

4.1 Impacts Not Found to be Significant

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an environmental impact report (EIR) contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. Such a statement may be contained in an attached copy of an initial study. For this EIR, issues related to aesthetics, population and housing, and public services were found not to be significant for the project and programmatic components of the Proposed Project listed in Table 4.1-1. See Chapter 3, Project Description, for a detailed description of the Proposed Project. This determination is based on the Initial Study (Appendix A) and additional information provided in this section.

Table 4.1-1. Project and Programmatic Components

Proposed Project Components	Project Components	Programmatic Components
WATER RIGHTS MODIFICATIONS		
Place of Use	✓	
Points of Diversion	✓	
Underground Storage and Purpose of Use	✓	
Method of Diversion	✓	
Extension of Time	✓	
Bypass Requirement (Agreed Flows)	✓	
INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS		
<i>Water Supply Augmentation</i>		
Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)		✓
New ASR Facilities at Unidentified Locations		✓
Beltz ASR Facilities at Existing Beltz Well Facilities	✓	
Water Transfers and Exchanges and Intertie Improvements		✓
<i>Surface Water Diversion Improvements</i>		
Felton Diversion Fish Passage Improvements		✓
Tait Diversion and Coast Pump Station Improvements		✓

4.1.1 Aesthetics

With regard to potential aesthetic impacts, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Santa Cruz (City) CEQA Guidelines consider whether a project would have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; substantially damage scenic resources; substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and surroundings; create a new source of substantial light or glare; or have a substantial, demonstrable, negative aesthetic effect. This section includes an evaluation of potential aesthetic impacts associated with the project and programmatic components of the Proposed Project.

4.1.1.1 Water Rights Modifications

The water rights modifications would not have the potential to result in aesthetic impacts, as these modifications would not directly result in construction and operation of new facilities that would result in changes to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Additionally, as indicated in Section 4.3, Biological Resources, the water rights modifications would not result in impacts related to riparian or other vegetation along the Loch Lomond Reservoir, Newell Creek, San Lorenzo River, and North Coast streams, as the water rights modifications would not substantially affect surface water levels or baseflows. Therefore, the water rights modifications would have no impact on aesthetics.

4.1.1.2 Infrastructure Components

Aquifer Storage and Recovery

The Proposed Project includes the City installing and operating aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) facilities within the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin inside or outside the areas served by the City, and in the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin outside the areas served by the City. ASR would include new ASR facilities at unidentified locations (referred to as “new ASR facilities”) and Beltz ASR facilities at the existing Beltz well facilities (referred to as “Beltz ASR facilities”). The aesthetics analysis for new ASR and Beltz ASR facilities is provided below.

New Aquifer Storage and Recovery

New ASR facilities would likely consist of the following components: (1) a pump control and chemical storage building; (2) a treatment system; (3) backwash tank(s) used in the treatment system; (4) a water well and monitoring wells, submersible pump and concrete pedestal, station piping including treated water pipelines, sewer connections, and stormwater drainage facilities that would connect to nearby facilities in adjacent roadways. A typical facility would require a site approximately 0.25 acres in size and would have a similar appearance to the existing Beltz 12 facility, which is a newer facility. Such new facilities would be located on relatively small sites, would be limited in height (e.g., equivalent to a one-story building), and would have new outdoor lighting for nighttime security only, which would be low wattage and directed downward to minimize light spillage. As such, new ASR facilities would not substantially affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, this programmatic component would have less-than-significant aesthetic impacts.

Beltz Aquifer Storage and Recovery

Beltz 8, 9, 10, and 12 are existing groundwater well facilities in the City’s Beltz system, located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County (see Figure 3-4, Chapter 3, Project Description). The facilities are located on relatively small sites with flat topography in urban settings surrounded by residential, commercial, and/or industrial buildings. The Beltz sites are not publicly accessible due to surrounding chain-link fencing. Each of these well sites currently include a pump control and storage cabinet, groundwater well, submersible pump and concrete pedestal, well head station piping, and surrounding pavement and fencing. Additionally, Beltz 8 and 12 contain water treatment facilities including filter and backwash tanks.

The Beltz ASR facilities would result in the following upgrades to the existing facilities at Beltz 8, 9, 10, and 12: new injection pipeline connections to the existing distribution system, modifications to the well head, replacement of submersible pump and motor, new flow control valves, and new piping and electrical conduits. Additional water treatment facilities may also be added at Beltz 8 and 12 and new monitoring wells would be installed at Beltz 9. The Beltz ASR facilities would have a similar appearance and height as under existing conditions.

The following subsections provide an assessment of the potential for impacts associated with Beltz ASR facilities related to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, and light and glare.

Scenic Vistas. No scenic vistas are located near the Beltz ASR facility sites, based on review of the Santa Cruz County General Plan (County of Santa Cruz 2020) and a site visit conducted during the preparation of this EIR. The Beltz ASR sites do not offer publicly available scenic views given the lack of public access, flat topography, and surrounding development. Additionally, the proposed improvements associated with this project component would not increase the height of the existing facilities such that long-range views from off-site vantage points would be adversely affected. Therefore, this project component would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic vistas.

