

3.7 Utilities

This section addresses the proposed Project's potential impacts on certain utilities and services – electric facilities, natural gas, and communication. This section also provides the environmental and regulatory settings and discusses mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts.

During the scoping period for the EIR (February 26 through March 27, 2015), written comments were received from agencies, organizations, and the public. These comments identified various substantive issues and concerns relevant to the EIR analysis. No comments related to utilities were raised during scoping.

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

The proposed Project is located in unincorporated Ventura County generally along the southern bank of the Santa Clara River, with components of the Project also located within the City of Oxnard, California. Project activities would extend east generally north of and parallel to the Bailard Landfill, Coastal Landfill, Ventura Regional Sanitation District (VRSD) Flare, River Ridge Golf Course and golf maintenance yard, and Santa Clara Landfill, and then continue east parallel to North Ventura Road to the north boundary of the Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) property (see Figure 2-1, Project Location).

3.7.1.1 Existing Conditions

Electric Facilities

Electrical power is provided to Ventura County by the Southern California Edison Company, which owns and operates substations and transmission lines, and purchases electricity from a variety of different generating sources (e.g., oil and gas fired, solar, hydro-electric, geothermal, and nuclear generators) (Ventura County, 2015). There is currently no electrical service to the proposed Project site, and electrical service is not expected to be needed during operation. However, temporary electrical service may be needed during construction.

Natural Gas

The Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) supplies natural gas to all of Ventura County through a fixed transmission and distribution system (Ventura County, 2015). SoCalGas operates high-pressure distribution pipelines (i.e., pipelines that operate at pressures above 60 pounds per square inch (psi) and deliver gas in smaller volumes to the lower pressure distribution system) underneath N. Ventura Road, north and south of the Santa Clara River (SoCalGas, 2015). A 12-inch natural gas pipeline is located east of the groins along the Santa Clara River where the proposed levee transitions from Reach 3 to Reach 4. To ensure gas line safety, the VCWPD would design the proposed Project to avoid these lines and coordinate with Underground Service Alert. South of the Santa Clara River, SoCalGas also operates transmission pipelines (i.e., generally large diameter pipelines that operate at pressures above 200 psi and transport gas from supply points to the gas distribution system) underneath N. Ventura Road (SoCalGas, 2015). Natural gas would not be required during construction or operation of the proposed Project.

Landfill Gas

Landfill gas recovery pipelines carry landfill gas to the VRSD Flare Station as well as the former cogeneration facility located at the current golf course maintenance yard. Gas pipelines are buried and above ground, and may be active or inactive (particularly near the former cogeneration facility).

Communication

Telephone service is provided by Verizon Communications. Verizon provides telephone service to the cities of Camarillo, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, and Thousand Oaks; plus the unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Somis, and Westlake. (Ventura County, 2015)

Cable TV service is provided by Time-Warner Cable. County communication equipment, operated by the County's Information Systems Department, includes radio, microwave, and telephone switching equipment, which is located at 17 separate sites, including each of the three community colleges. In addition, there are other governmental and privately operated communications equipment facilities (including radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations, and microwave towers) scattered throughout the County's hilltops. (Ventura County, 2015)

There is currently no known communication service to the proposed Project site and none is expected during construction or operation of the proposed Project.

3.7.1.2 Applicable Regulation, Plans, and Standards

State Regulations

California Government Code - Protection of Underground Infrastructure

The responsibilities of California utility operators working in the vicinity of utilities are detailed in Section 1, Chapter 3.1, "Protection of Underground Infrastructure" (Article 2 of California Government Code §§4216 - 4216.9). This law requires that an excavator must contact a regional notification center at least two days prior to excavation of any subsurface installation. Any utility provider seeking to begin a project that may damage underground infrastructure can call Underground Service Alert, the regional notification center. Underground Service Alert will notify the utilities that may have buried lines within 1,000 feet of the Project. Representatives of the utilities are required to mark the specific location of their facilities within the work area prior to the start of project activities in the area.

Local Regulations

Ventura County General Plan (Public Utilities) (Ventura County, 2015)

Goal

4.5.1 Promote the efficient distribution of public utility facilities and transmission lines to assure that public utilities are adequate to service existing and projected land uses, avoid hazards and are compatible with the natural and human resources.

