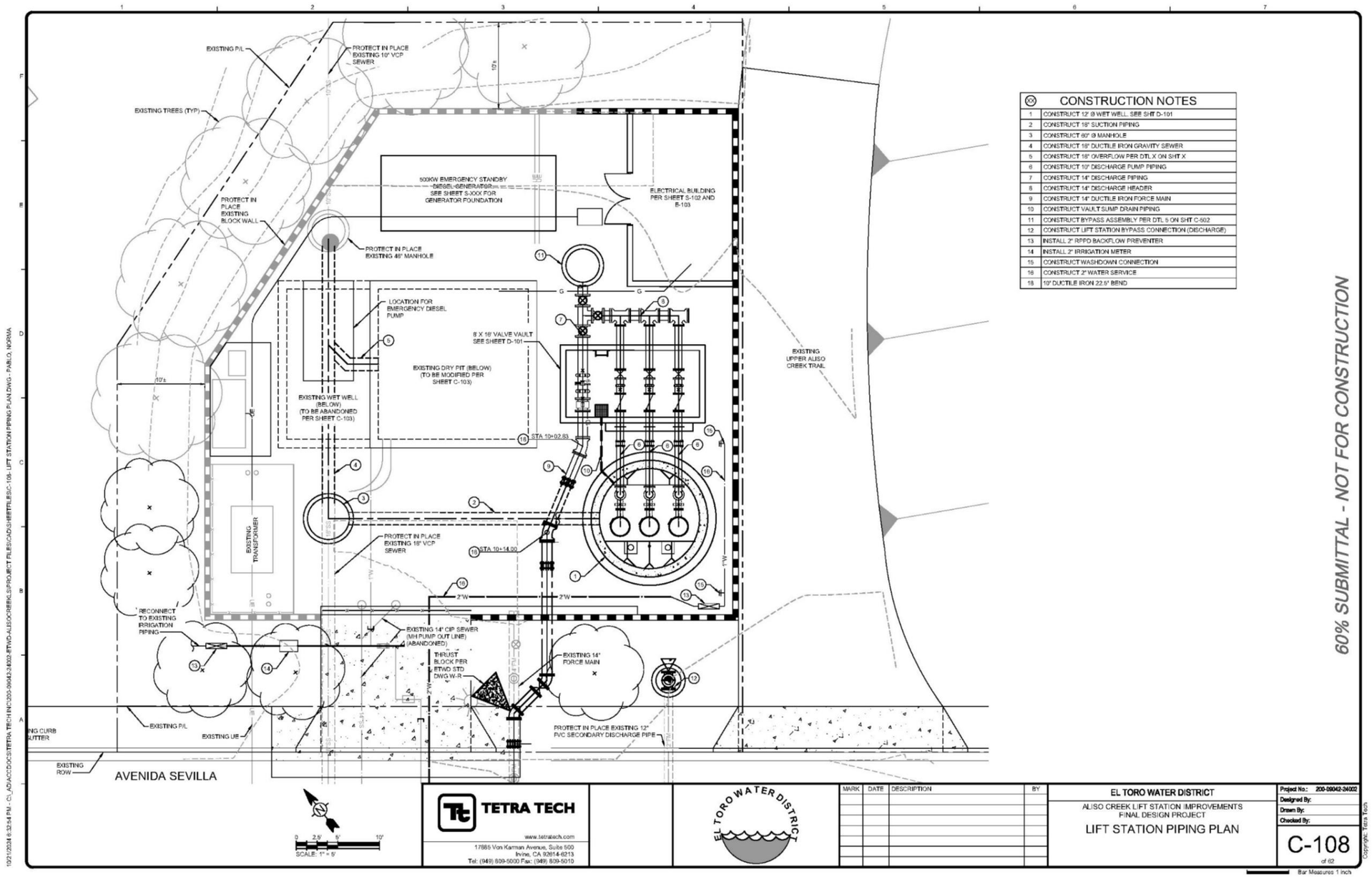
Due to the high groundwater elevations on site (approximately 19 feet below ground surface), temporary groundwater dewatering would be required during ground-disturbing activities at depths greater than 19 feet below ground surface. Groundwater dewatering would occur at a rate of approximately one gallon per minute, or 1,440 gallons per day, for approximately one month during construction of the wet well. The District's construction contractor would utilize a baffle structure or similar technique to remove sediment from the dewatered groundwater prior to discharge into the District's sewer system. In addition, due to the extent of trenching required for project construction, temporary shoring techniques would also be implemented during construction. The District's construction contractor would implement a shoring system in accordance with the recommendations detailed within the Geotechnical Exploration Report prepared for the project. Shoring systems would be designed by a California-licensed civil or structural engineer.

Approximately 340 cubic yards of soil would be excavated and reused as fill material on site to elevate reconfigured electrical equipment above-grade. In addition, approximately 80 cubic yards of soil would be imported from off-site sources, and approximately 160 cubic yards of soil would be exported from the project site. Approximately 4,680 cubic feet of demolition debris would be removed from the project site. Soil export and other solid waste generated during construction would be disposed of at the Prima Deshecha Landfill, located approximately 9.0 miles southeast of the project site in San Juan Capistrano. The maximum depth of excavation during project construction would be approximately 30 feet below ground surface for the wet well.

Construction workers would either park on-street or would park off-site and be shuttled to the project site, depending on the requirements of Laguna Woods Village. Construction equipment would be primarily staged at the project site within the existing lift station boundary, on the Upper Aliso Creek Trail, and within the private right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla. If additional off-site staging areas are necessary, the District would require the construction contractor(s) to only utilize paved areas for staging. During construction, the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla would be temporarily closed, which would result in one-lane traffic on Avenida Sevilla periodically during construction. Relocation of utilities not operated by the District would not be required.

Following completion of project construction, the District would pressure test the new infrastructure with potable water to ensure there are no leaks or weaknesses in the infrastructure. Water used to conduct the pressure test would be discharged to the District's sewer system and would not enter any stormwater facilities.

Figure 3 Preliminary Site Layout



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Operation and Maintenance

Once construction is complete, the District would continue to operate and maintain the ACLS similar to existing conditions. No additional operation and maintenance would be required beyond existing routine activities, and no additional employees would be required. Because the new wet well would extend below the groundwater table, permanent dewatering may be required, which would involve the use of a pump and discharge of the dewatered groundwater to the District's sewer system. Dewatering conducted for the new wet well would be similar in nature and volume to the dewatering currently conducted for the existing wet well. No new light and glare sources are proposed, and no new or increased odor generation would occur. Operation of the project would result in a net increase in the District's systemwide electricity consumption of approximately 82,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

The project site is located within the private Laguna Woods Village 55+ community and is surrounded by residential land uses, the closest of which are located approximately 15 feet north and 40 feet southwest of the project site. In addition, Aliso Creek runs parallel to the southeastern border of the project site.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

The District is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with responsibility for approving the project. The following additional approvals for the project are anticipated:

- City of Laguna Woods encroachment permit
- South Coast Air Quality Management District Permit to Construct/Operate

11. Have California Native American Tribes Traditionally and Culturally Affiliated with the Project Area Requested Consultation Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1?

On December 3 and December 5, the District distributed Assembly Bill (AB) 52 consultation letters for the proposed project, including project information, map, and contact information, to Native American tribes locally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The District received one request for consultation from the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation-Belardes. Section 18, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, of the Environmental Checklist provides further information regarding the tribal consultation process.

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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.

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

☐ 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	3/4/2025 Date
Hannah T. Ford, P.E. Printed Name	Director of Engineering, El Toro Water District 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?	☐	☐	■	☐
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	■
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public 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?	☐	☐	☐	■
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	■	☐

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

Scenic vistas are generally described in two ways: panoramic views (visual access to a large geographic area for which the field of view can be wide and extend into the distance) and focal views (visual access to a particular object, scene, or feature of interest). A significant impact would occur if the proposed project would introduce incompatible visual elements within a field of view containing a scenic vista or substantially block views of a scenic vista.

The City of Laguna Woods General Plan Open Space Element identifies three areas that offer scenic vistas and provide scenic qualities unique to the area - a 10-acre parcel adjoining El Toro Road opposite the terminus of Aliso Creek Road, the Southern California Edison right-of-way on the southwestern edge of the city, and a 178-acre area (the Laguna Laurel Annexation and Laguna Canyon Road Parcels) that lies east of State Route 133 and west of the terminus of Santa Maria Avenue (City of Laguna Woods 2015a). The project site is over two miles from these areas and is not visible from these vantage points due to intervening development and topography.

The project site is adjacent to Aliso Creek within a private residential neighborhood. Public views of Aliso Creek are primarily visible for pedestrians and motorists for an approximately 175-foot stretch along Avenida Sevilla and via the Upper Aliso Creek Trail. Focal views of Aliso Creek may be considered scenic due to the presence of natural vegetation and a watercourse.

During construction, equipment would be primarily staged at the project site, on the Upper Aliso Creek Trail, and within the right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla and may block motorist and pedestrian views of the adjacent Aliso Creek. However, the presence of construction equipment and materials would be temporary, short-term, limited to the construction period, and would not substantially interrupt focal views of Aliso Creek, which would remain available from Avenida Sevilla southeast of the project site and along the portions of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail to the northeast and southwest of the project site. The proposed project would also not permanently obscure views of Aliso Creek from Avenida Sevilla or the Upper Aliso Creek Trail as compared to existing conditions because 1) aboveground project components would be visually similar to the existing infrastructure at the project site that is visible from Avenida Sevilla and 2) the project site is on the opposite side of Upper Aliso Creek Trail and views of Aliso Creek from this trail would remain unobstructed following project completion. Therefore, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT 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?

According to California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), there are no officially designated State scenic highways within the vicinity of the project site. The nearest designated State scenic highway to the project site is State Route 91 approximately 18.5 miles north of the project site (Caltrans 2019). Due to the distance between State Route 91 and the project site, the proposed project would not be visible from this highway. Therefore, no impact to scenic resources within view of a state scenic highway 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?

According to Public Resources Code Section 21071(a), Laguna Woods is classified as an urbanized area because the population of Laguna Woods and the four contiguous incorporated cities (Aliso Viejo, Irvine, Laguna Beach, and Laguna Hills) combined equals at least 100,000 persons (United States Census Bureau 2024). According to Government Code Section 53091, building and zoning ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of wastewater. As such, the proposed project would not be subject to the City's building and zoning ordinances (Laguna Woods Municipal Code [LWMC] Titles 10 and 13).

The project site is partially located within the Avenida Sevilla right-of-way, including the paved roadway and sidewalk. The portion of the project site containing the existing lift station and the portion of the project site containing the private right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla are designated

Residential Community in the City's General Plan. The portion of the project site containing the Upper Aliso Creek Trail is designated Open Space in the City's General Plan. The project site would be subject to the scenic quality regulations and policies as outlined in the City's General Plan Land Use Element. Relevant policies include but are not limited to Goal L-2, which aims to promote unique but visually cohesive development. Policy Objective L-2.1 establishes standards for development projects to be designed and constructed in a manner that embraces Laguna Woods' aesthetics, character, and sense of place. In addition, Policy Objective L-2.2 encourages development projects to plant new trees and provide shade in a manner that reflects the abundance of trees throughout Laguna Woods (City of Laguna Woods 2024c).

The proposed project would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries, and project activities would not extend beyond the limits of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail into the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. The proposed project would not substantially change the aesthetics, visual character, and sense of place of the surrounding neighborhood because the ACLS would remain similar in visual appearance following completion of the proposed project as it appears under existing conditions. In addition, as described under Initial Study Section 8, *Description of Project,* although construction of the proposed project would require the removal of 15 trees, three 24-inch box trees would be planted along the southwestern boundary of the project site to shield the ACLS from public view and blend in with the existing landscaping and surroundings. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the goals and policy objectives of the City's General Plan Land Use Element governing scenic quality. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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

Project construction would occur primarily on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., consistent with the City's permitted hours of construction; however, for a period of approximately three weeks, the existing lift station would be temporarily shut off. During this limited shutdown, aboveground, diesel-fueled bypass sewage pumps would be operated 24 hours per day, seven days a week within the project site in order to continue conveying sewage through the District's existing infrastructure and maintain reliability of operations. During this time, nighttime construction lighting would be required. The District would require any temporary construction lighting to be aimed downward and directed away from residences to minimize light disturbance, as described under Initial Study Section 8, *Description of Project*. No new permanent sources of light and glare are proposed. Therefore, the project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area, and impacts 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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	■
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)); timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526); or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	■
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	■
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	■

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?

According to the California Department of Conservation's (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the project site designated as Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2022). Therefore, the project site does not contain land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. As a result, no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

b. Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

According to the most recent available data from the DOC, no 2023 Williamson Act data is available from Orange County (DOC 2024a). However, based on prior data, the project site is not under a Williamson Act contract (DOC 2010). In addition, the project site is not zoned for agricultural use (City of Laguna Woods 2017). Therefore, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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))?

The project site and its immediate surroundings are not zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland production (City of Laguna Woods 2017). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of forest land, timberland, or land zoned Timberland Production. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

d. Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No forest lands or forest related resources are located in Laguna Woods, and no land in Laguna Woods is zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 (City of Laguna Woods 2015b). In particular, the project site and its immediate surroundings do not contain forest land. Therefore, the project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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 a built-out residential neighborhood and does not contain Farmland, agricultural land, forest land, or timberland. The proposed project would not involve changes that could convert Farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	■	☐
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	■	☐
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	■	☐

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 (U.S. EPA) 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),[4] nitrogen oxides (NO_X), particulate matter with diameters of ten microns or less (PM_{10}) and 2.5 microns or less ($PM_{2.5}$), 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_X. Air pollutants can also be generated by the natural environment, such as when high winds suspend fine dust particles. Secondary pollutants include oxidants, ozone, and sulfate and nitrate particulates (smog).

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.

[4] 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 includes the non-desert portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties and all of Orange County. The SCAB is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). As the local air quality management agency, SCAQMD must monitor air pollutant levels to ensure the NAAQS and CAAQS are met, if they are not met, 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, and the human health impacts associated with these criteria pollutants, presented in Table 1, are already occurring in that area as part of the environmental baseline condition. Under state law, air districts are required to prepare a plan for air quality improvement for pollutants for which the district is in non-compliance. The SCAB is in nonattainment for the NAAQS for ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ and the CAAQS for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ and is designated unclassifiable or in attainment for all other federal and state standards (CARB 2023). The nonattainment statuses result from several factors. These factors include the combination of emissions from a large urban area, the regional meteorological conditions adverse to the dispersion of air pollution emissions, and the mountainous terrain surrounding the SCAB that traps pollutants (SCAQMD 2022).

Table 1 Health Effects Associated with Non-Attainment Criteria Pollutants

Pollutant	Adverse Effects
Ozone	(1) Short-term exposures: (a) pulmonary function decrements and localized lung edema in humans and animals and (b) risk to public health implied by alterations in pulmonary morphology and host defense in animals; (2) long-term exposures: risk to public health implied by altered connective tissue metabolism and altered pulmonary morphology in animals after long-term exposures and pulmonary function decrements in chronically exposed humans; (3) vegetation damage; and (4) property damage.
Suspended particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)	(1) Excess deaths from short- and long-term exposures; (2) excess seasonal declines in pulmonary function, especially in children; (3) asthma exacerbation and possibly induction; (4) adverse birth outcomes, including low birth weight; (5) increased infant mortality; (6) increased respiratory symptoms in children such as cough and bronchitis; and (7) increased hospitalization for both cardiovascular and respiratory disease, including asthma).

Source: U.S. EPA 2024

Air Quality Management

Since the SCAB is currently in non-attainment for the ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS, the SCAQMD is required to implement strategies to reduce pollutant levels to achieve attainment of the NAAQS. To meet the NAAQS and CAAQS, the SCAQMD has adopted a series of air quality management plans (AQMP) 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 SCAB is to reduce NO_X emissions to meet the 2037 ozone standard deadline for the non-Coachella Valley portion of the South Coast Air Basin, as NO_X 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 CAA measures to meet the eight-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, 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 RTP/SCS Plan (Connect SoCal) (SCAG 2020). SCAG is required by law to ensure transportation activities "conform" to, and are supportive of, the goals of regional and state air quality plans to attain the NAAQS. Connect SoCal includes transportation programs, measures, and strategies generally designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which are contained in the AQMP.

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 a project, which are used to evaluate a project's potential regional and localized air quality impacts (SCAQMD 2023).

Regional Thresholds

The SCAQMD recommends the use of quantitative regional significance thresholds for temporary project construction activities and long-term project operation in the SCAB, which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 SCAQMD Regional Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Pollutant	Construction (pounds per day)	Operation (pounds per day)
NO_x	100	55
VOC	75	55
PM_{10}	150	150
$PM_{2.5}$	55	55
SO_x	150	150
CO	550	550

NO_x = nitrogen oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns; SO_x = sulfur oxides; CO = carbon monoxide

Source: SCAQMD 2023

Localized Significance Thresholds

In addition to the 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_X, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ and represent the maximum emissions from a project that would 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 nearest sensitive receptor, and project size. LSTs have been developed for emissions within site areas that measure one, two, or five acres. LSTs only apply to emissions in a fixed stationary location (such as fugitive dust, equipment exhaust, and operational energy and area sources) and are not applicable to mobile sources, such as cars on a roadway (SCAQMD 2009).

The project site is within SRA 20 (Central Orange County Coastal). SCAQMD provides LST lookup tables for project sites that measure one, two, or five acres. The project site is approximately 0.16 acre; therefore, the LST analysis uses the one-acre LSTs. LSTs are provided for sensitive receptors at distances of 82 feet (25 meters), 164 feet (50 meters), 328 feet (100 meters), 656 feet (200 meters), and 1,640 feet (500 meters) between the project disturbance boundary to the sensitive receptors. The northwestern border of the project site is adjacent to residences. Therefore, the analysis uses LST values for 25 meters, consistent with SCAQMD methodology (SCAQMD 2009). LSTs for construction and operation in SRA 20 on a one-acre site with a receptor 25 meters away are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 SCAQMD LSTs for Construction and Operation

	Allowable Emissions for a One-Acre Site in SRA 20 for a Receptor 25 Meters Away (pounds per day)	
Pollutant	Construction	Operation
Gradual conversion of NO_X to NO_2	92	92
CO	647	647
PM_{10}	4	1
$PM_{2.5}$	3	1

SRA = source receptor area; NO_x = nitrogen oxides; NO_2 = nitrogen dioxide; CO = carbon monoxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns

Source: SCAQMD 2009

Toxic Air Containments Thresholds

SCAQMD has developed significance thresholds for 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 (1×10^{-6}) 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 and operation were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1. CalEEMod uses project-specific information, including the project's land uses, square footage for different uses (e.g., general light industry), and location, to model a project's construction and operational emissions. The analysis reflects the construction and operation of the project as described under Initial Study Section 8, *Description of the Project.*

Project construction would primarily generate temporary criteria air pollutant emissions from construction equipment operation on site, construction worker vehicle trips to and from the project site, and export of materials off-site. Construction activity was analyzed based on information provided by District staff and consultants, such as construction phasing, equipment list, and demolition activity. In addition to the project details provided under Initial Study Section 8, *Description of the Project*, the following assumptions were used in the modeling:

- Of the approximately 4,680 cubic feet of demolition debris, it is assumed that 2,800 cubic feet of demolition material would be metal, with an estimated weight of 225 pounds per cubic yard of waste. In addition, it is assumed that 1,880 cubic feet of concrete would be demolished, with an estimated weight of 860 pounds per cubic yard of waste (U.S. EPA 2016). As a result, it was assumed project construction would generate approximately 42 tons of demolition debris.
- Hauling trucks would have a capacity of 10 cubic yards of debris.
- Construction equipment would be equipped with Tier 4 Final engines, retrofitted to Tier 4 Final standards, or equipped with Level 3 diesel particulate filters.
- The project would comply with applicable regulatory standards, such as SCAQMD Rule 403 for dust control measures and Rule 1113 for architectural coating VOC limits.

