Orange County Water District Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project

Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
State Clearinghouse No. 2015061055

Findings of Fact

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SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq. and the CEQA Guidelines, the Orange County Water District (District) has conducted an environmental review of the proposed Orange County Water District Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project (Project). A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released for public review on June 30, 2015 to August 6, 2015. On February 3, 2016, the Draft Environmental Report (EIR) was released. After receiving public comment on the Draft EIR, the District prepared a document titled Response to Comments on the Draft EIR (RTC). The RTC document includes the verbatim comments received on the Draft EIR, a list of persons, entities, and agencies providing comments, the District's responses to the significant environmental points raised in the comments, as well as those raised in the review and consultation process. These Findings are based upon the information contained in the record of proceedings, including the Final EIR, which includes the Draft EIR and Technical Appendices, the RTC, the staff report, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and testimony presented at public meetings.

CEQA provides that "public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects" (Public Resources Code Section 21002). The procedures required by CEQA "are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed projects and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects" (Public Resources Code Section 21002).

CEQA's mandates and principles are implemented, in part, through the requirement that agencies adopt findings before approving projects for which EIRs are required. For each significant environmental effect identified in an EIR for a proposed project, the approving agency must issue a written finding reaching one or more of three conclusions:

1. "[c]hanges or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR,"
2. "[s]uch changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding [and] [s]uch changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency," or

3. "[s]pecific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR." (Public Resources Code Section 21081; CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15091.)

CEQA defines "feasible" to mean "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, legal, environmental, social and technological factors" (Public Resources Code Section 21061.1; CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15364).

Because the EIR for the Orange County Water District Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project determined that with the adoption of the proposed mitigation measures, the potential Project impacts would be mitigated to a level of less than significant and in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the Board of Directors of the Orange County Water District hereby adopts these Findings of Fact. For each of the significant effects identified in Section 4, as set forth in greater detail in these Findings below, the Board of Directors makes the finding under Public Resources Code Section 21081(a). In accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines Board of Directors of the Orange County Water District has independently reviewed the Record of Proceedings and based on the evidence in the Record of Proceedings adopts these Findings of Fact.

SECTION 2.0 PROJECT

2.1 Project Location

The Centennial Park project site is located at 300 West Edinger Avenue and the Heritage Park project site is located at 3101 West Harvard Street within the City of Santa Ana.

2.2 Project Description

The Project involves the construction and operation of four injections wells and a monitoring well.

2.3 Project Objectives

Implementation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project is intended to achieve the following objectives;

- Construct the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project in location that can readily tie into the existing GWR System pipeline with minimal adverse impacts to the environment.
- Provide 12 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity to the Orange County Groundwater Basin.
- Maximize the use of GWR System as the local water supply to replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin.
- Ensure that the operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project does not result in permanent loss of usable open space.
- Ensure that during construction and operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project potential safety conflicts with students from Godinez High School, Mitchell Child Development Center and from Centennial Education and Day Care Center are avoided.
- Ensure that the construction and operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project is compatible with park facilities.

SECTION 3.0 RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

For purposes of CEQA and these Findings, the Record of Proceedings for the Project consists of the following documents and other evidence, at a minimum:

- The Notice of Preparation (NOP) and all other public notices issued by the District in conjunction with the proposed Project.
- The Draft EIR and Technical Appendices.
- All written comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the public review comment period on the Draft EIR.
- All responses to written comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the public review comment period on the Draft EIR.
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).
- The documents, reports and technical memoranda included or referenced in the technical appendices of the Draft EIR.
- All documents, studies, EIRs, or other materials incorporated by reference in the Draft EIR and Response to Comments.
- The Resolution adopted by the District in connection with the proposed project, and all documents incorporated by reference therein.
- District Staff Report.
- Any documents expressly cited in these Findings.
- Any other relevant materials required to be in the record of proceedings by Public Resources Code Section 21167.6(e) (excluding privileged materials).

