

SECTION 7: ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

7.1 - Introduction

In accordance with Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) contains a comparative evaluation of the Beaumont Avenue Recharge Facility and Pipeline project with alternatives to the proposed project, including a No Project Alternative. Per Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines, this section focuses on alternatives to the proposed project that are capable of avoiding or substantially reducing any significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project, despite the possibility that the alternatives could impede attainment of project objectives or prove less cost efficient. Additionally, the alternatives could result in new impacts that would not have resulted from the proposed project. CEQA requires that alternatives analysis provide sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project.

Under case law and CEQA Section 15126.6(f), the discussion of alternatives need not be exhaustive and is subject to a rule of reason. In addition, an EIR that determines the potential adverse impacts of a project can be avoided or substantially lessened by mitigation measures, as the case of the proposed project, the lead agency is not required to make findings regarding the feasibility of proposed alternatives (*Rio Vista Farm Bureau v. County of Solano (1992) 5 Cal.App.4th 351, 379*).

CEQA Section 15126.6(d) states that “if an alternative would cause one or more significant effects in addition to those that would be caused by the project as proposed, the significant effects of the alternatives shall be discussed, but in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.” Determining factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are (a) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (b) infeasibility, or (c) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts. CEQA Section 15364 defines “feasibility” as “Capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.”

An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained, whose implementation is remote and speculative, or whose execution does not substantially lessen or avoid the significant effects of the project.

At the project and cumulative level prior the incorporation of mitigation measures, this Draft EIR has identified the following impacts to be significant:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

- Geology and Soils
- Transportation and Traffic

As addressed in Section 2, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, implementation of the project is needed to meet the following SGPWA objectives:

- To enable the Agency to deliver its entire Table A amount of water from the State Water Project.
- To enable the Agency to purchase Article 21 water or other supplemental water sources that become available over and above the Agency's Table A water.
- To provide a regional recharge facility that would be available to all retail water agencies.
- To augment regional storage capacity.
- To provide water supply for the ongoing and projected needs of the SGPWA's service area.

The May 28, 2008 Evaluation of Potential Recharge Sites for San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency report identified six potential recharge sites within SGPWA's service area. This report was intended to provide SGPWA with a decision making tool for future planning related to recharge of SWP water. Based on a review of this report and discussions with SGPWA, the assumptions in this report that recharge would only occur over 150 days is applicable to the Brookside South Site due to the site being within Noble Creek and the need to remove recharge operations during the rainy season. However, the 150 days has been modified for the remainder of the alternative sites to approximately 300 days and that the recharge capability for these other sites is revised from 3 acre-feet per day to 2 acre-feet per day, similar to the proposed project. Therefore, the recharge potential at each site, except for the Brookside South Site, has been doubled in the discussion below. The following is a description of each of the sites that were identified:

- **Site 1 (Sullivan Site):** The 15.3-acre property (APN 401-110-019/-020) located at the northeast corner of Beaumont Avenue and Orchard Street. The estimated recharge potential of this site is 5,600 acre-feet per year (AFY). The basic objective of the project is to increase recharge capabilities with the delivery of State Water Project (SWP) water, as well as other supplemental water source. To only receive the full Table A water of 17,300 AFY, the SGPWA needs a recharge facility with a capacity of 3,000 to 4,000 AFY; however, the SGPWA would actually require substantially more capacity due to the need for intermittent maintenance of the basins, variability in sources of supply that may be available for recharge other than SWP water, and the potential that SWP water may not be available continuously over the course of the year. Furthermore, additional capacity is required to receive Article 21 water or other supplemental water sources when they become available. Therefore, a recharge facility that provides a capacity of 5,600 AFY would not meet the basic objectives of the

project to receive not only Table A water, but also receive Article 21 water and other supplemental water sources when they become available. Thus, implementation of a recharge facility on Site 1 was considered but rejected.