Operational emissions modeled include area source and stationary source emissions. Area source emissions would be generated by architectural coatings, while stationary source emissions would come from the new 500-kW emergency generator. It is assumed that the emergency generator would be tested for up to two hours per day each month with 200 total annual operational hours for testing, maintenance, and emergency usage. The project would not require new employees or additional maintenance beyond existing conditions; therefore, there would be no net increase in mobile trips or mobile emissions. In addition, the project would not consume natural gas, so no energy source emissions were estimated.

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

To determine if a project is consistent with the 2022 AQMP, the SCAQMD has established consistency criterion that are defined in the SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* (1993) and are discussed below.

> **Consistency Criterion No. 1: The proposed project would not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emissions reductions specified in the Air Quality Management Plan.**

Consistency Criterion No. 1 refers to violations of the CAAQS and NAAQS. The 2022 AQMP provides strategies and measures to reach attainment with the CAAQS and NAAQS for 8-hour and 1-hour ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ as well as the CAAQS for PM_{10}. As shown in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 under thresholds 3(b) and 3(c), the proposed project would not generate criteria air pollutant emissions that would exceed applicable SCAQMD regional or localized thresholds. Therefore, the project would not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emissions reductions specified in the 2022 AQMP.

> **Consistency Criterion No. 2: The proposed project does not exceed the growth assumptions in the AQMP.**

A project may be inconsistent with the AQMP if it would generate population, housing, or employment growth exceeding forecasts used in the development of the AQMP. The 2022 AQMP, the most recent AQMP adopted by the SCAQMD, incorporates local city general plans and the SCAG's Connect SoCal socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population, housing, and employment growth (SCAQMD 2022; SCAG 2020). [5]

The proposed project has no residential component and would not directly induce population growth. 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 Orange County. The proposed project would involve ACLS to increase pump performance, address maintenance issues, simplify maintenance activities, and accommodate existing flows as well as the additional wastewater flows anticipated to be generated by the planned Village at Laguna Hills development. The Village at Laguna Hills development was introduced as part of the City of Laguna Hills' 2009 General Plan, and the City of Laguna Hills prepared and certified a Program Environmental Impact Report in 2009 for the General Plan (State Clearinghouse #2008081100), which specifically evaluated the environmental impacts of the buildout of the Village at Laguna Hills development. The proposed project supports the growth forecasts used in the 2022 AQMP, which take into account local general plan buildout, and would not induce any additional growth beyond what has already been analyzed. In addition, upon completion of construction, existing District staff would operate and maintain the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not exceed the 2022 AQMP growth assumptions.

[5] On April 4, 2024, SCAG's Regional Council formally adopted the 2024-2050 RTP/SCS (titled Connect SoCal 2024). However, the 2022 AQMP was adopted prior to this date and relies on the demographic and growth forecasts of the 2020-2045 RTP/SCS; therefore, these forecasts are utilized in the analysis of the project's consistency with the AQMP.

In light of the above discussion, because the project would meet both SCAQMD criteria for determining consistency with the 2022 AQMP, the project would not 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 Emissions

Project construction would generate temporary air pollutant emissions associated with fugitive dust (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and exhaust emissions from heavy construction equipment and construction vehicles. In addition, construction equipment would release VOC emissions during the drying of architectural coating and paving. Table 4 summarizes the estimated maximum daily emissions of criteria air 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 in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4 Estimated Maximum Daily Regional Construction Emissions

	Maximum Daily Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
Construction	**VOC**	**NO_x**	**CO**	**SO_2**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
2026	<1	1	7	<1	<1	<1
2027	<1	2	6	<1	<1	<1
SCAQMD Regional Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

VOC = volatile organic compounds NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns.

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations.

Source: CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A. 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 compliance with specific regulatory standards (e.g., SCAQMD Rules 403 and 1113).

Operational Emissions

Operation of the proposed project would generate criteria air pollutant emissions associated with area sources (e.g., architectural coatings) and stationary sources (e.g., emergency generator). This analysis takes a conservative approach and estimates the total operational emissions of the project without accounting for emissions generated by use of existing emergency generator at the existing ACLS. Table 5 summarizes the project's maximum daily operational emissions by emission source. As shown therein, operational emissions would not exceed SCAQMD regional thresholds for criteria air pollutants. Therefore, 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, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 5 Proposed Project Operational Emissions

	Maximum Daily Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
Operations	**VOC**	**NO_x**	**CO**	**SO_2**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Area	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Stationary	2	6	6	<1	<1	<1
Project Emissions	2	6	6	<1	<1	<1
SCAQMD Regional Threshold	75	100	550	150	150	55
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

VOC = volatile organic compounds NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns.

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations.

Source: CalEEMod worksheets in Appendix A. See Table 2.5 "Operational Emissions by Sector, Unmitigated" emissions. Highest of Summer and Winter emissions results are shown for all emissions.

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

Sensitive receptors are facilities or land uses that include members of the population who are particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. According to SCAQMD, sensitive receptors include schools and schoolyards, parks and playgrounds, childcare centers, long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, hospitals, retirement homes, and residential communities (SCAQMD 2005). The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site are residences located adjacent to the northwest of the project site. The proposed project would not add new sensitive receptors on the project site.

Localized Carbon Monoxide Hotspots

A carbon monoxide hotspot is a localized concentration of carbon monoxide that is above a carbon monoxide ambient air quality standard. The SCAB has been in attainment of federal carbon monoxide standards since 2007, and most air quality monitoring stations no longer report carbon monoxide levels (SCAQMD 2017). The nearest monitoring station to the project site that still monitors carbon monoxide is the Anaheim air monitoring station. The maximum one-hour and eight-hour carbon monoxide concentrations were 2.5 parts per million and 1.6 parts per million, respectively, in 2023 (SCAQMD 2024). These concentrations are well below the respective 1-hour and 8-hour standards of 20 parts per million and 9 parts per million.

Typical development projects, such as the proposed project, do not emit the levels of carbon monoxide necessary to result in a localized hotspot. As an example, a detailed carbon monoxide analysis was conducted during the preparation of the SCAQMD's 2003 AQMP. The locations selected for microscale modeling in the 2003 AQMP included high average daily traffic intersections in the SCAB that are expected to experience the highest carbon monoxide concentrations. The highest carbon monoxide concentration observed was at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue on the west side of Los Angeles near Interstate 405, approximately 78 miles west of the project site. The concentration of carbon monoxide at this intersection was 4.6 ppm, which is well below the state and federal standards. The Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue intersection had an average daily traffic of approximately 100,000 vehicles per day at the time of the study (SCAQMD 2003). The proposed project would not generate additional mobile trips that would have the potential to generate increased carbon monoxide emissions. In addition, as shown in Table 5 under

threshold 3(b), testing and maintenance of the proposed emergency generator would generate carbon monoxide emissions that would not exceed SCAQMD regional significance thresholds for operation. Therefore, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial carbon monoxide concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

Localized Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions

Table 6 summarizes the project's maximum localized daily construction and operational emissions from the proposed project. As shown therein, localized construction and operational emissions would not exceed SCAQMD LSTs. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial localized criteria air pollutant concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 6 Estimated Maximum Daily Localized Construction and Operational Emissions

	Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds per day)			
Year	**NO_X**	**CO**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Maximum Construction On-site Emissions	2	6	<1	<1
SCAQMD LST	92	647	4	3
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Maximum Operational On-site Emissions	2	6	<1	<1
SCAQMD LST	92	647	1	1
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

VOC = volatile organic compounds; NO_x = nitrogen oxide; CO = carbon monoxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter with a diameter no more than 2.5 microns

Notes: Some numbers may not add up precisely due to rounding considerations. 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 A. See Table 3.1 – 3.12 "Construction Emission Details" emissions and Table 2.5 "Operational Emissions by Sector, Unmitigated" emissions. Highest of Summer and Winter emissions results are shown for all emissions. The mitigated emissions account for compliance with specific regulatory standards (e.g., SCAQMD Rule 403).

Toxic Air Contaminants

Construction Impacts

Construction-related activities would result in short-term, project-generated emissions of DPM exhaust emissions from off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for site preparation, grading, building construction, infrastructure installation, and other construction activities. DPM was identified as a TAC by CARB in 1998. The potential cancer risk from the inhalation of DPM outweighs the potential non-cancer health impacts and is therefore the focus of this analysis (CARB 2024).

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period. Construction of the proposed project would occur over approximately 18 months. The dose to which 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 a person has with the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that 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 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 (assumed to be the approximate time that a person spends in a household). The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment recommends this risk be bracketed with 9-year and 70-year exposure periods. Health risk assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with the project.

The PM_{10} exhaust emissions, which are used to represent DPM emissions for this analysis, would occur during the ongoing cycles of demolition, building construction/infrastructure installation, and excavation during project construction activities. Due to site constraints, only one to two pieces of heavy-duty construction equipment would be in use on any given day, in addition to a tool truck. Furthermore, construction equipment used for the proposed project would be equipped with Tier 4 Final engines, retrofitted to Tier 4 Final emission standards, or fitted with Level 3 diesel particulate filters, which would minimize DPM emissions. Therefore, DPM generated by project construction is not expected to create conditions where the probability that the Maximally Exposed Individual would contract cancer is greater than 10 in one million. As a result, project construction would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial localized TAC concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Impacts

Sources of operational TACs include, but are not limited to, land uses such as freeways and high-volume roadways, truck distribution centers, ports, rail yards, refineries, chrome plating facilities, dry cleaners using perchloroethylene, and gasoline dispensing facilities. The project does not include construction of such land uses, roadways, or other sources that could be considered a new permitted or non-permitted source of TAC or $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in proximity to sensitive receptors. However, nearby sensitive receptors would be intermittently exposed to TAC emissions from the proposed 500-kW diesel emergency generator, which would replace the existing 350-kW emergency generator on site. The replacement emergency generator would operate for routine testing and maintenance up to approximately two hours per day each month and during emergency conditions, such as power outages, similar to use of the existing generator. Such activities would result in an increase in TAC emissions because the replacement generator would be larger than the existing generator, but this increase would be minor. The District would also be required to obtain a permit from SCAQMD for the emergency generator and meet the requisite standards for protection of human health. Therefore, project operation would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial localized TAC concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant.

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

During construction activities, heavy equipment and vehicles would emit odors associated with vehicle and engine exhaust. However, these odors would be intermittent and temporary, would cease upon completion, and would disperse with distance. In addition, project construction would be required to comply with SCAQMD Rule 402, which specifies that a person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public. Therefore, project construction would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and impacts would be less than significant.

CARB's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective (2005) provides recommendations regarding the siting of new sensitive land uses near potential sources of odors (e.g., sewage treatment plants, landfills, recycling facilities, biomass operations, autobody shops, fiberglass manufacturing, and livestock operations). Wastewater lift stations are not identified on this list, and no new or increased odor generation beyond existing conditions would occur as a result of the proposed project. Thus, project operation would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and impacts 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?	☐	■	☐	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	■
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	■
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	■
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	■

Overview of Biological Resources Evaluation

The following analysis is based on a biological reconnaissance survey and literature/database review performed for the project by Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon). Queries of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database Biogeographic Information and Observation System (2024) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (2024) were conducted to identify special-status species occurrences within the *Laguna Woods, California* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle and surrounding eight quadrangles (*Tustin, El Toro, Santiago Peak, Laguna Beach, San Juan Capistrano, Canada Gobernadora, Dana Point,* and *San Clemente*). Other resources reviewed to inform the biological resources evaluation included the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (2024), United States Geological Survey (2024) National Hydrography Dataset, USFWS (2024a) Information for Planning and Consultation System Unofficial Species List, and USFWS (2024b) Critical Habitat Mapper. Aerial photographs, soil survey maps, and climatic data in the area were also examined.

For purposes of this analysis, the Biological Study Area for regulated biological resources included the project site plus an additional 100-foot-survey buffer in all directions. On November 7, 2024, a Rincon biologist conducted a field reconnaissance survey to assess the suitability of habitat for special status species that have been recorded in the region, map existing vegetation communities, note potential jurisdictional waters or wetlands that may be present, document wildlife connectivity or movement features, and record plant and wildlife species within the project site. The potential for special status species to occur within the project site was assessed based on the existing habitat conditions as observed during the biological reconnaissance survey in comparison with the species habitat requirements and/or sign of presence such as burrows, scat, and tracks.

The project site is entirely disturbed and consists primarily of an existing lift station with cement and asphalt roads/paths, loose disturbed soil, and common ornamental landscape vegetation generally consisting of Indian Hawthorn (*Rhaphiolepis indicsa*), wax-leaf ligustrum (*Ligustrum japonicum*), and Chilean sea fig (*Carpobrotus chilensis*). The project site also includes a portion of the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail, beyond which is Aliso Creek. The surrounding area encompasses urban/developed land with suburban housing. Aliso Creek appears to flow perennially and generally consists of a riparian woodland corridor of mixed native and non-native tree canopy and understory, including multiple Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), Arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*), olive (*Olea europaea*), and rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*).

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 species are defined as those plants and animals that are:

- Species listed as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act (species that are under review may be included if there is a reasonable expectation of listing within the life of the project);
- Species listed as candidate, rare, threatened, or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act or Native Plant Protection Act;

- Species designated as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, or Watch List by the California Fish and Game Code or CDFW;
- Species designated as locally important by the City and/or otherwise protected through ordinance or local policy; and/or
- California Native Plant Society California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) List 1B and List 2 plant species, which are typically regarded as special status under CEQA and are considered as such in this document.

Special Status Plant Species

Six of the 45 special status plant species known to occur in the region have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the project site, specifically within the adjacent riparian habitat associated with Aliso Creek (CDFW 2024, CNPS 2024). These plant species include summer holly (*Comarostaphylis diversifolia ssp. diversifolia*; CRPR List 1B.2), Tecate cypress (*Hesperocyparis forbesii*; CRPR List 1B.1), mud nama (*Nama stenocarpa*; CRPR List 2B.2), decumbent goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii var. decumbens*; CRPR List 1B.1), Gambel's water cress (*Nasturtium gambelii*; CRPR List 1B.1), and white rabbit-tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum*; CRPR 2B.2). There are no known CNDDB occurrences within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area (CDFW 2024). Project impacts would be confined to previously disturbed/developed areas within the project site and would avoid the adjacent riparian corridor. Due to both existing levels of disturbance and the developed nature of the project site, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on special status plant species, and no impact would occur.

Special Status Terrestrial Wildlife Species

Based on a review of records from the CNDDB search, no special status wildlife species have the potential to occur within the project site. Within the riparian corridor associated with Aliso Creek that is adjacent to the project site, 14 special status wildlife species were identified as having low to moderate potential to occur, as presented in Table 7. Nine special status terrestrial wildlife species were determined to have a low potential to occur within the adjacent riparian corridor. Low potential generally means there are some habitat constituents present, but they are degraded or the habitat is otherwise not ideal to support the species. An additional five special status terrestrial wildlife species were determined to have a moderate potential to occur with the riparian corridor of Aliso Creek. A moderate potential determination was made because all or some of the habitat requirements for the species may be present, but the habitat is fragmented and the surrounding urbanized and developed nature of the area is generally not conducive for supporting the species. No species were identified as having high potential to occur within the adjacent riparian corridor associated with Aliso Creek.

Table 7 Special-Status Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur within the Biological Study Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Potential to Occur
Invertebrates			
Bombus crotchii	Crotch's bumble bee	SCE	Moderate Potential
Bombus pensylvanicus	American bumble bee	SCE	Moderate Potential
Danaus plexippus plexippus pop. 1	monarch butterfly	FPT	Moderate Potential
Fish			
Gila orcuttii	arroyo chub	SSC	Low Potential
Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 10	steelhead - southern California DPS	FE/SCE	Low Potential
Rhinichthys gabrielino	Santa Ana speckled dace	FPT	Low Potential
Amphibians			
Taricha torosa	Coast Range newt	SSC	Low Potential
Reptiles			
Actinemys pallida	southwestern pond turtle	FPT	Low Potential
Thamnophis hammondii	two-striped gartersnake	SSC	Low Potential
Thamnophis sirtalis pop. 1	south coast gartersnake	SSC	Low Potential
Birds			
Accipiter cooperii	Cooper's hawk	WL	Moderate Potential
Agelaius tricolor	tricolored blackbird	SSC	Low Potential
Setophaga petechia	yellow warbler	SSC	Low Potential
Icteria virens	yellow-breasted chat	SSC	Moderate Potential

DPS = Distinct Population Segment; FE = Federally Endangered; FPT = Federal Proposed Threatened; SCE = State Candidate Endangered; SSC = California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern; WL = California Department of Fish and Wildlife Watch List

Source: CDFW 2024

Species with a moderate potential to occur include Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii;* State candidate endangered), American bumble bee (*Bombus pensylvanicus;* State candidate endangered), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus pop. 1;* federal proposed threatened), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), and yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*). Crotch's bumble bee and American bumble bee require specific flowering plants as a nectar source, and they generally nest underground. Monarch butterfly also requires specific plants for nectar as well as a perennial fresh water source and tree groves for roosting. There are more than a dozen known occurrences of Crotch's bumble bee and American bumble bee within a five-mile radius of the project site (CDFW 2024). The proposed project would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries, and proposed project activities would not extend beyond the limits of the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail into the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. Therefore, impacts to Crotch's bumble bee, American bumble bee, and monarch butterfly would be less than significant.

The trees within the riparian corridor of Aliso Creek have a moderate potential to support Cooper's hawk and yellow-breasted chat due to nearby occurrences of these species documented in the CNDDB and the presence of suitable habitat features. Cooper's hawk, a species known to nest in large trees, has been observed in the region, utilizing riparian areas with dense tree cover for nesting and foraging. Similarly, yellow-breasted chat, which prefers dense shrubbery and riparian vegetation for nesting, has been documented in nearby habitats with similar features (CDFW 2024).

The presence of mature trees, dense understory, and proximity to water make the Aliso Creek riparian corridor a moderately suitable environment for both species, suggesting a moderate potential for them to occur in this area, particularly during the breeding season. As a result, the proposed project could potentially impact Cooper's hawk and/or yellow-breasted chat directly if nests are present in the trees that would be removed during construction or indirectly during construction from noise and vibration if individuals are nesting in nearby trees along the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. Therefore, impacts to Cooper's hawk and yellow-breasted chat would be potentially significant, and implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 would be required.