Custodian and Location of Records

The documents and other materials which constitute the administrative record for the District's actions related to the Project are located at the Orange County Water District at 18700 Ward Street, Fountain Valley, CA 92708. The Orange County Water District is the custodian of the record of proceedings for the Project. Copies of these documents, which constitute the record of proceedings, are available upon request at the Orange County Water District office. This information is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a) (2) and CEQA Guideline Section 15091(e).

SECTION 4.0 PROJECT ADVERSE IMPACTS MITIGATED TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL

The Draft EIR identified that the Project would result in significant adverse construction and operational impacts and has incorporated proposed mitigation measures to avoid or substantially lessen those impacts. Those impacts and mitigation measures are identified in this section. The Orange County Water District Board of Directors finds, based on the facts set forth in the record, which include but are not limited to the facts as set forth below, that the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will mitigate the following significant adverse construction and operation impacts to a level that is less than significant.

4.1 Aesthetics

Impact

AR-3: Onsite site lighting used during night time construction associated could cause temporary light and glare impacts within the study area.

Mitigation Measures

AR-1: Construction lighting fixtures will be shielded by providing side flap on lights, or providing a temporary drape/wall so that illumination is confined to within the work area. Onsite construction lighting will be arranged so that direct rays will not shine in or produce glare impacts to sensitive receptors.

AR-2: If the onsite construction lighting creates a light or glare issues for sensitive receptor properties, OCWD will implement corrective measures to resolve the issue. Such corrective measures may include providing additional shielding on light fixtures, relocating lighting light fixtures or increasing the height of the temporary drape/wall.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-21, Mitigation Measures AR-1 and AR-2 require the Project to adjust temporary onsite lighting to avoid spillover lighting impacts on sensitive receptors. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures AR-1 and AR-2 temporary light and glare impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.2 Biological Resources

Impact

BIO-4: Construction activities for the Project will have the potential to disrupt breeding patterns of migratory birds.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: At each well site a 24 foot high noise wall will be provided around the work area to minimize noise impacts.

BIO-2: All heavy equipment will be equipped with noise reduction features, such as mufflers and engine shrouds.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-66, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 require that sound attenuation features be incorporated into the construction activities to minimize noise impacts to nesting migratory birds. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 potential impacts to nesting migratory birds will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.3 Cultural Resources

Impact

CR-1: Construction activities for the Project could have the potential to result in adverse impacts to unknown historical resources.

Mitigation Measures

CR-1: *A qualified Archaeologist will be retained during construction to observe* grading activities in the uppermost layers of sediment and to salvage and catalogue archaeological resources, as necessary. The designated Archaeologist should be present during the pre-grade meeting to discuss cultural resources sensitivity and to assess whether archaeological resources have the potential to be encountered. The Archaeologist must first determine whether an archaeological resource uncovered during construction is a “unique archaeological resource” pursuant to Section 21083.2(g) of the *California Public Resources Code* or a “historical resource” pursuant to Section 15064.5(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines. If the archaeological resource is determined to be a “unique archaeological resource” or a “historical resource”, the Archaeologist

shall formulate a mitigation plan in consultation with the OCWD that satisfies the requirements of the above listed sections.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-75, Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires the Project to retain a qualified Archaeologist during construction to observe grading activities in the uppermost layers of sediment (soils and younger Quaternary Alluvium) and to salvage and catalogue archaeological resources, as necessary. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 potential impacts to unknown historical resources will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

CR-2: Construction activities for the Project could have the potential to result in adverse impacts to unknown archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measures

CR-1: *A qualified Archaeologist will be retained during construction to observe* grading activities in the uppermost layers of sediment and to salvage and catalogue archaeological resources, as necessary. The designated Archaeologist should be present during the pre-grade meeting to discuss cultural resources sensitivity and to assess whether archaeological resources have the potential to be encountered. The Archaeologist must first determine whether an archaeological resource uncovered during construction is a “unique archaeological resource” pursuant to Section 21083.2(g) of the *California Public Resources Code* or a “historical resource” pursuant to Section 15064.5(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines. If the archaeological resource is determined to be a “unique archaeological resource” or a “historical resource”, the Archaeologist shall formulate a mitigation plan in consultation with the OCWD that satisfies the requirements of the above listed sections.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-75, Mitigation Measure CR-1 requires the Project to retain a qualified Archaeologist during construction to observe grading activities in the uppermost layers of sediment (soils and younger Quaternary Alluvium) and to salvage and catalogue archaeological resources, as necessary. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 potential impacts to unknown archaeological resources will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

CR-3: Construction activities for the Project could have the potential to result in adverse impacts to unknown Native American sacred remains.