Policies

4.5.2 (1) New gas, electric, cable television and telephone utility transmission lines shall use or parallel existing utility rights-of-way where feasible and avoid scenic areas when not in conflict with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission. When such areas cannot be avoided, transmission lines should be designed and located in a manner to minimize their visual impact.

4.5.2 (2) All transmission lines should be located and constructed in a manner which minimizes disruption of natural vegetation and agricultural activities and avoids unnecessary grading of slopes when not in conflict with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission.

4.5.2 (3) *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to place utility service lines underground wherever feasible.

City of Oxnard General Plan (Gas and Electric Utilities) (City of Oxnard, 2015)

Goal ICS-17: Adequate and efficient public utilities that meet the needs of residents of the City.

ICS-17.1 Electric Facilities: Ensure that electric facilities (such as the Southern California Edison generating facilities located within the City) are built in accordance with the California Public Utilities Commission regulations and incorporate feasible solar, wind, and other renewable sources of energy.

ICS-17.2 Easements: Ensure that gas and electric service mains not installed in the public right-of-way have established easements.

ICS-17.4 Service Extension: Coordinate with gas and electricity providers for the extension of gas and electrical facilities.

ICS-17.5 Underground of Utility Lines: Require undergrounding of utility lines in new development, except where it is not feasible due to electrical transmission load or other operational issues.

City of Oxnard General Plan (Communications) (City of Oxnard, 2015)

Goal ICS-18: Expand communication system services to improve personal convenience for residents of the City.

ICS-18.1 Telecommunications Services: Work with telecommunications providers to ensure that residents and businesses have access to telecommunications services, including broad band service. To maximize access to inexpensive telecommunications services, the City shall encourage marketplace competition from multiple service providers.

ICS-18.3 Wireless Telecommunications: Encourage wireless providers to meet the following conditions, to the maximum extent feasible:

- Incorporate best available technology;
- Locate away from residential and open space areas;
- Not be visible from public rights-of-way and local and State scenic highways;
- When possible, locate on existing buildings, existing poles, or other existing support structures; and
- Incorporate well-designed stealth techniques that disguise the facility from the point of view of nearby residents.

3.7.2 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Information on the placement and presence of existing utilities at the Project site was attained to determine potential impacts of the proposed Project on existing utilities.

3.7.2.1 Criteria for Determining Impact Significance

A proposed project could result in impacts to utilities if it would cause a disruption or re-routing of an existing utility facility, or increase demand on a utility that results in expansion of an existing utility facility which has the potential for secondary environmental impacts (Ventura County, 2011). These facilities include: electrical generation plants, transmission substations and transmission lines; fixed natural gas transmission and distribution systems; and communications structures such as radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations, microwave towers and cellular and hard line telephone facilities.

3.7.2.2 Direct and Indirect Impacts

The installation of the flood gate in N. Ventura Road would require the relocation of numerous utilities under the roadway in order to install the flood gate. These utilities include existing natural gas, water, and sewer lines, as well as storm drains. The utilities would be lowered to provide adequate room for installation of the flood gate. The existing utility lines would remain functional until the newly relocated lines are complete, reducing potential disruption to service. The original lines would then be removed to provide adequate room for the installation of the flood gate.

Disruptions to the gas monitoring system associated with the landfills in Reaches 1-3 are expected during construction as a result of levee foundation preparation (Options 1A and 1B) and retaining wall (Option 1A) construction. Impacts resulting from this disruption are discussed in Section 3.4 (Hazards).

Disruption of Utilities

Impact U-1: Construction of the Project could accidentally damage buried utilities resulting in service disruption.