Special Status Aquatic and Semi-Aquatic Wildlife Species

Special status aquatic and semi-aquatic species, including arroyo chub (*Gila orcuttii*), steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 10), Santa Ana speckled dace (*Rhinichthys gabrielino*), Coast Range newt (*Taricha torosa*), southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys pallida*), two-striped gartersnake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), and south coast gartersnake, have the potential to occur within Aliso Creek near the project site (Table 7). These species have been documented within Aliso Creek in the CNDDB within the search radius but outside of the Biological Study Area (CDFW 2024). Direct impacts to these aquatic and semi-aquatic species would not occur because the proposed project would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries, and proposed project activities would not extend beyond the limits of the paved Upper Aliso Creek Trail into the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. However, due to the high groundwater elevations, temporary groundwater dewatering would be required during ground-disturbing activities at depths greater than 19 feet below ground surface. Groundwater dewatering would occur at a rate of approximately one gallon per minute, or 1,440 gallons per day, for approximately one month during construction of the wet well, which would be discharged into the District's sewer system. This amount of groundwater dewatering is minimal and does not have the potential to substantially alter surface water levels in Aliso Creek such that special status aquatic and semi-aquatic species would be impacted.

With regard to potential indirect impacts to habitat in Aliso Creek due to stormwater runoff from the project site during construction, as described further in Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the contractor would be required to comply with the erosion and sediment control regulations of LWMC Section 10.06.300, which requires implementation of erosion control measures during construction such as, but not limited to, the use of erosion control devices such as desilting basins, check dams, riprap or other devices; the prohibition of grading in excess of 200 cubic yards between October 1 and April 30 unless an erosion and sediment control system is implemented; and implementation of street sweeping to maintain paved streets sidewalks free of construction debris. These measures would direct stormwater runoff away from the Aliso Creek riparian corridor, minimizing the potential for stormwater to negatively impact water quality in Aliso Creek. However, in the event of an accidental spill of vehicle or equipment fuels, water quality in Aliso Creek could be degraded, which could indirectly affect aquatic and semi-aquatic species which utilize Aliso Creek. Therefore, project construction could result in a potentially significant impact on aquatic and semi-aquatic wildlife species. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, as described further in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, would be required to address this impact and includes implementation of a Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan (HMMSCP) with procedures to implement in the event of an accidental spill or release of hazardous materials during project construction, which would minimize the potential for a release of hazardous materials such as construction fuels into Aliso Creek. With implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, project impacts to aquatic and semi-aquatic species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Nesting Birds

The project involves removal of approximately 15 trees along the northwestern, northeastern, and southwestern sides of the existing lift station, which could impact nesting birds if present during construction activities. Migratory birds, including non-game species, are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503. Non-game migratory birds protected under California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 have moderate potential to nest within trees and vegetation of the Biological Study Area. Special-status birds that occur in the region, such as Cooper's hawk, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), and yellow-breasted chat, also have potential to nest in the adjacent riparian corridor.

Direct impacts to nesting birds may occur during removal or trimming of trees, shrubs, and other nesting substrates if active nests are present. Indirect impacts to nesting birds may also occur during construction activities in the vicinity of an active nest during the avian nesting season (typically February 1 through September 15) due to construction noise or vibrations, that may lead to nest abandonment or failure. Therefore, the proposed project would potentially have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on nesting birds, and impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 and BIO-2 would be required.

Mitigation Measures

In addition to Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, described further in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the following mitigation measures would be required to address project impacts to special status species.

BIO-1 Worker's Environmental Awareness Program

Prior to initiation of all construction activities (including staging and mobilization), all personnel associated with project construction shall attend a Worker's Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training, conducted by a qualified biologist, to assist workers in recognizing special status biological resources with the potential to occur within the project site. This training shall include information about special-status species determined to have potential to occur in the adjacent Aliso Creek riparian corridor, including nesting birds.

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 a review of the limits of construction and measures required to avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources within the project site. A fact sheet conveying this information shall also be prepared for distribution to all contractors, their employees, and other personnel involved with construction of the project. All employees shall sign a form provided by the trainer documenting their attendance of the WEAP and understanding of the information presented. The signed form shall be provided to the District as documentation of training completion. The crew foreman shall be responsible for ensuring crew members adhere to the guidelines and restrictions designed to avoid impacts to special status species. If new construction personnel are added to the project, the crew foreman shall ensure the new personnel receive the WEAP training before starting work.

BIO-2 Nesting Bird Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Initial site disturbance shall occur outside the general avian nesting season (February 1 through September 15), if feasible. If initial site disturbance must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction nesting bird survey no more than seven days prior to initial site disturbance. The survey shall cover the entire project site plus a 100-foot buffer. If active nests are found, an avoidance buffer shall be established by the biologist depending on species, nest status, location of the nest, and the nature of nearby construction. Work within these buffer areas shall be prohibited for all construction personnel and equipment until the qualified biologist confirms the adults and young are no longer reliant on the nest site. The biologist shall verify breeding or nesting is complete and the young have fledged the nest before the buffer is removed. The survey results and any avoidance buffers shall be documented in a report and submitted to the District for review and approval. If construction activities pause for more than seven days during the general avian nesting season, an additional nesting bird survey shall be conducted, and avoidance buffers shall be implemented if active nests are identified.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, and HAZ-1 would minimize potential impacts to special status species through WEAP training; completion of a pre-construction nesting bird survey and establishment of avoidance buffers around active nests, if present; and implementation of an HMMSCP to minimize the potential for a release of hazardous materials such as construction fuels into Aliso Creek. Overall, implementation of these measures would reduce project impacts to special-status wildlife species to a less-than-significant level.

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?

Plant communities are considered sensitive biological resources if they have limited distributions, have high wildlife value, include sensitive species, or are particularly susceptible to disturbance. Seven sensitive natural communities are known to occur within the eight-quadrangle search area surrounding the Biological Study Area, none of which were observed during the field reconnaissance survey. The project site does not occur within or adjacent to federally designated critical habitat for any of the listed species (USFWS 2024b) and does not occur within the Coastal Zone (California Coastal Commission 2024).

The Aliso Creek riparian corridor is within the Biological Study Area but outside of the project site. Project construction would not result in direct impacts to riparian habitat because none is present in the project site. In addition, the proposed project does not have potential to result in indirect impacts to riparian habitat because temporary groundwater dewatering during construction would be at a low rate and for a short duration (1,440 gallons per day for about one month) such that it would not affect the nearby riparian habitat supported by the perennial flows of Aliso Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

Aliso Creek is located within the Biological Study Area and is regulated under the Clean Water Act, which grants federal agencies authority over the management and protection of "waters of the United States." The stream as mapped by the USFWS (2024) National Wetlands Inventory is generally consistent with observations made during the field reconnaissance survey. Aliso Creek is located within 100 feet of the project site boundary. The creek is perennially flowing and consistently contains water prior to rain events. The creek contains a vegetated bed and banks and has a defined ordinary highwater mark of about one to two feet across. The distance between the top of the banks is approximately eight feet wide. Vegetation consists of dense brush including western ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya*), southern cattail (*Typha domingensis*) as well as other non-native species.

Aliso Creek falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers because it is perennial and has an indicator of an ordinary high-water mark. In addition, it is considered a water of the state regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and falls under the jurisdiction of CDFW pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 because it is a natural stream course. However, it is not within the Coastal Zone and is therefore not subject to California Coastal Commission jurisdiction.

The proposed project would avoid direct impacts to Aliso Creek because it is outside the project site. As discussed under threshold 4(b), temporary groundwater dewatering during construction would be at a low rate and for a short duration (1,440 gallons per day for about one month). This amount of groundwater dewatering is minimal and does not have the potential to substantially alter surface water levels or ecology in Aliso Creek. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

Wildlife movement corridors, or habitat linkages, are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated animal populations or those populations that are at risk of becoming isolated. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as providing a linkage between foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Others may be important as dispersal corridors for young animals. A group of habitat linkages in an area can form a wildlife corridor network.

The project site itself is relatively small, heavily disturbed/developed, and surrounded by a block wall with an access gate. As such, the project site itself does not offer opportunities for wildlife movement. However, riparian habitats such as those along Aliso Creek adjacent to the project site provide refugia, foraging, and breeding opportunities for wildlife in urban settings such as that of the project site. The City's General Plan Conservation Element identifies Aliso Creek as a significant

wildlife corridor, emphasizing its importance in facilitating species movement across fragmented urban landscapes and supporting biodiversity (City of Laguna Woods 2015b).

Santa Ana speckled dace, steelhead, arroyo chub, or tidewater goby may move locally within the portion of Aliso Creek within the Biological Study Area, but the proposed project would not result in impacts to Aliso Creek and therefore would not obstruct their movement. In addition, native wildlife nursery sites, such as those present within riparian habitats along Aliso Creek, are crucial for supporting the reproduction and rearing of young wildlife species in the region.

As discussed under threshold 4(b), temporary groundwater dewatering during construction would be at a low rate and for a short duration (1,440 gallons per day for about one month). As such, temporary groundwater dewatering during project construction does not have potential to result in indirect impacts to wildlife movement along Aliso Creek because the creek is actively flowing and has a much larger volume of water compared to the small amount of dewatered groundwater. Therefore, the proposed project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or with the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Consequently, no impact on wildlife movement would occur.

NO IMPACT

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

The City's General Plan Conservation Element contains objectives and policies for biological resources that are relevant to the proposed project given its location and proposed activities. These objectives and policies focus on conservation of existing natural areas; restoration of damaged natural vegetation; protection of wetlands, trees and other indigenous woodlands and endangered or threatened species and habitat; and protection of biological resources and significant wildlife corridors (City of Laguna Woods 2015b). As discussed under thresholds 4(a) through 4(d), the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to regulated biological resources (e.g., Aliso Creek) or wildlife movement corridors.

LWMC Section 4.26 promotes urban forestry and the appropriate care and maintenance of trees by establishing standards to protect trees from damage, requiring replacement of certain significant trees when removed, and recognizing trees with historical, arboricultural, or other significance. LWMC Section 4.26.060 requires a permit for the removal of significant trees on public and private lands. Pursuant to LWMC Section 4.26.030(35), significant trees are defined as:

- All trees and shrubs in public rights-of-way or on City-owned property
- Trees on nonresidential property subject to permits or zoning requirements
- Trees listed in the City's significant tree inventory. The City's significant tree inventory includes Southern California native trees with a diameter at breast height of eight inches or greater and non-Southern California native trees with a diameter at breast height of 24 inches or greater. In the case of trees with multiple trunks, the measurement is taken below the lowest crotch at the point giving the smallest diameter or based on the single largest trunk if the trunks originate from the collar at ground level.

Fifteen ornamental, non-native trees are proposed for removal as part of the proposed project. These trees have a trunk diameter (at breast height) of less than 24 inches and do not meet the criteria for significant trees. In addition, the trees are not located in the public right-of-way, are not

on City property, and are not subject to City permits or protection. In addition, the proposed project is not subject to City permits or zoning requirements because building and zoning ordinances do not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of wastewater pursuant to Government Code Section 53091. As a result, the proposed project is not subject to the requirements of LWMC Section 4.26.060. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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 located within the planning boundary of the *Natural Community Conservation Plan & Habitat Conservation Plan – County of Orange, Central & Coastal Subregion*, which is designed to protect sensitive species, habitats, and ecological systems while allowing for the implementation of certain land use and infrastructure projects. This plan generally focuses on preserving protected species and their associated habitats (County of Orange 1996). The project site is also within the planning boundary of the Orange County Transportation Authority *OCTA M2 Natural Community Conservation Plan/ Habitat Conservation Plan* (2016), which offsets potential effects to threatened and endangered species and their habitats resulting from the M2 freeway program.

Proposed project activities would occur within an already disturbed area (i.e., the existing ACLS) and do not involve new encroachment into sensitive habitats. The habitat within the Biological Study Area adjacent to the project site is a riparian corridor that would be avoided. In addition, based on the results of the field reconnaissance survey, there is no Coastal California sage scrub habitat within the project site suitable for the federally listed California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) within the Biological Study Area. The California gnatcatcher is the only species of concern in this context because it is the primary species addressed under the provisions of the County of Orange Central/Coastal Subregion NCCP/HCP and the Orange County Transportation Authority NCCP/HCP. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of these NCCP/HCPs, and 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:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	■	☐	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	■	☐

Overview of Cultural Resources Evaluation

The following is based on the Cultural Resources Technical Report prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) for the project in December 2024 (Appendix B).

On October 3, 2024, Rincon conducted a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search at the South Central Coastal Information Center, which is the official state repository for cultural resources records and reports for Orange County. The purpose of the records search was to identify previous cultural resources studies and previously recorded cultural resources within the project site and a one-mile radius. Rincon also reviewed the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), the California Historical Landmarks list, the Built Environment Resources Directory, and the Archaeological Determination of Eligibility list. A pedestrian survey of the project site was conducted on November 7, 2024, and no archaeological resources were identified during the field survey. The survey resulted in the identification of one historic-aged property, the ACLS, in the project site.

The CHRIS records search identified 27 cultural resources studies that have been previously conducted within the one-mile records search radius, one of which includes a portion of the project site. The CHRIS records search also identified eight previously recorded cultural resources within the one-mile records search radius, none of which are recorded in or adjacent to the project site.

Rincon contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on October 4, 2024, to request a search of the Sacred Lands File (SLF). On October 21, 2024, the NAHC responded to Rincon's SLF request, stating the results of the SLF search were positive. Potential project impacts to tribal cultural resources are discussed in Section 18, *Tribal Cultural Resources.*

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

A historical resource is defined as a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the 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]). To more clearly differentiate between archaeological and built environment resources, the analysis of potential impacts to historical resources under this threshold is limited to built environment resources. Archaeological resources, including those that may be considered historical resources pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and those that may be considered unique archaeological resources pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21083.2, are considered under threshold 5(b).

As part of the Cultural Resources Technical Report, Rincon evaluated the ACLS for eligibility to be listed on the NRHP and the CRHR. Rincon recommended the ACLS ineligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR due to a lack of historical and architectural significance. No other potential historical resources were identified as part of the Cultural Resources Technical Report (Appendix B). Accordingly, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. 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?

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.

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

The Cultural Resources Technical Report did not identify archaeological resources within the project site as a result of the records search, SLF search, Native American outreach, or pedestrian survey. The project site was used as agricultural land during the 1940s through the 1960s. Agricultural use has shallow ground disturbance due to plowing and cultivation process; however, construction of the existing ACLS in 1965 along with facility upgrades and periodic maintenance would have likely resulted in the modification and extensive disturbance of the soils within the project site. Ground-disturbing activities for the proposed project are expected to reach approximately three feet below the surface for the grading for foundations, and trenching for pipelines is anticipated to reach a maximum of approximately eight feet below the surface. Therefore, these activities would only impact artificial fill. Excavations for the valve and meter vault and wet well are expected to reach approximately 12 and 30 feet below the surface, respectively. Therefore, these activities would impact Monterey Formation sediments with low to no potential for encountering significant subsurface archaeological resources (Appendix B).

Given the level of past disturbance to the project site, which has likely resulted in substantial modification of subsurface soils, coupled with the findings of this study, the project site is considered to have a low potential to support the presence of intact subsurface archaeological resources within previously undisturbed native soils to the proposed maximum depths of disturbance. However, unanticipated discoveries during construction remain a possibility, and project construction could result in a potentially significant impact if an unanticipated archaeological resource were to be damaged or otherwise disturbed. Therefore, the proposed project would potentially cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, and this impact would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would be required.

Mitigation Measure

CUL-1 Unanticipated Discovery of Archaeological Resources

In the event archaeological resources are unexpectedly encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 50 feet of the find shall halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology (National Park Service 2020) 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 CRHR eligibility shall be completed. If the resource proves to be eligible for the CRHR and significant impacts to the resource cannot be avoided via project redesign, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare a data recovery plan tailored to the physical nature and characteristics of the resource, pursuant to the requirements of CEQA 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, the qualified archaeologist and Native American representative, as appropriate, shall recover and document the scientifically consequential information that justifies the resource's significance. The District 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 CHRIS, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(3)(C).

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure CUL-1 requires procedures for the construction contractor and District to follow in the event an unanticipated archaeological resource is encountered during construction. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources 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?

No human remains are known to be present at the project site (Appendix B). However, the discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground-disturbing activities. If human remains are found, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states 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 NAHC, which will determine and notify a most likely descendent (MLD). The MLD has 48 hours from being granted site access to make recommendations for the disposition of the remains. If the MLD 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 existing regulations, impacts related to the disturbance of human remains would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	■

Overview of Energy Consumption

As of 2022, California is one of the lowest per capita energy users in the United States, ranked 49th in the nation, due to its energy efficiency programs and mild climate (United States Energy Information Administration 2024a). Electricity and natural gas are primarily consumed by the built environment for lighting, appliances, heating and cooling systems, fireplaces, and other uses such as industrial processes in addition to being consumed by alternative fuel vehicles. Most of California's electricity is generated in state with approximately 23 percent imported from the Northwest and Southwest in 2023; however, the state relies on out-of-state natural gas imports for nearly 90 percent of its supply (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2024a and 2024b). In addition, approximately 57.9 percent of California's electricity supply in 2023 came from renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar photovoltaic, geothermal, and biomass (CEC 2024a). In 2022, Senate Bill 1020 established clean electricity targets for eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources to supply 90 percent of retail sale electricity by 2035, 95 percent by 2040, 100 percent by 2045, and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by 2035. Electricity would be provided to the project by Southern California Edison. Table 8 summarizes the electricity consumption for Orange County, in which the project site is located, and for Southern California Edison , as compared to statewide consumption. Natural gas would not be consumed at the project site; therefore, it is excluded from the analysis.

Table 8 2022 Electricity Consumption

Energy Type	Orange County	Southern California Edison	California	Southern California Edison Consumption Relative to Statewide	County Consumption Relative to Statewide[1]
Electricity (GWh)	20,244	85,870	287,826	30%	7%

GWh = gigawatt-hours

[1] For reference, the population of Orange County (3,150,835 persons) is approximately 8.1 percent of the population of California (39,128,162 persons) (California Department of Finance 2024).

Source: CEC 2024c

Petroleum fuels are primarily consumed by on-road and off-road equipment in addition to some industrial processes, with California being the seventh largest petroleum-producing state in the nation in 2023 (United States Energy Information Administration 2024b). Gasoline, which is used by light-duty cars, pickup trucks, and sport utility vehicles, is the most used transportation fuel in California with 13,576 million gallons sold in 2023 (CEC 2024d). Diesel, which is used primarily by heavy duty-trucks, delivery vehicles, buses, trains, ships, boats and barges, farm equipment, and heavy-duty construction and military vehicles, is the second most used fuel in California with 2,316 million gallons sold in 2023 (CEC 2024d). Table 9 summarizes the petroleum fuel consumption for Orange County, in which the project site is located, as compared to statewide consumption.

Table 9 2023 Annual Gasoline and Diesel Consumption

Fuel Type	Orange County (million gallons)	California (million gallons)	County Proportion of Statewide Consumption[1]
Gasoline	1,150	13,576	8%
Diesel	62	2,316	3%

[1] For reference, the population of Orange County (3,150,835 persons) is approximately 8.1 percent of the population of California (39,128,162 persons) (California Department of Finance 2024).
Source: CEC 2024d

Energy consumption is directly related to environmental quality in that the consumption of nonrenewable energy resources releases criteria air pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere. The environmental impacts of air pollutant and GHG emissions associated with the project's energy consumption are discussed in detail in Section 3, *Air Quality*, and Section 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, respectively.