Mitigation Measure

CR-2: If human remains are encountered during excavation activities, all work shall halt in the vicinity of the remains and the County Coroner shall be notified (*California Public Resources Code* §5097.98). The Coroner will determine whether the remains are of forensic interest. If the Coroner, with the aid of a qualified Archaeologist, determines that the remains are prehistoric, s/he will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC will be responsible for designating the most likely descendant (MLD), who will be responsible for the ultimate disposition of the remains, as required by Section 7050.5 of the *California Health and Safety Code*. The MLD shall make his/her recommendation within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. If feasible, the recommendation of the MLD shall be followed and may include scientific removal and non-destructive analysis of the human remains and any items associated with Native American burials (*California Health and Safety Code* §7050.5). If the landowner rejects the recommendations of the MLD, the landowner shall rebury the remains with appropriate dignity on the property in a location that will not be subject to further subsurface disturbance (*California Public Resources Code* §5097.98).

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-81, Mitigation Measure CR-2 requires that if human remains are encountered during excavation activities, all work shall halt in the vicinity of the remains and the County Coroner shall be notified. The Coroner will determine whether the remains are of forensic interest. If the Coroner, with the aid of a qualified Archaeologist, determines that the remains

are prehistoric, s/he will contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). With the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2 potential adverse impacts to unknown Native American sacred remains will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

CR-4: Construction operations for the Project could have the potential to result in adverse impacts to unknown paleontological resources.

Mitigation Measure

CR-3: A qualified Paleontologist be notified and retained when earth-moving activities are anticipated to impact undisturbed deposits in the Older Quaternary Alluvium on the project site. The designated Paleontologist should be present during the pre-grade meeting to discuss paleontological sensitivity and to assess whether scientifically important fossils have the potential to be encountered. The extent of monitoring activities will be determined at the meeting in consultation with the OCWD. If any scientifically important large fossil remains are uncovered during earth-moving activities, the Paleontological Monitor will divert heavy equipment away from the fossil site until s/he has had an opportunity to examine the remains. Samples of Older Quaternary Alluvium should be collected for processing and examination for very small vertebrate fossils.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-83, Mitigation Measure CR-3 requires that a qualified Paleontologist be notified and retained when earth-moving activities are anticipated to impact undisturbed deposits in the Older Quaternary Alluvium on the project site. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-3 potential adverse impacts to unknown paleontological resources will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.4 Geology/Soils

Impact

GEO-3: Earthwork activities conducted by the Project would uncover soils that could be subject to erosion impacts caused by water and wind.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1: Prior to the start of construction OCWD will obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board and in compliance with the permit shall file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-93, Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the Project to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board, file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 potential erosion impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

GEO-4: The study area contains expansive soils that could affect the construction of the Project.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-2: The final design and construction of the Project will incorporate the geotechnical recommendations provided in the Geotechnical Evaluation for the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project prepared by Leighton Associates.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-95, Mitigation Measure GEO-2 requires that the final design and construction of the Project incorporate the geotechnical recommendations provided in the Geotechnical Evaluation for the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project prepared by Leighton Associates. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-2 potential geotechnical impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.5 Hydrology/Water Quality

Impact

HWQ-3: During wet periods there could be the potential that the back flushed water from the injection wells could reduce the flood capacity of the Greenville Banning Flood Control Channel.

Mitigation Measure

HWQ-1: Prior to construction operations OCWD will obtain an encroachment permit from the County of Orange that allows for the discharging of groundwater from the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project into the Greenville Banning Flood Control Channel.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-131 during wet periods and based on intensity of storm conditions there would be the potential the back flushed water from the injection wells could reduce the flood control capacity of the Greenville Banning Flood Control Channel. Mitigation Measure HWQ-1 requires that the Project to obtain an encroachment permit from the County of Orange that would require OCWD to coordinate with County of Orange on the discharging of groundwater from the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project into the Greenville Banning Flood Control Channel to ensure there would adequate flood control capacity.

