VENTURA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY
EL RIO SEWER SYSTEM PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
42 U.S.C. 4332 (2) (C), 16 U.S.C. 470, 49 U.S.C. 303 and 23 U.S.C. 138
for the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

April 2003

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Abstract: This EA evaluates the affects of a proposed sewer system project that would include a sewage collection system and sewage treatment and disposal. The following alternatives have also been evaluated: No Action, Connection to the Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plan. The EA finds that the No Action Alternative would have a significant environmental effect. The Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative would have significant impacts, but with mitigation measures, such impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level. The other two alternatives would not result in less than significant impacts.

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SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND

The project is located in the El Rio area, an unincorporated area of the County of Ventura, California and adjacent portions of the City of Oxnard. In particular, the approximately 950-acre project area includes the communities of El Rio East, El Rio West, Strickland Acres, and the Vineyard Industrial Area. In the City of Oxnard, the project area includes a portion of the Rio Lindo area just south of Highway 101, land adjacent to the north edge of Highway 101 between Alvarado and Cortez Streets, and a parcel adjacent to the west edge of El Rio West. The project's regional location is shown on Figure 1.

The El Rio area includes many land uses, such as residential, industrial and commercial, that dispose of wastewater through the use of on-site septic systems. Septic systems remain the standard for newly developed areas of El Rio. These systems provide primary treatment of wastewater in the septic tank where solids settle out, and natural processes in the soil remove contaminants as the effluent percolates down to the groundwater. This method of wastewater disposal is effectively used in areas where there is an abundance of sand to leach the wastewater, the population density is low enough that leach fields can be rested periodically to regenerate the natural cleaning ability of sand, and where central collection and treatment is not available.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB), Los Angeles Region has determined that wastewater is contaminating the underlying groundwater basin in the El Rio area, which is the Oxnard Forebay Basin. As the groundwater from the Basin is used as a drinking water supply for the area, this contamination, with pathogens and nitrogen compounds, is impeding the beneficial use of the groundwater as a drinking water source throughout the Oxnard Plain. The downgradient migration of groundwater will likely carry contaminates toward domestic wells outside the area and ultimately the ocean. The CRWQCB, Los Angeles Region adopted Resolution No. 99-13 in August 1999 prohibiting new septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay, including El Rio and Saticoy areas, and discharge of septic effluent for lots less than 5 acres by January 1, 2008.

The County of Ventura has undertaken the necessary studies to determine and recommend corrective action. The results of the study are documented in the El Rio Area and Saticoy Sewer Collection and Disposal System Facility Plan (August 2000) prepared by Penfield & Smith for the County. The Plan analyzes the conversion of the residential, industrial, and commercial areas from septic sewage systems to a collection and central treatment sewage system.

2.0 NEPA PROCESS

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with Sections 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Chapter V). If, based on this analysis, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) finds that the proposed action (approval of funding for the project described herein) would have no significant environmental effects and concludes that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be published.

While the this EA covers the entire El Rio area, USEPA is only authorized to help fund the design work for the El Rio South Central Area.

3.0 RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

The lead agency for this EA is the USEPA. The County of Ventura has obtained a Fiscal Year 2002 Appropriations Act Grant from the EPA. The grant will provide funding for a portion of the project design. The contact person for the USEPA is:

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The local agency that is proposing and would administer the project is the Ventura County Public Works Agency, Water and Sanitation Division. The contact person for the Division is:

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Figure 1

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SECTION B - PURPOSE, NEED, OBJECTIVE AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The project area includes Rio Mesa High School and the Strickland Acres development along Central Avenue; the Beedy Street and Vineyard industrial areas adjacent to Vineyard Avenue (State Route 232) between Highway 101 and Central Avenue; the El Rio East community between Vineyard Avenue and Rose Avenue, north of Highway 101; and a small portion of the community of El Rio West off Vineyard Avenue. A portion of the El Rio community both west of Vineyard Avenue and along Ventura Road is within the City of Oxnard limits; it is currently provided sewer by the City and is not part of the project area.

The project objective is to provide an alternative sewage collection, treatment and disposal system to the El Rio area, described above, that will satisfy the requirements of CRWQCB Resolution No. 99-13. The El Rio wastewater lines would connect with existing pipes in Oxnard; no improvements to these pipes are proposed to accommodate the sewage from the El Rio area. This project would benefit residents, business owners, employers, and the public in general through compliance with the referenced resolution, which has the objective of protecting and improving water quality.

SECTION C - ALTERNATIVES

The proposed project evaluated in this EA includes the installation of a sewage collection system and method for sewage treatment and disposal for the El Rio area. The County of Ventura Facilities Plan, El Rio Area and Saticoy Sewer Collection and Disposal System (Penfield & Smith, August 2000) identifies construction and operation of the following for the El Rio area:

- Sewage Collection System (mostly within existing roadways)
- Sewage Treatment and Disposal (<u>one</u> of the options described below)
  - City of Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant (OWWTP)
  - Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to Oxnard WWTP
  - New Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

The preferred alternative for sewage treatment and disposal analyzed in this environmental document is connection to the OWWTP (see Figure 2). In addition, the No Action Alternative, as well as the two alternatives identified above, the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative and the Connect to the Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to the OWWTP Alternative, are evaluated, along with the Preferred Alternative, in the assessments for each of the environmental issue areas of this EA.

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Figure 2

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Because the proposed project is located in the State of California and requires discretionary approval, it was reviewed pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Through that process several measures were identified and have been incorporated into the proposed project to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts to a less than significant level. These measures would be applied to any all of the identified alternatives (unless otherwise stated) with the exception of the No Action Alternative. These measures are identified below by issue area.

Air Quality:

AQ1 To augment standard dust control measures, the Public Works Agency shall implement a Fugitive Dust Control Program. The Program shall include the following procedures:

- Water trucks shall spray exposed soils as needed to minimize off-site transport of fugitive dust.
- To prevent excessive amounts of dust, dust producing operations shall cease during high wind events. (High wind events are defined as wind of such velocity as to cause fugitive dust from within the site to blow off-site.)
- Streets shall be swept at the end of the day if visible soil material is carried over adjacent roads.
- Vehicular traffic in unpaved areas shall be limited to no more than 15 mph.
- All earth material transported to or from the site shall be sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- Minimize the area of soil disturbance to the extent feasible.
- At any point in time, if it is observed that fugitive dust is blowing off-site, additional dust prevention measures shall be initiated. If these measures are insufficient to prevent fugitive dust (i.e., during periods of extreme heat or winds), dust generating activities shall be immediately curtailed until the conditions abate.

AQ2 The following construction mitigation measures shall be applied to equipment and vehicles:

- Minimizing idling time.
- Maintaining engines in good condition and proper tune.

Water Resources:

WR1 The project applicant shall comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharge Associated with Construction Activity (No. CA000002) and the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, NPDES Permit No. CAS004002.

Paleontological Resources:

PR1 In the event that fossil remains are found during site preparation, work shall be stopped immediately or redirected away from the find. A Ventura County approved paleontologist shall be called to the site immediately to assess the site and determine further mitigation measures to be implemented as necessary.

Cultural Resources:

CR1 At the commencement of project construction, a professional archaeologist shall provide a cultural resources orientation to construction crews on the steps to be taken in the unexpected event that prehistoric and/or historic resources are exposed during project construction.

CR2 A professional archaeologist and Chumash representative shall be retained to monitor all trenching within El Rio West as shown on Figure 9 of the Phase I Archaeological Survey Report. The archaeologist shall have the power to temporarily halt or redirect project trenching in the event that potentially significant cultural resources are exposed.

CR3 In the event that archaeological resources are unearthed during project construction, all earth disturbing work within the vicinity of the find must be temporarily suspended or redirected until an archaeologist has evaluated the nature and significance of the find. After the find has been appropriately mitigated, work in the area may resume. A Chumash representative should monitor any mitigation work associated with prehistoric cultural material.

CR4 If human remains are unearthed, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission.

Seismic Hazards:

SH1 The Public Works Agency shall retain a registered engineering geologist to prepare a geotechnical study of the project area. Seismic and geologic hazards (including but not limited to liquefaction, subsidence, expansive soils) shall be assessed and mitigation

measures recommended as necessary. The report shall be submitted to the appropriate agencies for review and approval.

SH2 The Public Works Agency shall implement the appropriate measures identified in the approved Geotechnical Study during project design and construction. Such measures may include among others, implementation of recommended structural design criteria to accommodate the anticipated lateral movement that may be associated with liquefaction-related settlement.

Hazardous Materials/Waste:

HM1 Prior to project construction, the County of Ventura shall hire a qualified geoenvironmental consultant to perform a Phase I Site Assessment for the portions of the pipeline alignment not within road rights-of-way. If the Phase I Site Assessment indicates that there is a potential for contamination at the site, a Phase II investigation may be recommended. The Phase II shall also be completed prior to construction. In the event that the Phase II identifies contamination that may create a health hazard as a result of project implementation, measures to remediate the hazard shall be recommended (e.g., remediation of the contamination or redirection of the proposed development to avoid the hazard). Recommended remedial action shall be successfully implemented prior to the initiation of project construction.

Noise and Vibration:

N1 The project will comply with any and all standards, and requirements of the County's General Plan policies and noise criteria/thresholds in effect at the time of project construction. Noise reduction measures are likely to include:

- Construction will be limited to between the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- All equipment will be in proper operating condition and fitted with standard factory silencing features.
- Residents located adjacent to the project site will be given advanced notice with regard to the construction schedule.
- Portable noise barriers will be used

However, in the event that the use of portable noise barriers is not required in the County noise reduction measures at the time of project construction, such devices will not be used for the project.

Transportation/Circulation:

T1 The project proponent, Ventura County Public Works Agency, Water and Sanitation Division, shall pay the appropriate reciprocal traffic agreement fee ($278.00) to the Ventura County Public Works Agency, Transportation Department, prior to project construction.

T2 The contractor or Public Works Agency shall prepare a Traffic Control Plan, detailing access and lane closures, as well as signage and other mechanisms to ensure the effective and safe operation of the roadway network, bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, or Caltrans, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work.

T3 Prior to the start of construction or future maintenance work that may block access to driveways, the Public Works Agency or contractor shall prepare a description of the proposed closure or blocking of access, along with the notification procedure for all tenants and property owners that may be affected by the work. This information shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, or Caltrans, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the start of maintenance or construction.

T4 The County Public Works Agency shall include proper precautions to protect all pavement, curb and gutter, sidewalks and drainage structures from damage are taken during construction. Any portion damaged by the project's operations, in the opinion of the appropriate Transportation Department or designee, shall be replaced in accordance with current Standard Construction Details and/or in a manner acceptable to the Transportation Department or designee.

T5 Trenching shall not be permitted on any street listed in Table 1 entitled "Pavement Rehabilitation Since 1996" prepared by the County of Ventura Transportation Department until 5 years have elapsed since the date of the overlay. No trenching shall be permitted on any road listed on Table 2 entitled "Proposed Pavement Rehabilitation Plan" prepared by the County of Ventura Transportation Department unless a full overlay on the listed street is provided after trenching is completed. Alternatively, the Transportation Department would agree to delay the scheduled overlay on the listed streets until all trenching is completed provided the County Water and Sanitation Division agrees to bear a proportionate share of the cost to overlay these streets, based on the resurfacing cost at the time of construction.

T6 The hours of project operation including hauling shall be restricted to 7:30 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays.

T7 During the hauling of material to or from the sites, the trucks shall be covered to secure all material so that any nuisance or danger to the public from flying debris can be avoided.

T8 The contractor or County Public Works Agency shall prepare a Traffic Control Plan for bicycles and pedestrian facilities, detailing access and lane closures, detours, as well as signage and other mechanisms to ensure bicyclist and pedestrian safety in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer or Ventura County Transportation Department, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work.

T9 The contractor or Public Works Agency shall prepare a Traffic Control Plan for bus transit facilities, detailing access and lane closures, detours, as well as signage and other mechanisms in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, and SCAT, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work.

Waste Treatment and Disposal:

WT1 The proposed project will not be completed until adequate collection capacity exists within the City of Oxnard's system.

WT2 The County will pay to the City of Oxnard connection fees and any other fees, as negotiated between the County and the City. These fees are to ensure that the project pays its fair share toward the operation and maintenance of impacted City facilities, as well as the upgrade of any facilities as required to accommodate the project. The timing of the payment of fees will be mutually decided by agreement of the City and County. The agreement shall be prepared prior to project connection to the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant.

1.0 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

1.1 COMPONENTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative is estimated to add sewage collection and treatment for about 1,600 parcels. This alternative would include the installation and maintenance of about 83,610 linear feet of new sewage collection pipeline ranging in size from 8 to 21 inches in diameter. Collected sewage would be directed to and treated at the existing OWWTP.

A County Service Area for operations and maintenance of sewage infrastructure would be created under this alternative. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) would need to approve the sewer connection to the City of Oxnard.

The benefit of the proposed connection to the City of Oxnard disposal and treatment system is that the City of Oxnard is responsible for meeting and maintaining discharge requirements, moving sludge and solids, and for odor control. The City has a sewage collection system throughout Oxnard, and has prepared a Master Plan for sewage collection infrastructure and a Master Plan for the OWWTP that includes receiving El Rio sewage, as well as sewage from other areas in the City of Oxnard's sphere of influence. Capacity issues pertaining to the OWWTP and existing Oxnard collection infrastructure are addressed in Item 21.0 of this document.

In the County of Ventura Facilities Plan, El Rio and Saticoy Sewer Collection and Disposal System prepared by Penfield & Smith, the El Rio area has been divided into three drainage areas for ease of analysis. These areas are listed below, along with the estimated sewage flows.

North Area: The North are includes Rio Mesa High School, Strickland Acres, Beedy Street and Vineyard Industrial Areas. The average daily flow for sewage for this area is estimated to be 205,000 gallons per day (gpd).

El Rio West: El Rio West includes a small area of El Rio located west of Vineyard. The estimated sewage flow from this area is 41,400 gpd.

El Rio East: El Rio East includes a major portion of El Rio east of Vineyard and west of Rose Avenue. The estimated sewage average daily flow form this area is 763,600 gpd.

The total estimated average daily flow from the project is approximately 1.0 million gallons per day (mgd). Where water use records were available, the sewage flow was estimated as 85 percent of the potable water use, which is a widely accepted standard when planning sewer systems. This method was used for the Strickland Acres, Rio Mesa High School, and the Beedy Street and Vineyard Industrial areas. The flows for the Strickland Acres, Rio Mesa High School, and the two industrial areas were taken from the report titled County of Ventura Water and Wastewater Study for El Rio Juvenile Justice Complex (Penfield & Smith Engineers, January 17, 2000).

Where no useable water records were available, the metered sewer from Nyeland Acres, a similar type of community to the east of El Rio, was analyzed. It was determined that the flow in Nyeland Acres was equivalent to nearly 90 gallons per capita per day (gpcd). This closely approximates the City of Oxnard standard of 90 gpcd; therefore, 90 gpcd was used for the El Rio area. Density figures came from the Ventura County standards of 3.5 persons per single family home, 2.2 persons per apartment, and 0.003 cubic feet per second per acre for commercial properties.

The proposed project would collect sewage from the existing population and land uses and from future development, per existing land use designations within the four communities of the project area pursuant to the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan (Chase, personal communication, December 2000). This includes future development in the existing communities of El Rio East,

El Rio West, Strickland Acres, and the Vineyard Industrial Area as identified by the Area Plan. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to accommodate sewage flow from full buildout of the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, which is larger than the project area, nor the County of Ventura General Plan.

The north area sewage would be collected by 8-inch and 10-inch pipes along Central Avenue from the west side of Rio Mesa High School to Vineyard Avenue. There would be 8-inch feeder pipes from Strickland Acres to feed this main. In Vineyard Avenue, the 10-inch pipe would turn west to Beedy Street. At the western end of Beedy Street, the pipe would loop around the Juvenile Justice Center Complex (JJC) parcel to a connection with the JJC sewer to be constructed on South Bank Road. Feeders on Lambert Street, Montgomery Avenue and Sandy Circle would feed the JJC sewer. The sewage would be picked up in the JJC lift station constructed by the JJC project, and force main delivered to a new manhole at Vineyard Avenue and Simon Way. It would be transported through El Rio in a 15-inch pipe down Simon Way, turning at Cortez Street. At Helsam Avenue and Cortez Street, an 18-inch line would be used.

It should be noted that while the JJC sewer system would only require an 8-inch pipe, the County will construct a 10-inch sewer pipeline along South Bank Drive to Montgomery Avenue. This 10-inch line would be used for the North Area system. As part of the JJC project, the County will also construct the lift station which will be upgraded to accommodate the proposed project flows.

The lift station site would be located along a landscaped parkway strip between the sidewalk and a block wall, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Montgomery Avenue and South Bank Road. The lift station to be constructed as part of the JJC project would have three pumps, which may be above or under ground, a vault with valving, and a computerized control system (SCADA controller). The lift station would most likely be an 8-foot diameter pipe wet well with a 4' x 4' valve box, all below grade (up to a depth of 15 feet). There would be either a surrounding block wall or chain link enclosure of about 6-8 feet in height, and an above ground standby generator. A possible alternative to the wet well is a dry pit with belt driven pumps above ground. There would either be a stand-by generator or drive engine. This type of station would be of low-profile fiberglass housings, about 4-5 feet in height.

Lift station modifications to be conducted as part of this project would include installing larger pumps, larger electric starters and motor protection, and some control system changes. All of these changes would be primarily internal.

The JJC project would construct the force main from the lift station, along Montgomery Avenue. Until the El Rio project is ready, the force main would connect to the City of Oxnard's 10-inch line on Vineyard Avenue north of Collins Street. When the El Rio project is constructed, the force main would be intercepted at Simon Way and redirected as shown on Figure 2. The connection at the City's 10-inch pipeline would be abandoned, and the remaining force main would be abandoned in place.

For a connection to the City of Oxnard south of the freeway, the 18-inch pipe will need to crossover from Cortez Street to Balboa Street at Corsicana Drive. Once on Balboa Street, the 18" line would extend south to Ventura Boulevard. Once in Ventura Boulevard, it would change to 21", extend southerly across Highway 101 into the City of Oxnard, and connect to the City system in Stanford Avenue.

A network of 8-inch pipelines would collect the remainder of the El Rio Area and deliver the sewage to the main trunk line. The collection system would intercept the City system north of Highway 101, allowing the abandonment of the City's Lift Station #25 at Cortez Street and Ventura Boulevard. Therefore, delivery of the El Rio East and North Area sewage into the City of Oxnard would be by gravity feed to a 24-inch line in Stanford Avenue, south of the freeway.

The El Rio West system would be a series of 8-inch and 10-inch lines from Wright Road (in El Rio east), east on Sycamore Street, south on Colonia Avenue, and west on Myrtle Street to the western side of the area. A pipe from the City area north of El Rio West would intercept the flow from that area and allow the City to abandon its Lift Station #26 near Detroit Drive and Stroube Street. For disposal to the City of Oxnard, a 12-inch pipe would be extended west through a parcel in the City of Oxnard to connect to the City's 21-inch pipe that crosses Highway 101 into the Esplanade shopping area of Oxnard.

The pipelines described above were sized to keep velocity near or above 2 feet per second. Peaking factors were used to size the pipe, and were based on those of the City of Oxnard.

1.2 SCHEDULE

Project construction is expected to begin in 2006. The project will require an estimated 41 crew-months. A crew month is defined as one pipe crew per month. The contractor may select to use more than one pipe crew at a time, so that a total of 41 months would be expended, but over a shorter period of total time.