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?

During project construction, energy would be consumed in the form of petroleum-based fuels used to power off-road construction vehicles and equipment on the project site, construction workers travel to and from the project site, and vehicles used to deliver materials and haul demolition debris and soil off-site. Total gasoline and diesel fuel consumption during project construction was estimated using the assumptions and factors from CalEEMod used to estimate construction air emissions (Appendix A). Table 10 presents the estimated construction-phase energy consumption, which indicates construction equipment and hauling and vendor trips would consume

approximately 25,606 gallons of diesel fuel, and worker trips would consume about 563 gallons of gasoline fuel over the project construction period. The project would consume less than 0.01 percent of the total consumption in the Orange County region.

Table 10 Estimated Fuel Consumption during Construction

Fuel Type	Gallons of Fuel	MMBtu
Diesel Fuel (Construction Equipment)	25,492	3,249
Diesel Fuel (Hauling & Vendor Trips)	113	14
Gasoline Fuel (Worker Trips)	563	62
Total Diesel Fuel	**25,605**	**3,263**
Total Gasoline Fuel	**563**	**62**

See Appendix C for calculation details

The construction energy estimates represent a conservative estimate because all construction equipment used in each construction phase was assumed to operate every day of construction. However, due to the small size of the project site, only one or two pieces of equipment would fit within the site boundary and be operational at a given time. Construction equipment would be maintained to applicable standards, and construction activity and associated fuel consumption and energy use would be temporary and typical for construction sites. It is reasonable to assume contractors would avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary fuel consumption during construction to reduce construction costs. Therefore, project construction would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, and no impact would occur.

Project operation would contribute to regional energy demand by consuming electricity and diesel fuel. The proposed project would result in a net increase in District's systemwide electricity consumption of approximately 82,000 kWh per year. The proposed project would be served by Southern California Edison, which supplied approximately 85,870 GWh of electricity in 2022. The proposed project's total electricity demand would be less than 0.01 percent of SCE's projected low demand supply of 100,313 GWh in 2027 (CEC 2024e). In addition, the proposed project would be required to comply with any applicable portions of the California Energy Code and California Green Building Standards Code, which establish planning and design standards for sustainable development, energy efficiency, water conservation, and material conservation. The proposed project includes replacement of the existing 350-kW emergency generator with a new 500-kW emergency generator. The emergency generator would consume more diesel fuel compared to existing conditions, but this increase would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary because the generator would only operate for routine testing and maintenance and in the event of an emergency (e.g. power outage) to power critical wastewater conveyance infrastructure and prevent sanitary sewer overflows. Given required compliance with applicable regulations and continued energy efficiency programs implemented by Southern California Edison, project operation would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

b. Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

The District has not adopted any renewable energy or energy efficiency plans with which the project could comply. The City's General Plan Conservation Element (2015b) includes policies aimed at increasing energy resource independence under Goal CO-4. The proposed project would support this goal by enhancing the efficiency and reliability of wastewater management, thereby contributing to the city's energy resource independence goals. In addition, the proposed project would include energy-efficient lighting in the electrical building consistent with the 2022 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards. Furthermore, Senate Bill 1020 mandates 100 percent clean electricity for California by 2045. Because the proposed project would be powered by the existing electricity grid, the project would eventually be powered by renewable energy mandated by Senate Bill 100 and would not conflict with statewide plans for renewable energy. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

7 Geology and Soils

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than - Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
2. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	■	☐
3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	■	☐
4. Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	■	☐
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?	☐	☐	■	☐
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?	☐	☐	■	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	■	☐	☐

This section is based in part on the Geotechnical Exploration Report prepared for the project by Verdantas, Inc. in September 2024 (Appendix D).

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?

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are regulatory zones established throughout California by the California Geological Survey. These zones identify areas where potential surface rupture along an active fault could prove hazardous and where special studies are required to characterize the fault rupture hazard potential to habitable structures. The project site does not partially or fully intersect an Alquist Priolo Fault Zone (Appendix D). Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of an earthquake fault delineated on an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. 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?

According to the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D), nearby regional faults include the San Joaquin Hills Thrust fault located approximately 1.3 miles northeast of the project site, the Newport-Inglewood fault located approximately 8.1 miles west of the project site, and the Elsinore fault located approximately 17.0 miles northeast of the project site. These regional faults could produce strong seismic ground shaking in the event of an earthquake. Proposed ground disturbance activities, such as grading, would not create conditions that would promote seismic activity. Design and construction of the project would consider the seismic environment and would comply with applicable seismic design standards. The entirety of project design and construction would incorporate the recommendations from the Geotechnical Exploration Report, such as minimum sizing for structural components, use of structural materials with appropriate weight bearing capacities, and use of compacted fill materials, which would minimize the potential for the project to result in seismic risk. The risk of injury is minimal because personnel would only be on site during temporary construction activities lasting approximately 18 months and infrequently during routine operation and maintenance activities, which would not be increased compared to existing conditions. A large seismic event, such as seismic shaking or ground failure could result in damage in the improved lift station. In the event an earthquake compromised project components during operation, the District would conduct emergency repairs as soon as practicable . Therefore, while the project would be located in a seismically active area, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking, and impacts 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?

Liquefaction is the process whereby loose, saturated, granular soils behave similarly to a fluid when subjected to high-intensity ground shaking. According to the *Seismic Hazard Zone Map for the San Juan Capistrano Quadrangle*, the project site is located within an area potentially susceptible to liquefaction (Appendix D). However, based on boring and laboratory test results of project site soils analyzed as part of the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D), the liquefaction potential at the project site is low, and seismically-induced settlement is anticipated to be negligible because on-site soils consist mainly of clay and elastic silt. As described under threshold 7(a.2), project design and construction would incorporate the recommendations from the Geotechnical Exploration Report in order to minimize the potential for the project to result in geotechnical hazards, including liquefaction. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

a.4. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?

The project site does not contain steep slope conditions necessary for a landslide to occur. The topography surrounding the project site is also relatively flat. According to the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D), the project site is not located within an area identified by the California Geological Survey as potentially susceptible to seismically induced landslides. The proposed project would not create substantial slopes which could result in landslides. Therefore, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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

Soil erosion or the loss of topsoil may occur when soils are disturbed but not secured or restored, such that wind or rain events may mobilize disturbed soils, resulting in their transport off the project site. Construction of the project would result in the disturbance of approximately 0.16 acre adjacent to Aliso Creek, which could result in soil erosion if soils are left exposed during ground-disturbing activities and are subjected to wind and rain events. During construction, the contractor would be required to comply with the erosion and sediment control regulations of LWMC Section 10.06.300. These regulations include, but are not limited to, preparing cut and fill slopes to maintain control against erosion; using erosion control devices such as desilting basins, check dams, riprap or other devices; prohibiting grading in excess of 200 cubic yards between October 1 and April 30 unless an erosion and sediment control system is implemented; and implementing street sweeping to maintain paved streets and sidewalks free of construction debris. In addition, the District would require its construction contractor to incorporate the shoring design recommendations of the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D) to prevent structural failures during construction, which otherwise could result in substantial soil movement. Once construction is complete, ground surfaces would be restored to their existing paved condition, and operation of the project would therefore not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil. Therefore, the project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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?

As described under threshold 7(a.4), the project site is not subject to landslides. As described under threshold 7(a.3), the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D) concluded the liquefaction potential, and subsequently potential for lateral spreading, at the project site is low. The proposed project would be designed in compliance with applicable seismic design standards and the recommendations of the Geotechnical Exploration Report to minimize the potential to result in soil instability and liquefaction. Construction of the project would require groundwater dewatering at a rate of approximately one gallon per minute, or 1,440 gallons per day, for approximately one month to install the new wet well. This dewatering would be temporary, short-term, and minimal and therefore would not constitute substantial dewatering with the potential to induce subsidence. During operation, permanent groundwater dewatering may be required but would be similar in nature and volume to the dewatering currently conducted for the existing wet well. As described under threshold 7(b), the District would require its construction contractor to incorporate the shoring design recommendations of the Geotechnical Exploration Report (Appendix D) to prevent structural failures during construction, which would minimize the potential for collapse. In addition, as discussed further under threshold 7(d), the project site has a low potential for soil expansion and therefore would not be subject to high shrink-swell potential or collapse potential during operation (United States Department of Agriculture 2024). Accordingly, the project would not 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. Impacts 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 of soils is considered low if the soil has a linear extensibility[6] of less than three percent (United States Department of Agriculture 2017). The project site is underlain by Myford sandy loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes, and riverwash, which have linear extensibility ratings of 2.8 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively, indicating a low shrink-swell potential (United States Department of Agriculture 2024). Therefore, the project would not be located on expansive soil, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

[6] Linear extensibility refers to the difference in soil clod length of a particular soil based on its moisture content. A soil with a linear extensibility of 3.0 percent or less is considered to have a low shrink-swell class. A soil with a linear extensibility between 3.0 and 5.9 percent is considered to have a moderate shrink-swell class, while a soil with a linear extensibility of 6.0 to 8.9 percent is considered to have a high shrink swell class. A soil with greater than 9 percent linear extensibility is considered to have a very high shrink swell class.

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 project involves improvements to the existing ACLS, which is part of the District's sewer conveyance system. The project does not involve the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, 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 museum records search and 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.

Rincon requested a museum records search of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County on September 26, 2024, which recovered no known fossil localities within the project site (Bell 2024). However, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County identified five known localities within 0.8 miles of the project site. Three of these localities are noted from the Monterey Formation, which have yielded whale (Cetacea), eared seal (*Pithanotaria*), walrus (*Imagotaria*, *Neotherium*), dog (Canidae), squirrel (Sciuridae), bird, fish, shark, and invertebrate fossils. The remaining two localities originate from the Capistrano Formation, which yield whale (Cetacea), sea cow (Sirenia), walrus (*Imagotaria*), eared seal (Otariidae), bird, crocodile, turtle, fish, shark, and ray fossils as well as fragmentary terrestrial mammals. Rincon also requested a museum records search from the Orange County Paleontology Collection at the John D. Cooper Laboratory on November 15, 2024. This records search recovered no known fossil localities within the project site (Gelnaw 2024).

However, within one mile of the project site, the Orange County Paleontology Collection contains three localities from Quaternary alluvial sediments (i.e., older alluvium and stream terrace), 28 localities from the Monterey Formation, and five localities from undifferentiated Capistrano/Monterey Formation. Gelnaw (2024) did not report the taxa known from these exact localities. However, the search results did state that Quaternary alluvial sediments throughout Orange County have produced taxa such as mammoth (*Mammuthus*), American lion (*Panthera atrox*), ground sloth (*Megalonyx, Paramylodon*), and various other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates (Gelnaw 2024). Fossils known from the Monterey Formation in Orange County include whale (Cetacea), dolphin (Delphinidae), walrus (Odobenidae), eared seal (Otariidae), bird, sea turtle, shark, ray-finned fish, and invertebrates (Gelnaw 2024).

The project site is situated in the Peninsular Ranges, one of the eleven major geomorphic provinces in California (California Geological Survey 2002). In general, the Peninsular Ranges consist of northwest-southeast trending mountain ranges and faults (Norris and Webb 1976). These mountains are generally comprised of Mesozoic to Cenozoic plutonic and extrusive igneous and Cretaceous marine sedimentary rocks. The Peninsular Ranges province also contains sedimentary basins, such as the Los Angeles Basin, which have accumulated thick sequences of Cenozoic marine and terrestrial sedimentary rocks.

The project site is located in the *San Juan Capistrano, California* United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. The geology of the region surrounding the project site was mapped by Morton and Miller (2006), who identified a single geologic unit, Quaternary young axial channel deposits, underlying the project site. A test boring conducted for the project's geotechnical report encountered three geologic units: artificial fill, Quaternary young axial channel deposits, and Monterey Formation (Appendix D).

Artificial fill was encountered in the test boring from the surface to 10 feet below the surface (Appendix D). This layer consisted of two inches of asphalt underlain by olive brown, brown, and mottled gray and orange clay mixed with construction debris. Artificial fill represents sediments deposited by humans to change the grade of the land and/or physical properties of the sediment. Therefore, it cannot preserve paleontological resources and has no paleontological sensitivity.

The identity of what Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) referred to as 'Quaternary young axial channel deposits' is uncertain. Quaternary young axial channel deposits, as described by Morton and Miller (2006), consist of slightly to moderately consolidated silt, sand, and gravel, their coarse-grained nature being reflective of deposition in stream channels. However, the sediments described by Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) consisted of clay and small amounts of silt. The description of 'Quaternary young axial channel deposits' by Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) matches the description of the underlying Monterey Formation in color (dark or olive brown), grain size (clay/claystone), and presence of orange iron oxide staining. In addition, the lowest portions of what Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) referred to as 'Quaternary young axial channel deposits' and the uppermost portions of Monterey Formation both contain trace shell fossils. For these reasons, Rincon concluded the sediments identified as 'Quaternary young axial channel deposits' by Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) represent the Monterey Formation in early stages of weathering (making it softer and less consolidated) rather than younger alluvial sediments that were deposited on top of the Monterey Formation. Although the project site is mapped as Quaternary young axial channel deposits by Morton and Miller (2006, the large scale of this map means slight errors in the distribution different geologic units are expected, and sediments actually representing Quaternary young axial channel deposits likely occur within the channel of Aliso Creek immediately east of the project site rather than within the project site itself. The Monterey Formation is mapped at the surface by Morton and

Miller (2006) approximately 100 feet northwest of the project site as well as approximately 250 feet to the southeast on the opposite side of Aliso Creek.

The Monterey Formation was encountered from 10 feet to 51.5 feet (the maximum explored depth) in the test boring conducted by Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D), including sediments identified as 'Quaternary young axial channel deposits' in that report. Pursuant to Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D), the Monterey Formation consists of olive brown to dark brown, thin-bedded claystone. This geologic unit is lithologically variable throughout the region mapped by Morton and Miller (2006), but the description of this unit by Verdantas, Inc. (Appendix D) generally agrees with that of Morton and Miller (2006). The Monterey Formation has produced numerous fossil localities, including within Orange County, producing taxa such as whales (Cetacea), eared seals (Otariidae), walruses (Odobenidae), sea cows (Sirenia), horse (*Pliohippus*), turtles, crocodilians, sharks, fish, and invertebrates (Bell 2024; Paleobiology Database 2024; University of California Museum of Paleontology 2024). Therefore, the Monterey Formation has high paleontological sensitivity.

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 for the proposed project are expected to include grading for electrical building and generator foundations, excavations for the valve and meter vault and new wet well, and trenching for new pipelines to connect new and existing structures. Grading for foundations is expected to reach approximately three feet below the surface, and trenching for pipelines is anticipated to reach a maximum of eight feet below the surface. Therefore, these activities would only impact artificial fill and are not expected to significantly impact paleontological resources. Excavations for the valve and meter vault and wet well are expected to reach approximately 12 and 30 feet below the surface, respectively. Therefore, these activities would involve disturbance within the Monterey Formation and could significantly impact paleontological resources. Therefore, the proposed project could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature if present at these depths, and impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would be required.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1 Paleontological Resources Monitoring and Mitigation

The District shall implement the following monitoring and mitigation measures pertaining to paleontological resources prior to and during project construction.

QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL PALEONTOLOGIST

Prior to excavation, the District shall retain a Qualified Professional Paleontologist, as defined by the SVP (2010), who shall direct all mitigation measures related to paleontological resources.

PALEONTOLOGICAL WORKER ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAM (WEAP)

Prior to the start of construction, the Qualified Professional Paleontologist or their designee shall conduct a paleontological WEAP training for construction personnel regarding the appearance of fossils and the procedures for notifying paleontological staff should fossils be discovered by construction personnel.

PALEONTOLOGICAL MONITORING AND SALVAGE

Full-time paleontological monitoring shall be conducted during initial ground-disturbing construction activities within previously undisturbed sediments greater than 10 feet below the surface. 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. The Qualified Professional Paleontologist may recommend monitoring be reduced in frequency or ceased entirely based on geologic observations. Such decisions shall be subject to review and approval by the District. 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 (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 (most-specific) feasible 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 the District and, if fossil curation occurred, the designated scientific institution.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would require conducting a paleontological WEAP for construction personnel, paleontological monitoring of ground disturbance at depths where the Monterey Formation may be encountered, and implementing appropriate procedures for recovery, identification, and curation of previously unrecovered fossils if encountered during construction. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

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?	☐	☐	■	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	■

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 gas (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_2), 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_2) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of the gas emitted, referred to as "carbon dioxide equivalent" (CO_2e), 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_2 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_2 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, a total of 2,390 gigatons of anthropogenic CO_2 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 Threshold

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 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]).

To determine a project-specific threshold, guidance on GHG significance thresholds from SCAQMD, the air district in which the project site is located, was used. The SCAQMD's GHG CEQA Significance Threshold Working Group considered a tiered approach to determine the significance of residential, commercial, and industrial projects. The draft tiered approach is outlined in meeting minutes dated September 28, 2010 (SCAQMD 2010):

- **Tier 1.** If the project is exempt from further environmental analysis under existing statutory or categorical exemptions, there is a presumption of less-than-significant impacts with respect to climate change. If not, then the Tier 2 threshold should be considered.
- **Tier 2.** Consists of determining whether the project is consistent with a GHG reduction plan that may be part of a local general plan, for example. The concept embodied in this tier is equivalent to the existing concept of consistency in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), 15125(d) or 15152(a). Under this tier, if the proposed project is consistent with the qualifying local GHG reduction plan, it is not significant for GHG emissions. If there is not an adopted plan, then a Tier 3 approach would be appropriate.
- **Tier 3.** Establishes a screening significance threshold level to determine significance. The Working Group provided a recommendation of 3,000 metric tons (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e) per year for non-industrial projects.
- **Tier 4.** Establishes a service population threshold to determine significance. The Working Group provided a recommendation of 4.8 MT of CO_2e per year for land use projects.

Tier 1 would not apply to the project because it is not exempt from environmental analysis. For Tier 2, the District does not have a qualified GHG reduction plan. Therefore, for a project-specific threshold, the District has selected SCAQMD's recommended threshold of 3,000 MT of CO_2e per year for non-industrial projects as the applicable project-specific threshold, in accordance with Tier 3.[7] This threshold is frequently used by jurisdictions across Southern California to determine GHG emissions impacts from non-industrial projects. In addition, the proposed project is evaluated based on consistency with plans and polices adopted for the purposes of reducing GHG emissions

[7] The proposed project is considered non-industrial because it does not involve significant stationary source equipment that is permitted or regulated by SCAQMD.

and mitigation effects of climate change. The most directly applicable adopted regulatory plans to reduce GHG emissions are the 2022 Scoping Plan and the City's General Plan.