- **Site 2 (BUSD Site):** The 38.2-acre property (APN 405-240-003/-004) located on Brookside Avenue west of Mountain View Channel and Beaumont High School. Although undeveloped in 2008, BUSD has since expended Beaumont High School facilities and constructed District offices onto this site, making development of a recharge facility at Site 2 physically infeasible. Thus, implementation of a recharge facility on Site 2 was considered but rejected.
- **Site 3 (Brookside South Site):** The 18.2-acre property (APN 406-080-012) located within Noble Creek downstream from the confluence of Noble Creek and Mountain View Channel, totaling approximately 6,400 feet long. The estimated recharge potential of this site is 5,700 AFY. Since development of a recharge facility at Site 3 would allow SGPWA to receive its full allotment of SWP water, constructing a facility on this site would meet the basic project objective. Thus, implementation of a recharge facility on Site 3 is considered and further evaluated in Section 7.3, Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Location Alternative. Construction of a recharge facility at Site 3 was initially evaluated in the 2008 Brookside South Recharge project IS/MND.
- **Site 4 (BEK Site):** The 44-acre property (APN 406-080-032) located on the southwest corner of Beaumont Avenue and Brookside Avenue. This site represents the location of the proposed project and is considered and evaluated in Section 3, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR.
- **Site 5 (Noble Creek Meadows Site):** The 101-acre property (APN 406-070-024) located north of Oak Valley Parkway, east and south of Noble Creek, and west of Cougar Way. The estimated recharge potential of this site is 36,400 AFY. Since development of a recharge facility at Site 5 would allow SGPWA to receive its full allotment of SWP water, constructing a facility on this site would meet the basic project objective. Thus, implementation of a recharge facility on Site 5 is considered and further evaluated in Section 7.4, Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative.
- **Site 6 (Noble Creek SGPWA Site):** The 7.3-acre property (APN 403-080-010/-011/-012/-024 and 403-090-016/-017) located along Noble Creek on the northwest corner of Vineland Street and Noble Street. The estimated recharge potential of this site is 2,300 AFY. Since development of a recharge facility at Site 6 would only allow SGPWA to receive an additional 2,300 AFY of SWP water, constructing a facility on this site would not meet the basic project objective of receiving the Agency's full allotment of SWP water. In addition, the construction of a facility that would not allow the Agency to receive its full Table A water would require the Agency to construct another recharge basin to meet its primary objectives to receive not only Table A water, but also receive Article 21 water and other supplemental water sources when

they become available. Thus, implementation of a recharge facility on Site 6 was considered but rejected.

Based on the above, this Draft EIR evaluates three alternatives:

- No Project Alternative (Alternative 1)
- Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 2)
- Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 3)

Discussed above includes the alternatives that were considered but rejected from further consideration by the SGPWA, and below provides an evaluation of the two build alternatives selected for consideration for the proposed project in addition to the No Project Alternative. The analysis below is intended to provide a relative comparison between the proposed project and each individual alternative. The analysis only considers the issue areas analyzed in Section 3, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR. In several cases, different scenarios may share the same level of significance descriptions (i.e., both scenarios would result in a “less than significant” impact). However, although they might share the same level of significance under CEQA, the actual degree of impact may be slightly different for each scenario, and this relative difference is the basis for a conclusion of greater or lesser impacts.

An Environmentally Superior Alternative is identified among the alternatives evaluated in this Draft EIR. An alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project if it would result in fewer or less significant environmental impacts while achieving most of the project objectives.

7.2 - No Project Alternative

The discussion and evaluation of a No Project Alternative is required by the CEQA Guidelines. Under the No Project Alternative (Alternative 1), the Beaumont Avenue Recharge Facility and Pipeline project would not be constructed. The recharge facility site and the service connection site would remain vacant and undeveloped, as they currently are under existing conditions. Since the recharge basins would not be constructed, the associated pipeline along Beaumont Avenue and Orchard Street and the service connection facility connecting this pipeline to the existing EBX pipeline, would not occur. The proposed groundwater recharge operations resulting from the project would not occur.

Impact Analysis

Air Quality

Under Alternative 1, no construction activities would occur on the project sites, which would avoid the construction emissions that would result from project construction. The recharge facility site and the service connection site would remain vacant and undeveloped, and absent of any existing

operations that produce emissions or contribute to air quality effects. Therefore, impacts associated with air quality would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

No construction activities would occur on the currently vacant and undeveloped recharge facility site and service connection site, as well as adjacent to Noble Creek, as a result of Alternative 1. No biological resources would be affected by implementation of Alternative 1. Therefore, impacts associated with biological resources would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Under Alternative 1, no ground-disturbing construction activities would occur on the currently vacant and undeveloped recharge facility site and service connection site, no cultural resources, including any presently unknown buried resources, would be affected by implementation of Alternative 1. Therefore, impacts associated with cultural resources would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Geology and Soils

