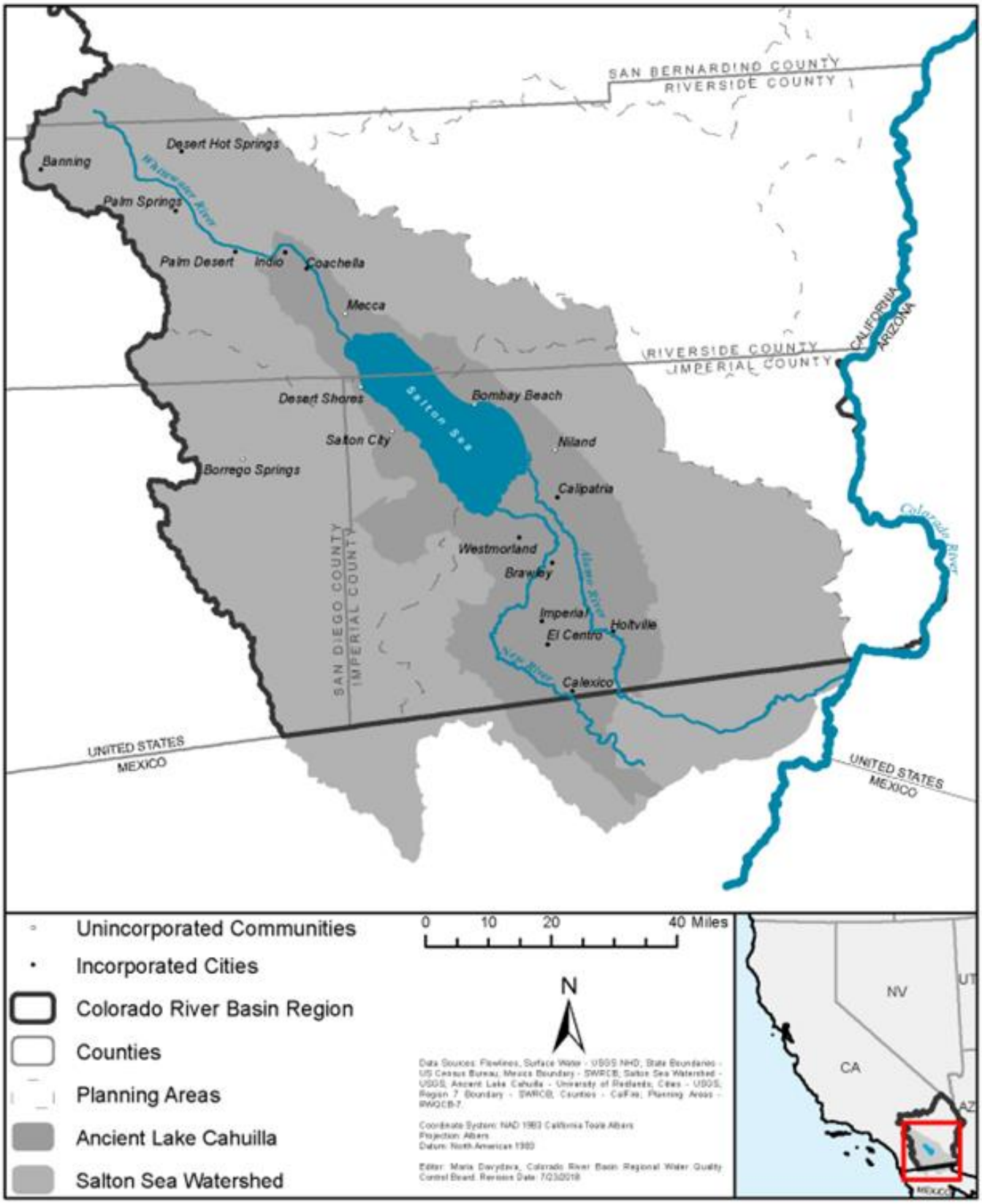
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING MEETING FOR DISSOLVED OXYGEN AND NUTRIENT IMPAIRMENTS IN THE SALTON SEA TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS

January 31, 2023

Contents

Project Vicinity Map

Salton Sea Watershed



Beneficial Uses

Beneficial Uses in the Salton Sea

Beneficial Use of Water	Definition
Aquaculture (AQUA)	Uses of water for aquaculture or mariculture operations including, but not limited to, propagation, cultivation, maintenance, or harvesting of aquatic plants and animals for human consumption or bait purposes.
Water Contact Recreation (REC I)	Uses of water for recreational activities involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, swimming, wading, water-skiing, skin and scuba diving, surfing, white water activities, fishing, and use of natural hot springs. An advisory has been issued by the Imperial County Health Department warming against the consumption of any fish caught from the river and the river has been posted with advisories against any body contact with the water.
Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC II)	Uses of water for recreational activities involving proximity to water, but not normally involving contact with water where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, picnicking, sunbathing, hiking, beachcombing, camping, boating, tide pool and marine life study, hunting, sightseeing, or aesthetic enjoyment in conjunction with the above activities.
Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM)	Uses of water that support warm water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.
Wildlife Habitat (WILD)	Uses of water that support terrestrial ecosystems including, but not limited to, the preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats, vegetation, wildlife (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates), or wildlife water and food sources.
Preservation of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE)	Uses of water that support habitats necessary, at least in part, for the survival and successful maintenance of plant or animal species established under state or federal law as rare, threatened or endangered.
Industrial Service Supply (IND) P	Uses of water for industrial activities that do not depend primarily on water quality including, but not limited to, mining, cooling water supply, hydraulic conveyance, gravel washing, fire protection, and oil well repressurization