1.3 CONSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY

The collection system pipes would likely be High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), Extra-Strength Vitrified Clay Pipe (VCP) or Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC). Other materials may be allowed, as specified in the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction or as allowed by the County. Force mains may be Polyethylene (PE) lined ductile iron, PVC, or another product, as allowed by the County.

The majority of the pipelines would be installed by the open trenching method. The excavated trench would vary from 2 to 4 feet wide, and 8 to 20 feet in depth, depending on the pipe diameter and location. Once the trench is constructed, the pipeline is placed within the trench and the trench is back-filled with dirt. Upon completion of pipeline installation, the disturbed area would be repaved.

A bore and jack method of construction would be utilized to extend pipes under Highway 101. Most likely a 20" vitrified clay pipe in a 30" jacked steel casing would be used. Bore and receiving pits on each side of the freeway would likely measure approximately 20' long by 10' wide and up to 25' deep. There may also be a need for microtunneling in some areas, at the contractor's discretion.

There would be no grading associated with the project. The bedding of the pipe trenches would consist of imported rock or sand. An equivalent amount of native dirt would consequently be removed from the site. Assuming a figure of 0.18 cubic yards (c.y.) per linear feet of 8"-10" pipe, 0.3 c.y. per linear feet for 12" pipe, and 0.5 c.y. per linear feet for 15"-21" pipe, the total amount of import of sand or rock, and consequent export of native soil, would be 18,905 cubic yards. For the bore and jack work, an estimated 90 cubic yards of soil would be removed from the site.

As previously noted, the improvements to the JJC lift station to be completed as part of this project would involve primarily internal upgrades to the existing station.

Equipment used during pipeline installation by each work crew would likely consist of the following:

Trackhoe (1)	Backhoe (1-2)
Crane (1)	Compactor (2-3)
Front end bucket loader (1-2)	Concrete trucks
Dirt trucks	Generator (possible)

If more than one work crew at a time is utilized by the contractor, the total number of equipment being used would increase. Lift station improvements would require some of the same equipment noted above. The bore and jack crew would use the following:

Hydraulic compressor (1)	Jacking machine (1)

It is anticipated that the majority of truck, equipment, and personnel will use State Route 232 (Vineyard Avenue) to access the sites. An alternative route would be Rose Avenue. The parking and staging area locations would be determined by the contractor; however, it is expected that various empty lots throughout the El Rio community will be used.

1.4 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

For ongoing operations and maintenance of the pipelines, once installed, the following would be necessary:

- Pipeline inspection every 5 years
- Pipeline cleaning as required
- Weekly on site lift station inspection and for operations maintenance and house keeping
- Operations and maintenance of lift station as required by manufacturers

1.5 EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS

There would be an estimated 10 construction-related personnel per work crew. These personnel would include a foreman, pipefitter, laborers, operators, plus an additional person for the manhole. As previously noted, the contractor may choose to employ more than one pipe crew at a time to shorten the total construction time. Therefore, the number of personnel may range from 10-20 at any one time. Additionally, there would be one superintendent for each pipeline contract. These employees are expected to come from the local work force or be part of regional construction crews that travel from project to project.

The ongoing monitoring, reporting, testing, maintenance and operation of the new sewer system would require one full time equivalent staff person.

2.0 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, no sewage collection system and no sewage treatment and disposal facilities would be constructed. The project area would continue to use septic systems.

3.0 CONNECTION TO SCWC BRINE LINE TO OWWTP ALTERNATIVE

This alternative, which would utilize the OWWTP by connecting first to the brine line on Rose Avenue, currently owned by the Santa Clara Wastewater Company (SCWC) (shown on Figure 2, along with the Preferred Alternative). This would require a lift station in the parking lot adjacent to Ventura Boulevard and Financial Square Drive, and a 10-inch force main along Ventura Road to Rose Avenue. This alternative would not require the Highway 101 crossing and piping to Stanford Avenue within the City of Oxnard. With the exceptions previously identified, the collection system would remain the same as for the Preferred Alternative. A total of about 90,000 linear feet of pipeline, ranging in size from 6- to 21-inchs in diameter would be constructed.

The SCWC owns and operates a 10-inch cement lined and asphalt coated steel pipeline. This pipeline conveys primary treated concentrated oil field wastewater, referred to as brine, from the wastewater skimming and shipping pump area located near Briggs Road, between Ventura and Santa Paula, to the City of Oxnard for final treatment. The SCWC has expressed an interest in selling this brine pipeline.

With this alternative, a County Service Area would be established, and the City would need to enter into a long-term agreement with the proposed County Service Area. The ongoing monitoring, reporting, testing, maintenance, and operation of the new sewer system would require one full time equivalent staff person.

The brine pipeline was constructed in 1959-60. Over the past 41 years, it has been reconstructed in isolated areas, due to relocation requirements. The line has been used at

approximately 30 pounds per square inch (psi) for its entire life. The design wall thickness is capable of higher pressures; however, it is not known how much corrosion has occurred over the years. Therefore, pressure testing would be necessary. In addition, the following issues still need to be explored with regard to the pipeline: internal and external condition and integrity of the pipeline; ability to be used under conditions different than its design use (especially given that the pipe lining has absorbed oils and other constituents of the oil field wastewater, and the possible physical reaction with the hydrogen sulfide of domestic sewage); costs to utilize the pipeline from the lift station and force main; and who will abandon the portion of the pipe that will not be used. Additionally, this alternative is estimated to be more costly than the Preferred Alternative.

4.0 ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT ALTERNATIVE

Figure 3 shows the facilities plan for this alternative, which involves the construction of a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in the El Rio area, and a collection system similar to the Preferred Alternative. Connections across U.S. 101 and into Oxnard would not be necessary. The proposed site is north and adjacent to the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) site at Beedy Street. It has a land use designation of Existing Community/Industrial and a zoning designation of "M-2", manufacturing zone. The parcel is bound by open space to the west (access road and ponded water from an aggregate mining area), beyond which is the Santa Clara River. To the north is open space, and to the east are industrial uses. On the south are farming uses, including the JJC parcel.

The design of the facility is conceptual only at this time. The parcel identified for the facility is an estimated 6.5 acres, and would likely be accessed from Beedy Street. The facility is expected to consist of the following components: one enclosed office building (roughly 1,000 square feet, 12 feet high); two to three treatment ponds; two pump stations; trickling filter recycle facility; solids and sludge transfer facility; headworks and screen; and other ancillary facilities. Parking for approximately 20 vehicles for employees and visitors, as well as crew vehicles, would be provided on-site, near the operations office. Landscaping would also be provided on-site to enhance the facility. There would be exterior security lighting around the perimeter, approximately 15 feet tall, and directed onto the site. A chain link fence 6 to 8 feet in height would be placed around the perimeter of the facility, with possibly a block wall along the front of the facility. Runoff from the WWTP would likely be directed into the Santa Clara River after collection and any required treatment via an oil and sediment separation mechanism. The effluent from the WWTP would most likely be diverted into percolation ponds for groundwater recharge.

With this alternative, the lift stations identified for the Preferred Alternative would also be required. Additionally, a lift station would be sited at the end of Myrtle Street in El Rio West. A total of 97,500 linear feet of pipeline ranging in size from 6-inch to 21-inch would be installed.

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Figure 3

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The WWTP would be designed for treating approximately 1.0 million gallons per day (mgd) of sewage, with the capability of treating the 2.9 mgd during peak periods. The flow from the master lift station near Ventura Boulevard and Financial Square Road would be directed up to Beedy Street, where it would enter a large diameter gravity sewer pipeline and flow into the WWTP. Sewage treatment would be through either xenon or bio-filtration processes. If disinfection by chlorination is chosen, there would most likely be liquid chlorine stored at the site in accordance with state and federal standards. If discharge to the adjacent Santa Clara River is selected, there would be a need to dechlorinate the effluent. Dechlorination would most likely be accomplished using thiosulfate or similar chemical, stored at the site in accordance with appropriate standards. Polymers may be used for the xenon process, but these polymer chemicals are normally non-hazardous. The WWTP would also have a standby generator, with fuel storage. Ongoing operations and maintenance would be the same as the proposed project for the collection system. Additionally, full time maintenance would be required at the WWTP.

The methods and details of construction and operation would be essentially the same as for the proposed project in terms of installation of the pipelines, except that the bore and jack operation under Highway 101 would not be required. It is anticipated that grading for the WWTP will be contained on-site. The cut from the pond excavation would be used for the building pad for the process and control structures. Import would consist of only special structural materials, such as base material for roads and parking facilities, and asphalt.

An estimated 30-40 construction employees would be needed for the WWTP, along with the 10-20 construction employees needed for the pipeline work (minus the bore and jack operations). It is expected that a total of 4 permanent employees to operate and maintain the facility, as well as the collection system, would be necessary.

Construction of the WWTP would begin in 2006. Construction time for the pipeline collection system would be the same as for the Preferred Alternative. It would take approximately 12 months to build the treatment plant. The lift stations and force mains would be constructed concurrently with the WWTP and collection system. The total number of working days for the lift stations and force mains would be roughly 60 to 90 calendar days. The majority of truck, equipment, and personnel traffic would use Vineyard Avenue to access the project area. However, Rose Avenue may also be utilized. As with the Preferred Alternative, a County Service Area would need to be established under this alternative

The equipment anticipated to be used for construction of the collection system is the same as for the proposed project, but would also involve the following for the WWTP: two scrapers for pond excavation, one man lift and one forklift. The equipment for the bore and jack operation identified for the proposed project would not be necessary for this alternative. For equipment staging and storage, in addition to the various sites to be used throughout the area for pipeline installation work, the WWTP site may be used during its construction.

SECTION D - OTHER PLANNED AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The project's contribution to cumulative impacts was evaluated for the Preferred Alternative, the No Action Alternative, the Connect to SCWS Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative, and the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative. Cumulative impacts take into consideration the combined effect of the proposed project together with past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects. A project's contribution to cumulative impacts may be determined to be "de minimus" - that is, not considered cumulatively considerable due to the small magnitude of the project's contribution relative to the cumulative effect as a whole.

The project area is primarily located in an unincorporated area of Ventura County, while a small portion is located in the City of Oxnard. Because the proposed project would occur primarily within the County of Ventura, the *County of Ventura Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (Guidelines) (September 2000), are used in assessing cumulative impacts. The Guidelines indicate that the Ventura County General Plan's population, dwelling unit, and employment forecasts, in conjunction with land use maps, should be used as the basis for determining cumulative development within a geographic area. Additionally, all known General Plan Amendments (GPAs) that have been filed, or are being processed in the same geographical area, should be added to the forecasts. Since the proposed action's area of potential environmental effect lies both within the City of Oxnard and unincorporated Ventura County, General Plan buildout and GPAs within both jurisdictions was considered for the purposes of cumulative analysis, as necessary. The following is a summary of the planned and proposed development projects that are included in the cumulative impact assessment of this environmental document.

Based on discussions with County Planning staff, there are no significant discretionary approvals (e.g., General Plan Amendments) currently being sought in the vicinity of the proposed project (Richards, personal communication, October 2002). Nor are there private or County projects that would occur simultaneously with the proposed project construction (Richards, personal communication, October 2002). However, there are several County Transportation Division projects that are planned or proposed in the project area and vicinity in the next several years, aside from ongoing street resurfacing. These include:

- 2002-3: Bike lanes are planned for Central Avenue, from Vineyard Avenue to Rose Avenue.
- 2003-5: Construction of turn lanes and drainage improvements are planned on Central Avenue from Vineyard Avenue to the City of Camarillo limit.
- 2004-5: Widening of Rose Avenue to 52' from Central Avenue to State Route 118 is planned.

One major County project that is currently under construction is the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). The County Juvenile Justice Center's (JJC) 45-acre site is located in the project area. It is bounded by Vineyard Avenue on the east, and is between Beedy Street and Montgomery Avenue. To the west of the site is the Santa Clara River. A portion of the El Rio

Sewer Project pipeline would cross the JJC site on the western edge. The parcel is zoned M-2 Manufacturing Zone, and is designated as Existing Community in the Ventura County General Plan, and Industrial in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan.

The JJC involves the phased development of a 540-bed detention and commitment facility, six juvenile courts, and ancillary facilities. The complex would encompass about 521,000 square feet of building area at full buildout, and is anticipated to be constructed in two phases. The initial phase would consist of a 420-bed detention and commitment facility, and the courts and office buildings. It is intended to meet projected facility needs through 2010. The second phase would consist of up to 120 additional beds at the detention and commitment facility, and would meet needs through 2020. Construction is expected to be completed by early 2003.

The JJC project would construct the lift station at Montgomery Avenue and South Bank Road, which the proposed project would then upgrade, as well as a force main along Montgomery Avenue. The proposed El Rio Sewer System Project would also accommodate the sewage from the JJC.

The Final Environmental Impact Report for the JJC was certified in February 2000. A Conditional Use Permit and amendment to the M-2 zone has been processed to allow the development of a detention facility on the site. The amount of development associated with the JJC is basically what would be allowed under the current M-2 zoning.

According to planning staff at the City of Oxnard, there are 3 other development projects planned for the area along Highway 101 at this time. A roughly 18,000 square-foot gas station, with some potential retail development, is planned for Vineyard Avenue at Collins Street; however, the project has not been finalized or approved. The project is consistent with the City's land use and zoning designations for the site, and has been considered in the buildout of the City of Oxnard General Plan (Sugano, personal communication, October 2002).

The Riverpark Project is a large mixed-use project that is proposed in the area along the Santa Clara River, north of Highway 101, but west of El Rio West. The northern boundary has not yet been clearly established, but would likely be the unincorporated industrial area of the County. The project would be mostly in the City of Oxnard, although a portion would lie in the unincorporated County area, and would require annexation to the City. A Specific Plan for the project was adopted in August 2002, and an Environmental Impact Report certified in July 2002. The project entails 3 million square feet of retail and office space, a 600-room hotel, 2,500-3,000 single family and multi-family residential units, and open space uses. The project would require a General Plan Amendment, and is expected to begin construction in 2003 (Sugano, personal communication, November 2000). A separate sewer collection system is expected to be constructed for the Riverpark Project, which would connect with the City of Oxnard's system.

For the purposes of cumulative analysis in this document, the Ventura County General Plan, Oxnard General Plan, and El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, along with the corresponding Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), are utilized. Additional consideration has been given to the Riverpark Project and associated hotels because they require General Plan amendments.

The EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the Ventura County General Plan (March 9, 1988) estimates that by the year 2010 that an additional 1,905 acres of urban development will occur, and that the total population increase will be less than 22,000 in unincorporated areas of the County. The buildout Countywide (unincorporated areas and areas in various City jurisdictions) under the General Plan would allow 24,133 acres of new urban development and result in 274,442 new residents.

The current population in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan study area is 10,150. However, this includes portions of the City of Oxnard and the Nyeland Acres Subarea, which would not be served by the proposed project. Only a portion of the City of Oxnard covered in the Area Plan is actually in the sewer project area, although no part of Oxnard would be served by the project. The buildout population projection for the entire area encompassed in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan is an additional 1,800 persons, resulting in a total buildout population of 11,950 by 2010. By 2010, an additional 15.2 acres of commercial land and 68.3 acres of industrial land would be developed. Residential development by 2010 would add 484 housing units. The buildout of the El Rio area was evaluated in the Final EIR for the El Rio/Del Norte area (Ventura County Resources Management Agency, June 1996).

The City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan identifies a population of 127,721 as of January 1989. By 2020, the total population is estimated to be 164,936. Urban developed acreage in the City as of January 1989 was almost 17,000 acres. In 2020, the urban developed acreage is anticipated to be nearly 21,000 acres.

SECTION E - IMPACTS

The following analysis evaluates the direct and indirect effects of the proposed action, both long-term and short-term (i.e., construction-related) for each relevant environmental issue area. Because the proposed project would occur primarily within the County of Ventura, the *County of Ventura Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (Guidelines) (September 2000), specifically environmental thresholds, have been used for the purposes of impact analysis. The discussion of impacts for each environmental issue area consists of a description of the affected environment of the proposed action, a discussion of the environmental consequences related to the Preferred Alternative and each of the three other alternatives, and, as appropriate, necessary measures to mitigate any project impacts.

1.0 LAND USE

1.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment for all alternatives is the same, except where specifically noted below. The project is located mostly within unincorporated Ventura County, while a portion near Highway 101 is within the City of Oxnard. This area of the Oxnard plain is primarily residential, industrial, and open space/agricultural, with some commercial. The open space/agricultural uses create a semi-rural atmosphere, interspersed with pockets of distinct neighborhoods and urban uses. The majority of the pipeline work would occur in residential areas. Beyond the western edge of the project area runs the Santa Clara River, with its notable riparian habitat. An open space buffer, consisting of an aggregate mining area, lies between the river and the agricultural and urban uses of the El Rio area.

The project construction would occur mainly within roadways. The land uses vary along the roadway corridors, and are described below. The discussion focuses mainly on areas that would be physically disturbed by project activities (e.g., for installation of new pipeline). The project work area can be viewed as four separate areas: El Rio (East and West), Strickland Acres, Vineyard Industrial Area, and the Rio Lindo community of Oxnard.

Strickland Acres: Primarily agricultural and institutional uses exist along Central Avenue, along with some residential parcels.

Vineyard Industrial Area: The area between Montgomery Avenue and Beedy Street, west of Vineyard Avenue, is industrial and commercial. These uses include new and long-established industries, as well as agricultural-based businesses. The JJC is sited here, bound by Beedy Street, Lambert Street, and Vineyard Avenue. To the west of these uses is open space (former aggregate mining site) and beyond that the Santa Clara River. The area to the west of the Vineyard Industrial Area is part of the Riverside Park Specific Plan Area described in Section D, Other Planned and Proposed Development. Land uses identified in the Specific Plan to be located to the west of the Vineyard Industrial Area include water infiltration and storage, and Public Facilities/School.

El Rio (East and West): Low, medium and high-density residential uses are congregated in the area bound by Vineyard Avenue to the west, Lemar Avenue to the north, Rose Avenue to the east, and Highway 101 to the south. There is a scattering of small industrial parcels in this area also, mostly located near Highway 101, both in the County and City of Oxnard. Medium density residential uses are found in El Rio West, bounded by Mrytle Street, Stroube Street, and Vineyard Avenue. The area to the west of the El Rio West Area is also part of the Riverside Park Specific Plan Area described in Section D, Other Planned and Proposed Development. Land uses identified in the Specific Plan to be located to the west of the El Rio West Area include residential and to the north Public Facilities/School.

Rio Lindo: This portion of Oxnard, just south of Highway 101, consists of mostly residential uses.

The entire project area in unincorporated Ventura County is within the City of Oxnard's Sphere of Influence, adopted by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) (City of Oxnard General Plan, November 1990). The Sphere of Influence represents the probable ultimate physical boundary and service area of the City. However, there are no plans to annex this area at this time (Sugano, personal communication, December 2000). The Guidelines for Orderly Development are regional jurisdictional policies adopted by the County of Ventura and all cities in Ventura County, as well as Ventura LAFCO. These Guidelines clarify the relationship between the cities and the County with respect to urban planning and services. The primary intent of these Guidelines is that urban development be located within incorporated cities whenever and wherever practical.

The following is a description of the General Plan land use designations for the project area: Existing Community for unincorporated County areas per the County General Plan, and Industrial, Institutional, Urban Residential (UR 1-2, UR 2-4, UR 4-6), and Rural Residential per the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. The County approved the Juvenile Justice Center Complex (JJC) project, which is located within the proposed project area, and is currently being constructed. The JJC project will construct a sewer system consisting of a lift station and a force main. The sewage will be discharged to the City of Oxnard Sewer System. The JJC site is designated Industrial in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, and Existing Community in the County General Plan.