Impact

HWQ-4: Earthwork activities conducted by the Project would uncover soils that could be subject to erosion impacts caused by water and wind.

Mitigation Measure

GEO-1: Prior to the start of construction OCWD will obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board and in compliance with

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-93, Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the Project to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board, file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 potential erosion impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

HWQ-5: The construction and operation activities for the Project would have the potential to generate construction-related storm water degraded runoff impacts and long- term operational degraded storm water runoff impacts.

Mitigation Measures

GEO-1: Prior to the start of construction OCWD will obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Quality Control Board and in compliance with the permit will file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Quality Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

HWQ-2: The final design of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project will incorporate the storm water management program contained in the approved Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Wells Project Non-Priority Water Quality Plan.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-137, Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the Project to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board, file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare and implement Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, and Mitigation Measure HWQ-2 requires the Project to implement the storm water management program contained in the approved Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Wells Project Non-Priority Water Quality Plan. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and HWQ-2 potential construction-related degraded storm water runoff impacts and long-term operation degraded storm water runoff impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

HWQ-6: The construction and operation activities for the Project could have the potential to degrade water quality.

Mitigation Measures

GEO-1: Prior to the start of construction OCWD will obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Quality Control Board and in compliance with the permit will file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Quality Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

HWQ-2: The final design of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project will incorporate the storm water management program contained in the approved Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Wells Project Non-Priority Water Quality Plan.

HWQ-3: Prior to conducting dewatering activities OCWD will receive a NPDES Dewatering Permit from the regional Water Quality Control Board.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-137, Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the Project to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit by the State Water Resources Control Board, file a Notice of Intent with the State Water Resources Control Board and prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, and Mitigation Measure HWQ-2 requires the Project to implement the storm water management program contained in the approved Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Wells Project Non-Priority Water Quality Plan, and Mitigation Measure HWQ-3 requires issuance of NPDES Permit to ensure there would be no adverse water quality impacts from groundwater dewatering activities. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1, HWQ-2 and HWQ-3, the potential impact to degrade water quality will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

HWQ-6: The Project would require excavation into the east and west facing levees of the Santa Ana River and the installation of water pipeline along the nose piers of the Edinger Avenue Bridge. There would be concern that these

activities could affect the structural integrity of the levees and provide constraints to remove debris from the river during storm event flows.

Mitigation Measures

HWQ-4: Prior to construction activities occurring along the west and east levees of the Santa Ana River OCWD will obtain an encroachment permit from the County of Orange and a Section 408 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

HWQ-5: Prior to placement of the water supply pipeline along the nose piers of the Edinger Avenue Bridge OCWD will obtain an encroachment permit from the County of Orange and as part of the permit conditions will coordinate with County of Orange Flood Operations on the design of the water supply pipeline to ensure it does not impede flood maintenance activities along the bridge during flood events.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-137, Mitigation Measure HWQ-4 requires the Project to obtain a Section 408 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that no adverse impacts to east and west facing levees will occur and Mitigation Measure HWQ-5 requires the Project to obtain an encroachment permit from the County of Orange to ensure that the water pipeline along the nose of the bridge piers will not adversely affect the ability of the County of Orange to remove storm debris from the Santa Ana River. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures HWQ-4 and HWQ-5, potential adverse impacts to Santa Ana River levees and to the Edinger Avenue Bridge will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.6 Noise

Impact

N-1: The construction activities for the Project will have the potential to expose persons to noise levels in excess of local noise standards.

Mitigation Measures

N- 1: The Project will incorporate the noise reduction design features identified in the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project EIR.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-217, Mitigation Measures N-1 requires that the noise reduction features identified Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project EIR are implemented. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1 potential adverse noise impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

N-2: The construction activities for the Project will have the potential to cause a temporary increase in ambient noise levels.