Summary of the Beneficial Uses Specific to the Salton Sea

	AQUA	IND	REC I	REC II	WARM	WILD	RARE
Salton Sea	X	P	X	X	X	X	X

‘X’ indicates existing uses

‘P’ indicates potential uses

Water Quality Objectives

Water quality objectives (WQOs) are standards established to protect beneficial uses designated for water bodies in the Colorado River Basin region. WQOs are listed in Chapter 3, Section II of the Basin Plan titled General Surface Water Objectives. The following WQOs are associated with the pollutants to be addressed under this Project:

Biostimulatory Substances: Waters shall not contain biostimulatory substances in concentrations that promote aquatic growths to the extent that such growths cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses. Nitrate and phosphate limitations will be placed on industrial discharges to New and Alamo Rivers and irrigation basins on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the beneficial uses of these streams.

Chemical Constituents: No individual chemical or combination of chemicals shall be present in concentrations that adversely affect beneficial uses. There shall be no increase in hazardous chemical concentrations found in bottom sediments or aquatic life.

Dissolved Oxygen: The dissolved oxygen concentration shall not be reduced below the following minimum levels at any time:

Waters designated:

WARM (Warm Freshwater Habitat).....5.0 mg/l

COLD (Cold Freshwater Habitat)..... 8.0 mg/l

WARM and COLD……..... 8.0 mg/l

The Salton Sea is designated with the Warm Freshwater Habitat beneficial use, but not with the Cold Freshwater Habitat beneficial use; therefore, the first minimum value of 5.0 mg/l applies..

CEQA Environmental Factors

1. Aesthetics
2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources
3. Air Quality
4. Biological Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Energy
7. Geology and Soils
8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
10. Hydrology and Water Quality
11. Land Use and Planning
12. Mineral Resources
13. Noise
14. Population and Housing
15. Public Services
16. Recreation
17. Transportation
18. Tribal Cultural Resources
19. Utilities and Service Systems
20. Wildfire
21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

The CEQA checklist for each of the environmental factors is included in the following pages.

CEQA Checklist

Project Title:
Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrient Impairments in the Salton Sea Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

Lead Agency Name and Address:
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Lead Agency Contact Person:
Hajer Dawoody
California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 313-1291
hajer.dawoody@waterboards.ca.gov

Project Description:
Development of total maximum daily loads for dissolved oxygen and nutrients in the Salton Sea.

Project Location:
The Salton Sea watershed in Imperial and Riverside Counties, California.

1. AESTHETICS

The level of impacts to aesthetics are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below, except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099, will the project:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	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 publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?				
D	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				

2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

The level of impacts to agriculture and forestry resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				
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?				

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. The level of impacts to air quality are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to will the project:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 ?				
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?				

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to biological resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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, 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?				

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to cultural resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to section 15064.5?				
B	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to section 15064.5?				
C	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?				

6. ENERGY

The level of impacts to energy are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Result in 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?				

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The level of impacts to geology and soils are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving rupture of known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
B	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?				
C	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				
D	Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving landslides?				
E	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				
F	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?				
G	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?				
H	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The level of impacts to greenhouse gas emissions are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The level of impacts to hazards and hazardous materials are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				
D	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				
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?				
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?				

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The level of impacts to hydrology and water quality are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				
D	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 offsite?				
E	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 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?				

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
F	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?				
G	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				
H	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

The level of impacts to land use and planning are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to mineral resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a 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?				

13. NOISE

The level of impacts to noise are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Generate 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	Generate 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?				

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

The level of impacts to population and housing are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				
B	Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

The level of impacts to public services are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Fire protection?				
B	Police protection?				
C	Schools?				
D	Parks?				
E	Other public facilities?				

16. RECREATION

The level of impacts to recreation are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	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	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				

17. TRANSPORTATION

The level of impacts to transportation are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				
D	Result in inadequate emergency access?				

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

The level of impacts to tribal cultural resources are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.				

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The level of impacts to utilities and service systems are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				

20. WILDFIRE

The level of impacts to wildfire are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project is located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones will the project:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
A	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				
B	Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?				
C	Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?				
D	Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The level of impacts to mandatory findings of significance are evaluated based on the following questions posed under impact description in the matrix below as to whether the project will:

No.	Impact Description	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)?				
C	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				