The land use designation is Regional Commercial for the portion of the project located in the City of Oxnard. This area is bounded by Highway 101 on the south and El Rio West (Mrytle Street, Stroube Street, Vineyard Avenue) on the west, along the edge of which a 21-inch line and a 10-inch line would be sited. The area of Oxnard south of Highway 101, where the sewer system would connect to the City of Oxnard line under the Preferred Alternative only, is designated Residential.

There is no zoning on road rights-of-way, where most of the project work would occur (County of Ventura and City of Oxnard).

For the Preferred Alternative, the zoning for the parcel in the City of Oxnard, just north of Highway 101, where the pipeline connects with a 21-inch line near the Esplanade shopping area, is C-2 Commercial Planned Development (with a Specific Plan Overlay). The zoning is the same for the 10-inch pipeline proposed along the western edge of the residential uses bound by Myrtle Street, Stroube Street, and Vineyard Avenue.

In the County of Ventura, the parcel where the Juvenile Justice Complex (JJC) is being developed, and on the western edge of which a portion of the proposed pipeline would be sited, is zoned M-2, Manufacturing Zone.

The lift station to be installed by the JJC project at the southeastern corner of South Bank Road and Montgomery Avenue would be upgraded to accommodate flows from the proposed project. This site is located in a developed industrial area, zoned M-2, Manufacturing Zone.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

1.2.1 Plan and Policy Consistency

The Ventura County Guidelines indicate that any project that is inconsistent with a specific environmental policy of the Ventura County General Plan is considered as having a significant environmental impact. The Guidelines further state that any project that appears to be inconsistent with an environmental goal of the General Plan must be evaluated by the Planning Division in light of other related goals, policies and programs of the General Plan in order to determine significance.

The guiding policy and planning documents for the area of the proposed project, including all alternatives, consist of:

- The Ventura County General Plan
- The El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan
- City of Oxnard General Plan
- County of Ventura Water Management Plan
- County of Ventura and City of Oxnard Zoning Ordinances

A discussion of policy and goal consistency for the Preferred Alternative, the No Action Alternative, the Connection to the Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative, and the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative is provided below and in the following tables.

The Ventura County Water Management Plan, Volume 1, Goals, Policies and Programs is a resource management document with the following program pertaining to water quality that is relevant to the project:

> *Program III.B.2. Continue to monitor areas where septic system problems exist and encourage public sewering wherever feasible.*

Preferred Alternative: The project would be consistent and in support of the Ventura County Water Management Plan, as it would provide for compliance with the RWQCB Resolution No. 99-13, and allow for sewering of the El Rio area. The portions of the project in unincorporated Ventura County are consistent with all policies and goals contained in the Ventura County General Plan and the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, or would be consistent with the implementation of mitigation measures as identified in this environmental document. Likewise, the portions of the project in the City of Oxnard are either consistent with the policies and goals listed in the City of Oxnard General Plan, or would be upon implementation of mitigation measures as identified in this EA. The Preferred Alternative would be compatible with the land use designations and zoning for the area. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not result in impacts with respect to policy and plan consistency. No cumulative impacts to policy and plan consistency would result.

Table 1. Consistency with the Ventura County General Plan

Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	1.1.2	Resources - Protection of resources through environmental review	X		X		X		X	
1.2.1		Air Quality - Mitigate air quality impacts	X		X		X		X	
	1.2.2	Air Quality - Consistency with Air Quality Management Plan	X		X		X		X	
1.3.1.3		Water Resources - Maintain and restore surface and groundwater quality	X			X	X		X	
	1.3.2.1	Water Resources - Consistency with Water Management Plan	X			X	X		X	
	1.3.2.4	Water Resources - Discretionary development shall not significantly impact quantity or quality of water resources within watersheds, groundwater recharge areas of groundwater basins	X			X	X		X	
	1.3.2.2	Water Resources - Comply with State and County water regulations	X			X	X		X	
1.5.2.1		Biological Resources - Comply with State and County water regulations	X			X	X		X	
	1.7.2.2	Scenic Resources - Protect scenic resources and views	X	X	X		X		X	
	1.8.2.1	Cultural and Paleontological Resources - Assess projects for impacts to cultural and paleontological resources	X		X		X		X	
2.2.1		Hazards - Minimize risk of loss from fault rupture	X		X		X		X	
2.3.1		Hazards - Minimize risk of loss from ground shaking	X		X		X		X	
2.6.1		Hazards - Minimize risk of loss from liquefaction	X*		X		X*		X*	
2.7.2	2.7.2.1	Hazards - Minimize risk of damage from subsidence and recognize the potential in design	X*		X		X*		X*	
2.8.1		Hazards - Minimize risk of structural damage from effects of expansive soils	X*		X		X*		X*	
2.16.1	2.16.2	Hazards - Protect sensitive uses from noise impacts and review discretionary development for noise	X*		X		X*		X*	

Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
3.1.1.4		Land Use - Ensure land uses are appropriate and compatible	X		X		X		X	
	3.1.2.3	Land Use - Consistency of land use if permitted by zoning and consistent with GP policies	X		X		X		X	
4.1.1.1		Public Facilities and Services - Plan for public facilities and services that will adequately serve existing and future residents of the County	X		X	X	X		X	
	4.1.2.3	Public Facilities and Services - Public facilities shall be consistent with the GP	X		X		X		X	
	4.4.2.1	Public Facilities and Services - Community sewage treatment facilities shall be deemed consistent with the GP if they are on the Public Facilities Map	X			X	X		X	
	4.4.2.4	Public Facilities and Services - Waste treatment and disposal operations shall be compatible with surrounding land uses	X		X		X		X	

* The project would be consistent with the specified goal or policy with implementation of mitigation measures identified in this EA.

Table 2. Consistency with the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan

Area Plan Element	Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Resources	1		Ensure that potentially significant health risk resulting from the release of toxic, hazardous or odoriferous substances into the air are mitigated to less-than-significant levels	X		X		X		X	
Resources		1	Development that could have significant adverse air quality impacts shall be conditioned with all feasible mitigation measures to avoid, minimize or compensate for impacts	X		X		X		X	
Water Resources	1		Protect the Oxnard Forebay Basin and its recharge area within the El Rio/Del Norte area to protect groundwater resources	X			X	X		X	
Water Resources		1	Development shall not result in a net decrease in the quantity of groundwater	X		X		X		X	
Water Resources		2	Development that would individually or cumulatively result in a significant adverse impact on groundwater quality shall be prohibited	X		X		X		X	
Water Resources		3	Development shall comply with all applicable NPDES standards to protect surface water quality	X		X		X		X	

Area Plan Element	Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Water Resources		4	Development that would significantly decrease the recharge capability of the property shall be prohibited	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	1		General - Preserve the character of the area, with its small town, semi-rural, and distinct neighborhoods	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	3		General - Locate new development primarily within existing communities to avoid encroaching into established agricultural, open space lands, and to protect resources	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	5		General - Encourage the enhancement/upgrading of existing neighborhoods	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	1		Agricultural - Preserve irrigated agricultural lands	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	2		Agricultural - Minimize incompatibilities between agricultural operations and other uses	X		X		X		X	
Land Use		3	Agricultural - Development located adjacent to Agricultural designated land shall be conditioned to ensure that impacts on agricultural uses are minimized	X		X		X		X	
Land Use	1		Open Space - Preserve the essentially undeveloped lands that surround the Existing Community designated areas to protect lands that contain biological and mineral resources, and water recharge/storage areas	X		X		X		X	

Area Plan Element	Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Land Use		1	Open Space - Development located on or adjacent to Open Space land shall be conditioned to ensure that impacts to biological and mineral resources and recharge/storage basins are minimized	X		X		X		X	
Public Facilities and Services	1		Waste Treatment /Disposal - Encourage the construction of an adequate sewage collection system	X			X	X		X	
Public Facilities and Services	2		Waste Treatment/Disposal - Ensure that all sewage collection and treatment facilities are available to serve future development in the Existing Community designated areas and sized to prevent future development outside the existing communities	X			X	X		X	
Public Facilities and Services	3		Waste Treatment/Disposal - Ensure that sewage treatment facilities provide maximum feasible protection and/or enhancement of groundwater resources	X			X	X		X	

Table 3. Consistency with the City of Oxnard General Plan

General Plan Element	Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Land Use	2		Preservation of scenic views, natural topography, natural physical amenities, and air quality	X		X		X		X	
Circulation		1	Where environmentally feasible, all intersections in the City of Oxnard should operate at Level of Service "C"	X		X		X		X	
Public Facilities	1		Public facilities and services adequate to serve existing and future development within the City's Urban Service Area	X			X	X		X	
Open Space/ Conser-vation (OS/C)		6	Encourage measures that maintain clean air and water	X			X	X		X	
OS/C		8	Dust control and other measures designed to reduce the impact in ambient air quality from short-term construction are required	X		X		X		X	
OS/C		17	Silt and sediment from construction shall be minimized or prohibited	X		X		X		X	
Noise	1		A quiet environment for the residents of Oxnard	X*		X		X*		X*	

General Plan Element	Goal	Policy	Issue	Preferred		No Action		Connect to SCWC		Onsite WW Treatment Plant	
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Noise		6	Development projects shall not generate more noise than that classified as "satisfactory," as determined by the noise compatibility standards, on nearby property, and noise generated shall be reduced or buffered	X*		X		X*		X*	

* - The project would be consistent with the specified goal or policy with implementation of mitigation measures identified in this EA.

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would be inconsistent with Ventura County General Plan and El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan policies and goals regarding water resources and public facilities, since a sewage collection and treatment system would not be constructed. As such, the area would not be in compliance with the State Water Resources Board and Resolution No. 99-13 adopted by the CRWQCB, Los Angeles Region. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would result in significant impacts with respect to policy and plan consistency, and cumulative impacts would also be significant.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: This alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative. As such, there would be no impacts with respect to policy and plan consistency, as long as the mitigation measures identified in this document are implemented. The project would be consistent with the zoning. There would also be no cumulative impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: The same guiding policy documents would apply to the WWTP Alternative as to the Preferred Alternative, with the exception of the City of Oxnard General Plan. This alternative would be consistent with the applicable goals and policies of the Ventura County General Plan and the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, assuming implementation of necessary mitigation (as with the Preferred Alternative). This alternative, like the Preferred Alternative, would be consistent with the Ventura County Water Management Plan since it would provide for public sewering within an area currently using septic systems and would improve and protect groundwater quality. Therefore, there would be no impacts to plan and policy consistency, and also no cumulative impacts.

The proposed WWTP would be located within an "M-2", Limited Industrial zone. A WWTP is a conditionally permitted use in this zone. Therefore, the project would require a Conditional Use Permit from the County of Ventura.

1.2.2 Housing

County Guidelines for significance of impacts to housing pertain to removal of existing housing and creation of demand for housing. Short-term (18-month or less) construction worker housing demand is not considered significant because there have historically been more construction workers than construction jobs County-wide, and the work is short-term. A project that employs 30 or more full-time workers is regarded as potentially significant if the current housing market vacancy rate in the area is less than 3 percent, unless there is sufficient planned residential development to increase the vacancy rate to above 3 percent.

Preferred Alternative: While the general project area supports residential uses, no housing is located within the project impact area. Residential uses are adjacent to portions of the project area, but would not be impacted by the project. As such, it would not be necessary to provide replacement housing. Only one new full-time employee would be required for long-term project operation. Depending upon the number of work crews used at a given time, the number of construction employees may range from 10-20 for the installation of new pipeline and lift station improvements. These temporary employees are expected to come from the existing community and would not require new housing. Therefore, the project would have a less than

significant project-specific impact on housing, and it would not significantly contribute to cumulative housing impacts.

No Action Alternative: There would be no housing impacts associated with the No Action Alternative, since no sewage collection, treatment and disposal system would be constructed. Therefore, this project would not have a project-specific or cumulatively significant adverse impact on housing.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: The project would be similar to that of the Preferred Alternative, with less than significant housing impacts. Similarly, cumulative housing impacts would not be considerable.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: Like the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would have less than significant impacts on housing due to the small number of long-term employees (4) that would be required, and the fact that short-term employees are expected to come from the local work force or regional construction crews. Similarly, there would be a less than significant contribution to cumulative housing impacts.

1.2.3 Transportation

The discussion of Transportation includes travel patterns and accessibility; highway and traffic safety; the demand for transportation facilities, including roadways and parking; and considerations relating to pedestrians and bicyclists.

The major roadways within the project area are Vineyard Avenue (State Route 232), Central Avenue, Ventura Boulevard, and Highway 101. In the project area, Central Avenue and Vineyard Avenue are in the unincorporated portion of the County. Ventura Boulevard and U.S. Highway 101 run through both the City of Oxnard and unincorporated County area. Highway 101 is a multi-lane freeway that serves as the principal inter-city route within Ventura County. Primary access between the freeway and the project area is provided via the interchange at Vineyard Avenue. Vineyard Avenue in the project area is a 4-lane rural highway, a secondary arterial. In the project area, Vineyard Avenue is in Caltrans jurisdiction. Central Avenue is a 2-lane roadway, as is Ventura Boulevard.

Current Levels of Service (LOS) designations for the intersection of Central Avenue at Vineyard Avenue are LOS A in A.M. and P.M. peak hour periods (Torfeh, personal communication, December 2000). As indicated in Section 4.0, the County of Ventura Transportation Division is planning to conduct turn lane improvements to Central Avenue starting at Vineyard Avenue. In the City of Oxnard at Vineyard Avenue and Mrytle Street, just outside of the project area, the LOS is "A." With future improvements, by 2020 the LOS is expected to be "C" (Genovese, personal communication, December 2000). U.S. 101 from Oxnard to Camarillo, and from Oxnard to Ventura, operates in the LOS E range. There are no LOS designations available for other intersections or roadways in or adjacent to the project area.

Installation of the sewer pipeline is proposed within the Central Avenue and Vineyard Avenue rights-of-way, and within the rights-of-way of smaller streets in the El Rio area and portions of the City of Oxnard. The pipelines would cross under Highway 101 at two locations.

The County Guidelines state that the minimum acceptable level of service on all County thoroughfares and highways within the unincorporated area of the County (with the exception of a portion of SR 33) is LOS D. Due to the poor level of service, the County considers any project that adds one or more peak hour trips to roadways with LOS D as resulting in a significant impact and requires mitigation. If a project will add 1 percent of a project's trips or 10 average daily trips (whichever is greater) to a road or intersection that is operating at a less than acceptable level of service (LOS), the project would have a significant impact. The County guidelines further state that if a project will add one or more peak hour trips to a roadway segment that is part of the regional road network, and is projected to fall to a less-than-acceptable LOS by the year 2020, it would result in a significant cumulative impact. The policies of the Oxnard General Plan state that:

> *Where environmentally feasible, all intersections in the City of Oxnard should operate at Level of Service "C."* (Policy 1, Circulation Element)
>
> *Where development will cause the LOS of a County maintained road or intersection located outside of the City, but within the Area of Interest, to drop below the County standard, contribution toward improvement costs shall be made.* (Policy 8, Circulation Element).

As the pipeline installation would occur within some roadways bordering residential, industrial, and commercial uses, there are some driveways within the project area. There is one private road adjacent to the project area, on the west side of Vineyard Avenue, in the City of Oxnard, between Louisiana Place and Montgomery Avenue.

There are no bicycle lanes or paths in the project area. However, the Ventura County Transportation Division is planning to construct a bike lane along Central Avenue from Vineyard Avenue to Rose Avenue in 2002-3 (prior to the construction of the El Rio Sewer System Project). Sidewalks are provided along some of the roadways in the project area.

There are numerous parking lots, both private and public, in the vicinity of the project. In some locations, parking is permitted along the roadways.

South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) provides mass transit facilities to the project area via bus line No. 15. This line operates along portions of Collins Street, Vineyard Avenue, Cortez and Balboa Streets, to Rose Avenue and the Oxnard Auto Center. The City of Oxnard also operates a dial-a-ride service.

No railroad line is located in the project area. However, a railroad line crosses Vineyard Avenue, south of Highway 101, about 500 feet from the project area in the Rio Lindo part of Oxnard.

Preferred Alternative: While the exact number is not certain, an estimated 10-20 construction employees would be working on the project temporarily. Construction workers would generate trips going to and from the project work areas. Additionally, there would be some trips generated by transporting equipment and materials to and from the work areas during the construction phase. Temporary traffic trips from employees and transporting equipment and materials would also occur during future maintenance of the pipelines. The roadways expected to be most utilized for construction and future maintenance work trips are Vineyard Avenue and Central Avenue. However, the resulting addition of vehicle or truck trips to area roadways would be minor and temporary. Therefore, there would be less than significant short-term project-specific impacts. The proposed project would create only one new employment position. Therefore, project-generated trips would be limited to the one employee's commute trips, and trips for future maintenance and repair of the lines and lift station. Consequently, there would be no change in LOS as a result of the project. However, because the additional trips may affect roads already operating at LOS D or below the project proponent, Ventura County Public Works Agency Water and Sanitation Division will pay the standard appropriate reciprocal traffic agreement fee to the Ventura County Public Works Agency Transportation Department prior to project construction. Thus, impacts to LOS would be less than significant on a project-specific and cumulative basis.

Pipeline installation would be within road rights-of way. During construction, work in the rights-of-way would require the temporary closure of vehicle lanes intermittently throughout the construction period. However, for each roadway, at least one lane would be open at any given time, and there would be no complete closure of roadways (Chase, personal communication, December 2000). The Ventura County Public Works Agency Water and Wastewater Division would need to obtain road permits from the City of Oxnard and the County of Ventura, as well as Caltrans. As a part of this process, measures to redirect traffic and ensure the safety of both workers and drivers are required to be implemented at the project site. The Ventura County Public Works Agency Water and Wastewater Division proposed to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan detailing access and lane closures, as well as signage and other mechanisms to ensure the effective and safe operation of the roadway network, bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, or Caltrans, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work. Similar permitting requirements and Transportation Plan development and implementation would exist for any future repair work to be conducted in road rights-of-way. The project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts with regard to temporary facilities closures is not expected to be significant, given the construction time frame of the other known proposed projects in the area. With implementation of the Transportation Plan, short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts related to road congestion and safety issues associated with construction, repair and maintenance activities would be less than significant.

Construction also has the potential to cause accidental damage to other right-of-way facilities, such as sidewalks, curbs, etc., and to interfere with plans for roadway paving in the area. However, the County Public Works Agency shall include proper precautions to protect all pavement, curb and gutter, sidewalks and drainage structures from damage are taken during

construction. Any portion damaged by the project's operations, in the opinion of the appropriate Transportation Department or designee, shall be replaced in accordance with current Standard Construction Details and/or in a manner acceptable to the Transportation Department or designee. Additionally, the proposed construction would be coordinated with the county Transportation Department to avoid impacts to newly paved roadways. With implementation of these measures as proposed, impacts to public roads and highways are considered to be less than significant on a project-specific and cumulative basis.

The proposed action does not include any new roadways or changes to roadways, so no hazards due to design features would result. Thus, no long-term impacts to safety and design of public roads and highways are expected. The proposed action would therefore also not contribute to any cumulative impacts to public roads and highways.