Option 1B – Minimum Levee System (Preferred) with Reach 4 Floodwall

Utilities including existing natural gas, water, and sewer lines, as well as storm drains are not expected to be disrupted during construction of the proposed flood gate, as the existing utility lines would remain functional until newly relocated lines are completed. The following lines would potentially be relocated during installation of the flood gate:

- 6" high-pressure gas line
- 18" domestic (potable) water line
- 16" recycled water line
- Electrical line

Any unplanned disruption of utility service or physical impact to existing utility lines would be considered significant. The VCWPD would coordinate with utility service providers prior to installation of the flood gate to identify potential conflicts, ensure that installation and removal of utility lines do not cause disruption to existing utility operations, and to formulate strategies for any unanticipated problems that may arise during installation. Impacts would not be significant (Class III).

Landfill gas recovery pipelines carry landfill gas to the VRSD Flare Station as well as the former cogeneration facility located at the current golf course maintenance yard. Gas pipelines are buried and above ground, and may be active or inactive (particularly near the former cogeneration facility). Damaging or rupturing a pipeline containing landfill gas could occur during grading for the Reach 1

landfill tie-ins. Placing new levee fill over an existing gas pipeline may impede future maintenance of the pipeline. Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 (Coordination to Protect, Remove, or Relocate Landfill Gas Pipelines) would ensure that the existing landfill gas recovery pipelines would not be damaged and therefore would not result in disruption of service (Class II). Existing gas recovery pipelines in the work areas could also result in a public health impact to workers and possibly the public if the line was damaged during construction; this impact is discussed in Section 3.4 (Hazards).

An existing 12-inch natural gas pipeline is located east of the groins along the Santa Clara River, where the proposed levee transitions from Reach 3 to Reach 4. This natural gas pipeline would be protected in place and no impacts are expected to occur (Class III).

Option 1A – Full Levee System with Reach 4 Floodwall

See discussion above under Option 1B. Impacts would be less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 (Class II).

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 (Coordination to Protect, Remove, or Relocate Landfill Gas Pipelines) – See Section 3.4.2.2 (Hazards).

Increase Demand for Utility Service

No increased demand for utility service would occur under the proposed Project as the service provided by the existing utility lines would continue to be provided without disruption. The proposed Project would not result in an increase to the existing population in the area. Therefore, no increase in demand for utility service would occur.

3.7.2.3 Cumulative Impacts

Introduction

The geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts for utilities would be the immediate Project location and surrounding community, which includes portions of unincorporated Ventura County and the City of Oxnard. Any potential disruptions to the service provided by these utility lines would affect the service provided to other parts of unincorporated Ventura County and the City of Oxnard.

Other planned or proposed projects in the area would have the potential to result in significant impacts to utilities if they would result in increased demand for utility services or result in the disruption of utility service. Each individual project would be required under CEQA to assess potential project impacts and provide measures to mitigate significant impacts to the extent feasible.

Project Contribution to Cumulative Impacts

The proposed Project would not result in any significant impacts related to utilities. However, any potential disruption to service of the existing utility lines would contribute to a cumulative impact if there are other disruptions to utility service at the same time. Any potential disruption to utility service would be temporary in nature during construction. Therefore, the proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts.

3.7.2.4 Impact Significance Summary

Table 3.7-1, below, provides a summary of each identified direct and indirect impact and associated mitigation measures to reduce or avoid the impact, if warranted. Mitigation measures are required for each significant impact, but are not required for impacts that are not significant. Table 3.7-1 also indicates the significance conclusion for each identified impact. For cumulative impacts, the proposed Project’s contribution to impacts on utilities during construction and O&M were determined not to be cumulatively considerable.

Table 3.7-1. Summary of Utilities Impacts and Mitigation Measures		
Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Significance Conclusion
U-1: Construction of the Project could accidentally damage buried utilities resulting in service disruption.	HAZ-3: Coordination to Protect, Remove, or Relocate Landfill Gas Pipelines.	Class II

- Class I: Significant impact; cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** A Class I impact is a significant adverse effect that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Class I impacts are significant and unavoidable.
- Class II: Significant impact; can be mitigated to a level that is not significant.** A Class II impact is a significant adverse effect that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the application of feasible mitigation measures presented in this EIR/EIS.
- Class III: Adverse; less than significant.** A Class III impact is a minor change or effect on the environment that does not meet or exceed the criteria established to gauge significance.
- Class IV: Beneficial impact.** A Class IV impact represents a beneficial effect that would result from project implementation.