No ground-disturbing construction activities would occur on the currently vacant and undeveloped recharge facility site and service connection site as a result of Alternative 1. Alternative 1 would not place a recharge facility, pipeline, and service connection facility in a seismically active region that is also susceptible to subsidence. Therefore, impacts associated with geology and soils would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Under Alternative 1, no construction activities would occur on the project sites, which would avoid the greenhouse gas emissions that would result from project construction. The recharge facility site and the service connection site would remain vacant and undeveloped, and absent of any existing operations that produce greenhouse gas emissions or contribute to greenhouse gas effects. Therefore, impacts associated with greenhouse gas emissions would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

No ground-disturbing construction activities would occur on the project sites as a result of Alternative 1, which would avoid the possibility of unearthing potentially contaminated subsurface soils from previous contamination events. Alternative 1 would prevent the handling and disposal of such potentially contaminated soils on the project sites and adjacent to existing schools. Therefore, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Under Alternative 1, the recharge facility would not be constructed on the recharge facility site, which is outside of 100-year flood hazard area as designated by FEMA. Similar to the proposed project, by not constructing anything within or adjacent to a 100-year floodplain, Alternative 1 would avoid any and all potential affects related to impeding or redirecting flood flows or exposing structures or people to a significant risk of loss or injury. In addition, Alternative 1 would avoid potential surface water quality impacts during construction activities. Without the construction of the proposed project, however, Alternative 1 would also avoid the beneficial effects to local and regional groundwater levels as a result of the proposed project's groundwater replenishment efforts. Overall, the potential effects related to constructing adjacent to a 100-year flood hazard area would be balanced by the beneficial effects of groundwater recharge. Therefore, impacts associated with hydrology and water quality would be similar compared to the proposed project.

Noise

No construction activities would occur on the project sites as a result of Alternative 1, which would avoid the need to operate noise-producing and groundborne vibration-generating construction equipment on the project sites. The recharge facility site and the service connection site would remain vacant and undeveloped, and absent of any existing operations that produce noise or contribute to noise effects. Therefore, impacts associated with noise and groundborne vibration would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Transportation and Traffic

Under Alternative 1, no construction activities would occur on the project sites, which would produce temporary construction traffic on the local roadway network. The recharge facility site and the service connection site would remain vacant and undeveloped, and absent of any existing operations that produce traffic or contribute to traffic effects. Therefore, impacts associated with transportation and traffic would be avoided compared to the proposed project.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

Alternative 1 would avoid project impacts associated with air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, and transportation and traffic. Impacts associated with hydrology and water quality under Alternative 1 would be similar to the proposed project. Therefore, Alternative 1 would be environmentally superior compared to the proposed project. However, Alternative 1 would not meet the project objectives.

7.3 - Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 2)

Under the Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 2), the recharge facility would be constructed on 18.2 acres downstream of the confluence of Noble Creek and Mountain View Channel, totaling approximately 6,400 feet long. Alternative 2 involves using the Noble Creek

stream channel south of Brookside Avenue to impound and recharge SWP water during the non-storm season. This Alternative consists of constructing multiple earthen berms within and perpendicular to Noble Creek. The berms would create shallow impoundments that would cover the channel bottom and serve as temporary barriers, causing ponding of the released SWP water during the non-storm season. The berms would slow flows and allow the SWP water to form shallow ponds. The ponded water would then percolate into the channel bottom, migrate through the vadose zone, and ultimately recharge the main water table of the Beaumont Basin. Since these berms would be constructed within Noble Creek, which serves as flood control facility during the storm season, Alternative 2 would be constructed and removed on an annual basis. The estimated recharge potential of Alternative 2 is 5,700 AFY.

Since the location of the Alternative 2 site is adjacent to the proposed project, the pipeline length would generally remain the same as under the proposed project. The service connection facility would be constructed as proposed without any modifications.