Pipeline installation activities would be limited to the roadways described above, and would not involve work in driveways or other private roads. Vehicle traffic would be maintained throughout the work area. However, during installation of the pipe in the roadways, some driveways may be blocked temporarily and then reopened once steel crossing plates are installed (Chase, personal communication, December 2000). To minimize this effect, prior to the start of construction or future maintenance work that may block access to driveways, the Public Works Agency, or its contractor shall prepare a description of the proposed closure or blocking of access, along with the notification procedure for all tenants and property owners that may be affected by the work. This information shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, or Caltrans, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the start of maintenance or construction. With implementation of this measure impacts associated with driveway blockage would be less than significant. Future maintenance activities associated with the pipelines may also result in temporary access impacts, this effect would be less than significant due to implementation of the same measure identified above. The project's contribution to incremental cumulative impact from temporary private road and driveway closure is expected to be less than significant, given that the other known projects proposed in the vicinity would be constructed prior to the El Rio Sewer System Project. Additionally, the notification process described above would minimize any project contribution to cumulative driveway closure impacts.

Installation of the sewer pipelines would not result in long term impacts to bicycle paths or lanes or pedestrian paths from operation of the facilities. However, during construction and future maintenance activities associated with the pipelines, there would be temporary access impacts and possible intermittent closure of these facilities. To minimize this effect, the contractor or County Public Works Agency shall prepare a Traffic Control Plan for bicycles and pedestrian facilities, detailing access and lane closures, detours, as well as signage and other mechanisms to ensure bicyclist and pedestrian safety in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer or Ventura County Transportation Department, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work. With implementation of this measure as proposed, the temporary closure of such facilities would result in a less than significant impact. The project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts with regard to

temporary facilities closures is not expected to be significant, given the construction time frame of the other known proposed projects in the area and he implementation of the Traffic Control Plan.

Construction employee parking and the equipment staging area would be accommodated at various sites throughout the project area, and would be sufficient to meet demands. Since the project involves installation of new pipelines and improvements to a lift station, and only one employee would be added for the long-term operation of the facilities, there would be a negligible increase in demand for parking, aside from during project construction and possibly during future maintenance activities. Parking related to future maintenance activities associated with the pipelines could also be accommodated at the sites throughout the project area. The County Guidelines indicate that a project with adequate on-site parking for construction vehicles and operational parking that meets the zoning requirements would have a less than significant impact. Therefore, there would be less than significant impacts to parking capacity with the proposed project. Similarly, there would likewise be no significant contribution to a cumulative parking impact.

Project construction and long-term maintenance may result in periodic closures on the roadways on which Line No. 15 operates. However, one lane would be open at any given time to accommodate transit service. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. Given that the other proposed projects in the vicinity would be constructed prior to the El Rio Sewer System Project, the project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts to bus transit would also be less than significant. Additionally, the contractor or Public Works Agency shall prepare a Traffic Control Plan for bus transit facilities, detailing access and lane closures, detours, as well as signage and other mechanisms in the project area during construction and maintenance activities. The plan shall be submitted to the City of Oxnard Traffic Engineer, Ventura County Transportation Department, and SCAT, as appropriate, for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction and maintenance work. Implementation of this measure would further reduce any project-related affect on public transit.

According to the County Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact on a railroad if it would substantially interfere with an existing railroad's facilities or operations. As there is no railroad line in the project area, and no work is proposed that would affect the railroad line near the project area, the project would not impact railroad facilities or operations on either a project-specific or cumulative basis. Similarly, there are no airports or harbors in or adjacent to the project area, so there would be no impacts to these facilities.

No Action Alternative: Since no construction would occur with the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to transportation. Likewise, there would be no cumulative impacts.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: The project would be similar to that of the Preferred Alternative and would include the same transportation related measures (e.g., Traffic control Plan). Therefore, this alternative would result in less than significant transportation impacts similar to the Preferred Alternative. As with the Preferred Alternative, there would be no significant contribution to cumulative transportation impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: This alternative would generate vehicle trips associated with long-term operation of the WWTP and pipeline maintenance. A total of four full time employees would be required, resulting in commute trips. Some additional trips for the delivery of supplies, periodic removal of sludge, etc. would also be required. Based upon the analysis provided in the Final EIR for the JJC, a project that is expected to generate over 3,000 average daily trips (ADT) and from which no project impact to City roadways was found, this substantially smaller project (Onsite WWTP Alternative) should not result in impacts to City roadways. However, based upon County of Ventura thresholds, if a project will add 1 percent of a project's trips or 10 average daily trips (whichever is greater) to a road or intersection that is operating at a less than acceptable level of service (LOS), the project would have a significant impact. If a project would add one vehicle trip during the peak hour on a road or intersection that is operating at a less than acceptable LOS, the project would have a significant impact. A project that would add one or more peak hour trips to a road that is currently operating at an acceptable LOS, but is expected to fall to an unacceptable level by the year 2020, is considered to have a significant cumulative traffic impact. As indicated in the JJC FEIR, the segments of U.S. 101 from Oxnard to Camarillo and from Oxnard to Ventura operate in the unacceptable LOS E range. This alternative has the potential to significantly impact one or both of these sections of the U.S. 101. An improvement project is currently underway for the section of U.S. 101 from Oxnard to Ventura. When implemented, this would mitigate the project's impacts to this roadway segment. The project will participate in the County's traffic impact fee program, as described for the Preferred Alternative, to mitigate project-specific and cumulative impacts to impacted roadway segments.

This alternative has the potential to result in significant but mitigable safety and design impacts, since a site plan has not been prepared for the WWTP site. Mitigation would include preparation of a site plan showing adequate access and safety design features, and submittal to the County Transportation Department for review and approval. Other impact issues related to transportation would be the same as for the Preferred Alternative.

1.2.4 Growth Inducement

The County Guidelines indicate that growth-inducing impacts are to be assessed on a case-by-case basis depending upon:

- How much growth would be accommodated by removing an impediment to growth.
- Whether the project is consistent with the planned land use of the area.
- The secondary impacts of growth.

Preferred Alternative: The proposed project has been developed to accommodate the existing needs and future development in the portions of El Rio in the project area only (El Rio East, El Rio West, Strickland Acres, Vineyard Industrial Area), pursuant to the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. The current population in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan study area is 10,150. However, this includes portions of the City of Oxnard and the Nyeland Acres Subarea, which would not be served by the proposed project. Only a portion of the City of Oxnard covered in the Area Plan is actually in the sewer project area, although no part of Oxnard would be served

by the project. The buildout population projection for the entire area encompassed in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan is an additional 1,800 persons, resulting in a total buildout population of 11,950. The buildout of the El Rio area was evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Report for the El Rio/Del Norte area (Ventura County Resources Management Agency, June 1996). This document is hereby incorporated by reference, and is available for public review at the County of Ventura Planning Division located at the County Government Center, 800 South Victoria Avenue in Ventura, California.

The Ventura County General Plan EIR (March 1988) notes that infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate projected growth would not have a significant growth-inducing impact beyond the levels needed to meet forecasted needs. The proposed project is an infrastructure improvement with the purpose of accommodating only a portion of the growth outlined by the local government jurisdictions, and not beyond the capacities needed to serve forecasted levels of demand. The project is designed to meet the estimated current demand and some additional demand from future development in the same areas. Because the project's design population follows generally accepted population estimates, and is intended to accommodate only some of the growth that has already been identified in the applicable Area Plan, the proposed action is not growth-inducing. However, it may be considered to eliminate an impediment to planned growth.

The project would also accommodate the sewage generated by the proposed JJC project. The amount of development associated with the JJC is basically what would be allowed under the current M-2 zoning. Therefore, the JJC project would be consistent with the amount of development assumed at buildout in the Ventura County General Plan and the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan.

The proposed project is not growth-inducing, and would therefore not contribute to any cumulative growth inducing impacts.

No Action Alternative: Since no construction would occur under the No Action Alternative, no impacts from growth inducement would result, and there would likewise be no contribution to cumulative growth-inducing impacts.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given the similarity of this alternative to that of the Preferred Alternative, there would also be no growth-inducing impacts from the project, and no contribution to cumulative growth-inducing impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: The project would be designed to serve only the needs of buildout of the El Rio community area to be served, as presently allowed under the County General Plan and El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. Therefore, like the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would not be growth-inducing. Similarly, there would be no contribution to cumulative growth-inducing impacts.

1.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

For the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plan Alternative Only:

- A site plan of the WWTP showing site access and circulation shall be submitted to the County Transportation Department for review and approval, prior to issuance of a building permit, if required, or prior to project construction.

There would remain significant unmitigable impacts to plan and policy consistency with the No Action Alternative. Upon implementation of the mitigation measure listed above, impacts associated with all other alternatives would be less than significant.

2.0 FARMLAND

2.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Ventura County is one of the principal agricultural counties in the state, and the Oxnard Plain contains the most fertile land in Ventura County. In particular, portions of the unincorporated area of the County and the City of Oxnard are actively farmed.

The project area is mainly confined to street rights-of-ways. However, the parcel located in the City of Oxnard, near Highway 101 and the El Rio West area, as well as the JJC site, are currently used for agriculture. The JJC site is identified as "agricultural land identified for development" per the California Department of Conservation (Ventura County, June 1996).

In Ventura County, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI) system is used to inventory lands considered to have agricultural value. The areas with the highest agricultural potential are classified as "Prime" or of "Statewide Importance," followed by "Unique," "Local Importance," "Grazing," "Urban" and "Other."

A portion of the City of Oxnard parcel is identified as "Prime" farmland by the California Department of Conservation, but this designation is not on the portion planned for the pipeline crossing, which is identified as "Urban and Built-Up Land" (California Department of Conservation, *Important Farmlands Maps*). The soil of the Oxnard parcel is considered Class III-IV per the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. These classifications indicate severe to very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants and/or require conservation practices.

The JJC site, while identified as agricultural land to be developed per the State Department of Conservation, is also considered "Prime" farmland. The portion of the project area where the lift station to be constructed as part of the JJC project would be improved by the proposed project is an area identified as "Urban and Built-Up Land" (California Department of Conservation, *Important Farmlands Maps*). Land designated as "Prime" farmland is also located adjacent to the project site, bounded by Vineyard Avenue to the west, Central Avenue to the north, Rose Avenue to the east, and the existing El Rio East area to the south. This land is

also under the Oxnard-Camarillo Greenbelt Agreement, and portions are under Land Conservation Act contract (Ventura County, June 1996).

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The County of Ventura Guidelines state that projects resulting in the loss of 20 acres or more of prime soil, if the General Plan land use designation is other than agriculture or open space/rural, would result in significant project-specific impacts to agriculture. The cumulative loss of agricultural soils was addressed in the Final EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the County General Plan (1988). Since the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, additional cumulative environmental analysis is not required.

The Farmland Protection Policy Act authorizes the Department of Agriculture to develop criteria for identifying the effects of Federal programs on the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Federal agencies are instructed to use the criteria; identify and consider the adverse effects of Federal programs on the preservation of farmland; consider appropriate alternative actions that could lessen adverse effects; and assure that such Federal programs are compatible with state, local, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

Preferred Alternative: Although a portion of the sewer pipeline would cross the western boundary of the JJC site, which is "Prime" farmland, the JJC project has been approved by the County for urban development, and is undergoing construction at present. Moreover, the JJC site is designated as "Urban and Built-Up Land" (California Department of Conservation, *Important Farmlands Maps*). The area of pipeline crossing would total less than 20 acres. Even if the JJC site was not designated for urban development, the pipeline would be situated underground, and agricultural production at the parcel could continue. Therefore, no Farmland would be converted as a result of the Preferred Alternative.

The project might result in temporary impacts to farming during construction of the pipeline, however given the limited scope and time frame of the disturbance, this impact is considered less than significant. Therefore, even if the JJC project were not constructed on the site, impacts to agricultural lands would not be significant. The pipeline crossing the City of Oxnard parcel that is being used for agriculture would be located in the access road portion, which is not considered "Prime" farmland, and so would not result in direct impacts to long-term agricultural production on the property.

The cumulative impact of the loss of agricultural soil has been previously addressed as identified above. Since the project is consistent with the General Plan, no further assessment of cumulative impacts to agricultural soil is warranted.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction under this alternative, no impacts to farmland would result, and there would therefore be no cumulative impacts.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given the similarity of this alternative with the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. Under this alternative, however, there would be no pipeline crossing the City of Oxnard parcel that is being used for agriculture. For the same reasons as the Preferred Alternative, no further assessment of cumulative impacts to agricultural soil is warranted.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: Soils at the proposed WWTP site consist of Pico sandy loam (PcA). The soil capability unit for this soil is IIw-2, which indicates that it is a prime agricultural soil. The proposed WWTP site is 6.5 acres. Based on the Ventura County Initial Assessment Guidelines (September 2000), the loss of this amount of agricultural soil on a site that is designated for industrial purposes is considered adverse, but less than significant. Therefore, the project would not result in a significant impact to Farmland. Moreover, the JJC is currently being constructed; upon completion, very little (approximately 2 acres) of remaining agricultural land would continue to exist in the vicinity of the proposed WWTP site with development of both the JJC and the WWTP. For the same reasons as the Preferred Alternative, no further assessment of cumulative impacts to agricultural soil is warranted.

2.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No significant impacts would result, therefore, no mitigation is necessary.

3.0 SOCIAL IMPACTS

This section addresses the following issues: neighborhoods, community cohesion, social groups, and public services (i.e., school districts, recreation areas, businesses, police and fire protection). Transportation issues are discussed in Item 1.0 LAND USE.

3.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The general El Rio area is primarily residential, industrial, and open space/agricultural, with some commercial uses. The adjacent portions in the City of Oxnard are primarily residential, agricultural, and industrial. The Santa Clara River runs west of the project area. An open space buffer and an aggregate mining area lay between the river and the agricultural and urban uses of the El Rio area, west of Vineyard Avenue. The character of the El Rio area is defined by its small town, semi-rural qualities, consisting of several separate and distinct neighborhoods situated within the Oxnard plain. See Item 1.0 LAND USE of this document for additional detail.

The County Guidelines state that:

All projects have some degree of impact on community character. Any project that is consistent with both the zoning and the General Plan (Land Use Chapter of the Goals, Policies and Programs, and Area Plan) can be determined to have a less than significant impact on the land use of an area, so long as its design/architectural style is compatible with the surrounding community.

Most of the project area is in the County of Ventura jurisdiction. These portions are served by the County Sheriff's Department, from its headquarters at the County Government Center on Victoria Avenue in Ventura. The portions in the City of Oxnard are served by the City of Oxnard Police Department from the facility at 3rd and C Streets. The California Highway Patrol also serves Vineyard Avenue, a state highway.

Fire protection services for the unincorporated County portions of the project area are provided by County Fire Station No. 51, at El Rio Road, along the Highway 101 frontage. The Oxnard Fire and Emergency Services Program responds to fires within the City limits of the project area from its Fire Station No. 4 at 230 West Vineyard Avenue in Oxnard (Vineyard Avenue and Oxnard Boulevard). Both stations are sited in the City of Oxnard, and are not within the project area.

Ventura County encompasses 20 school districts, three community colleges, and a four-year university that opened its doors for students in the Fall of 1999. The Oxnard Union High School District and the El Rio School District serve the project area. Three schools, including Rio Mesa High School, are located either within or adjacent to the project area.

The closest recreation area is Rio Lindo Park in the City of Oxnard, in the Rio Lindo residential area, south of State Highway 101. There are no park or other recreation facilities in the project area.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: Because the project is limited to the installation of wastewater lines in primarily existing developed roadways, and the pipelines would be subsurface, the project does not present a conflict with adjacent and surrounding land uses, and would not affect community character. Furthermore, because of the subsurface nature of the project, it does not have the potential to divide an established community. The lift station to be installed by the JJC project at the southeastern corner of South Bank Road and Montgomery Avenue, would be upgraded by the proposed project. The improvements to the lift station would be primarily internal upgrades. The lift station structure is limited in size, mostly subsurface, and is compatible with the surrounding industrial and agricultural uses.

The project would be located primarily in the road rights-of-way. Since planning agencies do not typically zone road rights-of-way, there is no zoning designation for these areas of pipeline installation. Subsurface infrastructure is commonly sited in the rights-of-way, and

would be compatible with that use. The parcel of the approved JJC project is zoned M-2 Manufacturing Zone, designated "Industrial" by the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan, and designated Existing Community by the County General Plan. A portion of the proposed pipeline would cross this parcel on the western edge, between Beedy Street and South Bank Road. The underground pipeline would be an allowed use in this area. The parcel adjacent to Highway 101, in the City of Oxnard, where a 21-inch pipe and 10-inch pipe would connect to the City's system, is designated Regional Commercial, and zoned C-2 Community Planned Development. This zoning designation allows for the installation of pipelines. The pipeline would be sited within an access road, adjacent to the agricultural field. The lift station site is located in a developed industrial area, zoned M-2, and designated Existing Community/Industrial, and would allow for the lift station improvements.

Since the project elements would be compatible with the community character and land use and zoning of the area, there would be no impacts to neighborhoods, community cohesion, and social groups. Likewise, there would be no cumulative impact to these issue areas.

Since the project is one of subsurface infrastructure improvement, involving the installation of wastewater lines and improvements to a lift station, no increase in the need for fire protection is expected. Installation of new pipeline facilities is not the type of development typically considered to place additional demand upon firefighting services. Therefore, there would be no impacts to fire protection services. As there would be no project-specific impacts, there would similarly be no cumulative fire protection impacts.

The proposed project involves the installation of wastewater pipelines and the improvement of a lift station. Police protection services are normally required to be augmented when new residential or commercial development is proposed, which would increase an area's population. The new pipeline is sized to accommodate existing development, and only some of the development that has been allocated for under the Ventura County General Plans and El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. Hence, it would not result in an increase in population that would place additional demand upon police services. Given the infrastructure nature of the project, there would be no need for additional police protection services. As project-specific impacts to police protection personnel, equipment, and facilities are not expected, the project would likewise not contribute to any cumulative police protection impacts.

The proposed project is not expected to cause an increase in demand for schools, as no housing, commercial, or industrial development would be constructed, and therefore no direct or indirect increase in population would result. The small number of temporary construction-related employees estimated (10-20 positions) is expected to come from the local population or from regional construction crews that travel from project to project. The new pipeline is sized to accommodate existing development, and only some of the development that has been allocated for under the Ventura County General Plan and the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. Hence, it would not result in an increase in population that would place additional demand upon school or library services. The project would not directly impact any educational facilities during the long-term operation of the pipelines. Therefore, the project would have no project-specific or cumulative impacts on educational facilities.

The proposed project is not expected to cause an increase in demand for recreational facilities, including parks and trails, as no housing, commercial, or industrial development would be constructed, and therefore no direct or indirect increase in population would result. The small number of temporary construction-related employees estimated (10-20) is expected to come from the local population or from construction crews that travel from project to project. The new pipelines are sized to accommodate existing development, and only some of the development that has been allocated for under the relevant general and area plans. Consequently, it would not result in an increase in population that would place additional demand upon recreational services. Additionally, the project would not directly impact any recreational facilities during construction or during the long-term operation of the pipelines. Therefore, the project would have no project-specific or cumulative impact on recreational facilities.

No Action Alternative: Since no sewer collection, treatment and disposal system would be created under this alternative, there would be no adverse project specific or cumulative social impacts.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given the similarity of this alternative with the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. Therefore, there would be no social impacts, either project-specific or cumulative, with this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: The WWTP site is used for agricultural production (e.g., strawberries). Land uses surrounding the site include the proposed Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) to the south/southwest (currently being constructed), a former mining pit filled with water to the west/north west, disturbed undeveloped land to the northwest and industrial use to the east/southeast. The Santa Clara River lies beyond the former mining pit and disturbed lands about 1,250 feet northwest of the proposed WWTP site. The siting of the treatment plant under this alternative would be consistent with the surrounding land uses and community character. However, since the plant has not yet been designed, a determination regarding the appropriateness of the design and architectural style of the building cannot be made; with regard to community character, then, this alternative has the potential to result in a significant impact, although cumulative impacts would not be considerable. A mitigation measure is included below that ensures that the building would be designed appropriately.