Methodology

Calculations of CO_2, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions are provided to identify the magnitude of potential project effects. The analysis focuses on CO_2, methane, and nitrous oxide because these make up 98 percent of all GHG emissions by volume and are the GHG emissions the project would emit in the largest quantities (IPCC 2014). Emissions of all GHGs are converted into their equivalent GWP in terms of CO_2 (i.e., CO_2e). Minimal amounts of other GHGs (such as chlorofluorocarbons) would be emitted; however, these other GHG emissions would not substantially add to the total GHG emissions. GHG emissions associated with project construction were estimated using CalEEMod, version 2022.1, with the project details provided in Initial Study Section 8, *Description of the Project*, and the assumptions described in Section 3, *Air Quality*, in addition to the following:

- The proposed project would not consume water or generate solid waste.
- The proposed project would have a 50-year lifespan, based on information provided by District staff.

a. Would the project generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Construction of the proposed project would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily from the operation of construction equipment as well as from vehicles transporting construction workers to and from the project site and heavy trucks to transport materials and haul demolition debris and soil. As shown in Table 11, construction of the proposed project would generate an estimated total of 251 MT of CO_2e. Construction GHG emissions are amortized over a 50-year period (i.e., the estimated project lifetime) and would generate an estimated 5 MT of CO_2e per year.

Table 11 Estimated Construction GHG Emissions

Construction	Project Emissions (MT of CO_2e)
2026	94
2027	157
Total	**251**
Amortized over 50 Years	5

MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent
Source: See Appendix A for CalEEMod worksheets. See Table 2.3 "Construction Emissions by Year, Mitigated" annual emissions. The mitigated emissions account for compliance with specific regulatory standards.

Operation of the proposed project would generate GHG emissions associated with energy sources (i.e., increased electricity consumption) and stationary sources (i.e., emergency generator). This analysis takes a conservative approach and estimates the total operational GHG emissions of the project without accounting for emissions generated by use of existing emergency generator at the existing ACLS. Table 12 combines the estimated construction and operational GHG emissions associated with project implementation. Annual emissions from the proposed project would be approximately 69 MT of CO_2e per year, which would not exceed SCAQMD's recommended screening-level threshold of 3,000 MT of CO_2e per year for non-industrial projects. Therefore, the

project would not generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 12 Combined Annual GHG Emissions

Emission Source	Project Emissions (MT of CO_2e per year)
Construction[1]	**5**
Operational	**64**
Energy	13
Stationary	51
Total	**69**
SCAQMD Recommended Tier 3 Threshold	**3,000**
Exceed Threshold?	**No**

MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

[1] Construction-related GHG emissions amortized over 50 years (see Table 11).

Source: Appendix A CalEEMod worksheets. See Table 2.5 "Operational Emissions by Sector, Unmitigated" annual emissions.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

b. Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Neither the District nor the City has adopted a GHG reduction plan; therefore, there are no local GHG reduction plans that would apply to the proposed project. The City's Conservation Element Goal CO-8 aims to reduce local GHG emissions through implementation of a climate action plan, minimizing GHG emissions from municipal solid waste handling, and incorporating climate adaptation planning in long-range planning documents (City of Laguna Woods 2015b). These policies all involve actions to be taken by the City and are not applicable to individual projects. The project would enhance the performance of the wastewater pumps at the ACLS and would be powered by the existing electricity grid. In addition, the proposed project would be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan's statewide goals and policies because it supports the need for efficient wastewater management, which aligns with statewide objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote environmental sustainability. Furthermore, Southern California Edison, the project's electricity provider, would be required to supply electricity generated fully by renewable energy sources, as mandated by Senate Bill 1020, thereby minimizing the project's energy-related GHG emissions. Thus, the project would not impede attainment of the 2030 and 2050 reduction goals identified in Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 1279 and would not conflict with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than - Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	■	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	■	☐	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	■
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	■	☐	☐
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	■

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 small quantities of potentially hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, fluids, construction materials, and construction-related chemicals. 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. In addition, all materials used during construction of the proposed project would be delivered to the project site in their original unopened containers bearing the manufacturer's name, product name, and batch number. All coatings would be stored in enclosed structures to protect them from weather and excessive heat and cold. Flammable coatings would be stored in accordance with City, County of Orange, and state safety codes for flammable coating or paint materials. Any use of potentially hazardous materials during construction of the proposed project would be required to comply with all local, state, and federal regulations regarding the handling of hazardous materials, including the Hazardous Material Transportation Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the California Hazardous Materials Management Act, and California Code of Regulations Title 22, Division 4.5. Furthermore, project 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 the potential to create a significant hazard to construction workers or the surrounding community.

Construction of the proposed project would require the removal of asbestos cement pipe (ACP), which would be handled and disposed of in compliance with state regulations. As noted in the project's Technical Specifications (Appendix F), an investigation survey was conducted to assess the presence of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint at the project site. The limited asbestos report indicated no asbestos was detected in the six samples collected from the exterior cement roofing and fiberboard. Similarly, the limited inspection report indicated that no x-ray fluorescence readings of the painted components showed lead-based paint at or above regulatory levels However, it was noted some surfaces may contain lead levels below regulatory standards, which could potentially create lead hazards in dust, soil, and air. All ACP would be removed at the joint or fitting and disposed of in a proper manner, with no field cutting allowed. The construction contractor, who would be required to be registered with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health and certified by the Contractors State Licensing Board for asbestos removal, would also be responsible for the proper manifesting of the ACP at an authorized disposal site, submitting copies of their certification, and providing manifests and disposal records to the District prior to commencing any asbestos removal activities. Workers handling ACP would be required to be trained in accordance with applicable state regulations in compliance with Title 8 California Code of Regulations Section 1529. In addition, lead-based materials exposure is regulated by California Division of Occupational Safety and Health regulations. Specifically, the construction contractor would be required to comply with California Code of Regulations Section 1532.1, which requires testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of lead-based materials such that exposure levels do not exceed California Division of Occupational Safety and Health standards.

Operation and maintenance of the proposed project would be conducted in a manner consistent with existing operation of the ACLS and would not include the use of hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment

through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and 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, primer, ACP, and other similar materials) could introduce the potential for an accidental spill or release to occur. As discussed under threshold 9(a), operation and maintenance of the proposed project would be conducted in a manner consistent with existing operation of the ACLS and 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 could result in an accidental upset or release of hazardous materials if they are not properly stored and secured. However, hazardous materials would be stored in accordance with applicable regulations to ensure safe storage of hazardous materials. These regulations include the Hazardous Material Transportation Act, which mandates proper packaging, marking, and labeling of hazardous materials, and the California Hazardous Materials Management Act, which requires incompatible substances to be separated to prevent accidental contact. Hazardous materials used during project construction would be disposed of off-site in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to the California Building Code and California Fire Code, as well the regulations of the federal and state Occupational Safety and Health Administrations. Nonetheless, upset or accidental conditions could result in the unanticipated spill or release of hazardous materials such as vehicle and equipment fuels during project construction, potentially introducing a hazard to the public and/or the environment, which could result in a potentially significant impact especially if materials are released into the adjacent Aliso Creek. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would be required to provide an additional level of safety during project construction, thereby reducing the potential impact to the public and environment due to release of hazardous materials during upset or accident conditions to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure

HAZ-1 Hazardous Materials Management and Spill Control Plan

The District shall require its construction contractor to prepare and implement an HMMSCP, including a project-specific contingency plan for hazardous materials and waste operations, and submit the HMMSCP to the District for review and approval prior to the start of project construction. The HMMSCP shall establish policies and procedures consistent with applicable codes and regulations, including, but not limited to, the California Building and Fire Codes, as well as regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Labor, United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and California Division of Occupational Safety and Health. The HMMSCP shall articulate hazardous materials handling practices to prevent the accidental spill or release of hazardous materials during project construction and shall specify proactive actions that shall be implemented to prevent a release of hazardous materials to Aliso Creek in the event of a flooding event that inundates the project site during construction.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would require preparation and implementation of an HMMSCP with appropriate procedures to implement in the event of an accidental spill or release of hazardous materials during project construction. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would reduce impacts to the public or the environment related to the release of hazardous materials into the environment during reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions to a less-than-significant level.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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 nearest school to the project site is Laguna Hills High School located approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school, and no impact would occur.

NO 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 databases and listings compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 were reviewed on December 5, 2024, for known hazardous materials contamination at the proposed project site:

- California State Water Resources Control Board (2024) GeoTracker search for leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) and other cleanup sites;
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control (2024) EnviroStor database for hazardous waste facilities or known contamination sites;
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by the State Water Resources Control Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2016a);
- List of active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the California State Water Resources Control Board (California Environmental Protection Agency 2016b); and
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, identified by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024).

In addition, the U.S. EPA (2024) Superfund Enterprise Management System was reviewed for the project site.

The project site is not listed in the above databases, and no listed sites are present within 1,000 feet of the project site. Therefore, the project would not be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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 public or private airport to the project site is the John Wayne Airport, located approximately 10.4 miles to the northwest. The project site is not located within this airport's Airport Influence Area (Orange County Airport Land Use Commission 2008). Thus, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people working in the project area due to proximity to an airport, and 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 applicable emergency response and evacuation plan for the project site vicinity is the City's Emergency Operations Plan (City of Laguna Woods 2015c). The Emergency Operations Plan is designed to manage and sustain an effective local response to emergencies and outlines goals aimed at preventing emergencies, mitigate vulnerabilities, enabling emergency response, and facilitating short-term recovery. During project construction, equipment staging would primarily occur on site and along the adjacent Upper Aliso Creek Trail and Avenida Sevilla. During construction, the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla would be temporarily closed, resulting in periodic one-lane traffic. Pursuant to the project's Technical Specifications (Appendix F), flagmen, barricades, flares, lights, warning signs, and other safety devices would be used to ensure the safe control of traffic near all work areas during construction. However, the project site is located within the private Laguna Woods Village community, and local traffic circulation is limited by the 14 gates that provide access. Specifically, the project site vicinity is accessed primarily via Gates 1, 2, 3, and 4 (exit only), and the portion of Avenida Sevilla adjacent to the project site is the sole means of traffic circulation between the neighborhoods to the east (near Gate 4) and the rest of the Laguna Woods Village community. Due to the local traffic circulation limitations within the Laguna Woods Village community, the temporary lane closure along Avenida Sevilla could result in delays in emergency vehicle access or hinder potential evacuation for the Laguna Woods Village community and thereby affect implementation of emergency response and emergency evacuation plans in the event of an emergency. Therefore, project construction could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1, described in Section 17, *Transportation*, would be required to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed project does not include permanent changes to the existing street system that could result in inadequate emergency access, and project operation and maintenance would not introduce new activities or traffic with the potential to interfere with emergency response and evacuations. Therefore, project operation would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and no impact would occur.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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

As discussed further in Section 20, *Wildfire*, the project site and surrounding area is not within a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection [CAL FIRE] 2024). The nearest VHFHSZ identified by CAL FIRE is approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the project site (CAL FIRE 2024a). In addition, the nearest Fire Hazard Severity Zone to the project site as delineated by the City's General Plan Safety Element is a moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the project site (City of Laguna Woods 2015b). The project site is separated from these fire hazard zones by existing highways and development, which provide a buffer against potential wildland fire risks. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, and no impact would occur.

NO 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?	☐	■	☐	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	■	☐
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	■	☐
(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☐	■	☐
(iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	■	☐
(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	■	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	■	☐	☐
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	■	☐	☐

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

Demolition and construction activities would disturb approximately 0.16 acre adjacent to Aliso Creek. As discussed in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, no asbestos was found in the exterior samples, and no lead-based paint was detected at regulatory levels, although some surfaces may still pose lead hazards if lead is present below regulatory standards (Appendix F). In addition, pursuant to the project's Technical Specifications, no field cutting of ACP would be allowed on site in order to reduce the release potential into the surrounding community, including to the adjacent Aliso Creek (Appendix F). Accordingly, the water quality of Aliso Creek would not be affected due to the presence of asbestos or lead.

Demolition and construction activities for the project could result in soil erosion due to earth-moving activities such as stockpiling, excavation, soil compaction, cut and fill activities, and grading. Disturbed soils within the project site would be susceptible to erosion from river flow, wind, and rain, resulting in sediment transport from the construction site and temporary staging area. Receiving water bodies in the vicinity of the project site include Aliso Creek. The types of pollutants contained in runoff from the project site during construction could include sediments and contaminants such as oils, fuels, paints, and solvents. In addition, other pollutants, such as trace metals and hydrocarbons, could attach to sediment and be transported downstream of the project site, contributing to the overall degradation of water quality.

As described under threshold 7(b) in Section 7, *Geology and Soils*, the contractor would be required to comply with the erosion and sediment control regulations of LWMC Section 10.06.300, which requires implementation of erosion control measures during construction such as, but not limited to, the use of erosion control devices such as desilting basins, check dams, riprap or other devices; the prohibition of grading in excess of 200 cubic yards between October 1 and April 30 unless an erosion and sediment control system is implemented; and implementation of street sweeping to maintain paved streets sidewalks free of construction debris. In addition, as described under threshold 9(b) in Section 9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the transportation and use of potentially hazardous materials during demolition and construction of the proposed project would be subject to compliance with the Hazardous Material Transportation Act and the California Hazardous Materials Management Act, which would minimize the potential for such materials to be discharged to Aliso Creek. However, in the event of an accidental spill of hazardous materials such as vehicle or equipment fuels that migrates off site into Aliso Creek, water quality in Aliso Creek could be degraded. Therefore, project construction could result in a potentially significant impact to surface water quality of Aliso Creek. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, as described further in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, would be required to address this impact and includes implementation of an HMMSCP with procedures to implement in the event of an accidental spill or release of hazardous materials during project construction, which would minimize the potential for a release of hazardous materials such as construction fuels into Aliso Creek. With implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, potential project impacts to the surface water quality of Aliso Creek in the event of an unanticipated spill would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Based on the subsurface investigation completed to inform the Geotechnical Exploration Report, groundwater is present approximately 19 feet below the existing grade of the project site (Appendix D). Temporary groundwater dewatering would be required during ground-disturbing activities at depths greater than 19 feet for approximately one month during construction at a rate of approximately one gallon per minute, or 1,440 gallons per day. This amount of groundwater dewatering is minimal and does not have the potential to substantially alter groundwater levels or

surface water levels in Aliso Creek. In addition, the District's construction contractor would utilize a baffle structure or similar technique to remove sediment from the dewatered groundwater prior to discharge into the District's sewer system. Because dewatered groundwater would be treated and discharged into the District's sewer system, the dewatered groundwater would not have the potential to degrade surface or groundwater quality. Following completion of project construction, the District would pressure test the new infrastructure with potable water to ensure there are no leaks or weaknesses in the infrastructure. Water used to conduct the pressure test would also be discharged to the District's sewer system and would not enter any stormwater facilities leading to surface water bodies.

Once operational, permanent groundwater dewatering may be required, which would involve the discharge of groundwater to the District's sewer system. Dewatering conducted for the new wet well would be similar in nature and volume to the dewatering currently conducted for the existing wet well. Because dewatered groundwater would be discharged to the District's sewer system, this activity would not have the potential to degrade surface or groundwater quality.

Project operation would not introduce new sources of pollutants that could adversely affect water quality because the project would upgrade the existing ACLS. The District would continue to operate and maintain the ACLS similar to existing conditions. Therefore, project operation 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.

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?

Although localized groundwater is present underneath the project site, the project site does not overlie a mapped groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources 2024). As described under threshold 10(a), groundwater dewatering would be required during construction and operation. Extraction of groundwater can lower the groundwater table; however, groundwater dewatering during construction would be temporary, short-term (i.e., approximately one month), and minimal in volume. During operation, groundwater dewatering conducted for the new wet well would be similar in nature and volume to the groundwater dewatering currently conducted for the existing wet well and therefore would not result in an increase in dewatering activities. Groundwater dewatering would be localized to the project site and therefore is only anticipated to affect shallow groundwater levels. Given that the groundwater dewatering would not occur in a mapped groundwater basin and would be minimal in volume, groundwater dewatering would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or impede sustainable groundwater management of a groundwater basin. Furthermore, because the project site does not overlie a mapped groundwater basin, the minimal impervious surfaces that would be added to the project site due to addition of a new access driveway would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. Accordingly, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Impacts would be less than significant impact.

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?

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?

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?

The project would include improvements to the existing ACLS, including the minor addition of impervious surface for the new access driveway but would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries. The minor increase in impervious surfaces associated with the installation of the driveway would not constitute a substantial alteration to the existing drainage pattern of the project site or area that would have the potential to result in substantial erosion or siltation, a substantial increase in surface runoff, or an exceedance of the capacity of stormwater drainage systems. In addition, project operation would not introduce new potential sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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?

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (2009) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the western portion of the project site is located within Zone X,[8] and the eastern portion of the project site containing the Upper Aliso Creek Trail is located within the Zone AE[9] special flood hazard area (FIRM #06059C0427J).

Although the eastern portion of the project site containing the Upper Aliso Creek Trail is located within the Zone AE special flood hazard area, the project would not include development within this area. Rather, the portion of the project site containing the Upper Aliso Creek Trail would be used for construction equipment staging. Temporary fencing used within the Upper Aliso Creek Trail for temporary trail closures would be taken down following completion of construction. Furthermore, the project would not include the placement of any structures within Aliso Creek. Therefore, the project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area in a manner that would impede or redirect flood flows of Aliso Creek, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

[8] Zone X is defined as an area with a 0.2 percent chance of annual flood and is not classified as a special flood hazard area.
[9] Zone AE is defined as an area with a one percent chance of annual flooding and is classified as a special flood hazard area.

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

The project site is not located within a tsunami inundation area (DOC 2024b). Therefore, the project site is not subject to flooding risk from tsunamis. Seiches are a hazard that can occur when a sudden displacement event (i.e., earthquake) or very strong winds occur in an enclosed or semi-enclosed body of water, such as a lake or reservoir. The closest body of water, the Veeh Reservoir, is located approximately 2.1 miles northwest of the project site. Due to the distance between the project site and the Veeh Reservoir, the proposed project would not be at risk from inundation by seiche at this reservoir. In addition, the project site is not downstream from Veeh Reservoir such that inundation of the project site could occur in the event of a dam failure. As described under threshold 10(c.iv), the eastern portion of the project site containing the Upper Aliso Creek Trail is located within the Zone AE special flood hazard area. This area would only be used for construction equipment staging, and the project would not develop permanent structures within Zone AE.

Construction activities that use or store large quantities of hazardous materials could harm the environment if inundated by a flood resulting from a storm event. As described in Section 9, *Hazardous and Hazardous Materials,* limited quantities of hazardous materials would be used during construction, and these materials would be contained within receptacles specifically engineered for safe storage and disposed of off-site. However, flooding of the project site during project construction could result in an accidental spill of hazardous materials such as vehicle or equipment fuels that release pollutants into Aliso Creek. Therefore, project construction could result in a potentially significant impact. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, as described further in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, would be required to address this impact and includes implementation of an HMMSCP with proactive actions that shall be taken to prevent a release of hazardous materials to Aliso Creek in the event of a flooding event that inundates the project site during construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, potential impacts to Aliso Creek due to the release of pollutants during project site inundation would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Operation of the project would not introduce new pollutant sources to the project site or result in a substantial change to existing flood patterns because operation of the ACLS would be similar to existing conditions. Thus, operation of the proposed project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation in flood hazards, tsunami, or seiche zones, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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

The *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin* (Basin Plan; 2024), adopted by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, is the water quality control plan applicable to the project site. The Basin Plan defines beneficial uses, sets forth water quality objectives, and establishes programs to manage the quality of surface water and groundwater and achieve those water quality objectives for protection of beneficial uses. As discussed under threshold 10(a), project construction and operation would not substantially degrade the surface water quality of Aliso Creek with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1. Therefore, project construction and operation would not adversely impact receiving waters protected by the Basin Plan and would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

As described under threshold 10(b), the project site does not overlie a mapped groundwater basin (California Department of Water Resources 2024). Therefore, there is no sustainable groundwater management plan applicable to the project. As a result, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan, and no impact would occur.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	■	☐	☐

a. Would the project physically divide an established community?