Impact Analysis

Air Quality

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce air pollutant emissions during project construction. However, since the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, there will be a corresponding reduction in the amount of earthmoving activities that would be required. Because of this reduction in earthmoving activities, there would be an incremental reduction in the quantity of air pollutants emitted during project construction. During project operations, the berms within Noble Creek would be constructed and removed on an annual basis, requiring the use of a dozer over the course of approximately 5 days annually, which is roughly the same amount of time required for the proposed project's annual maintenance activities. Therefore, since construction emissions would be incrementally reduced under Alternative 2, impacts associated with air quality would decrease when compared to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

While the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, project construction would occur within Noble Creek, which could directly affect jurisdictional areas delineated as Waters of the United States and/or Water of the State. Additionally, the existing Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub (RAFSS) plant communities located along the upper tiers of Noble Creek could be directly impacted during project construction and operations. Since RAFSS provides suitable habitat for Los Angeles Pocket Mouse (LAPM), this species could also be affected. There is substantially more RAFSS within the upper tiers of Noble Creek compared to the RAFSS located on the proposed recharge basin site. Therefore, biological resources impacts associated with Alternative 2 would be greater than biological resources impacts associated with the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require earthmoving activities that could affect unknown buried cultural resources. However, since the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, there will be a corresponding reduction in the amount of earthmoving activities that would be required, and thus, a reduction in the potential that undiscovered buried cultural resources would be encountered during earthmoving activities. Therefore, since the area of disturbance would be reduced under Alternative 2, impacts associated with cultural resources will decrease when compared to the proposed project.

Geology and Soils

Although the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, the recharge facility would still be located within a seismically active region susceptible to strong seismic ground shaking, expansive soils, and related geotechnical effects. Subsurface characteristics are generally shared throughout the region, and as a result, Alternative 2 would be susceptible to the same soil conditions and issues as the proposed project. Therefore, impacts associated with geology and soils would be similar to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce greenhouse gas emissions during project construction. However, since the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, there will be a corresponding reduction in the amount of earthmoving activities that would be required. Because of this reduction in earthmoving activities, there would be an incremental reduction in the quantity of greenhouse gases emitted during project construction. During project operations, the berms within Noble Creek would be constructed and removed on an annual basis, requiring the use of a dozer over the course of approximately 5 days annually, which is roughly the same amount of time required for the proposed project's annual maintenance activities. Therefore, since construction emissions would be incrementally reduced under Alternative 2, impacts associated with greenhouse gases would decrease when compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

While the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, the recharge facility would still be located within the search radius of the same potentially hazardous materials sites evaluated for the proposed project. As addressed in Section 3.6, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, none of these potentially hazardous materials sites represent a recognized environmental concern (REC). As a result, Alternative 2 would not be affected by any such hazardous sites. Therefore, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Alternative 2 would be located within Noble Creek, an area designated by FEMA as Zone A, which is a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) subject to inundation by a 100-year flood. The berms that are constructed as part of Alternative 2 would be removed during the flood season and constructed during the non-flood season. Therefore, less than significant effects related to flood flows would occur with the implementation of Alternative 2. This potential effect will be greater under Alternative 2 compared to the proposed project.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce higher noise levels during project construction. However, since the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, there will be a corresponding reduction in the amount of earthmoving activities that would be required. Because of this reduction in earthmoving activities, there would be an incremental reduction in the duration of noise that would be emitted during project construction. During project operations, the berms within Noble Creek would be constructed and removed on an annual basis, requiring the use of a dozer over the course of approximately 5 days annually, which is roughly the same amount of time required for the proposed project's annual maintenance activities. Therefore, since construction noise levels would be incrementally reduced under Alternative 2, impacts associated with noise would decrease when compared to the proposed project.

Transportation and Traffic

While the size of the recharge facility would be reduced under Alternative 2, the amount of haul trips related to pipeline excavation activities would remain similar to the proposed project. The length of the pipeline under Alternative 2 would generally remain the same as the proposed project, and as a result, the number of haul trips required during pipeline construction would not change. Therefore, impacts associated with transportation and traffic materials would be similar to the proposed project.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

Alternative 2 would result in a reduction in project impacts associated with air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. Impacts associated with geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and transportation and traffic would be similar to the proposed project. Alternative 2 would result in increase impacts related to biological resources and hydrology/water quality. Overall, the implementation of Alternative 2 could be considered environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Alternative 2 could meet most of the project objectives. This alternative could result in recurring impacts to sensitive habitat and species within Noble Creek and may not provide the SGPWA with a cost effective system of replenishing groundwater in the region, as the collective costs of purchasing or leasing the site from its current owner, the Riverside County Flood Control and Water

Conservation District (RCFCWCD); constructing and removing the berms on an annual basis; and performing emergency maintenance on the berms following large storm events would result in higher recurring costs compared to the proposed project.