The construction of the plant, a new facility, would require law enforcement and fire services. However, due to the nature of the facility, the service required is expected to be minimal. Like the Preferred Alternative, no impacts to recreation or educational facilities are anticipated. Employees are expected to come from the local area, or from regional construction crews that travel from project to project, and not generate additional requirements for these services.

Therefore, social impacts would be potentially significant. However, the project would not contribute to significant cumulative social impacts.

3.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

For the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Only:

- Prior to construction, the design and architectural plans for the wastewater treatment plant shall be submitted to the appropriate County staff, or review committee or board, for approval.

The remainder of the impacts for the various alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, are less than significant, or there are no impacts. Therefore, no other mitigation measures are necessary. With implementation of the above mitigation measures, impacts from the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant would be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.0 RELOCATION IMPACTS

4.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Please refer to the discussion in Item 1.0 LAND USE.

4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Relocation refers to the displacement of households as a result of project implementation. Since no housing would be disturbed by the Preferred Alternative or any of the other alternatives, there would be no need for relocation, and therefore no relocation impacts would result.

4.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

Since there would be no impacts, no mitigation is necessary.

5.0 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

5.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Please refer to the discussion in Item 1.0 LAND USE.

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: Since the Preferred Alternative consists of improving the sewage collection, treatment and disposal system in the El Rio area, eliminating the current septic system, the community may realize a slight property value increase due to this improved infrastructure. Nonetheless, the beneficial economic impact from the Preferred Alternative would be less than significant.

There may be some minor economic impacts associated with temporary closures of roadway lanes during project construction, which may affect businesses in the area by reducing access to patrons and clientele. However, the temporary closures are expected to be minor, and some access along each roadway would remain open to serve the businesses. Therefore, such adverse economic impacts would be less than significant.

Likewise, any cumulative impact related to economics would be less than significant.

No Action Alternative: There would be no economic impacts associated with this alternative, since no project would be funded or constructed.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: This alternative would have the same effects as the Preferred Alternative, given that the two have the same purpose and similar construction and implementation. That is, there would be less than significant economic impacts, both adverse and beneficial. Similarly, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: Construction of an onsite wastewater treatment plant would have similar economic impacts as the Connect to SCWS Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative, and the Preferred Alternative. All of these alternatives have the same objective, and all would provide sewer system collection, distribution, and disposal. Moreover, the construction and implementation under this alternative would be similar to that of the other two alternatives. Hence, there would less than significant economic impacts (some adverse, and some beneficial), and there would be less than significant cumulative impacts.

5.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

Since adverse impacts are less than significant, no mitigation is required.

6.0 JOINT DEVELOPMENT

This section refers to joint development measures to be employed in a project, and is not applicable to the El Rio Sewer System Project.

7.0 AIR QUALITY IMPACTS

7.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The project site is a residential area, which includes persons more sensitive to poor air quality, such as children and the elderly. The air quality of Ventura County is monitored by a network of air monitoring stations operated by the California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board (ARB) and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The air monitoring network includes eight stations in Ventura County. The closest station and most

representative of the air quality of the project site is the El Rio station, located at Rio Mesa School, immediately south of the proposed sewers on Central Avenue and Strickland Drive.

Air quality standards are specific concentrations of pollutants that are used as thresholds to protect public health and the public welfare. In July 1997, EPA finalized new health-based ozone and particulate matter (PM) standards. However, due to delays caused by several lawsuits, the new standards were not fully implemented until February 2001. The new Federal ozone standard is based on a longer averaging period (8-hour vs. 1-hour), recognizing that prolonged exposure is more damaging. The new Federal PM standard is based on finer particles (2.5 microns and smaller vs. 10 microns and smaller), recognizing that finer particles may have a higher residence time in the lungs and cause greater respiratory illness.

Currently, ambient air quality data collected in Ventura County has resulted in the designation of non-attainment for the State and Federal 1-hour ozone standard and the State PM_{10} standard (particles less than 10 microns in diameter). Non-attainment means the applicable air quality standard is regularly violated.

Data from the El Rio monitoring station is provided in Table 4 below. Air quality standard violations at the El Rio monitoring station from 1999 through 2001 include:

- The State 1-hour ozone standard (0.09 parts per million [ppm]) was violated on only one day;
- The Federal 1-hour ozone standard (0.12 ppm) and 8-hour ozone standard (0.08 ppm) were not violated; and
- The State PM_{10} standard (50 micrograms per cubic meter) was violated on 4 days.

Table 4. Air Quality Standard Exceedances

Year	1999	2000	2001
1-Hour Ozone (ppm)			
Worst 1-Hour Period	0.103	0.084	0.094
Number of State Exceedances (Days >0.095 ppm)	1	0	0
Number of Federal Exceedances (Days >0.12 ppm)	0	0	0
8-Hour Ozone (ppm)			
Worst 8-Hour Period	0.080	0.072	0.072
Number of Federal Exceedances (8-Hours >0.085 ppm)	0	0	0
PM_{10} (micrograms/cubic meter)			
Worst Sample	50.8	52.2	51.5
Number of State Exceedances (Samples >50)	1	1	2
PM2.5 (micrograms/cubic meter)			
Worst Sample	36.7	45.7	41.0
Number of Federal Exceedances (Samples >65)	0	0	0
Carbon Monoxide (ppm)			
Worst 1-Hour Period	1.20	1.28	1.64
Number of State Exceedances (Hours >9 ppm)	0	0	0

7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Ventura County APCD is the local agency responsible for implementation of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). In November 2000, the Ventura County APCD adopted the Ventura County Air Quality Assessment Guidelines (Guidelines), which include project-specific thresholds that should not be exceeded to ensure consistency with the SIP and minimize public exposure to pollutants:

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP);
- Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation;
- Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria non-attainment pollutant;
- Expose the public (especially schools, day care centers, hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent facilities and residences) to substantial pollutant concentrations; and
- Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

A considerable net increase of ozone precursors (a non-attainment pollutant) is considered 25 pounds per day of reactive organic compounds (ROC) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx). The Ventura County APCD significance thresholds are not applicable to construction emissions, since these emissions are only temporary (Guidelines, 2000). However, construction-related emissions should be mitigated if ROC and NOx emissions would exceed the 25 pounds per day threshold.

Preferred Alternative:

Short-Term. Air emissions associated with pipeline installation were estimated based on using three equipment spreads to reduce the installation period to about 14 months. Equipment assumed to be used includes 3 backhoes, 4 wheeled loaders, 3 excavators, 3 cranes and 3 rollers (pavement patching). In addition, air emissions would be generated by construction worker vehicles and heavy-duty trucks. Table 5 provides estimates of construction emissions for a peak day and for the entire project. Due to the short-term nature of these emissions, the Ventura County APCD significance thresholds are not applicable. Therefore, short-term local and regional emissions are considered a less than significant impact.

Table 5. Construction Emissions Estimates - Preferred Alternative

Source	Peak Day (pounds)		Total Project (tons)	
	NOx	ROC	NOx	ROC
Heavy Equipment (trenching)	278.5	24.2	41.78	3.64
Heavy Equipment (boring & jacking)	112.6	12.5	0.28	0.03
Construction worker vehicles	1.3	0.6	0.20	0.10
Heavy-duty trucks	3.2	0.3	0.49	0.05
Total	395.6	37.6	42.75	3.82

Construction would occur near Rio Mesa High School and may expose students to substantial pollutant concentrations. However, emissions-producing equipment (excavator, backhoe, wheeled loader, crane, roller) would be dispersed along the sewer line installation corridor, and be located a minimum of 500 feet from classrooms and playing fields. Therefore, public exposure to substantial pollutant concentrations is not expected.

Grading and other earthwork would generate fugitive dust, which may cause or substantially contribute to violations of the State PM_{10} standard. However, the construction contractor would implement dust control measures as required under Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction. Therefore, no violations of the PM_{10} standard are expected.

Long-Term. Air emissions associated with long-term operation would be limited to operations and maintenance of the pipeline infrastructure, including the lift station. Based on the activities listed in Item 1.4, it is expected that operation-related activities would require about four one-way vehicle trips (light-duty truck) on a peak day. Peak day emissions would be 0.08 pounds NOx and 0.03 pounds ROC. These emissions are below the 25 pound per day significance threshold, and are considered a less than significant impact to local and regional air quality.

Sewers may generate odors through vapor leakage at manholes. However, manholes would be sealed (excluding small pick holes) and serve mostly small collector lines. Odors from manholes are generally the result of turbulence induced by rapid changes in sewer line gradient. The project sewer lines would be located in level areas where turbulence is not expected. Overall, sewers are a consistent element of the residential environment and are rarely a source of odors. Therefore, objectionable odors affecting a considerable number of persons are not expected.

Due to the very small amount of emissions, the project's incremental contribution to regional and local air emissions and non-attainment of the State 1-hour ozone standard is not considered to be cumulatively considerable.

Consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Public infrastructure projects have the potential to cause a population increase, and would be considered inconsistent if such increase is not accommodated in the AQMP. However, the proposed project would serve only existing and approved development in the El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan. The community of El Rio is located within the County's Planning area called the Oxnard Growth Area. The current estimated actual population for the Oxnard Growth area is 159,769. The projected population for this area, as utilized for the 1995 AQMP revision, was 162,408. Therefore, since the current population is less than the projections used for AQMP planning purposes, the proposed project is consistent with the AQMP.

Consistency with the Federal Clean Air Act. Section 176 of the 1990 Amendments to the Federal Clean Air Act prohibits (FCAA) the Federal government from engaging in any activity that does not conform to the applicable air quality implementation plan. For the purposes of the proposed project, the applicable implementation plan is the California State Implementation Plan for Ozone. Ventura County is classified as a severe non-attainment area for ozone, meaning the County must attain the Federal ozone standard by 2005. Determining Conformity of General Federal Actions to State or Federal Implementation Plans (40 CFR 93.153b) lists "de minimis" thresholds for non-attainment areas, which are emission levels below which a conformity determination is not required. The threshold for severe ozone non-attainment areas is 25 tons per year oxides of nitrogen (NOx) or volatile organic compounds (equivalent to ROC).

Temporary emissions, including construction-related emissions must be also be assessed for conformity. As indicated in Table 5, construction emissions would exceed the 25 ton per year threshold. However, 40 CFR 93.158(a)(5)(v) indicates that conformity requirements will be met for regional water and wastewater projects sized to meet only the needs of the population as projected in the applicable SIP. As stated above, the actual growth rate in the project area is less than assumed in the AQMP, the applicable SIP. Therefore, the proposed project is sized to be consistent with existing and approved development and satisfies Section 93.158 of the General Conformity Rule.

No Action Alternative: There would be no air quality impacts associated with this alternative, since no project would be constructed.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: This alternative would have the same effects as the Preferred Alternative, given the similarity of the two alternatives, especially concerning construction and ongoing operations and maintenance. There would be less than significant impacts to air quality with this alternative, but mitigation measures would still be implemented to ensure that impacts are minimized. As stated above, the actual growth rate in the project area is less than assumed in the AQMP, the applicable SIP. Therefore, the

proposed project is sized to be consistent with existing and approved development and satisfies Section 93.158 of the General Conformity Rule.

As with the Preferred Alternative, this alternative's incremental contribution to regional and local air emissions and non-attainment of the State 1-hour ozone standard is not considered to be cumulatively considerable. This alternative would be consistent with the AQMP.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant:

Short-Term. Air emissions associated with this alternative were estimated based on the same assumptions as used for the Preferred Alternative, with the following changes:

- Boring and jacking emissions were deleted;
- Pipeline installation emissions were assumed to be the same as for the proposed project;
- The number of construction worker trips was increased to account for construction of the WWTP;
- Heavy equipment emissions associated with WWTP construction were added; and
- Cut and fill would be balanced at the WWTP site; therefore, the number of heavy-duty truck trips was assumed to be the same as for the proposed project.

Table 6 provides estimates of construction emissions for a peak day, and for the entire project. Due to the short-term nature of these emissions, the Ventura County APCD significance thresholds are not applicable. Therefore, short-term emissions are considered a less than significant impact. However, the Ventura County APCD recommended construction emission measures shall be applied to this alternative, as with the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the standard dust control measures required under Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction shall also apply to this alternative to ensure that there are no violations of the PM_{10} standard. As stated above, the actual growth rate in the project area is less than assumed in the AQMP, the applicable SIP. Therefore, the proposed project is sized to be consistent with existing and approved development and satisfies Section 93.158 of the General Conformity Rule.

Table 6. On-Site WWTP Alternative Construction Emissions Estimates

Source	Peak Day (pounds)		Total Project (tons)	
	NOx	ROC	NOx	ROC
Heavy Equipment (trenching)	278.5	24.2	41.78	3.64
Heavy Equipment (WWTP)	186.1	12.8	9.50	0.66
Construction worker vehicles	1.9	0.9	0.28	0.14
Heavy-duty trucks	3.2	0.3	0.49	0.05
Total	469.7	38.2	52.05	4.49

Long-Term. Operation-related air emissions associated with this alternative would be greater than the Preferred Alternative due to the addition of a standby generator (monthly testing) and additional employees to operate the WWTP. Peak day emissions (during generator testing) would be 6.0 pounds NOx and 0.7 pounds ROC. These emissions are below the 25 pound per day significance threshold, and are considered a less than significant impact to regional air quality.

This alternative would be consistent with the AQMP. Additionally, this alternative's incremental contribution to regional and local air emissions and non-attainment of the State 1-hour ozone standard is not considered to be cumulatively considerable.

7.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

For All Alternatives, Except the No Action Alternative:

Although construction-related impacts were found less than significant, the following measure will be implemented in addition to the measures incorporated into the project as identified in Section C of the Environmental Assessment because Ventura County is a severe non-attainment area for ozone:

1. All construction work requiring the use of exhaust producing equipment shall be cancelled during smog alerts.

8.0 NOISE IMPACTS

8.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

8.1.1 General Characteristics and Regulation of Noise

The duration of noise and the time period at which it occurs are important factors in determining the impact of noise on sensitive land uses. Noise is more disturbing at night than during the day, and noise indices have been developed to account for the varying duration of noise events over time, as well as community response to them. The Community Noise Level Equivalent (CNEL) and the Day-Night Average Level (DNL or Ldn) are such indices. They are time-weighted average values based on the equivalent sound level (Leq), which is a constant sound level that equals the same amount of acoustic energy as actual time-varying sound over a particular period. The CNEL penalizes noise levels during the night (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) by 10 dB to account for the increased sensitivity of people to noise after dark. Evening noise levels (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.) are penalized 5 dB by the CNEL. Appropriately weighted hourly Leqs are then combined over a 24-hour period to result in a CNEL. The Ldn also penalizes nighttime noise levels, but does not penalize evening levels. These two indices are generally equivalent.

In general, the CNEL may be thought qualitatively as an accumulation of the noise associated with individual events occurring throughout a 24-hour period. The noise of each individual event is accounted for in a separate, discrete measurement that integrates the

changing sound level over time as, for example, when an aircraft approaches, flies overhead, then continues off into the distance. These integrated sound levels for individual operations are referred to as Sound Exposure Levels or SELs. The accumulation of the SELs from each individual operation during a 24-hour period determines the CNEL for the day.

To limit population exposure to physically /or psychologically significant noise levels, the State of California, various County governments, and most cites in the state have established guidelines and ordinances to control noise. Based upon the County of Ventura General Plan Hazards Appendix, an exterior noise level of 60 to 65 dBA CNEL is considered "normally acceptable" for residential uses. A noise level of 70 dBA CNEL is considered to be "conditionally acceptable" and a noise level of greater than 75 dBA CNEL is considered "clearly unacceptable" for residences. 70 dBA CNEL is considered to be the upper limit of "normally acceptable" noise levels for other sensitive uses such as schools, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and parks. These noise criteria are based upon the California Office of Noise Control land use compatibility guidelines. These noise standards are also referenced in the City of Oxnard's General Plan and General Plan EIR.

The Ventura County General Plan (Section 2.16.2-1 of the Goals, Policies and Programs) also establishes policies pertaining to noise. These policies are reflected in the Ventura County Guidelines threshold criteria for noise, as presented below in the impact analysis section of this noise discussion.

The County of Ventura has one existing Noise Ordinance (Article 11 - Loud or Raucous Nighttime Noise in Residential Zones, Ord. #4124). The ordinance states that no person shall create within a residential zone of the County of Ventura any loud or raucous noise which is audible to the human ear during the hours of 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. of the following day, at a distance of 50 feet from the property line of the noise source, or 50 feet from any such noise source if the noise source is in public right-of-way.

The City of Oxnard also has a noise ordinance (Ordinance No. 2292). The ordinance does not pertain to construction related noise, provided that the activities occur between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, including Saturday. Other elements of the ordinance would not apply to the project since it is a subsurface wastewater infrastructure project that would not generate noise during operation.

8.1.2 Site-Specific Setting

The primary existing source of noise in the project area is vehicle traffic on local roads (e.g., Highway 101, Vineyard Avenue, and Central Avenue). Noise sensitive land uses in the general vicinity of the project's impact area include residential uses, a library at the intersection of Jordan and Strobe Streets, an elementary school on Balboa Street and Strickland Drive, and Rio Mesa High School on Central Avenue.

Ambient noise levels in the project vicinity vary primarily based on the volume, speed and type of traffic occurring in the specific area, as well as proximity and type of other noise

sources (e.g., industrial or agricultural operations). As indicated above, the project area of disturbance is confined mainly to road rights-of-way. Short-term (15-minute Leq) ambient noise measurements were taken by Padre Associates, Inc. staff on Wednesday afternoon (3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.), November 22, 2000, using a Larson Davis DSP80 Sound Level Meter, at four sensitive receptor locations in proximity to where project construction activities would occur. The ambient noise measurement results are provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Ambient Noise Levels

Location	Distance to Primary Noise Source	Distance to Nearest Sensitive Receptor	Noise Level (Leq)
End of Myrtle Street	Approximately 350 feet from the centerline of U.S. 101	At the lot line of home on Myrtle Street	61.0 dBA
Strobe Street (second home past library on Jordan Street)	Approximately 500 feet from the centerline of Vineyard Avenue	Five feet from the lot line of home on Strobe Street	63.3 dBA
Strickland Drive (about midway between Central Avenue and 90 degree turn in Strickland Drive)	Approximately 375 feet from the centerline of Central Avenue	Five feet from the lot line of home on Strickland Drive	53.4 dBA
Intersection of Villanova Avenue and Occidental Drive	Approximately 40 feet from the centerline of Villanova Avenue and 20 feet from the centerline of Occidental Drive	Five feet from the lot line of home at intersection.	53.4 dBA

8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Project activities that would create noise impacts would be located within the County of Ventura for the most part, and would affect sensitive uses in the County. However, some of the construction would occur within the City of Oxnard and would affect sensitive uses in the City. The County of Ventura thresholds of significance for noise impacts are used here for the purposes of analysis. The City of Oxnard does not have adopted noise thresholds of significance.

The current County Guidelines provide the following applicable noise threshold:

Noise generators proposed to be located near any noise sensitive use shall incorporate noise control measures so that outdoor noise levels at the sensitive receptor do not exceed:

a. Leq 1H of 55 dBA or ambient noise level plus 3 dBA, whichever is greater during any hour from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm

b. Leq 1H of 50 dBA or ambient noise level plus 3 dBA, whichever is greater, during any hour from 7:00 pm to 10 pm

c. Leq 1H of 45 dBA or ambient noise level plus 3 dBA, whichever is greater during any hour from 10 pm to 6 am

As indicated above, the City of Oxnard has no adopted short-term noise threshold of significance for the purposes of environmental review. It appears, from review of City environmental documents including the General Plan EIR, that the City has considered construction noise as a less than significant adverse impact due to its short-term nature.