Mitigation Measures

N- 1: The Project will incorporate the noise reduction design features identified in the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project EIR.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-217, Mitigation Measures N-1 requires that the noise reduction features identified Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project EIR are implemented. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure N-1 potential adverse noise impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

4.7 Traffic/Transportation

Impact

T-3: Temporary lane closures required for the Project could adversely impact existing circulation patterns within and outside of Centennial Park, including access to the Godinez High School parking structure, and access to student drop off areas at the high school. Additionally, construction activity for the Project could result student/pedestrian construction equipment conflicts.

Mitigation Measure

T-1: Prior to start of pipeline construction activities along Edinger Avenue a Traffic Management Plan will be prepared and approved by the City of Santa Ana. The Traffic Management Plan will include traffic control devices and signage to avoid vehicle and pedestrian conflicts from the temporary closing of Edinger Avenue.

T-2: Pipeline construction along the Centennial Loop Road will be conducted during the night time hours. Steel plates will be placed over exposed trenches at the end of the work activities to allow vehicle access during the day.

T-3: A Traffic Control Plan with traffic control devices and signage will be implemented at Parking Area 2 directing student drop-offs to the turn-around located north of the Centennial Skate Park.

T-4: A Construction Safety Plan will be prepared and implemented that will include fencing around all work areas to prevent public access and the use of flag men to direct students and pedestrians from construction equipment and activities.

T-5: During construction activities a signage program will be implemented that identifies parking lots where construction activity is not occurring where parking is available.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-245, Mitigation Measure T-1 requires preparation of traffic management plan to avoid vehicle and pedestrian conflicts, Mitigation Measure T-2 requires construction of the loop road at night to maintain safe vehicle access during the day, Mitigation Measure T-3 requires implementation of traffic control devices to direct vehicles to a temporary student drop off area, Mitigation Measure T-4 requires preparation of a Construction Safety Plan to avoid student/pedestrian conflicts with construction equipment and activities and Mitigation Measure T-5 requires that a signage program be implemented that identifies parking lots where construction activity will not be occurring. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures T-1, T-2, T-3, T-4 and T-5 potential adverse circulation impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

T-3: During construction of the water supply pipeline the Project will require a temporary lane closure which could potentially impact emergency access within the study area.

Mitigation Measure

T-1: Prior to start of pipeline construction activities along Edinger Avenue a Traffic Management Plan will be prepared and approved by the City of Santa Ana. The Traffic Management Plan will include traffic control devices and signage to avoid vehicle and pedestrian conflicts from the temporary closing of Edinger Avenue.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-247, Mitigation Measure T-1 requires preparation of traffic management plan to maintain adequate emergency access within the study area. With the implementation of mitigation Measure T-1, potential vehicle and pedestrian conflicts from the temporary closing of Edinger Avenue will reduced to a less than significant level.

Impact

T-4: During construction of the water supply pipeline temporary lane closure would be required for the Project which would require the temporary closure of existing bike lanes and pedestrian sidewalk along the south side of Edinger Avenue.

Mitigation Measure

T-1: Prior to start of pipeline construction activities along Edinger Avenue a Traffic Management Plan will be prepared and approved by the City of Santa Ana. The Traffic Management Plan will include traffic control devices and signage to avoid vehicle and pedestrian conflicts from the temporary closing of Edinger Avenue.

Finding

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 (a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project which avoid or substantially lessen the potential significant effect as identified in the Final EIR.

Facts in Support of Finding

As identified in the Final EIR on Page 5-247, Mitigation Measure T-1 requires preparation of traffic management plan to direct bicyclist and pedestrians to north side of Edinger Avenue for access when the water supply pipeline construction is occurring. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure T-1 potential adverse pedestrian and bicycle impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

SECTION 5.0 FEASIBILITY OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Where a project will result in significant adverse impacts to the environment, the lead agency is required to consider the feasibility of an environmental superior alternative that could avoid or result in less severe significant adverse impacts while attaining most of the basic objectives of the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

Implementation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project is intended to achieve the following objectives;

- Construct the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project in location that can readily tie into the existing GWR System pipeline with minimal adverse impacts to the environment.
- Provide 12 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity to the Orange County Groundwater Basin.
- Maximize the use of GWR System as the local water supply to replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin.
- Ensure that the operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project does not result in permanent loss of usable open space.
- Ensure that during construction and operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project potential safety conflicts with students from Godinez High School, Mitchell Child Development Center and from Centennial Education and Day Care Center are avoided.
- Ensure that the construction and operation of the Mid Basin Centennial Park Injection Well Project is compatible with park facilities.