7.4 - Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 3)

Under the Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative (Alternative 3), the recharge facility would be constructed on the 101-acre site located north of Oak Valley Parkway, east and south of Noble Creek, and west of Mountain View Avenue. The Alternative 3 site includes 101 acres, 40.4 acres available for spreading, and 36,400 AFY of estimated recharge potential. However, based on the presence of the approximately 200-foot wide Southern California utility easement, as well as irregular terrain, on the southern portion of this site, this alternative assumes the construction of a recharge facility of approximately the same size as the proposed project (e.g., +/-44 acres, 20 acres available for spreading, 3,00 to 4,000 AFY of estimated recharge during normal operations and a capacity of up to 14,500 AFY) on the northern half of the Alternative 3 site.

Due to the more southwesterly location of the Alternative 3 site, the pipeline length would be increased approximately 1,250 feet as compared to the proposed project. The service connection facility would be constructed as proposed without any modifications.

Impact Analysis

Air Quality

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce air pollutant emissions during project construction. Since the size of the recharge facility would remain the same under Alternative 3, the amount of earthmoving activities would be similar as well. However, since Alternative 3 would require an additional 1,250 feet of pipeline, there will be a corresponding increase in the amount of pipeline excavation activities that would be required. Because of this increase in excavation activities, there would be an incremental increase in the quantity of air pollutants emitted during project construction. During project operations, maintenance activities would require the use of a dozer over the course of approximately 5 days annually, which is the same amount of time required for the proposed project's annual maintenance activities. Therefore, since construction emissions would be incrementally increased under Alternative 3, impacts associated with air quality would increase when compared to the proposed project.

Biological Resources

Based on a general review of the habitat within the northern portion of Alternative 3 and based on information derived from the focused trapping and survey efforts that were conducted on the proposed recharge basin site as well as adjacent areas, the unnamed creek that extends west of Mountain View Avenue has a low to moderate potential for LAPM and the upper benches of Noble

Creek have a moderate potential for LAPM. While the jurisdictional status of the unnamed drainage west of Cougar Way is presently undelineated, this feature could have state and federal jurisdiction. Due to the potential for Alternative 3 to potentially impact LAPM and state and federal jurisdictional areas, the implementation of Alternative 3 could have an increased impact on biological resources compared to the proposed project.

Cultural Resources

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would require earthmoving activities that could affect unknown buried cultural resources. However, since Alternative 3 would require an additional 1,250 feet of pipeline, there will be a corresponding increase in the amount of pipeline excavation activities that would be required, and thus, an increase in the potential that undiscovered buried cultural resources would be encountered during earthmoving activities. Therefore, since the area of disturbance would be increase under Alternative 3, potential impacts associated with cultural resources will increase when compared to the proposed project.

Geology and Soils

Similar to the proposed project, the Alternative 3 site would still be located within a seismically active region susceptible to strong seismic ground shaking, expansive soils, and related geotechnical effects. Subsurface characteristics are generally shared throughout the region, and as a result, Alternative 3 would be susceptible to same soil conditions and issues as the proposed project. Therefore, impacts associated with geology and soils would be similar to the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce greenhouse gas emissions during project construction. Since the size of the recharge facility would remain the same under Alternative 3, the amount of earthmoving activities would be similar as well. However, since Alternative 3 would require an additional 1,250 feet of pipeline, there will be a corresponding increase in the amount of pipeline excavation activities that would be required. Because of this increase in excavation activities, there would be an incremental increase in the quantity of greenhouse gases emitted during project construction. During project operations, maintenance activities would require the use of a dozer over the course of approximately 5 days annually, which is the same amount of time required for the proposed project's annual maintenance activities. Therefore, since construction emissions would be incrementally increased under Alternative 2, impacts associated with greenhouse gases would increase when compared to the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Similar to the proposed project, the Alternative 3 site would still be located within the search radius of the same potentially hazardous materials sites evaluated for the proposed project. As addressed in Section 3.6, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, none of the potential hazardous materials sites

represent a REC. As a result, the Alternative 3 site would not be affected by any such hazardous sites. Therefore, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials would be similar to the proposed project.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Similar to the proposed project, the recharge facility constructed under Alternative 3 would be located outside of an area designated by FEMA as Zone A, which is a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) subject to inundation by a 100-year flood. As a result, Alternative 3 would not be susceptible to 100-year flood events and would not redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area. Therefore, impacts associated with hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed project.