Preferred Alternative: The use of construction equipment during project implementation would raise the existing ambient noise levels substantially in the short-term. Noise produced by construction equipment varies depending on the type of equipment, and its operation and maintenance. Additionally, construction noise represents a short-term impact on ambient noise levels at any one location. Noise impacts associated with construction activities would impact the sensitive receptor locations identified above (all along the proposed pipeline corridor). Based upon modeling of noise levels that would be produced during the ground tamping and repaving phase of the construction effort, short-term noise levels at sensitive uses on the streets that would be impacted by construction would reach an estimated maximum of about 94 dBA (Leq). This noise level would likely be experienced for a couple of hours at any given sensitive receptor while construction activities are concentrated in proximity to the given use. As the construction activity moves away from the receptor, noise levels would diminish.

Project construction would generate noise levels in excess of 3 dBA above ambient conditions (or 55 dBA) during operational hours at all of the sensitive receptor locations along the proposed sewer corridors. However, noise mitigation has been incorporated into the project to reduce the short-term construction noise impact to a less than significant level.

Long-term noise would not be an issue for the project, since the project is mostly confined to the operation of subsurface wastewater collection lines. However, it is possible that repair work during the life of the project could result in localized short-term noise in the future.

The major cumulative projects proposed in the general project vicinity are expected to be constructed prior to the proposed project with the exception of possible development within the Riverpark Specific Plan Area. With the implementation of the noise reduction incorporated into the project, the project's contribution to any cumulative noise impacts would be reduced to the extent feasible. Therefore, the El Rio Sewer System Project is not expected to result in a cumulatively considerable short-term or long-term noise impact.

No Action Alternative: Since no project would be constructed, there would be no impacts to noise.

Connect to SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: This alternative would have the same effects as the Preferred Alternative, given the similarity of the two alternatives, especially concerning construction and ongoing operations and maintenance. There would be significant

but mitigable short-term construction noise impacts, but less than significant long-term noise impacts. Like the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would not result in a cumulatively considerable long-term noise impact.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant: Noise impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to those associated with the Preferred Alternative. However, this alternative would include the construction of a new WWTP at the end of Beedy Street. This area is industrial in nature. Other nearby land uses includes agriculture and an open pond (former mining site). A juvenile justice center complex is proposed for most of the area presently occupied by agricultural uses. Because there are no sensitive uses in proximity to the proposed wastewater treatment site, construction noise impacts associated with the WWTP would be less than significant. However, short-term noise associated with pipeline construction would be significant but mitigable, as with the Preferred Alternative, and would require the same mitigation.

Normally acceptable noise levels for industrial areas are 75 dBA CNEL or below (Ventura County 1988 as amended 1994). Ambient noise measurements were taken by Padre staff within the City of San Buenaventura WWTP at a location 15 feet from a subsurface pump station housing 6 continuously operating 100 hp variable speed pumps on June 7, 1999. Noise levels at this location were measured at 56.8 dBA (Leq) (two minute duration measurement). Based upon noise measurements taken at the City of San Buenaventura WWTP, long-term noise associated with the proposed El Rio WWTP operations would be expected to be within the acceptable range for the uses in proximity to the site, and therefore, less than significant.

As with the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would not result in a cumulatively considerable long-term noise impact.

8.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation beyond that incorporated into the project is required.

9.0 WATER RESOURCES IMPACTS

9.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The project site is located in the Oxnard Forebay Groundwater Basin, and is hydrologically connected to the overdrafted Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin. The Basin is under the management of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (GMA). The GMA is responsible for overseeing groundwater resources in an area of roughly 185 square miles that includes the Oxnard Forebay Groundwater Basin, the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin, the Pleasant Valley Basin, the Las Posas Basin, and a small westerly portion of the Santa Rosa Basin. The Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant is located in the Oxnard Plain Basin.

The Oxnard Forebay Basin and Oxnard Plain Basin are underlain by three different aquifers at different depths. These are called the semi-perched, upper and lower aquifers. The

Forebay Basin, with its high permeability soils, provides a major source of recharge to both basins. In the El Rio area, recharge occurs in the area east of Rose Avenue, and the area south of Highway 101 in Oxnard (Ventura County Uniform Mapping System).

Water quality in the Oxnard Forebay Basin is generally considered to not meet State drinking water standards. Two of the primary problem constituents are total dissolved solids (TDS) and nitrates (County of Ventura, August 1989 and County of Ventura, February 2000). The October 14, 1999 resolution of the Los Angeles RWQCB (Resolution No. 99-13) pertaining to the prohibition of septic systems in the El Rio area cites substantial evidence that septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay are in violation of the water quality objectives for pathogens and nitrate, and impair the beneficial uses of the groundwater.

There are no surface water features (e.g., streams, ponds, etc.) within the project area. The closest surface water body is the Santa Clara River, located along the western edge of El Rio, roughly one-third mile from the nearest proposed pipeline.

The Vineyard Avenue Acres Mutual Water Company, Cloverleaf Mutual Water Company, El Rio Plaza Water Company, as well as several other small water purveyors, provide water to the El Rio area (Richards, Linda personal communication, December 2000). Water sources are primarily groundwater and United Water Conservation District (UWCD) water. The City of Oxnard provides water service within the incorporated City. The UWCD treats its water to comply with all applicable water quality regulations. The UWCD diverts water from the Santa Clara River and utilizes groundwater as its supply.

The City of Oxnard purchases water from the Calleguas Municipal Water District (CMWD) and the UWCD. The City of Oxnard also operates four active shallow and two active deep groundwater wells. The City of Oxnard's water supply currently meets all federal and State requirements for water quality.

The CMWD is a member agency of the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California, from which it purchases State Water Project water. The MWD water provided to CMWD is filtered and disinfected at a MWD facility. MWD uses chloramines to disinfect its water to ensure against forming certain by-products like Trihalomethanes (THMs) that result when chlorine is added to water with naturally occurring organics.

9.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The County Guidelines state the following:

- Any land use that will directly or indirectly decrease, either individually or cumulatively, the net quantity of groundwater in a basin that is overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potential significant impact.
- Any project that will individually or cumulatively degrade the quality of groundwater, and cause it to fail to meet groundwater quality basin standards set by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), is a significant impact.

- The quality of water available to development must be in compliance with the applicable State Drinking Water Standards as described in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 64421 et. Seq.
- A land use or activity could cause a significant adverse impact upon surface water resources in itself or on a cumulative basis if it will degrade the quality of surface water and cause it to fail to meet the surface water quality objectives for a hydrologic unit defined in the Water Quality Control Plan, Santa Clara River Basin 4A Plan adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region.

Preferred Alternative:

Water Supply. The project will not require a new source of domestic water, and would not require substantial additional water supplies. Additional water supply needs would be limited to that generated by the new full-time employee equivalent. There may be a very small amount of water used incidentally during construction and the long-term operation and maintenance of the pipelines and lift station. These supplies may be carried by water trucks; the source of water is unknown at this time. Given the minimal amount of water to be used, this impact to water supplies would be less than significant, and not cumulatively considerable

Groundwater. No new impervious surfaces would be created by the proposed project that would prevent groundwater recharge. However, by providing a sewer system, the existing septic systems would no longer be used. Therefore, an estimated one million gallons per day (mgd) of sewage that has historically percolated into the groundwater basin would no longer contribute to groundwater recharge. To mitigate this problem, the project is located in the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin that is within the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency. The Agency has adopted a management plan and ordinances to manage the recharge, extraction and use of groundwater from the aquifers within the Agency. This management ensures that there will be no continuing overdraft of the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin, the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin and the Pleasant Valley Basin. Additionally, the Agency has proven the assertion regarding the ability to control the groundwater basins within the boundary of the Agency. Consequently, the Agency provides mitigation for groundwater quantity within the Agency boundary.

While eliminating the existing septic tanks would have an effect on groundwater supplies available to water purveyors, the project would also protect the integrity of the water supply by removing the septic tanks as a source of groundwater contamination. Effluent discharges at the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant are regulated by the RWQCB, and waste discharge requirements have been established by the RWQCB. As previously noted, the current septic systems are considered to be in violation of water quality objectives for pathogens and nitrates, and are limiting the beneficial uses of the groundwater. By changing from a septic system to a sewer system, the project is designed to ensure compliance with the water quality requirements, and would have a beneficial impact on groundwater quality. Water quantity effects are considered to be offset by the beneficial effect on water quality, and therefore would be less than significant.

The potential exists for impacts to groundwater quality in the El Rio and Oxnard areas from pipeline overflows, which are not routine, but possible. These could include inadvertent releases of untreated wastewater. The likelihood of contaminants, in the event of an overflow, reaching the underground water sources would be low, as any spills would be contained and repaired as rapidly as possible by maintenance crews, pursuant to the County's sewer spill response plan. Therefore, this is considered a less than significant impact.

The installation of new wastewater pipelines is not expected to result in impacts to drinking water quality. However, since elimination of the use of septic systems in the El Rio area is expected to have a beneficial impact on groundwater quality, the project will have a beneficial effect on the groundwater supplies used by the domestic water purveyors in the project area.

Because the project would likely have an overall beneficial impact on groundwater quality, and any potential adverse impact from an accidental release is considered unlikely, it would not contribute significantly to adverse cumulative groundwater quality impacts.

Surface Water. The proposed project does not directly or indirectly impact any surface water bodies, as there are none in, or adjacent to, the project area. Because the project would not introduce any new structures or impervious surfaces, no changes to surface water runoff would result. Therefore, the project would not result in a project-specific or cumulative impact on surface water quantity.

During project construction there would be disturbance of soils. In the event that construction were to occur during the rainy season, disturbed soils could be exposed to rainfall and subsequently result in silty runoff entering the storm drain system, which eventually outlets to the Santa Clara River or percolates into the ground. This would be a potentially significant surface water quality impact to the Santa Clara River. However, the project must comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharge Associated with Construction Activity. This program is administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB). The RWCB Los Angeles Region is responsible for administering the program within the project area. The General Permit requires all dischargers (where construction activity disturbs more than five acres or more) to prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the project which specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will prevent all construction pollutants from contacting storm water and with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off site into receiving waters. Dischargers are also required to eliminate or reduce nonstorm water discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the nations. Finally, dischargers are required to perform inspections of all BMPs.

Additionally, the project must also comply with the local requirements of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, NPDES Permit No. CAS004002. Under this permit, the project applicant is required to develop, implement, and submit for approval a Stormwater Pollution Control Plan (SWPCP) to the Ventura County Flood Control District (VCFCD). The SWPP prepared to meet the State requirements, upon (VCFCD) review and

approval, can be submitted to satisfy the local SWPCP requirement. Conformance with these permits should reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

There are no other known projects that are scheduled to be constructed within the El Rio area during the same period as the proposed project, however, it is likely that construction would be ongoing somewhere within the watershed during this period. Conformance of projects with the applicable NPDES permits should reduce cumulative impacts to a less than significant level.

Because the project is limited to subsurface infrastructure and does not include any water crossings, it is not anticipated to result in any release of contaminants or other elements that would impact surface water quality through routine operation. However, the potential exists for impacts to the water quality of the Santa Clara River from pipeline upsets, which are not routine, but are possible. These could include inadvertent releases of untreated wastewater. However, the likelihood of contaminants, in the event of an upset, reaching the surface waters of the river would be rare, considering the river is about one-third mile from the project site. The potential for accidental releases may be greater with the proposed project than with the current septic system, given that the proposed project could accommodate increased wastewater flows to meet future demands. In the event of a spill, the County would be responsible to provide cleanup, disposal, and implementation of protection measures, as well as notification to the County Environmental Health Department and RWQCB. This impact is considered less than significant, given the distance to the Santa Clara River and unlikely nature of such an event.

Since the project would not result in significant surface water quality impacts, and any potential impacts from accidental releases are expected to be rare, it would not contribute significantly to cumulative surface water quality impacts.

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would not result in impacts to water supply, groundwater supply, and surface water. However, the beneficial impacts of improving groundwater quality in the Oxnard Forebay Basin would be forfeited. Moreover, unless an alternative to the use of septic tanks within the project area is implemented, the septic tanks will continue to be in violation of the water quality objectives for pathogens and nitrate, and impair the beneficial uses of the groundwater, resulting in noncompliance with Resolution No. 999-13, adopted by the RWQCB, Los Angeles Region. Therefore, impacts to groundwater quality would be significant. This alternative may also result in a considerable contribution to cumulative groundwater quality impacts.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: This alternative would present the same impacts to water resources as that of the Preferred Alternative, considering the similarity of the two alternatives. That is, the impacts to water supply, groundwater, and surface water would be less than significant, as would the project's contribution to cumulative impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative would result in a minor increase in water use for drinking, maintenance and landscape irrigation for the WWTP. However, these uses would result in less than significant impacts on water supply. As with the Preferred Alternative, no significant changes in surface water quantity are expected.

There would be a beneficial impact to groundwater quantity with this alternative, in comparison to the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would allow for the percolation of treated wastewater effluent into the groundwater basin, used for domestic supplies, thereby replenishing groundwater supply; under the Preferred Alternative, effluent would be discharged to the ocean.

Groundwater quality would be improved under this alternative, for the same reasons as the Preferred Alternative. That is, a potential source of groundwater contamination, septic tanks, would be removed.

While effluent from the OWWTP is planned to be percolated on-site, if discharge to the Santa Clara River were proposed, it would most likely only occur if percolation ponds were at capacity under long-term wet weather conditions. Releases under these conditions are not expected to cause a significant impact to surface water quality.

As with the Preferred Alternative, there would continue to be the potential for significant surface water quality impacts during construction. However, as with the Preferred Alternative, conformance with State and County stormwater regulations and permits should reduce impacts to a less than significant level. This alternative would require an NPDES permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board for short-term stormwater discharge and effluent discharge. Assuming compliance with all permit conditions and standards regarding water quality, this alternative would not have a significant adverse impact on surface water quality.

Like the Preferred Alternative, water resources impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

9.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

As impacts from the Preferred Alternative, the Connection to the Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative, and the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative would be less than significant, no mitigation measures are necessary. Groundwater quality impacts from the No Action Alternative would be significant.

10.0 PERMITS

The Preferred Alternative, Connection to the Santa Clara Wastewater Company Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative, and the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative would require permits from the City of Oxnard and the County of Ventura, as well as the State, as listed below. No permits would be required for the No Action Alternative.

Table 8. Permit Requirements for Alternatives

Permit Required	Alternative		
	Preferred	Brine Line	Onsite Plant
Wastewater service connection approval from the City of Oxnard	Yes	Yes	No
County of Ventura and City of Oxnard Street Encroachment Permits	Yes	Yes	No
County of Ventura Environmental Health Division for the storage of hazardous chemicals	No	No	Yes
Caltrans Road Encroachment Permit and approval for tunneling under Highway 101, and Road Encroachment Permit for work in the Vineyard Avenue right-of-way	Yes	Yes	No
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approval for the sewer connection to the City of Oxnard	Yes	Yes	No
Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) excavation permits	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for storm water management and construction water disposal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Authority to Construct Permit and/or permit to operate for standby generator for lift station if greater than 50 HP.	Yes	Yes	Yes

11.0 WETLAND IMPACTS

11.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The site is located within the Oxnard Plain, a generally level coastal plain that has largely been developed for agricultural and urban uses. Native biological resources within the coastal plain tend to be concentrated along the stream and river systems, in particular, the Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek. The Santa Clara River generally forms the westerly

boundary of the plain, flowing along the south side of the City of San Buenaventura and draining into the Pacific Ocean south of the Ventura Harbor. Calleguas Creek is generally located on the easterly end of the plain, dividing the agricultural lands of the plains from the native scrub habitats of the western Santa Monica Mountains. The Santa Clara River mouth is also an important estuarine system that provides critical migratory habitat for thousands of shorebirds, as well as breeding habitat for many resident birds, mammals, fish, and reptiles.

The open water of the gravel pit or pond near the Santa Clara River, northwest of Sandy Circle, Lambert Street, and Beedy Street, and adjacent to the project area, may be considered a "wetland." The pit is a man-made feature that generally lacks wetland vegetation, and may not qualify as a "significant wetland." Nonetheless, the ponded water of the pit is utilized by several species of water birds for loafing and feeding. The bank of the pit isolates the ponded water from potential disturbances associated with the urban uses located outside of the pit area (Rincon Consultants, February 2000).

11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: No wetlands are located within the project area. The project site is located about one-third mile from the Santa Clara River, and approximately 300 feet from the gravel pit where water ponds. Given the nature of the project as primarily installation of underground infrastructure, and the substantial distance from the Santa Clara River and ponded area, no impacts to wetland habitat are expected to result. Therefore, no project-specific or cumulative impacts to wetlands would occur as a result of the project.

No Project Alternative: No impacts to wetlands would result from the No Project Alternative, as no construction is proposed.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: As with the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would not impact wetlands. The project boundary on the northwest is the same as that of the Preferred Alternative. Similarly, there are no wetlands in the project area, or within 300 feet of the project site. No project specific or cumulative impacts to wetlands would occur as a result of the project.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: The wetlands impacts identified for the Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative would be the same for this alternative. The ponded area is about 300 feet away from the closest project element, the onsite wastewater treatment plant. The plant site is presently an agricultural field and does not support native vegetation, nor wetland vegetation. Therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands, and so no cumulative contribution to wetland impacts.

11.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No impacts to wetlands would occur under any of the project alternatives. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

12.0 WATER BODY MODIFICATION AND WILDLIFE IMPACTS

12.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The discussion of affected environment in Item 11.1 applies here as well.

12.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: The closest water body is the ponded area northwest of the project area, and the Santa Clara River. These water bodies are located at least 300 feet from the project site. There would be no impacts associated with water body modification and wildlife impacts, as no modifications to these resources, either directly or indirectly, are proposed. Likewise, there would be no cumulative impact to such resources.

No Project Alternative: Since no construction would occur under this alternative, no water body modification and wildlife impacts would result.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: For the same reasons noted above for the Preferred Alternative, there would also be no project-specific or cumulative water body modifications or wildlife impacts with this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative is similar to the Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWS Brine Line to OWWTP Alternatives with regard to water body modification and wildlife impacts. This alternative differs, however, in that there is the potential for occasional release of wastewater effluent into the Santa Clara River if percolation ponds are at capacity under long-term wet weather conditions. Nonetheless, as discussed in Item 9.0 WATER RESOURCES IMPACTS, releases under these conditions are not expected to cause a significant impact to water quality. As such, there would be less than significant modifications to the water body of the Santa Clara River and the wildlife using the water body. Similarly, there would not be a considerable contribution to a cumulative impact on water body modification and wildlife impacts.

12.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

There would either be no impacts to water body modifications and related wildlife, or such impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

13.0 FLOODPLAIN IMPACTS

13.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Portions of the project area that are within a flood hazard area are those located along Highway 101 (500-year flood zone). No other portions of the project are in flood prone areas. The Santa Clara River is prone to dam inundation hazards. However, this area is located about 1/3 mile from the project area.

13.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not influence drainage patterns or quantities of flood flows. The project proposes subsurface infrastructure in primarily existing road rights-of-ways and mostly internal impacts to a lift station. Given the nature and scope of the project, and that it is not sited within a high flood or dam inundation hazard area, it would not result in significant impacts to people or property in the event of flooding. The project would also not contribute to increased flood flows or redirect flood flows. Since there are no project specific impacts, the project would not contribute to any cumulative flooding impacts.