The proposed project involves improvements to the existing ACLS in the Laguna Woods Village community in the city of Laguna Woods. The proposed project would not expand the footprint of the ACLS beyond its current boundaries and would not result in permanent changes to access along Avenida Sevila and the Upper Aliso Creek Trail. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community, and 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?

In general, the proposed project has low potential to conflict with land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect because the project involves improving the existing lift station without expanding the ACLS footprint beyond its current boundaries or encroaching into the Aliso Creek riparian corridor. Most components would be located underground with low-profile aboveground infrastructure. Construction activities would be temporary, and the project site would look and function similar to existing conditions once construction is complete.

According to Government Code Section 53091, building and zoning ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water. As such, the proposed project would not be subject to the City's building and zoning ordinances (LWMC Titles 10 and 13). As outlined in Section 4, *Biological Resource*, the proposed project would not impact significant trees protected by LWMC Section 4.26.

Project consistency with the goals of the City's General Plan pertaining to energy, GHG emissions, noise, and transportation are discussed in Section 6, *Energy*, Section 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, Section 13, *Noise*, and Section 17, *Transportation*, respectively. In addition, the proposed project would be consistent with the following General Plan goals adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect:

- **Goal CO-1:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-1 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to improve air quality because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to air quality as discussed in Section 3*, Air Quality*.
- **Goal CO-2:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-2 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to preserve and enhance the environment to support biological resources because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to biological resources with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, as discussed in Section 4, *Biological Resources*.
- **Goal CO-3:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-3 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to preserve cultural resources because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to cultural resources with implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, as discussed in Section 5*, Cultural Resources*.
- **Goal CO-5:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-5 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to balance land resource utilization with environmental concerns because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to land resources as discussed in Section 12*, Mineral Resources*.
- **Goal CO-7:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-7 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to improve receiving water quality because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to water quality, as discussed in Section 10*, Hydrology and Water Quality*.
- **Goal CO-9:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal CO-9 of the City's General Plan Conservation Element to divert two-thirds of local waste from landfills because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to solid waste generation, as discussed in Section 19*, Utilities and Service Systems*.
- **Goal S-1:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal S-1 of the City's General Plan Safety Element to protect residents, businesses, and government functions from fire hazards because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts to fire hazards, as discussed in Section 20*, Wildfire*.
- **Goal S-2:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal S-2 of the City's General Plan Safety Element to protect residents, businesses, and government functions from flood hazards because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to on- or off-site flooding, as discussed in Section 10*, Hydrology and Water Quality*.
- **Goal S-3:** The proposed project would be consistent with Goal S-3 of the City's General Plan Safety Element to protect residents, businesses, and government functions from geologic and seismic hazards because the proposed project would not result in significant impacts pertaining to geologic and seismic hazards, as discussed in Section 7*, Geology and Soils*.
- **Goal S-5:** The proposed project would potentially be inconsistent with Goal S-5 of the City's General Plan Safety Element to ensure that residents, businesses, and government functions are ready for emergencies because the proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to emergency response, evacuation, and access, as discussed in Section 9*, Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, and Section 17, *Transportation*. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1, as outlined in Section 17, *Transportation*, would be required and would reduce such impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, CUL-1, and TRA-1, the proposed project would be consistent with the applicable goals of the Laguna Woods General Plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Furthermore, as noted throughout this document, the project would result in no impact, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with the incorporation of mitigation measures for all issue areas evaluated. As a result, with implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1, the proposed 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. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	■

a. 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?

The project site is not underlain by a known mineral resource (DOC 2023). According to Mineral Land Classification Maps prepared by the Department of Conservation (DOC), the project site is in an area designated Mineral Resource Zones 1 and 3, indicating there are no significant mineral deposits present and there are mineral deposits whose significance cannot be evaluated due to insufficient data, respectively (DOC 2023). In addition, the proposed project would not involve mineral extraction or changes in land use that could affect the availability of mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

As discussed under threshold 12(a), the project site is not underlain by a known mineral resource (DOC 2023). In addition, the proposed project would not involve mineral extraction or changes in land use that could affect the availability of mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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, and 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?	☐	■	☐	☐
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	■	☐
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	■

Overview of Noise

Sound is a vibration that transmits through a medium (such as a gas, liquid, or solid) created by a moving or vibrating source, which is capable of being detected by the hearing organs. Noise is defined as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired and may therefore be classified as a more specific group of sounds.

Noise levels are commonly measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels so that they are consistent with the human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 hertz and less sensitive to frequencies around and below 100 hertz (Kinsler, et al. 1999). Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale that quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used to measure earthquake magnitudes. A doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as the doubling of vehicle traffic volumes, results in a noise level increase of 3 dB, whereas dividing the energy of a noise source in half results in a 3 dB decrease (Crocker 2007).

Human perception of noise has no simple correlation with sound energy, meaning the perception of sound is not linear in terms of dBA or in terms of sound energy. Two sources, each containing the same sound energy, do not “sound twice as loud” as one source. It is widely accepted that the average healthy human ear can detect changes (either increases or decreases) of 3 dBA, which is recognized as being barely perceptible to most people. Similarly, a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible, and a change of 10 dBA sounds twice (or half) as loud (Crocker 2007).

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 in this analysis are the equivalent continuous noise level (L_{eq}) and the maximum noise level (L_{max}). The L_{eq} is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period of time. Typically, the L_{eq} is expressed as the noise level over a one-hour period, even when measured for shorter durations, because the noise level of a 10- to 30-minute period would be the same as that for an hour-long period if the noise source is relatively steady. In addition, the L_{max} is the highest Root Mean Squared sound pressure level within the sampling 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 away from the source. Other sources of noise, such as a road or railroad, are not single, stationary point sources of sound but rather, emanate noise from a line (i.e., a "line" source). The drop-off rate for a line source is 3 dBA for each doubling of distance away from the source.

The propagation of noise is also affected by the absorption characteristics of the ground: a hard site, such as a parking lot or smooth body of water, provides no absorption/attenuation and the changes in noise levels with distance result simply from the geometric spreading of the source (i.e., 3 or 6 dBA reduction per doubling of distance for a point source or line source, respectively). Conversely, a soft site, such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees, may provide additional absorption/attenuation, potentially reducing noise levels an additional 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance away from the source (Caltrans 2013).

Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures. The amount of reduction provided by the "shielding" of these features depends on the size of the structure/s, the location of the structure/s relative to the noise source and receivers, and the frequency content 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 between a noise source and receiver will provide at least a 5-dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (Federal Highway Administration 2011).

Vibration Overview

Groundborne vibration of concern in environmental analysis consists of the oscillatory waves that move from a source through the ground to adjacent structures. The number of cycles per second of oscillation make up the vibration frequency, described in terms of hertz. The frequency of a vibrating object describes how rapidly it oscillates. 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 to prevent damage to nearby structures.

Sensitive Receptors

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. The City of Laguna Woods General Plan Noise Element defines noise-sensitive land uses as "those that are associated with activities that are particularly disrupted, or interfered with, by noise," which generally consist of "residences, convalescent homes, hospitals, schools, churches, temples, places of worship, public parks, and sensitive wildlife habitat, including the habitat of rare, threatened, and endangered species" (City of Laguna Woods 2024c). The closest sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site are residences located to the north, east, south, and west of the project site. The closest residence is located approximately 20 feet northwest of the northwestern project site boundary. In addition, Aliso Creek, which has the potential to support special status species as indicated in Section 4, *Biological Resources*, is located directly east of the project site.

Project Noise Setting

To characterize existing noise levels in the vicinity of the project site, Rincon conducted three short-term (15-minute) noise measurements on Thursday, November 7, 2024, using a SoftdB Piccolo-II, American National Standards Institute Type 2 integrating sound level meter. The sound level meter was field calibrated prior to and after the measurements. Short-term noise measurement 1 (ST-1) was conducted along the sidewalk near the adjacent residence to the northwest, approximately 30 feet from the boundary of the project site; ST-2 was conducted on the sidewalk near the closest residence located to the southwest of the project site and approximately 25 feet from the centerline of Avenida Sevilla; and ST-3 was conducted on the sidewalk near the closest residence located to the southeast of the project site and approximately 30 feet from the centerline of Avenida Sevilla. Approximate noise measurement locations are shown in Figure 4, and noise measurement results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13 Short-Term Noise Measurement Results

Measurement Location	Location Description	Sample Times	Measured Noise Levels (dBA)					
			L_{eq}	L_{min}	L_{max}	L_{10}	L_{50}	L_{90}
ST-1	Along sidewalk near adjacent residence to the northwest, approximately 30 feet from project site boundary	8:21 – 8:36 a.m.	46.6	39.6	56.6	49.4	45.0	41.4
ST-2	Along sidewalk near residence to the southwest and approximately 25 feet from centerline of Avenida Sevilla	8:55 – 9:10 a.m.	57.0	36.3	70.0	61.8	50.6	39.6
ST-3	Along sidewalk near residence to the southeast and approximately 30 feet from centerline of Avenida Sevilla	8:38 – 8:53 a.m.	60.7	39.2	73.7	65.6	53.7	43.7

dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level; L_{min} = minimum sound level; L_{max} = maximum sound level; L_{10} = sound level exceeded 10 percent of the time during measurement period; L_{50} = sound level exceeded 50 percent of the time during measurement period; L_{90} = sound level exceeded 90 percent of the time during measurement period.

Approximate measurement locations shown in Figure 4; measurement data included as Appendix D.

Figure 4 Approximate Noise Measurement Locations

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24-16575 EPS
Fig X Noise Measurements

Significance Thresholds

City of Laguna Woods General Plan Noise Element

The City of Laguna Woods General Plan Noise Element "identifies priority noise issues in Laguna Woods and sets forth goals and policies to achieve balance between the needs of the community and future development" (City of Laguna Woods 2024c). Goals and policies applicable to the proposed project include:

Goal N-2: Minimize the impact of construction-related noise on properties not undergoing such construction.

> **Policy N-2.1.** Regulate the timing of construction activities with the potential to result in significant noise affecting uninvolved properties, particularly during evening, overnight, and early morning hours.

Goal N-3: Protect residences, convalescent homes, and other noise-sensitive land uses from excessive exterior noise exposure.

> **Policy N-3.1.** Establish and apply standards for development projects to make siting decisions and provide noise barriers or other noise reduction improvements or strategies appropriate to the proposed land uses based on expected audible proximity to noise-sensitive land uses.

Laguna Woods Municipal Code

LWMC Section 7.08.060 establishes exterior noise standards based on time of day and prohibits the creation of any noise that exceeds these exterior noise limits, as measured at the property line of another residential property. These exterior noise limits are shown in Table 14.

Table 14 City of Laguna Woods Exterior Noise Standards

Noise Zone[1]	Noise Level[2]	Time Period
1	55 dBA	7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
	50 dBA	10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.

[1] Pursuant to LWMC Section 7.08.050, "[t]he entire territory of the City is hereby designated as "Noise Zone 1" .

[2] In the event the alleged offensive noise consists entirely of impact noise, simple tone noise, speech, music, or any combination thereof, each of the above noise levels shall be reduced by 5 dBA.

Source: LWMC Section 7.08.060(a)

Furthermore, LWMC Section 7.08.060(b) imposes additional limits to the exterior noise standards shown in Table 14 depending on the duration of the noise, stating it is unlawful for any person at any location within the city to create noise exceeding:

- The exterior noise standard for a cumulative period of more than 30 minutes in any hour; or
- The exterior noise standard plus 5 dBA for a cumulative period of more than 15 minutes in any hour; or
- The exterior noise standard plus 10 dBA for a cumulative period of more than five minutes in any hour; or
- The exterior noise standard plus 15 dBA for a cumulative period of more than one minute in any hour; or
- The exterior noise standard plus 20 dBA for any period of time.

In addition, LWMC Section 7.08.060(c) states "[i]n the event the ambient noise level exceeds any of the first four noise limit categories above, the cumulative period applicable to said category shall be increased to reflect said ambient noise level. In the event the ambient noise level exceeds the fifth noise limit category, the maximum allowable noise level under said category shall be increased to reflect the maximum ambient noise level."

Furthermore, the LWMC contains exemptions to its noise limits for certain activities and sources of noise. Pursuant to LWMC Section 7.08.080(4), any mechanical device, apparatus or equipment used, related to or connected with emergency machinery, vehicle or work[10] is exempt from the City's noise standards. Pursuant to LWMC Section 7.08.080(5), noise sources associated with construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property are exempt from the City's noise standards provided such activities do not take place between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on weekdays, including Saturday, or at any time on Sunday or a federal holiday.

Federal Transit Administration Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual

The City does not have established quantitative limits on construction noise and vibration; therefore, the criteria recommended by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* were used to determine potential noise and vibration impacts during project construction. This document provides criteria for assessing construction noise impacts based on the potential for adverse community reaction according to affected land use type and vibration impacts based on preventing minor architectural (i.e., non-structural) damage to nearby structures. Construction noise and vibration limits are shown in Table 15 and Table 16, respectively.

Table 15 FTA Construction Noise Criteria

	dBA L_{eq} (8-hour)	
Land Use	**Day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.)**	**Night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.)**
Residential	80	70
Commercial	85	85
Industrial	90	90

dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{eq} = equivalent sound level

Source: FTA 2018

Table 16 FTA Vibration Damage Criteria

Building Category	PPV (in/sec)
I. Reinforced concrete, steel, or timber (no plaster)	0.5
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3
III. Nonengineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12

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

Source: FTA 2018

[10] LWMC Section 7.08.030 defines emergency machinery, vehicle, or work as "any machinery, vehicle or work used, employed or performed in an effort to protect, provide, or restore safe conditions in the community or for the citizenry, or work by private or public utilities when restoring utility service."

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

Daytime Construction Activities

Based on information provided by District staff and the consultant engineer, the majority of construction activities would occur between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays. Therefore, construction noise from these daytime construction activities is exempt from the noise standards established in the City's Municipal Code. However, to present a comprehensive evaluation of potential project noise impacts under CEQA, construction noise was quantified and compared to applicable limits established by the FTA.

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). Due to the complex and mobile nature of construction activity within a project site, the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* document recommends evaluating construction noise impacts from all equipment at the center of the construction site, stating the distance variable in its recommended construction noise calculation "assumes that all equipment operates at the center of the project" (FTA 2018).

Construction noise was estimated using the Federal Highway Administration's Roadway Construction Noise Model (FWHA 2006). Typical construction projects have long-term noise averages that are lower than louder short-term noise events due to equipment moving around 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, while others may have more intermittent, 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). Due to the small size of the project site and the need to maintain ongoing lift station operations, project construction would include cyclical periods of demolition, site preparation, grading/excavation, infrastructure installation/building construction, paving/site restoration, and architectural coating. It is assumed diesel engines would power all construction equipment. Noise levels generated during each phase of construction were estimated based on the equipment list provided by District's consultant engineer. Due to the small size of the project site, only one or two pieces of equipment would fit within the site boundary at a given time; therefore, it was assumed no more than two pieces of equipment would be operating at a given time. For a conservative evaluation of noise impacts, the loudest two pieces of equipment during each phase were evaluated under the assumption they would be operating simultaneously.

Construction noise was estimated while also accounting for the existing CMU wall, which surrounds the project site. This wall would block the line of sight between construction equipment and nearby receptors at certain points during project construction, providing some reduction of construction noise. The northwestern portion of this wall is approximately 10 feet tall, while the southeastern portion is approximately six feet tall, based on visual estimations made by Rincon during the noise measurements. During construction, the northwestern portion of the wall would remain in place while the southeastern portion of the wall would be demolished and replaced with an eight-foot-tall wall of similar materials. Due to the phasing of construction, the southeastern portion of wall would be removed for much of the construction period; therefore, noise reduction would only be provided by the northwestern portion of the wall at receptors located to the north and northwest of the project site. Noise reduction from the southeastern portion of the CMU wall was not accounted for in calculating construction noise levels at nearby receptors. The noise reduction provided by the existing CMU wall was determined using the methodology described in the *Design Guidelines for Highway Noise Barriers* (Klingner et al. 2003). Based on these calculations, the northwestern portion of the CMU wall would provide approximately 12 dBA of noise reduction at receptors to the north and northwest.

Table 17 shows estimated noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors during each phase of construction while accounting for noise reduction provided by the CMU wall to receptors to the north and northwest. As shown in Table 17, construction noise levels would not exceed the FTA's daytime threshold of 80 dBA L_{eq} (8-hour) at the nearest sensitive receptors to the northwest and would continue to attenuate with distance at receptors located farther away. Therefore, daytime construction would not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site, and impacts would be less than significant.

Table 17 Estimated Daytime Construction Noise Levels at Sensitive Receptors by Phase

	dBA L_{eq} (8-hour)				
Construction Phase	**RCNM Reference Noise Level[1]**	**Residence to Northwest[1]**	**Residence to North[1]**	**Residence to Southwest**	**Residence to Southeast**
Distance (feet)	**50**	**60**	**120**	**125**	**200**
Demolition	85	71	65	77	73
Site Preparation	83	69	63	75	71
Grading/Excavation	83	69	63	75	70
Infrastructure Installation/ Building Construction	83	69	63	75	70
Paving/Site Restoration	85	71	65	77	73
Architectural Coating	79	65	59	71	67

dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level; RCNM = Roadway Construction Noise Model

[1] Due to the orientation of this receptor to the project site, the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall along the northwestern boundary of the project site would provide an approximately 12-dBA noise reduction at this receptor, which is accounted for in the noise level estimate.

Source: Roadway Construction Noise Model. See Appendix D for construction noise modeling results.

Bypass Pumping

In addition to daytime construction activities, the existing lift station would be temporarily shut off for an approximately three-week period during construction. During this time, bypass sewage pumps would be operated 24 hours per day, seven days per week within the project site in order to continue conveying sewage through the District's existing infrastructure and maintain reliability of operations. This activity would not be exempt from compliance with LWMC Section 7.08.080(5) when pumping occurs outside of the City's allowable hours of construction of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays.

Based on the project plans, bypass pumps would be located near the northeastern corner of the project site. Table 18 shows estimated noise levels associated with bypass pumping at the nearest sensitive receptors, accounting for the noise reduction provided by the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall at receptors located to the north and northwest of the project site. As shown in Table 18, noise levels associated with bypass pumping during nighttime hours and on Sundays would exceed the City's applicable daytime and nighttime noise thresholds of 55 and 50 dBA, respectively. Therefore, temporary nighttime bypass pumping would generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site, and impacts would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would be required.