Noise

Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 3 would require the use of heavy construction equipment and diesel trucks that would produce higher noise levels during project construction. The size of the recharge facility would remain the same under Alternative 3 as the proposed project. The amount of earthmoving activities would be similar as well. However, the design of the basins could be different under this alternative resulting in less grading operations adjacent to Mountain View Middle School. Under the proposed project, grading operations would include the excavation of the recharge basins and fill in the southern portion of the recharge basin site adjacent to Mountain View Middle School. Under alternative 3, the fill portion could be located further away from the school and result in less noise impacts. Although Alternative 3 would require an additional 1,250 feet of pipeline and a corresponding increase in the amount of pipeline excavation activities, the placement of fill material further away from the school compared to the proposed project could result in less noise impacts to sensitive uses (i.e., school) compared to the proposed project.

Transportation and Traffic

Since Alternative 3 would require an additional 1,250 feet of pipeline, there will be a corresponding increase in the amount of excavation activities that would be required. While the size of the recharge facility would remain the same under Alternative 3, the amount of haul trips would increase, as the majority of haul trips will be related to pipeline excavation. Therefore, since the number of haul trips would increase, impacts associated with transportation and traffic would increase when compared to the proposed project.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

Alternative 3 could result in less noise impacts during construction activities compared to the proposed project. This alternative would result in similar impacts associated with geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and hydrology and water quality compared to the proposed project. Alternative 3 would result in increase impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation and traffic. Overall, Alternative 3 would not be environmentally superior to the proposed project.

Alternative 3 could meet the basic objectives of the project. To implement Alternative 3, the SGPWA would be required to purchase or lease the property from its present owner, Noble Creek Meadows, LLC.

7.5 - Environmentally Superior Alternative

Section 15126(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to identify an “environmentally superior alternative.” If the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives.

Each of the three alternatives would have a reduction of at least one environmental impact relative to the proposed project. As previously addressed, if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, which is the case with the conclusions in this alternatives analysis, the EIR must also identify another environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives. Table 7-1 provides a comparison of the proposed project and the three alternatives based on the environmental topics addressed in Section 3, Environmental Impact Analysis.

Based on a comparison of the two build alternatives (Alternatives 2 and 3), impacts associated with air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic would be less under Alternative 2 compared to Alternative 3. Impacts associated with geology and soils, and hazards and hazardous materials under Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 3. Impacts associated with biological resources and hydrology and water quality would be greater under Alternative 2 compared to Alternative 3. Overall, based on the above evaluations, the Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Alternative (Alternative 2) is considered the environmentally superior alternative.

Table 7-1: Alternatives Comparison

Environmental Issue	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: No Project Alternative	Alternative 2: Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Alternative	Alternative 3: Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative
Air Quality	SM	NI (L)	LTS (L)	SM (G)
Biological Resources	SM	NI (L)	SM (G)	SM (G)
Cultural Resources	SM	NI (L)	SM (L)	SM (G)
Geology and Soils	SM	NI (L)	SM (E)	LTS (E)
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	LTS	NI (L)	SM (L)	LTS (G)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	LTS	NI (L)	SM (E)	LTS (E)

Table 7-1 (cont.): Alternatives Comparison

Environmental Issue	Proposed Project	Alternative 1: No Project Alternative	Alternative 2: Reduced Footprint/Alternate Site Alternative	Alternative 3: Secondary Alternate Site Location Alternative
Hydrology and Water Quality	LTS	LTS (E)	LTS (G)	LTS (E)
Noise	LTS	NI (L)	LTS (L)	LTS (L)
Transportation and Traffic	LTS	NI (L)	LTS (E)	LTS (G)
Abbreviations: L Lesser impact than the proposed project NI No Impact E Equivalent impact to the proposed project LTS Less than Significant G Greater impact than the proposed project SM Significant Prior to Mitigation, but Less Than Significant After Mitigation				