The Final EIR examined a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project to determine whether any alternative could meet the project's objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening the Project significant adverse impacts. These findings examine each alternative to determine their feasibility. In determining the feasibility of the alternatives, the lead agency may take into account factors such as whether the alternative could be accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time in light of economic, environmental, legal, social and technological factors.

The Final EIR has concluded that the implementation of the Project will have the potential to result in significant adverse construction and operational impacts to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, hydrology, noise and traffic. However, the EIR concludes that, with incorporation of mitigation

measures as described in the EIR and this Statement the potential impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

The Final EIR also analyzed three alternatives to the proposed Project. The alternatives, which are analyzed in Section 5 of the EIR, includes; Alternative 1-No Project Alternative, Alternative 3-Reduced Intensity Alternative and Alternative 4-Pipeline Design Alternative. The following summarizes the feasibility of the analyzed alternatives as a means to reduce or avoid the significant adverse impacts associated with the Project.

Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, no improvements will occur to Centennial Park or to the Heritage Museum. Both sites will continue to operate as a community park and cultural education center.

Because Alternative 1 will not involve any construction activities, there will not be any construction related light and glare impacts, potential impacts to unknown cultural resources, degraded surface water runoff impacts , construction noise impacts, loss of parking impacts or construction traffic impacts. Compared to the Project, there will be overall less impacts to the environment. However, the No Project Alternative is infeasible because it will not attain any of the project objectives.

Alternative 2 – Reduced Intensity

Under Alterative 3, three injections wells and associated water supply and back flush pipeline will be constructed at Centennial Park and a below ground monitoring well will be constructed at Heritage Museum. An estimated 9 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity will be provided to help replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

The implementation of Alternative 3 will involve the construction of one less injection well and a reduced amount of pipeline. Compared to the Project, there will be fewer days of construction activity and marginally less severe light and glare impacts, less severe construction noise impacts, less severe potential impacts to unknown cultural resources, less potential to generate degraded surface water runoff impacts, less severe parking impacts, less severe construction traffic impacts and less potential for conflicts with pedestrians and construction equipment and construction activities. Because the alternative will result in marginally less severe construction impacts, Alternative 3 is considered the environmentally superior alternative. However, Alternative 3 does not attain the project objective of providing 12 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity to the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

Alternative 4: Pipeline Design Alternative

Under Alterative 4, four injections wells and associated water supply and back flush pipeline will be constructed at Centennial Park and a below ground monitoring well will be constructed at Heritage Museum. Under Alternative 4, an alternative water supply pipeline alignment will be constructed within Centennial Park. An estimated 12 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity will be provided to replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

The implementation of Alternative 4 will involve the construction of an alternative pipeline route that will extend through parking areas, school facilities and open space areas in Centennial Park. Compared to the Project there would be more severe parking and traffic circulation impacts and increased potential for conflicts with pedestrians and construction equipment and construction activities.

Summary

The Orange County Water District finds that all potential significant adverse environmental impacts of the Project will be mitigated to a less than significant level with the incorporation of the mitigation measures as set forth in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Compared to the Project, Alternative 3 will result in marginally less severe significant impacts to the environment. However, Alternative 3 will not attain the project objective of providing 12 MGD of additional groundwater recharge capacity to help replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin, as a result, Alternative 3 will require the Orange County Water District to increase imported water supplies to help replenish the groundwater basin, which will result in increased regional air quality and greenhouse gas emission impacts and increased economic costs. The Orange County Water District has determined that the marginally less severe impacts to the environment gained from Alternative 3 will not outweigh the benefits of the Project of providing additional groundwater recharge capacity to help replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin and therefore is supporting approval of the Project.