Table 18 Estimated Nighttime Bypass Pumping Noise Levels at Nearby Sensitive Receptors

	dBA L_{eq} (8-hour)				
Construction Activity	**RCNM Reference Noise Level[1]**	**Residence to Northwest[1]**	**Residence to North[1]**	**Residence to Southwest**	**Residence to Southeast**
Distance (feet)	**50**	**70**	**110**	**140**	**190**
Bypass Pumping	78	63	59	69	66

dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level; RCNM = Roadway Construction Noise Model

[1] Due to the orientation of this receptor to the project site, the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall along the northwestern boundary of the project site would provide an approximately 12-dBA noise reduction at this receptor, which is accounted for in the noise level estimate.

Source: Roadway Construction Noise Model. See Appendix D for construction noise modeling results.

Operation

The primary source of noise associated with project operation would be a new 500-kW emergency generator located along the northeastern boundary of the project site. Due to the phasing of the construction period, the project would undergo an interim operational condition during which the existing 350-kW emergency generator would be temporarily relocated near the southwestern corner of the project boundary while construction continues in other portions of the site. While the interim operational condition would be temporary, this analysis evaluates the noise levels produced during both interim and final conditions to present a comprehensive analysis of potential noise impacts. Pursuant to LWMC Section 7.08.080(4), emergency equipment is exempt from the City's noise regulations. The proposed project does not include any other new stationary noise sources that would produce noise during operation. Therefore, project operation would not generate a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site, and impacts would be less than significant.

Although exempt from compliance with the noise standards of the LWMC, operational noise levels associated with interim and final operational conditions of the emergency generator have been

calculated and are presented for informational purposes. During interim operation of the project, the existing Caterpillar 5406 350-kW emergency generator would be temporarily relocated to the southwestern portion of the project site, situated approximately 55 feet from the nearest residence to the northwest. During interim operational conditions, the emergency generator would be moved to a new location at approximately the same distance from the nearest residences to the northwest and southwest. However, the interim generator location would be outside of the existing CMU wall, which provides a reduction in noise levels under existing conditions. Due to the age of this generator model, sound data are not known or available online; therefore, sound data for a similar generator model of equal power – the Caterpillar D350 GC diesel generator – were used (manufacturer specifications included in Appendix D). Based on manufacturer sound data, the Caterpillar D350 GC generator produces a sound pressure level of 71 dBA at 23 feet away while operating at 100 percent load. Table 19 summarizes noise levels produced by the generator at nearby sensitive receptors during interim operational conditions. Noise produced by the existing emergency generator during interim operational conditions would be temporary and would only occur for brief periods for routine testing and if backup power is needed.

Table 19 Operational Noise Levels at Nearby Sensitive Receptors

Generator Operating Condition		Residence to Northwest	Residence to Southwest	Residence to North	Residence to Southeast
Interim Operation	**Distance (feet)**	**55**	**75**	**125**	**235**
	Noise Level (dBA)	63[1]	61[1]	44[2]	51[1]
Final Operation	**Distance (feet)**	**50**	**140**	**95**	**200**
	Noise Level (dBA)	50[2]	45[2]	45[2]	43[3]

[1] Due to the orientation of this receptor to the interim location of the existing generator, the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall along the northwestern boundary of the project site would not provide any noise reduction to this receptor. Therefore, noise level reductions at this receptor from the CMU wall were not included in the calculation.

[2] Due to the orientation of this receptor to the project site, the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall along the northwestern boundary of the project site would provide an approximately 12-dBA reduction in noise levels at this receptor, which is accounted for in the noise level estimate.

[3] Due to the orientation of this receptor to the project site, the proposed 8-foot-tall CMU wall along the southeastern boundary of the project site would provide an approximately 9-dBA reduction in noise levels at this receptor, which is accounted for in the noise level estimate.

See Appendix D for manufacturer specifications for the existing and proposed generators.

Once construction of the project is complete, the project would include periodic operation of a new 500-kW emergency generator during routine testing activities and emergency conditions (e.g., power outages) at the northeastern boundary of the project site, situated approximately 50 feet from the nearest residence to the northwest. The proposed generator, a Caterpillar C13 diesel generator with a Level 2 sound attenuated steel enclosure, produces a sound pressure level of 70 dBA at 23 feet away while operating at 100 percent load (manufacturer specifications included in Appendix D). Table 19 presents operational noise levels associated with final operational conditions for the emergency generator at the nearest sensitive receptors. As noted in Table 19, the noise level estimates for final operational conditions of the emergency generator account for the noise reduction provided by either the existing 10-foot-tall CMU wall along the northwestern perimeter of the project site or the proposed 8-foot-tall CMU wall along the southeastern perimeter of the project site at respective receptors.

As discussed above, operation of the existing and proposed emergency generators would be exempt from the City's noise standards pursuant to LWMC Section 7.08.030. In addition, operation of the existing and proposed emergency generators would be temporary and would only occur for periods during routine testing (approximately two hours per month) and when backup power is needed. The proposed project does not include any other new stationary noise sources that would produce noise during operation. Therefore, project operation would not generate a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project site, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure

NOI-1 Noise Reduction Measures for Bypass Pumping

The District shall require its construction contractor(s) to reduce nighttime bypass pumping noise levels to at or below 50 dBA at the nearest residences during any construction activities occurring between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (i.e., nighttime hours) on all days of the week and to at or below 55 dBA during daytime hours on Sundays to the extent feasible. Strategies to achieve this may include, but are not limited to, the installation of temporary sound barriers/blankets around the bypass pumps. If temporary sound barriers are utilized, they shall have a density of at least 1.5 pounds per square foot with no gaps from the ground to the top of the barrier. If sound blankets are utilized, barriers shall be constructed with solid material with a density of at least 1 pound per square foot with no gaps from the ground to the top of the barrier and shall be lined on the construction side with acoustical blanket, curtain, or equivalent absorptive material rated sound transmission class 32 or higher.

Documentation of the noise control strategies implemented to reduce construction noise levels to at or below the City's applicable noise limits at the nearest residences shall be provided to the District prior to initiating bypass pumping during nighttime hours or on Sundays.

In addition, the District shall implement the following measures:

- At least 21 days prior to the start of bypass pumping activities during nighttime hours or on Sundays, off-site residents within 500 feet of the proposed nighttime bypass pumping work shall be notified of the planned construction activities. The written notification shall include a brief description of the project, the activities that would occur during nighttime hours and on Sundays, the hours when such activities would occur, and the overall duration of the activities. The notification shall include the telephone number of the District's authorized representative that is assigned to respond in the event of a noise complaint. In addition, a construction notification sign shall be posted at the job site, clearly visible to the public, that includes telephone number of the District's authorized representative that is assigned to respond in the event of a noise complaint. Documentation of the resident notification and the construction notification sign shall be prepared and retained by the District prior to the start of bypass pumping activities.
- If a noise complaint(s) is registered regarding bypass pumping activities, the contractor 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 during bypass pumping activities. The consultant shall prepare a letter report for the District summarizing the measurement results and potential measures to reduce nighttime noise to below the City's noise limits at nearby residences if an exceedance is identified. The District and its contractor(s) shall implement the measures necessary to reduce bypass pumping

noise to at or below the City's applicable noise limits at nearby residences. Documentation of the measures implemented shall be prepared and retained by the District prior to resuming bypass pumping activities.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would require the use of noise reduction techniques, such as temporary noise barriers/blankets, to reduce bypass pumping noise to at or below the City's applicable noise limits, resident notification of bypass pumping activities, maintenance of a noise complaint hotline, and procedures to address any identified noise exceedances during bypass pumping. Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce noise impacts associated with bypass pumping to a less-than-significant level.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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

Construction Vibration

Construction activities known to generate excessive groundborne vibration, such as pile driving and blasting, would not be conducted during construction of the project. Therefore, the greatest known sources of vibration during project construction activities would be large earthmoving equipment such as an excavator, which produces a vibration level of approximately 0.089 in/sec PPV at a reference distance of 25 feet (FTA 2018). Based on the project site plan, this type of equipment would be used to remove some of the existing trees surrounding the CMU wall along the northwestern perimeter of the project site and may be used as close as approximately 19 feet to the nearest off-site structure (a single-family residence to the northwest of the project site). At a distance of 19 feet, vibration levels generated by large earthmoving equipment would attenuate to approximately 0.134 in/sec PPV.[11] Therefore, vibration levels generated during construction of the project would not exceed the significance threshold of 0.2 in/sec PPV (the level at which architectural damage to nonengineered timber and masonry buildings would occur, see Table 16) at the nearest off-site structures. As a result, project construction would not result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise level, and impacts would be less than significant.

Operational Vibration

Operation of the project would not include any substantial sources of vibration. Therefore, project operation would not result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise level, and no impact would occur.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

[11] $PPV_{Equipment} = PPV_{Ref} (25/D)^n$ (in/sec), PPV_{Ref} = reference PPV at 25 feet, D = distance, and n = 1.1

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 John Wayne Airport, located approximately 10.4 miles northwest of the project site. The project site is not located within the noise contours of the airport, according to the airport's Noise Abatement Program Quarterly Report (County of Orange 2023). Therefore, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels, and no impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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14 Population and Housing

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

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 result in the construction of new homes and therefore would not directly induce substantial unplanned population growth. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase pump performance, address maintenance issues of existing piping and equipment, and simplify maintenance activities. In addition, the project aims to accommodate current and future wastewater flows, including those from the planned Village at Laguna Hills development. The Village at Laguna Hills development was introduced as part of the City of Laguna Hills' 2009 General Plan. The City of Laguna Hills prepared and certified a Program Environmental Impact Report in 2009 for the General Plan (State Clearinghouse #2008081100), which specifically evaluated the environmental impacts of the buildout of the Village at Laguna Hills development. (Five subsequent Addenda to the 2009 Program Environmental Impact Report have been adopted for the project, with the most recent adopted in March 2021.) Therefore, the proposed project would be in furtherance of growth already anticipated in the City of Laguna Hills' General Plan and would not have the potential to induce substantial unplanned growth. Furthermore, no additional District employees would be required to operate the proposed project. Accordingly, the project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area, either directly or indirectly. 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?

The proposed project would include improvements to an existing lift station and does not include demolition of existing housing. As such, the project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, and 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?	☐	☐	☐	■
	2 Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	■
	3 Schools?	☐	☐	☐	■
	4 Parks?	☐	☐	■	☐
	5 Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	■

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?

As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth that may increase demand for fire protection services. The proposed project would not include features or facilities requiring additional or unusual fire protection resources during operation beyond that required for the existing ACLS. In the event of the unexpected need for fire protection at the project site, the closest fire station is the Orange County Fire Authority Station No. 22, located approximately 1.1 mile to the northwest of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth that could increase demand for police protection services. The proposed project would not include features or facilities requiring additional or unusual police protection resources during operation beyond that required for the existing ACLS. The ACLS would remain a secured facility, similar to existing conditions, with a surrounding wall and access gate to prevent unauthorized entry. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth that could increase demand for schools. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth that could increase demand for parks. Project construction may require temporary closure of a segment of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail within the project site during construction of new access driveway and gate. In addition, during construction, the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla would be temporarily closed, resulting in periodic one-lane traffic. These closures would result in temporary disruptions to trail users, who may choose to use other nearby parks, such as Sheep Hills Park (approximately 0.6 mile to the southeast), during project construction instead. However, this disruption to use of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail would be temporary and would not be substantial enough to necessitate the provision of new or physically altered parks to accommodate the re-directed demand for parks. In addition, access to the Upper Aliso Creek Trail would remain available via multiple other trail entrances in the surrounding neighborhoods, such as the entrances near 609 and 641 Avenida Sevilla and the entrance off Avenida Majorca. Furthermore, the portion of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail that is disturbed by

project construction activities would be restored to its existing condition or better upon completion of construction. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. Impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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?

As discussed in Section 14, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth that may increase demand for other public facilities, such as libraries. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. No impacts would occur.

NO IMPACT

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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?	☐	☐	■	☐
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	■

a. 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?

As discussed in Section 15, *Public Services*, project construction may require temporary closure of a segment of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail within the Laguna Woods Village United South trail system This closure would result in temporary disruptions to trail users who typically access the trail from this location. However, access to the Upper Aliso Creek Trail would remain available via multiple other trail entrances in the surrounding neighborhoods, such as the entrances near 609 and 641Avenida Sevilla and the entrance off Avenida Majorca. Trail users may also choose to use other nearby trails within the private Laguna Woods Village community, such as other trails within the United South and United North trail systems (Laguna Woods Village 2024b) during project construction instead. However, disruption to use of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail would be temporary in nature. Although temporary closure of a segment of the Upper Aliso Creek Trail may result in an incremental and temporary increase in the use of other trails in Laguna Woods Village, the temporary closure would not be substantial enough to cause substantial physical deterioration of this park or other existing neighborhood and regional parks and recreational facilities, especially given that access to this trail is restricted to residents and guests of Laguna Woods Village. Therefore, construction of proposed project would not 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. Impacts would be less than significant.

Upon completion of project construction, the portions of Upper Aliso Creek Trail disturbed by construction activities would be restored to their existing condition or better. The project would not result in ongoing, long-term impacts to Upper Aliso Creek Trail; therefore, operation of the proposed project would not 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. No impact would occur.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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?

The proposed project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?	☐	☐	■	☐
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☐	■
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	■	☐
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	■	☐	☐

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

Regional and local plans and policies addressing the circulation system include the City's General Plan Mobility Element and SCAG's Connect SoCal 2024 (City of Laguna Woods 2024a; SCAG 2024). The project site is located within the private Laguna Woods Village community, and local traffic circulation is limited by the 14 gates that provide access. The project site is partially located within the private right-of-way of Avenida Sevilla, including the paved roadway and sidewalk. Avenida Sevilla does not contain a designated bicycle lane. The nearest transit facility to the project site is a bus stop located at the intersection of Avenida Sevilla and Paseo De Valencia, approximately 0.4 mile east of the project site. The project site is located along the Laguna Woods Village Easy Rider Fixed Bus Route 6 (Laguna Woods Village 2024b).

As described in Initial Study Section 8, *Project Description*, construction workers would either park on-street or would park off-site and be shuttled to the project site, depending on the requirements of Laguna Woods Village. During construction, the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla would be temporarily closed, which would result in one-lane traffic on Avenida Sevilla periodically during construction and closure of the sidewalk along the northwest-bound lane. The project site vicinity is accessed primarily via Gates 1, 2, 3, and 4 (exit only), and the portion of Avenida Sevilla adjacent to the project site is the sole means of traffic circulation between the neighborhoods to the east (near Gate 4) and the rest of the Laguna Woods Village community. Motorists that normally travel east along Avenida Sevilla may choose to instead access the southern portion of the community via Gate 4 on Paseo De Valencia, and motorists that normally travel west along Avenida Sevilla from the neighborhoods near Gate 4 may choose to instead access the rest of the community via Gate 2 on Paseo De Valencia or Gate 3 on Moulton Parkway. This redirection of traffic would be temporary, and motorists would still be able to travel east and west along Avenida Sevilla through the single

open lane during construction, although they may experience some delays. Pursuant to the project's Technical Specifications (Appendix F), flagmen, barricades, flares, lights, warning signs, and other safety devices would be used to ensure the safe control of traffic near all work areas during construction.

Because no designated bicycle lanes exist on Avenida Sevilla, the project would not interfere with bicycle facilities. The one-lane closure of Avenida Sevilla would be temporary and would not result in the permanent closure of Avenida Sevilla or the sidewalk. Accordingly, project construction would not result in the full closure of Easy Rider Fixed Bus Route 6, although some temporary delays in service or a temporary re-routing of service along Paseo De Valencia may be necessary. During construction, pedestrian access along Avenida Sevilla would remain available along the sidewalk on the southeast-bound side of the roadway. Once construction is complete, the sidewalk, curb, and gutters would be restored to their existing paved condition to allow for continued pedestrian access on the sidewalk along the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla. Installation of the new access driveway would not interfere with future pedestrian use of the sidewalk because an access driveway is present under existing conditions. After construction is complete, no changes to existing transportation patterns would occur because no new operation and maintenance activities would be required for the ACLS. Due to the small-scale nature of construction and the lack of permanent impacts to the local circulation network, the project would not have the potential to conflict with the City's General Plan Mobility Element and SCAG's Connect SoCal 2024. Accordingly, 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 CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(3), a lead agency may include a qualitative analysis of operational and construction traffic if existing models or methods are not available to estimate the VMT for the project being considered. The District and the City have not adopted VMT thresholds. The Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted the Guidelines for Evaluating Vehicle Miles Traveled under CEQA in 2020, but these do not include thresholds for construction-phase VMT impacts (County of Orange 2020).

A VMT calculation is typically conducted on a daily or annual basis, for long-range planning purposes. Construction of the project would result in short-term, temporary vehicle trips to and from the project site during the construction period. Increases in VMT from construction would be short-term, minimal, and temporary. Operation of the project would require the same number and frequency of vehicle trips by District staff as under existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). No impact would occur.

NO 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 project involves improvements to the existing ACLS and would not introduce incompatible uses such as farm equipment to the project site or surrounding roadways. In addition, the project does not propose modifications to Avenida Sevilla with the exception of the installation of a new access driveway to replace the existing access driveway. The design of the new access driveway would be required to comply with safe line-of-sight standards and reviewed and approved by the City in accordance with the provisions of LWMC Chapter 9.20, which requires the City to issue a permit for the construction of a new driveway. City review of the driveway design would ensure the new driveway would not substantially increase transportation hazards along Avenida Sevilla. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use, and impacts would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

The proposed project would involve the transport of construction materials, equipment and workers to and from the project site, as well as the hauling of construction debris. Construction workers would either park on-street or would park off-site and be shuttled to the project site, depending on the requirements of Laguna Woods Village, to minimize traffic within Laguna Woods Village. However, during construction, the northwest-bound lane of Avenida Sevilla would be temporarily closed, which would result in periodic one-lane traffic on Avenida Sevilla. Pursuant to the project's Technical Specifications (Appendix F), flagmen, barricades, flares, lights, warning signs, and other safety devices would be used to ensure the safe control of traffic near all work areas during construction. However, the project site is located within the private Laguna Woods Village community, and local traffic circulation is limited by the 14 gates that provide access. Specifically, the project site vicinity is accessed primarily via Gates 1, 2, 3, and 4 (exit only), and the portion of Avenida Sevilla adjacent to the project site is the sole means of traffic circulation between the neighborhoods to the east (near Gate 4) and the rest of the Laguna Woods Village community. In the event of an emergency during construction, the partial closure of Avenida Sevilla could result in delays in emergency vehicle access or hinder potential evacuation for the Laguna Woods Village community. Therefore, project construction would potentially result in inadequate emergency access, and implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would be required.

Project operation would result in result in the same number of trips by District staff to the project site as under existing conditions for routine maintenance activities and therefore would not result in inadequate emergency access. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measure

TRA-1 Traffic Management Plan

The District shall require the project contractor(s) to prepare and implement a traffic management plan that specifies how traffic will be safely and efficiently redirected during lane closures. All work shall comply with the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook, which conforms to the standards and guidance of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Traffic control measures for lane closures shall be included, and priority access shall be given to emergency vehicles. The traffic management plan shall also include requirements to notify local emergency response providers and all residences within 1,000 feet at least one week prior to the start of work when lane closures are

required. Such notifications shall include the anticipated length of temporary road closures and alternative routes for residents to take in the event of evacuation, which shall be designated in consultation with Laguna Woods Village. In addition, the traffic management plan shall require placement of temporary lane closure warning signage at the Gates 1, 2, and 3 entrances as well as at the Avenida Sevilla/Avenida Majorca, Avenida Sevilla/Ronda Sevilla, Avenida Sevilla/Via Mendoza, and Avenida Sevilla/Calle Aragon intersections to redirect vehicle traffic.