No Action Alternative: Since no project would be constructed, there would be no impacts to the floodplain or flooding hazards.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: For the same reasons noted above for the Preferred Alternative, there would also be no project specific or cumulative impacts to floodplains or flooding hazards associated with this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative is similar to the Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWS Brine Line to OWWTP Alternatives with regard to floodplain and flood hazard impacts. Impacts from the subsurface lines, lift stations and other mechanisms would be the same as the other two alternatives. With regard to the WWTP, based upon the Final EIR for the JJC, the proposed WWTP site is not in the 100 year-flood plain. Therefore, there would be no flooding impacts for any component of this alternative, and there would then also be no contribution to cumulative impacts. This alternative would include a drainage plan that directs onsite runoff flows to the Santa Clara River. The plan would need to be approved by the County Engineering Department/Flood Control. Therefore, no flooding impacts to surrounding properties would be expected from this alternative.

13.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No floodplain or flooding hazard impacts would occur under any of the project alternatives. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

14.0 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act describes river areas eligible to be included in a system afforded protection under the Act. There are no rivers within or proposed for designation in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the areas of the Preferred Alternative and other alternatives. The Santa Clara River is the major natural drainage facility nearest the project area. It flows intermittently during winter months. However, it is not a Wild and Scenic River.

Since there are no National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and no rivers proposed for such listing, in the general project area, the Preferred Alternative and the other alternatives would not affect such resources. Therefore, further analysis of this issue is not necessary.

15.0 COASTAL BARRIERS AND COASTAL ZONE IMPACTS

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) establishes certain coastal areas to be protected by prohibiting the expenditure of Federal funds for new and expanded facilities within designated coastal barrier units. Since there are no coastal barrier units in the project area, further analysis of this issue is not necessary.

The California Coastal Commission is responsible for determining project consistency with the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). However, the project area is not within the Coastal Zone. Therefore, no further discussion of this environmental issue area is necessary.

16.0 THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

16.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Sensitive species are classified in a variety of ways, both formally (e.g. State or Federal Threatened or Endangered Species) and informally ("Special Animals"). Species may be formally listed and protected as Threatened or Endangered by the California Department of Fish and Game or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or as California Fully Protected (CFP). Informal listings by agencies include the California Species of Special Concern (CSC), which is a broad database category applied to species, roost sites, or nest sites; or as a USFWS Candidate taxa.

Since most work would occur in road rights-of-way within developed areas, there is minimal biological habitat, especially for endangered, threatened or rare species, in the project area. The JJC project would construct the lift station at Montgomery Avenue and South Bank Street, and the proposed project would include mostly interior improvements to the station. The site is a landscaped area at the corner of a road intersection, with minimal habitat value.

The parcel located in the City of Oxnard, near Highway 101 and the El Rio West area, currently consists of agriculture, and an access road borders the City of Oxnard site on the south. In each area, a portion of the pipeline would be sited on the edge of the parcel. Given that these areas are farmed or contain a road, there is minimal habitat for sensitive species.

Approximately 300 feet west of the project area, beyond the JJC site, is a former gravel pit that contains ponded water. This ponded water provides an open water source adjacent to the Santa Clara River that may be utilized by several birds, including mallard, coot, double-crested cormorant, eared grebe, ring-billed gull, western gull, Foster's tern, snowy egret, and black-necked stilt. The pit has vertical sides, and the ponded water may be up to 20 feet deep. Between the project area and the pit is a maintained access road and mixed native and non-native scrub containing mulefat, saltbush, tree tobacco, and numerous weedy annuals (Rincon Consultants, February 2000). None of these species is considered sensitive.

The closest recorded sensitive species to the project area are the least Bell's vireo *(vireo bellii pusillus)*, a federally and state listed endangered species, and the San Diego horned lizard *(phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei)*, a state species of special concern. The least Bell's vireo has been documented in 1999 as breeding just downstream of the U.S. 101 bridge at the Santa Clara River, approximately 1and 1/2 mile from the project area (Greaves, personal communication, October 2000). The horned lizard was sited in 1995 south of the Santa Clara River, southwest of the intersection of Leland Street, Auto Center Drive, and Ventura Road, on the river side of the existing levee, about 3/4 mile from the project area.

16.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: The project area is generally comprised of road rights-of-way, and some agricultural parcels, none of which provide suitable habitat for any identified sensitive species. The closest sensitive species (horned lizard), a state species of special concern, is located at least ¾ mile from the project area, across Highway 101. The least Bell's vireo, the closest federally and state listed endangered species to the project area, was recorded about 1 ½ miles from the project area. Since the riparian habitat of the Santa Clara River is located about 1/3 mile from the project area, riparian-dependent sensitive species such as the yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, Cooper's hawk, pond turtle, steelhead, and the two striped garter snake would neither be directly or indirectly impacted by the project. In conclusion, given the project site's distance from threatened and endangered species, as well as other sensitive species, no direct or indirect impacts to such species are anticipated from this project. Consequently, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to such species.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction with the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given the similar project components and project areas, for the same reasons noted above for the Preferred Alternative, there would also be no project specific or cumulative impacts to threatened or endangered species associated with this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative is similar to the Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWS Brine Line to OWWTP Alternatives with regard to threatened and endangered species impacts. Additionally, the WWTP site is presently an agricultural field and does not support native vegetation. Because of the lack of habitat associated with the WWTP site, no impacts to biological resources, particularly threatened or endangered species, are expected to result from any component of this alternative. Likewise, there would be no project contribution to cumulative impacts affecting threatened and endangered species.

16.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

As there would be no impacts associated with any of the alternatives, no mitigation measures are required.

17.0 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGIC PRESERVATION

17.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Paleontological resources refer to the fossilized remains of plant and animal life. In Ventura County, paleontological remains include examples from throughout most of geologic history to the present (Ventura County, 1992). Certain geologic formations are of known paleontological importance, others are of low importance, while the importance of other deposits is unknown. Fossil remains are considered important if they are: 1) well preserved, 2) identifiable, 3) type/topotypic specimens, 4) age diagnostic, 5) useful in environmental reconstruction, 6) represent rare and/or endemic taxa, 7) represent a diverse assemblage, 8) represent associated marine and nonmarine taxa.

Quaternary deposits, which represent the last 10,000 years of geological history, include alluvial deposits and landslides. The project area is comprised of alluvium (silt, sand and gravel of valley and floodplain areas), mapped as Qa on the Geologic Map of the Saticoy and Oxnard Quadrangles (Dibblee, Jr., 1992). Based upon the County of Ventura Guidelines, these deposits have the potential for high to no resource importance. However, typically these deposits do not have the potential to produce scientifically significant fossils due to the historic and current fluvial influence.

Archaeological resources are the material remains (artifacts, structures, refuse, etc.) produced purposely or accidentally by members of prehistoric cultures. A unique archaeological resource is 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 meets any of the following criteria:

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

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

The County Guidelines indicate that damage or destruction of unique archaeological resources is considered a significant impact.

The discussion provided below is based upon the following report: *Phase I Archaeological Survey of Approximately 15.5 Linear Miles for the El Rio Sewer Project, El Rio, Ventura County, California*, prepared by Conejo Archaeological Consultants (December 2000). This document is available for review on a "need to know" basis at the County of Ventura Water and Sanitation Division office 7150 Walnut Canyon Road, Moorpark, California. The Phase I Archaeological Survey consisted of record searches at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) and Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), an archaeological survey of the proposed pipeline routes, Native American consultation, background research at the Ventura County Museum of Art and History's Historical Research Library, and interviews with individuals knowledgeable about El Rio's history.

The SCCIC cultural records search was conducted in November of 2000. The record search identified no recorded prehistoric or historic sites within ½-mile of the project area. Twenty-five archaeological studies have been conducted within a ½-mile radius of the project area, eleven of which cross various sections of the project site. Additionally, the NAHC identified no sacred lands within or adjacent to the project area.

As part of the records search, the Center staff also checked its files of historic maps, the National Register of Historic Places, the California State Historic Inventory, and the listing of California Historical Landmarks in the region. No historic archaeological sites were identified within a ½-mile radius of the project area.

The archaeological survey was conducted in November and December of 2000. Because most of the pipeline would be laid in existing paved roads, the survey methodology consisted of examining any open space along both sides of the paved roads. The entire project area of potential effect (APE) has been disturbed to varying degrees by agricultural activities and/or construction. The survey identified no significant prehistoric or historic resources. A few isolated pieces of marine shell and three isolated fragments of historic purple glass were noted. All the shell and glass was noted in a disturbed context, and all of it except two pieces of shell was noted in El Rio West.

Background research has indicated that the El Rio West APE should be considered sensitive for archaeological resources, as there are various factors indicating a potential for either prehistoric or historic resources to occur in this area including the following:

- Chumash consultant Jamie Karl has indicated that he was told burials were found along Colonia Avenue in West El Rio (Karl 1989). To date no other definite

reference to this second hand report of burials has been found. Karl also notes in his letter that J.P. Harrington referenced an El Rio cemetery, but he does not know where it is.

- A 1923 newspaper article references five skeletons being found in El Rio (which would have been either in the portion of New Jerusalem destroyed by Highway 101 construction or in El Rio West). The article is not clear if the skeletons were recent or of Native American descent (Sheridan 1923). It is not clear if these burials are related to the ones mentioned by Karl (1989).
- El Rio West dates to the 1880s and is associated with the historic townsite of New Jerusalem. An adobe possibly dating back to the late 1880s was known to exist along Colonia Avenue.
- Archaeologist Robert Lopez (personal communication) speculates that El Rio west may have been built on top of the historic Chumash village site of Quinaeputecno.
- A few scattered pieces of marine shell and two pieces of historic purple glass were identified during the current survey within El Rio West. The shell and glass were found in graded areas and had no context, but may be indicative of cultural deposits in the area.

While there is no formal documentation of buried prehistoric or historic deposits within El Rio West, the above information does indicate the potential archaeological sensitivity of this portion of the APE.

17.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: The site is comprised of alluvium, and has for the most part, been disturbed by previous activities. No intact, unique, paleontological resources are expected to exist within the project's area of impact. However, in the event that site preparation activities disturb previously unidentified, intact paleontological resources at the site, , work shall be stopped immediately or redirected away from the find. A Ventura County approved paleontologist shall then be called to the site immediately to assess the site and determine further mitigation measures to be implemented as necessary. Therefore, no significant paleontological impact would result with the implementation of this measure. Because the project is not expected to result in project-specific impacts to paleontological resources, its cumulative impact is not expected to be significant.

While there are no known archaeological sites in the project area, background research indicates that there is a possibility that prehistoric or historic deposits may occur in the area of El Rio West. Since the project involves subsurface excavation for placement of the pipes, albeit in mostly previously disturbed areas, there remains the possibility that significant archaeological resources could be impacted during construction. However, USEPA is only authorized to fund the design work for the El Rio South Central Area, and not for the El Rio West Area. While sewage collected from both the El Rio Central project and El Rio West project likely will flow into the same wastewater collection system, these projects are not operationally linked. Therefore,

the design, as described in the County's application for the grant, and ultimately the construction and operation of the El Rio South Central project, can proceed independently of the El Rio West project.

Further, the County of Ventura will no longer have jurisdiction over the El Rio West area, as that portion of the County will soon be annexed by the City of Oxnard. According to the County, the annexation process will be completed in a year, and the City will take on full responsibility for the design and construction of the sewer project for the El Rio West area. While there are no current plans or funding for the El Rio West portion of the project, the City will be required to follow all applicable laws.

The County of Ventura has agreed to the other three recommendations contained in the archaeological survey that are related to the El Rio South Central Area. These are:

1. At the commencement of the project construction, the archaeologist shall provide a cultural resources orientation to construction crews. This training will outline the steps to be taken in the event that prehistoric and/or historic resources are exposed during project construction;
2. In the event that archaeological resources are unearthed, all earth-disturbing work within the vicinity of the find will be suspended until the find has been appropriately mitigated. (If a find is made, a Chumash representative will be asked to monitor any mitigation work associated with a cultural find.)
3. If human remains are unearthed, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings, as pursuant to State law. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission within twenty-four hours.

With implementation of these measures, the project would not have a significant effect on prehistoric resources on either a project-specific or cumulative basis. EPA has consulted with the list of tribal representatives provided it by the Native American Heritage Commission, and on March 13, 2003, received a letter from the Office of Historic Preservation Department of Parks and Recreation which stated that EPA's efforts to address the requirements of 36 Part 800 for this undertaking were satisfactory.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction under this alternative, no impacts to historic or archaeological or paleontological resources would occur.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given this alternative's similarity to the Preferred Alternative, impacts to paleontological, historic, and archaeological resources would be the same.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: The Phase I cultural resource study prepared for the proposed project by Conejo Archaeological Consultants included the proposed WWTP site. Based upon the findings of the study, only the El Rio West area is considered to be

culturally sensitive. Therefore, this alternative would result in the same potential impacts to prehistoric, historic, and paleontological resources as the Preferred Alternative.

17.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No additional mitigation measures are required.

18.0 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

18.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A hazardous waste is defined as a waste or combination of wastes, which because of their quantity or concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may either:

- Cause or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible or incapacitating reversible illness, or
- Pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human beings or the environment.

The project area consists primarily of existing street rights-of-way, as well as the edges of some existing agricultural parcels, and portions of a lift station. It does not include above-ground hazardous materials. Underground gas lines may be present in the project area of disturbance. One such line is sited in the right-of-way of Central Avenue, in the area of the proposed pipeline (Ventura County Hazards Appendix).

18.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: The project would not introduce a population into an area with above ground hazardous materials, nor would it involve the generation or transport of any such known materials.

The lift station would have fuel stored for the stand-by engine generator. Additionally, sewer line maintenance and repair may require the use of chemicals that are considered hazardous materials. These materials will be handled in accordance with the County's Hazardous Materials Business Plan, and are not expected to result in a significant public health hazard.

The pipeline alignment would be sited within areas occupied by various land uses, including industrial and agricultural, among others. There are businesses that utilize, generate, store or transport hazardous materials or waste in the general vicinity, or have in the recent past. Therefore, there is the potential for workers and the general public to be exposed to subsurface contamination during excavation of the pipeline corridors. However, prior to project construction, the County of Ventura Public Works Agency shall hire a qualified geoenvironmental consultant to perform a Phase I Site Assessment for the portions of the pipeline alignment not within road rights-of-way. If the Phase I Site Assessment indicates that there is a potential for contamination at the site, a Phase II investigation may be recommended.

The Phase II shall also be completed prior to construction. In the event that the Phase II identifies contamination that may create a health hazard as a result of project implementation, measures to remediate the hazard shall be recommended (e.g., remediation of the contamination or redirection of the proposed development to avoid the hazard). Recommended remedial action shall be successfully implemented prior to the initiation of project construction. With the implementation of this measures as incorporated into the project, the project would not result in any significant short-term hazards to workers due to exposure to subsurface contamination.

Should underground gas lines be inadvertently compromised during construction, a hazard to construction workers and the local population could result. However, prior to digging, the contractor must routinely call Dig Alert to determine if there are any such lines present. Identified lines are then avoided. Therefore, no impact is expected with regard to underground hazards.

The hazardous materials related impacts associated with this alternative are site- and project-specific, and not subject to cumulative analysis.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction under this alternative, no hazardous waste site impacts would occur.

Connection to the SCWC Brine Line to OWWTP Alternative: Given this alternative's similarity to the Preferred Alternative, impacts to hazardous waste sites would be the same. Since hazardous materials related impacts related to this and the Preferred Alternative are site- and project-specific, they are not subject to cumulative analysis.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative would result in similar impact to the Preferred Alternative, but of greater magnitude due to the inclusion of the WWTP site. The WWTP site has been used for agricultural purposes, and may have had or still have storage sheds, etc. for agricultural chemicals that may serve as a source of contamination.

Additionally, the WWTP would be likely to store and utilize hazardous materials for the wastewater treatment process. Mishandling of such materials could expose workers or the public to a hazardous condition, which is a significant mitigable impact. As with the other alternatives, the impacts are not subject to cumulative analysis.

18.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

For the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative Only: The following additional measure is required to reduce impacts to less than significant.

- The County Public Works Water and Wastewater Division shall develop a Hazardous Materials Business Plan for the WWTP, and submit it to the County Health Department and Fire Department prior to or at the time of building occupancy.

Upon implementation of the above mitigation measures, all impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels.

19.0 VISUAL IMPACTS

19.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

There are no elements of the neighborhood other than the Santa Clara River to the west and the mountains to the north that are scenic elements. However, the City of Oxnard (November 1990) has designated the following roadway segments in or adjacent to the project area as part of its Scenic Highway System: Vineyard Avenue (236) between Los Angeles Avenue (118) and Paterson Avenue; Highway 101 through the Oxnard sphere of influence; Central Avenue between Vineyard Avenue and Santa Clara Avenue. Vineyard Avenue throughout the project area is also considered a City of Oxnard City Image Corridor. No scenic highways or resource areas have been designated by the County of Ventura in the project area. County guidelines indicate that a project would have a significant impact if it would degrade or significantly alter or obscure public views.

Sources of glare in the project vicinity include primarily roadway lighting, lighting from adjacent commercial, industrial and residential uses, and lighting from vehicular traffic. The major reflective surface in the project area is the Santa Clara River, as sunlight reflects off of the water. Some agricultural parcels, when tarps or other plastic covers are laid on the fields, may be reflective and therefore a potential source of glare.

19.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The County Guidelines state that a project would have a significant impact if it would have a substantial, demonstrable negative aesthetic effect. Further, Policy 1.7.2.1 of the County General Plan states that a project would have a significant impact if it would degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views.

Preferred Alternative: The project would directly impact portions of Vineyard Avenue and Central Avenue, and indirectly impact Highway 101, all designated scenic highways. Areas adjacent to and visible from Highway 101 would be under construction, and the Vineyard and Central roadways would be temporarily impacted during construction. The activities on these roadways may last for a few months or more, within the general period of up to two years for total project construction. During this time, construction equipment, materials, and open trenches would be viewed from these roadways. This would be considered to adversely affect the scenic views from these roads. However, due to the temporary nature of the activity, the impact is considered to be less than significant.

The lift station to be constructed as part of the JJC project would be a minor, incidental structure set within existing developed areas. The work to the lift station proposed as part of this project would be primarily internal upgrades. Given the limited size and stature of the lift station, that it is located adjacent to developed areas, it is 1,500 feet from the nearest scenic

highway (Vineyard Avenue), and that the proposed project would result in only minor exterior changes to the structure, if any, the lift station work would result in less than significant impacts to scenic highways.

The proposed pipeline infrastructure would be subsurface, and therefore hidden from public view. There may be an occasional need to do repair work on pipelines. However, this activity would also be temporary. So, long-term project impacts on scenic roads are considered to be less than significant.

Therefore, the visual impacts of the project are considered less than significant, and are also not considered to be cumulatively considerable, especially since the other major projects proposed in the general area would likely be constructed prior to the El Rio Sewer System Project.

No lighting or other elements that would be reflective or potentially cause glare are proposed as part of the project. Therefore, the project would not result in any glare-related impacts, either project-specific or cumulative.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction associated with this alternative, there would be no associated visual impacts, either project-specific or cumulative.

Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative: Since this alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. That is, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources, and no impacts regarding glare. Similarly, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts as a result of this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: This alternative would have a greater impact than the Preferred Alternative because, in addition to the subsurface pipelines, a wastewater treatment facility would be constructed. However, the WWTP site is located in an area characterized by past mining activity, and industrial and agricultural use. The level of scenic value is relatively low in this area. The JJC project is also being constructed adjacent to the site. This alternative would not significantly alter views from designated scenic roads, nor alter an existing scenic feature. Water from the percolation ponds could be a source of glare, however there are no glare-sensitive receptors in the area to be impacted. Therefore, this alternative would result in a less than significant visual impact. The alternative would also not contribute to a significant cumulative visual impact, given that the other major projects in the general area would likely be constructed prior to the El Rio Sewer System Project.

19.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

Since there would be either no impacts or less than significant impacts with the alternatives, no mitigation is required.

20.0 ENERGY

20.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Energy resources are defined in the County Guidelines as sources of power necessary to operate and maintain human activities. Included resources are solar, petroleum, wind and hydraulic. Energy resources are currently used for various operations in and around the project area.

20.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The County Guidelines state that no individual project will have a significant impact because solar, wind and hydraulic energy resources are renewable. The County Guidelines state that no project would have a significant demand on petroleum resources, because such resources are considered a worldwide, national, and state resource that is beyond the scope of local governments to effectively manage or control.

Preferred Alternative: Energy would be used in the short-term for project construction activities. The project's additional long-term operational energy use would be for the lift station (87,500 KWh of electric power per year), which is being constructed as part of the JJC project, but upgraded as part of the proposed project. The project may also require energy for the treatment and disposal of the additional project generated sewage at the Oxnard WWTP. The increased electrical demand would be met from the grid, and energy could be generated at any power station in the western United States. The minor contribution of energy use related to the project is less than significant, and not cumulatively considerable.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction associated with this alternative, there would be no associated energy impacts, either project-specific or cumulative.

Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative: Since this alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. That is, there would be less than significant impacts to energy resources. Similarly, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts as a result of this alternative.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: The use of energy resources under this alternative would be similar to, but greater, than the Preferred Alternative, due to the additional WWTP component. However, impacts would still be considered less than significant, because the alternative would result in a minor contribution to the need for such resources. Likewise, there would be less than significant cumulative impacts to energy resources with this alternative.

20.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

Since there would either be no impacts or less than significant impacts, no mitigation measures are necessary.

21.0 WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL IMPACTS

21.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

21.1.1 Sewage Collection and Treatment

Currently the El Rio area uses septic systems. In the City of Oxnard the wastewater treatment is provided by the City through the local collection system and the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant (OWWTP). The OWWTP also provides sewage treatment for the City of Port Hueneme, the Naval construction Battalion Station at Port Hueneme, the Point Mugu Naval Air Station, and some adjacent areas (County of Ventura, February 2000). The OWWTP provides secondary wastewater treatment through a biofiltration process. The current design capacity of the OWWTP is 31.7 mgd based upon dry weather flows. The plant currently treats an average of 19 mgd or 60 percent of capacity.

The first phase of a two-phase plan for expansion has been completed (County of Ventura, February 2000). The second phase will be planned to coincide with the demand for increased capacity. The expansion at full buildout would provide capacity of 39.6 mgd average dry weather flow and 75.4 mgd peak wet weather flow capacity. However, flow capacity would be limited to 50 mgd until outfall pipe capacity is increased.

The existing Master Plan for the OWWTP, prepared in the mid-1980s by the City, assumed accommodation of wastewater flows from the El Rio Area (Norris, personal communication, 2000). An update to that plan is currently underway and is expected to be presented to the City Council along with the associated environmental documentation by the beginning of 2003.

Some of the wastewater collection lines within the City, including those that would be impacted by the proposed project, are currently at capacity (Norris, personal communication, December 2000). The City of Oxnard has prepared a Wastewater System Master Plan Draft Final Report that addresses the existing collection system deficiencies. Additionally, the plan identifies and addresses deficiencies of the collection system that will occur at ultimate buildout (including the El Rio area). This Master Plan and its associated environmental documentation still need to be presented to the Oxnard City Council for adoption.

Ultimate buildout of the system that would convey the El Rio wastewater also would include the proposed Riverpark development (formerly known as the Towne Center), the University Tract, and a septic system-served community south of the US 101 across from El Rio and within the City of Oxnard. Based upon the findings of the Master Plan, at buildout, there will be a total of 4 to 5 miles of deficient pipelines servicing this area. These lines start on Stanford Avenue from Vanderbilt Drive south to Gonzales Road and include an extension of that line southerly to 3rd Street, isolated spots along the trunk line south of 5th Street on Richmond Avenue and isolated segments along Pleasant Valley Road to the treatment plant on Perkins Road. As indicated above, the Plan and its associated environmental documentation are anticipated to be presented to the Oxnard City Council for adoption by the beginning of 2003.

21.1.2 Solid Waste Management

Presently, Ventura County is not experiencing a shortage of landfill space (Timmons, personal communication, March 2000). Available capacity exists for at least the next 15 years.

21.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Preferred Alternative: The project proposes to direct approximately 1 mgd of wastewater currently disposed in septic systems in the El Rio area to the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant (OWWTP). The plant currently has adequate capacity to accommodate the projected wastewater flows of the project, and would therefore not create a project-specific impact to wastewater treatment capacity at this time. However, since the project would not be constructed until 2006, it is possible that development of other projects that would direct flows to the OWWTP would utilize all of the existing available capacity, thus triggering the need for construction of the second phase of the OWWTP expansion. The project, similar to other development utilizing the OWWTP, would therefore have the potential to result in a project-specific and cumulatively significant contribution to wastewater treatment capacity.

The City of Oxnard has Master Plan documents that address the upgrades of the wastewater system that would be impacted by the project and related cumulative development. Upgrades to the collection infrastructure would be required to accommodate the project. Upgrades to the OWWTP may be triggered by the project in association with cumulative development, depending upon the actual timing of development. However, the proposed project shall not be completed until adequate collection capacity exists within the City of Oxnard's system, as confirmed by the City of Oxnard. Further, the County will pay to the City of Oxnard connection fees and any other fees, as negotiated between the County and the City. These fees are to ensure that the project pays its fair share toward the operation and maintenance of impacted City facilities, as well as the upgrade of any facilities as required to accommodate the project. The timing of the payment of fees will be mutually decided by agreement of the City and County. The agreement shall be prepared prior to project connection to the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project as proposed with these measures would result in less than significant impacts to wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure on a project-specific and cumulative basis.

Installation of the new pipelines is expected to result in a minimal amount of solid waste. Approximately 2,000 tons of asphalt concrete would be generated by the project. However, it would be reused by the contractor as base material for other road work. Additionally, there is expected to be no solid waste generated on a long-term, operational basis once the pipelines are installed, with the exception of incidental waste associated with maintenance or repair activities. As the amount of solid waste associated with the project would be minor, and there is currently no shortage of landfill space, project specific and cumulative impacts to solid waste management would be less than significant.

No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to waste treatment and disposal, since there would be no construction and no change to the existing septic tank system.

Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative: Since this alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. That is, there would be less than significant project-specific and cumulative impacts to sewage collection and treatment, and less than significant impacts to solid waste management, both on a project-specific and cumulative basis.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: Solid waste impacts during construction would be similar to the Preferred Alternative. However, this alternative would generate somewhat more solid waste than the Preferred Alternative, since the WWTP would produce a small amount of incidental trash and biosolids for disposal. Adequate landfill space is available for Ventura County trash haulers, and biosolids would likely be sent to Kern County for recycling as soil amendment. Therefore, solid waste management impacts would be less than significant, both on a project-specific and cumulative basis. This alternative would avoid sewage collection and treatment impacts to the Oxnard WWTP because a new plant would be constructed in El Rio. Sewage collection and treatment impacts would be less than significant for the project, and the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to this issue.

21.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation is required.

22.0 SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

22.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

22.1.1 Seismic Hazards

The entire southern California region is seismically active, given the numerous faults throughout the region. However, there are no known active faults within or adjacent to the project area. No Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zones (zones that delineate areas of known active faulting that may be subject to surface displacement based on future faulting) exist within or adjacent to the project area. The closest active fault to the site is the Oak Ridge fault (about 1.5 miles to the northwest). The Oak Ridge fault near the project area is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zone (Rincon, 2000).

The Oak Ridge fault is a regional, active fault system that extends westerly from approximately Castaic, through the Santa Clara Valley and Ventura Basin, and offshore into the Santa Barbara Channel. The Oak Ridge fault is the dominant fault system relative to the project site and has the potential to generate the greatest amount of strong ground motion at the site.

The fault has been delineated into two segments: 1) the eastern segment that extends east of the westerly margin of South Mountain (at the Wright Road fault); and 2) the Western segment that projects through the Ventura basin, west of South Mountain. The Western segment is thought to be an active blind-thrust projecting beneath the Santa Barbara Channel, forming an active fold-thrust belt that has elevated the Channel Islands above sea level (Shaw,

1993). According to Yeats (1988), the Oak Ridge fault is believed to have an estimated average slip rate of 6 to 12 millimeters per year (mm/yr) with an annual recurrence interval of between 250 and 500 years. Petersen et al. (1996) describe the onshore segment of the Oak Ridge fault as being a 50 ± 5-mile (80 ± 8-kilometer) long, dip-slip fault, having an average poorly constrained annual slip rate of 4 ± 2 mm/yr, a maximum moment magnitude (Mw) earthquake of 6.9, and a recurrence interval of 299 years. Petersen et al.'s (1996) slip rate is at the bottom of the range reported by Yeats (1988).

Due to the seismic activity of the region, the area is subject to several types of earthquake related risks, including surface rupture, ground shaking, and liquefaction. Although no known active fault lies within the project area, active and potentially active faults are present in the surrounding region. As such, seismic activity on regionally active faults could result in surface rupture within the project area.

Tsunamis are seismic sea waves. The project area is about 5½ miles from the ocean. A seiche is an oscillating wave that occur in enclosed or semi-enclosed bodies of water. Seiches can be caused by earthquake waves that travel through the ground beneath the water.

Liquefaction is an unstable ground condition in which water-saturated soils change from a solid to semi-liquid state because of sudden shock or strain. The primary variable factor for liquefaction in the Oxnard Plain is the depth of the water table. In areas with shallow groundwater, the potential exists for liquefaction to occur during earthquake events (City of Oxnard, 1990). The project area is subject to liquefaction due to the underlying moderate to high water table (15-40 feet below surface).

22.1.2 Geologic Hazards

The following setting information is based on information provided in the City of Oxnard General Plan and County of Ventura General Plan Hazards Appendix.

The Oxnard Plain is comprised of alluvial deposits of silt, sands, and gravel. The deposition of the alluvium materials is related to the Santa Clara River and its historic flood patterns. Beneath the alluvium is the San Pedro formation, which consists of sandstone and conglomerate (City of Oxnard, 1990).

Subsidence may be defined as the downward movement of a relatively large amount of land caused by the withdrawal of subsurface water or petroleum, which creates air space in underlying sediments. The project area is within a subsidence zone identified in the County of Ventura Hazards Appendix as having about 0.05 feet per year of subsidence.

Expansive soils are primarily clay-rich soils subject to changes in volume with changes in moisture content. Expansive soils may be found within the project area (El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan EIR, 1996).

The project area is relatively level. There are no slopes or features that would be prone to landslides or mudslides.

22.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

22.2.1 Seismic Hazards

The County Guidelines state that fault rupture hazards primarily exist along pre-existing faults. These faults are considered to pose a hazard if they have moved within a specific period of time. This period depends on the type of project. For almost all projects, the period of interest is the last 11 thousand years. For siting of critically hazardous facilities, such as atomic power plants, fault activity over longer periods needs to be considered.

Threshold criteria for determining whether a project is at risk with respect to fault rupture is its location within any of the following areas: 1) a State of California designated Aquist-Priolo Special Fault Study Zone, 2) a County of Ventura designated Fault Hazard Area, a County of Ventura designated Potential Fault Hazard Area.

Preferred Alternative: Based upon the facts that there are no known faults within the project area, the site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone or County Fault hazard area, there is no fault rupture impact associated with this alternative. Cumulative impact analysis is not relevant to fault rupture impacts, as the issue is site-specific.

Because the site is located in a seismically active region, there is the potential for ground shaking. However, given the project site's distance from active faults, that the project is not in an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zone, and that all construction is being designed to comply with local earthquake design standards (Uniform Building Code, Seismic criteria), impacts are expected to be less than significant. An assessment of cumulative development impacts is not relevant to the issue of ground shaking.

Given the project area's distance from the coast, it is unlikely that a tsunami would be a threat. In any case, even if the project were in a tsunami hazard area, given that the project consists of underground pipes and improvements to a lift station, the effects of a tsunami would likely not result in significant damage to life or property. This issue is not subject to cumulative analysis, as it is site-specific.

According to the County Guidelines, areas subject to seiche hazards are those located within 10 vertical feet elevation from an enclosed body of water. Due to the location and elevation of the project area, hazards from seiches are unlikely (El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan EIR, 1996). Moreover, even if the area was in a seiche hazard area, because the project is subsurface pipelines and a lift station, the effect of such inundation would not result in significant damage to life or property. This issue is not subject to cumulative analysis, as it is site-specific.

The project site is located in an area identified as being subject to liquefaction. During an earthquake event, soil liquefaction could possibly develop at the site. Under these conditions, the potential for structural damage to pipelines is considered significant, but mitigable. This issue is not subject to cumulative analysis, as it is site-specific.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction under this alternative, no impacts to seismic hazards would result.

Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative: Since this alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative, the impacts would be the same. That is, there would be no fault rupture impact, impacts from ground shaking would be less than significant, tsunami and seiche hazards would be less than significant, and liquefaction potential would be significant, but mitigable. Since all of these environmental issue areas are site-specific, they are not subject to cumulative analysis.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: Based upon the Final EIR for the JJC, there are no faults within the proposed WWTP site. Therefore, this alternative, like the Preferred Alternative, is not expected to result in fault rupture impacts. Because all other seismic conditions are similar to the Preferred Alternative, there would be no fault rupture impact, impacts from ground shaking would be less than significant, tsunami and seiche hazards would be less than significant, and liquefaction potential would be significant, but mitigable. Since all of these environmental issue areas are site-specific, they are not subject to cumulative analysis.

22.2.2 Geologic Hazards

Preferred Alternative: The County Guidelines state that subsidence hazards are particularly related to project type, and that all utility and drainage facility projects in the Oxnard Plain require subsidence studies. As indicated above, the project area is subject to subsidence. Also, the project has the potential to result in impacts associated with expansive soils. Any new sewer lines proposed by the project would be subject to the same hazards as the existing infrastructure in the area. However, the County Public Works Agency shall retain a registered engineering geologist to prepare a geotechnical study of the project area. Seismic and geologic hazards, including but not limited to liquefaction, subsidence, expansive soils, and in the case of the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant, slope instability, shall be assessed. Mitigation measures shall be recommended as necessary. Further, the County Public Works Agency shall implement the appropriate measures identified in the approved Geotechnical Study during project design and construction. Such measures may include, among others, implementation of recommended structural design criteria to accommodate the anticipated lateral movement that may be associated with liquefaction-related settlement. The report shall be submitted to the appropriate agencies for review and approval. With implementation of these measures, impacts due to geologic and seismic hazards would be less than significant. These issues are not subject to cumulative analysis, as they are site-specific.

The site is not located in a designated mudslide or landslide hazard zone, pursuant to the Ventura County Landslide Map. This issue is not subject to cumulative analysis, as it is site specific.

No Action Alternative: Since there would be no construction under this alternative, no impacts to geologic hazards would result.

Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative: Since this alternative is very similar to the Preferred Alternative, the geologic impacts would be the same. That is, there would be less than significant impacts related to subsidence and expansive soils, but no impacts regarding mudslides or landslides. These issue areas are not subject to cumulative analysis.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative: Subsidence and expansive soils would create significant but mitigable impacts for this alternative, the same as for the Preferred Alternative. However, based upon the Final EIR for the JJC, the WWTP site also has a potential for slope instability at the north end of the site near the Santa Clara River. Implementation of the geotechnical study and appropriate design measures as identified in the study will ensure that geotechnical hazard impacts would be less than significant. As with the Preferred Alternative, there would be no impacts related to mudslide or landslides in the project area. These issue areas are not subject to cumulative analysis.

22.3 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation is required.

23.0 RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES VS. LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The local short-term impacts and use of resources by the Preferred Alternative, the Connection to the SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative, and the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Plant Alternative are consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity for the local area. The No Action Alternative would result in no short-term impacts and no use of resources; however, the purpose and intent of the project, which complement those of the local plan and policy documents, and aim to comply with State regulations, would not be met.

With all of the proposed alternatives except the No Action, the use of resources would be nominal, and is primarily limited to fuel for energy to operate the facilities, and materials to construct the facilities. These alternatives would result in a relatively small use of resources for a substantial gain in improved sewage collection, treatment, and disposal, and in improved groundwater quality. All of the alternatives except the No Action Alternative support the applicable local policies and goals of maintaining, restoring and protecting groundwater quality. They would also meet the requirements of Resolution No. 99-13 by the RWQCB, prohibiting new septic systems in the Oxnard Forebay and the discharge of septic effluent for lots less than 5 acres by January 1, 2008.

The Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative may be viewed as comparable to one another, and superior to the other alternatives in that the relationship between the minimal expenditure of resources and public facility and groundwater benefits is even more pronounced. The Onsite WWTP Alternative would require somewhat more resources to achieve the same benefits.

24.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

With the exception of the No Action Alternative, all alternatives would commit irreversible and irretrievable resources. These would include natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Fuel would be used during construction and, to varying extents, to operate and maintain the facilities. Building materials would be used, and would be the most notable resource to be expended. Building labor would be used to construct, and operate and maintain, the facilities. The Onsite WWTP Alternative would require the most labor and materials. The Preferred Alternative and the Connection to the SCWW Company Brine Line Alternative would be comparable in the demand for labor and materials, and substantially less than the Onsite WWTP Alternative.

These alternatives would require a one-time expenditure of local, State or Federal funds, which are not retrievable. Both the Onsite WWTP and the Connection to SCWW Company Brine Line Alternatives would be more costly than the Preferred Alternative.

Without implementation of one of the alternatives, other than the No Action Alternative, the County would be out of compliance with State regulations, and the existing septic tanks in the area would continue to adversely affect the groundwater quality. The commitment of the resources noted above is based on the concept that individuals, including residents, in the immediate area and region would benefit by the improved groundwater quality, and sewage collection, treatment and disposal system. These benefits are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these resources.

25.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The El Rio community consists of some low income and minority residents. All of the alternatives, with the exception of the "No Action" Alternative, would have a positive effect on these residents by providing an improved sewage collection, treatment and disposal system, and therefore better groundwater quality. Through the process of implementing these improvements, the community would be exposed to both the beneficial and adverse impacts discussed in this environmental document. The advantages of the project would outweigh the adverse impacts, which are mitigable to a level of less than significant. Additionally, the project alternatives would not require relocation of any residents or result in a change of demographics in any neighborhood.

SECTION F - LIST OF PREPARERS

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SECTION G - COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

Several agencies were consulted in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment. They are listed below in Section H, Information Sources. Additionally, a Notice of Availability will be published and distributed for this Environmental Assessment. Public and agency comments will be solicited and responded to in the final EA.

SECTION H - INFORMATION SOURCES

AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

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SECTION I – APPENDICES (AVAILABLE FROM EPA UPON REQUEST)

Air Quality

Air Pollutant Emission Estimates

Biology

California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base Report for Oxnard and Saticoy Quadrangles

Noise

Ambient Noise Data Measurement Sheets

Construction Noise Model Results