Prior to the start of construction, the construction contractor shall prepare and submit a traffic management plan to the District for approval. Construction shall not start until approval of the plan is provided by the District. The traffic management plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- A temporary traffic control plan that addresses traffic safety and control through the work zone, including the temporary one-lane closure of Avenida Sevilla to accommodate construction.
- Identification of the timing of deliveries of heavy equipment and building materials.
- Requirement for designated construction staff to be assigned as flaggers to direct traffic through Avenida Sevilla, as needed during lane closures.
- Measures to maintain access for emergency vehicles to the surrounding community.

Significance after Mitigation

Mitigation Measure TRA-1 requires implementation of a traffic management plan to address traffic safety through the work zone, maintain emergency vehicle access, and designate alternative routes for emergency evacuation for residents to take in the event of an emergency during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would reduce the project's impacts to emergency access to a less-than-significant level.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than - Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in 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:				
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)?	☐	■	☐	☐
b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	■	☐	☐

Overview of Tribal Cultural Resources

Tribal cultural resources are defined in Public Resources Section 21074(a)(1)(A-B) as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either:

- Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; and/or
- Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Section 5020.1(k).

AB 52 establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding those resources. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be adopted or certified. 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,"

specifically with those Native American tribes that have requested notice of projects proposed within the jurisdiction of the lead agency. Consultation begins with a written notification that must include a brief description of the proposed project, the project location, the CEQA lead agency contact information, and notification that the California Native American Tribe has 30 days to request consultation. Upon receipt of a written response from a California Native American Tribe requesting consultation, the CEQA lead agency and the California Native American Tribe requesting consultation shall begin the AB 52 process. The District circulated AB 52 consultation letters for the proposed project, including project information, map, and contact information, to the following Native American tribes on December 3 and December 5, 2024:

- Cahuilla Band of Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation
- Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieliño Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrieliño/Tongva Nation
- Juaneño Band of Mission Indians
- Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes
- Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A
- La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
- Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians

The Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians responded on December 4, 2024, but indicated no concerns and deferred to the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians. The District received one response requesting consultation from Joyce Perry, Cultural Resources Director of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation-Belardes via email on January 8, 2025. The District held a consultation meeting with Ms. Perry via Zoom on February 4, 2025. Ms. Perry did not identify the presence of tribal cultural resources but expressed concern about the potential to encounter human remains of Native American origin during ground-disturbing activities. Ms. Perry requested full-time Native American monitoring of ground-disturbing activities up to 10 feet below ground surface and indicated monitoring could be reduced to spot-checking or eliminated if initial monitoring observed the presence of fill materials and/or the absence of cultural materials. Ms. Perry followed up via email on February 10, 2025 with suggested mitigation measure language. The District closed c~~C~~onsultation with the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation-Belardes with consensus on March 27, 2025 ~~is ongoing~~. No other requests for AB 52 consultation were received.

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?

The District conducted AB 52 consultation with the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation-Belardes (Consulting Tribe). No tribal cultural resources as defined in PRC Section 21074(a) that are listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or determined significant by the District were identified as a result of consultation. However, the Consulting Tribe expressed concern about the potential to encounter human remains of Native American origin that may be present at depths up to 10 feet below ground surface. As a result of the District's consultation with the Consulting Tribe, the District has voluntarily proposed implementation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1, which incorporates the input received from the Consulting Tribe during AB 52 consultation.

Mitigation Measure

TCR-1 Native American Monitoring

Prior to the start of initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g., site preparation, grubbing, excavation, grading), the District shall retain a Native American monitor representing the Consulting Tribe to observe initial ground-disturbing activities up to 10 feet below ground surface. The Native American monitor shall be present at the pre-grade conference. Monitoring shall be limited to the disturbance of sediments from their native place of deposition and shall not include any secondary movement of sediment that might be required for the proposed project (e.g., backfilling). The Native American monitor shall have the authority to halt and redirect work should any archaeological resources of Native American origin or human remains be identified during monitoring. If archaeological resources of Native American origin or human remains are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 50 feet of the find shall halt, and the District shall retain an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for archaeology. The archaeologist shall, in consultation with the Native American monitor, evaluate the find for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources/National Register of Historic Places. If human remains are encountered, the procedures outlined in California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 shall be implemented. Native American monitoring may be reduced to spot-checking or eliminated at the discretion of the Consulting Tribe, in consultation with the District, as warranted by conditions such as encountering bedrock or sediments being excavated are fill. The Native American monitor shall prepare daily monitoring logs that include a description of construction activities, hours worked, and other applicable observations. In the event the Native American monitor is not present in accordance with the established schedule, construction will nonetheless continue.

Significance After Mitigation

Mitigation Measure TCR-1 would minimize potential impacts to human remains of Native American origin through Native American monitoring and implementation of appropriate procedures for unanticipated discoveries. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure TCR-1, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

19 Utilities and Service Systems

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

a. 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?

Water

The proposed project involves improvements to the existing ACLS, which is part of the District's wastewater conveyance system. The proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities; therefore, no impact would occur.

Wastewater Treatment

The proposed project involves improvements to an existing wastewater lift station, the environmental impacts of which are analyzed throughout this document. No additional environmental impacts associated with the construction or relocation of wastewater facilities would occur beyond those analyzed herein.

Stormwater Drainage

As discussed in Section 10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the proposed project would not introduce substantial additional impervious surfaces to the project site. The minor increase in impervious surfaces associated with the installation of the new access driveway would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff. Runoff would be directed to stormwater gutters on Avenida Sevilla, similar to existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded stormwater drainage, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. No impact would occur.

Electric Power and Natural Gas

As discussed in Section 6, *Energy*, project operation would increase electricity consumption at the project site by approximately 82,000 kWh per year; however, the proposed project's total electricity demand would be less than 0.01 percent of Southern California Edison's projected low demand supply of 100,313 GWh in 2027 (CEC 2024e). The proposed project would not require upgrades to electric power facilities to accommodate the increased electricity demand and does not include natural gas connections. Furthermore, no modifications to the on-site transformer are proposed. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power or natural gas facilities, and no impact would occur.

Telecommunications

The proposed project would involve installation of wall telephone outlets, telephone terminal cabinets and wall-mounted telephones within the proposed electrical building. All equipment, materials, and installations would be required to comply with applicable standards, specifications, and regulations of local power and telephone companies. The environmental impacts of this infrastructure have been evaluated throughout this document, and no additional environmental impacts associated with the construction or relocation of telecommunications facilities would occur.

Summary

In summary, the proposed project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. No impact would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance the ACLS by increasing pump performance, addressing maintenance issues of existing piping and equipment, and simplifying maintenance activities. In addition, the increased pump performance would allow the ACLS to accommodate existing flows as well as the additional wastewater flows anticipated to be generated by the planned Village at Laguna Hills development, proposed within the District's existing service area. The Village at Laguna Hills development was introduced as part of the City of Laguna Hills' 2009 General Plan. The City of Laguna Hills prepared and certified a Program Environmental Impact Report in 2009 for the General Plan (State Clearinghouse #2008081100), which specifically evaluated the environmental impacts of the buildout of the Village at Laguna Hills development, including impacts to water supplies. (Five subsequent Addenda to the 2009 Program Environmental Impact Report have been adopted for the project, with the most recent adopted in March 2021.) The proposed project itself would have no permanent on-site personnel and would not require water supplies during operation. Therefore, no impact to water supplies would occur.

NO IMPACT

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?

The proposed project involves improvements to the existing ACLS, which is part of the District's wastewater conveyance system. The proposed project would not require permanent on-site personnel and does not include the installation of restroom facilities. The proposed project is intended to provide critical upgrades to ACLS to improve system reliability and reduce the potential for unexpected leaks and/or overflows of the wastewater system. The proposed project would involve both temporary and permanent dewatering during construction and operation, respectively. Groundwater produced during dewatering would be discharged to the District's sewer system for treatment. The District has determined it has sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated volume of dewatering during project construction, and the volume of dewatering during operation would be consistent with existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not result in a determination by the District that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to its existing commitments. 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 soil spoils or other construction waste, which would be disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. The proposed project would involve the export of approximately 160 cubic yards of soil and approximately 4,680 cubic feet of demolition debris would be removed from the project site. The non-hazardous waste generated by the proposed project would be disposed of

at the Prima Deshecha Landfill, located in San Juan Capistrano approximately 9.0 miles southeast of the project site. The Prima Deshecha Landfill accepts a variety of waste industrial, construction/ demolition, and mixed municipal waste. As of September 2023, the Prima Deshecha Landfill has a remaining capacity of 128,800,000 cubic yards and a maximum permitted capacity of 172,100,000 cubic yards, which is sufficient to accommodate the solid waste generated by the proposed project (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery 2024). Given the landfill's substantial remaining capacity, the temporary nature of construction, and minimal level of waste, the proposed project would not generate quantities of non-hazardous solid waste that would account for a substantial percentage of the total daily regional permitted capacity available at Prima Deshecha Landfill. Once constructed, the proposed project would not consume or generate solid waste during operation. Therefore, non-hazardous waste generated by the proposed project would not exceed the available capacity at the landfill serving the project area that would accept debris generated by the project.

The proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to solid waste generation, collection, and disposal. The proposed project would be required to transport and dispose of any and all hazardous waste as outlined in Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, at a licensed hazardous waste disposal facility in accordance with all applicable regulations. Such regulations include but are not limited to the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, California Hazardous Material Management Act, and California Code of Regulations Title 22. Recycling and reuse activities during construction would comply with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939). As such, the proposed project would not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Therefore, impacts to solid waste would be less than significant.

LESS-THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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?	☐	☐	☐	■
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	■
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	■
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	■

Overview of Wildfire Risk

The entire coastal southern California region is prone to large wildfires due to its hot, dry climate and expansive coverage of ignitable vegetation. During the autumn and winter months, strong offshore Santa Ana wind events carry dry, desert air and can fan fast-moving fires that spread rapidly from heavily-vegetated wilderness and mountainous areas into developed communities. The most recent fire in the project site vicinity was the 23,526-acre Airport Fire approximately 10.5 miles northeast of Laguna Woods in September 2024 (CAL FIRE 2024b).

Post-fire conditions leave exposed mountain slopes and hillsides vulnerable to surface erosion and runoff. Debris flows during post-fire rainy seasons can pose a risk to life and property and occur with little warning. In southern California, as little as 0.3 inch of rain in 30 minutes can produce debris flows on post-fire landscapes (United States Geological Survey 2018).

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?

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?

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 project site is not located in a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) or a State Responsibility Area (SRA). The nearest VHFHSZ identified by CAL FIRE is approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the project site (CAL FIRE 2024a). In addition, the nearest Fire Hazard Severity Zone to the project site as delineated by the City's General Plan Safety Element is a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the project site (City of Laguna Woods 2015c). The project site is separated from these fire hazard zones by existing highways and development, which provide a buffer against potential fire risks. Therefore, the proposed project would not be located in or near a State Responsibility Area or land classified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. No impacts related to wildfire would occur.

NO IMPACT

21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than - Significant Impact	No Impact
Does the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	■
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)?	☐	■	☐	☐
c. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	■	☐	☐

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?

As discussed in Section 4, *Biological Resources*, the project would not 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. In addition, as discussed in Section 5, *Cultural Resources*, the project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, no impact would occur.

NO 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)?

Cumulative impacts are defined as two or more individual (and potentially less than significant) project effects which, when considered together or in concert with other projects, combine to result in a significant impact within an identified geographic area. 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 create 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 in the project area may be more substantial. The District does not currently have any major cumulative projects (outside of routine operation and maintenance activities) proposed within one mile of the project site, and there are no other cumulative projects planned within one mile of the project site (City of Laguna Woods 2024b). In addition, the project site is located in the Laguna Woods Village community, which is fully built out. Therefore, this cumulative impacts analysis evaluates 1) the potential for the proposed project in combination with past, present, and probable future growth/development projected in local and regional planning documents, such as local General Plans and SCAG's Connect SoCal 2024, for south Orange County and Southern California as a whole to result in significant cumulative impacts as well as 2) the potential for the proposed project to result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to any identified significant cumulative impacts. The geographic scope defines the geographic area in which projects may contribute to a specific cumulative impact. The geographic scope of the following cumulative impact analysis varies depending upon the specific environmental issue area being analyzed.

Project impacts are primarily temporary, localized effects that would occur during construction activities. As discussed throughout this IS-MND, the project would result in no impacts to agriculture and forestry resources, mineral resources, population and housing, and wildfire; therefore, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to these resources. The potential for the project to contribute to cumulative impacts would be limited to the infrequent periods of project activities and the following specific issue areas, for which the project is anticipated to have less than significant impacts (with or without mitigation):

- **Aesthetics.** Cumulative development in the region could continue to change the existing visual landscape. However, cumulative projects in the vicinity of the project site would consist of a continuation of existing uses and would not result in the addition of large structures that could interfere with public views in the area. Cumulative development would be subject to existing regulations governing scenic character, including the City's General Plan. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to aesthetics would be less than significant.
- **Air Quality.** Because the SCAB is designated as being in nonattainment for the ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS and CAAQS and nonattainment for the PM_{10} CAAQS, significant cumulative air quality impacts currently exist for these pollutants. As discussed in Section 3, *Air Quality,* the proposed project would not generate emissions of these air pollutants that exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds, which are intended to assess whether a project's contribution to existing cumulative air quality impacts is considerable. Therefore, the project's contribution to significant cumulative air quality impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

- **Biological Resources.** Cumulative development in the region would continue to disturb areas with the potential to contain or provide habitat for biological resources. Cumulative development projects have undergone or would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential biological resources impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. If these cumulative projects would result in impacts to biological resources, impacts to such resources would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Given the uncertainty in the extent of impacts associated with these projects, this analysis conservatively assumes a significant cumulative impact to biological resources would occur. However, project impacts to biological resources would be localized and limited to the temporary construction period. Such project-level impacts would be less-than-significant impacts with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2. Consequently, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this cumulative impact.
- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources.** Cumulative development in the region would continue to disturb areas with the potential to contain cultural and tribal cultural resources. As mentioned above, cumulative development projects have undergone or would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential cultural and tribal resources impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. If cumulative projects would result in impacts to cultural and tribal resources, impacts to such resources would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Given the uncertainty in the extent of impacts associated with these projects, this analysis conservatively assumes significant cumulative impacts to cultural and tribal resources would occur. Nevertheless, no cultural or tribal cultural resources are known to be present within the project site, and the proposed project would be required to implement Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and TCR-1 to reduce its impacts to unanticipated discoveries of cultural resources, archaeological resources of Native American origin, and human remains to a less-than-significant level such that project-level impacts would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to these cumulative impacts.
- **Energy.** Cumulative development in the region would use energy resources during both construction and operation. Similar to the proposed project, cumulative project construction would be subject to existing regulations that would minimize inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary fuel consumption. Furthermore, in the interest of cost-efficiency, cumulative project construction contractors would not be anticipated to utilize fuel in a manner that is wasteful or unnecessary. Cumulative project operations would consist of a continuation of existing uses and would not substantially increase energy usage. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to energy would not be significant.
- **Geology and Soils.** Cumulative development in the region would continue to disturb areas with the potential to contain paleontological resources, including the Monterey Formation, which has high paleontological sensitivity. As discussed above, cumulative development projects have undergone or would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential paleontological resources impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. This analysis conservatively assumes a significant cumulative impact to paleontological resources would occur. Nevertheless, the proposed project would be required to implement Mitigation Measure GEO-1 to reduce its impacts to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level such that project-level impacts would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to this cumulative impact.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** GHG emissions and climate change are, by definition, cumulative impacts. As discussed in Section 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the adverse environmental impacts of cumulative GHG emissions, including increased average temperatures, more drought years, and more frequent large wildfires, are already occurring. As a result, cumulative impacts related to GHG emissions are significant. Thus, the issue of climate change involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards an impact is cumulatively considerable. As discussed in Section 8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, project emissions would be consistent with adopted plans and would therefore not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** Similar to the proposed project, cumulative projects would be required to comply with regulations applicable to the use, disposal, and transportation of hazardous materials during construction activities, and compliance with applicable regulations would reduce potential cumulative impacts to less-than-significant levels. With respect to the use and accidental release of hazardous materials in the environment during construction, effects are generally limited to site-specific conditions. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to accidental release of hazardous materials would not be significant. In addition, cumulative impacts related to emergency response and evacuation plans would be less than significant because no cumulative projects are proposed within one mile of the project site that could combine with the proposed project to create greater impacts to local emergency response and evacuation than those identified for the proposed project.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** Cumulative projects in the region would be required to comply with existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulations to ensure they do not result in substantial erosion, surface runoff, or stormwater discharges that would substantially affect water quality in the area. Implementation of these regulations minimizes and avoids the potential for cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts to occur. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.
- **Land Use and Planning.** Cumulative development would be subject to existing land use and planning regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding and mitigating environmental effects, including the City's General Plan and LWMC and would be required to address and minimize any conflicts on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to land use and planning would be less than significant.
- **Noise.** There are no cumulative projects proposed within one mile of the project site that would have the potential to result in cumulative noise impacts. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to noise would be less than significant.
- **Public Services.** No cumulative projects are proposed within one mile of the project site that would also result in impacts to the Upper Aliso Creek Trail, and the proposed project would result in no impacts to all other public services. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to public services would be less than significant.
- **Recreation.** No cumulative projects are proposed within one mile of the project site that would also result in impacts to the Upper Aliso Creek Trail. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to recreation would be less than significant.
- **Transportation.** There are no cumulative projects proposed within one mile of the project site that would have the potential to result in cumulative transportation impacts. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to transportation would be less than significant.

- **Utilities and Service Systems.** Cumulative development in the region would continue to increase demand for utilities and service systems. As mentioned above, cumulative development projects have undergone or would be required to undergo CEQA review, which would determine the extent of potential utility and service system impacts and mitigate those impacts appropriately. If cumulative projects would result in impacts to utilities and service systems, impacts to such services would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Given the uncertainty in the extent of impacts associated with these projects, this analysis conservatively assumes significant cumulative impacts to utilities and service systems would occur. Nevertheless, the project itself consists of wastewater conveyance infrastructure and would not generate a substantial increase for water supplies. Solid waste generation associated with the project would be minimal and temporary during the construction period. Therefore, the project's contribution to significant cumulative impacts related to utilities and service systems would not be considerable.

Given the above discussion, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact with incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, CUL-1, GEO-1, NOI-1, TRA-1, and TCR-1.

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?

In general, impacts to human beings are associated with such issues as air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and wildfire impacts. As detailed under Section 3, *Air Quality*, Section 9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, Section 13, *Noise*, and Section 20, *Wildfire*, the proposed project would not result, either directly or indirectly, in substantial adverse effects related to air quality, hazardous materials, noise, and wildfire with implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1. Therefore, impacts to human beings would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED

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