Scenic Resources. State Highway 1, south of the Beltz 12 ASR facility site and north of the Beltz 8, 9, and 10 ASR facility sites, is eligible as a scenic highway (Caltrans 2020) and is a County designated scenic road (County of Santa Cruz 1994). However, given the height of the existing and proposed facilities at the Beltz ASR facility sites, flat topography, and surrounding development and vegetation along State Highway 1, the Beltz ASR facility sites are not visible from Highway 1 under existing conditions and would also not be visible under project conditions. Additionally, the Santa Cruz County General Plan and Local Coastal Program indicates that visual and scenic resource areas are defined as areas having regional public importance for their natural beauty or rural agricultural character, including but not limited to, ocean views, agricultural fields, wooded forests, open meadows, mountain hillside views, and unique hydrologic, geologic, and paleontologic features (County of Santa Cruz 2020). As described above, the Beltz ASR facility sites are located in an urban setting and do not include such scenic resources. Therefore, this project component would have a less-than-significant impact on scenic resources.

Visual Character. While Beltz ASR facilities would result in some modifications to the existing facilities at Beltz 8, 9, 10, and 12, the Beltz ASR facility sites are currently developed and the proposed upgrades would not alter the existing visual character of the sites or surroundings, as they would be installed on the existing developed Beltz sites, would not change the height of the existing facilities, and would not result in additional night lighting. Therefore, this project component would have a less-than-significant impact on visual character.

Light and Glare. The proposed upgrades at the Beltz ASR facility sites would not result in new lighting or sources of glare. Therefore, this project component would have no impacts related to light and glare.

Water Transfers and Exchanges and Intertie Improvements

Water transfers and exchanges would not have the potential to result in aesthetic impacts, as this operational activity would involve the movement of water in subgrade pipelines between water agencies and districts. The intertie pipelines of this programmatic component would also not have the potential to result in aesthetic impacts, as these modifications would be composed of underground pipelines that would not result in changes to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. As such, the underground pipelines would have no impacts on aesthetics.

The City/Scotts Valley Water District (SVWD) intertie would include one new pump station on La Madrona Drive and the City/Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD)/Central Water District (CWD) intertie would include one pump station upgrade on McGregor Drive and two new pump stations, one on Freedom Boulevard and one on Valencia Drive (see Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, Project Description). The McGregor Drive pump station upgrade would involve replacing two pumps and would not involve modifications to the pump station structure, lighting or fencing. As such, the McGregor Drive pump station upgrade would not substantially affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, the McGregor Drive pump station upgrade would have no impacts on aesthetics.

The three new pump stations would be located in predominantly developed areas, surrounded by residential, rural residential, or commercial areas. These small new structures would be single story and not visible from long-range public vantage points. Additionally, according to Santa Cruz County General Plan, there are no scenic vistas located on or nearby the new and upgraded pump station sites (County of Santa Cruz 2020).

Santa Cruz County contains several county-designated scenic roads and state-designated scenic highways (County of Santa Cruz 2020). State Highway 17 and State Highway 1 are eligible as state scenic highways (County of Santa Cruz 2020; Caltrans 2020) and County designated scenic roads (County of Santa Cruz 1994), and are located near the pump station sites. The new pump station that would be located in Scotts Valley would be constructed just east of State Highway 17. However, given the limited height of the proposed single-story structure and the dense canopy of trees and vegetation between State Highway 17 and the pump station site, the pump station would not be visible from State Highway 1. While the new pump station on Freedom Boulevard could potentially be visible from State Highway 1, depending on the ultimate site selected, there is other visible development in this location as well, and given the small size of the structure, it would not damage scenic resources along State Highway 1. The new pump station on Valencia Road would not be visible from State Highway 1 as the site is set back from the highway and there is intervening topography and vegetation that would block views of this location from State Highway 1.

As the new pump station facilities would be located in predominantly developed areas on relatively small sites, would be limited in height (e.g., equivalent to a one-story building), and would have new outdoor lighting for nighttime security only, which would be low wattage and directed downward to minimize light spillage, they would not substantially affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, this programmatic component would have less-than-significant aesthetic impacts.

Felton Diversion Improvements

Felton Diversion is located east of State Highway 9, adjacent to the San Lorenzo River in unincorporated Santa Cruz County near the community of Felton. This site is surrounded by mountainous terrain and dense forested vegetation, which obscures public views of the site, except that the existing pump station that can be partially viewed from State Highway 9, at the entrance to the facility. The facility includes a surface water diversion on the San Lorenzo River and the adjacent pump station, which are not accessible to the public due to chain-link fencing.

This programmatic component would include modifications to comply with the latest fish passage and screening criteria. These improvements would be constructed on the west side of the Felton Diversion on the existing diversion facility structure. These improvements would not require any construction activities or disturbance in the riverbed. While permanent improvements would result in some alterations to the existing facilities at the site, the site is currently developed with a surface water diversion and pump station and the proposed upgrades would not substantially alter the existing visual character of the site or surroundings, as they would be installed on the existing site, would not change the height of the existing facilities, and would not result in additional night lighting. Given the above, improvements to the Felton Diversion would not substantially affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, this programmatic component would have a less-than-significant impact related to aesthetics.

Tait Diversion and Coast Pump Station Improvements

The Tait Diversion and Coast Pump Station site (Tait site) is located in the City of Santa Cruz along the San Lorenzo River in a predominantly industrial area (City of Santa Cruz 2019). The Tait site is located approximately 2.4 miles upstream of the mouth of the San Lorenzo River on State Highway 9/River Street. The facility includes a surface

water diversion on the San Lorenzo River and the adjacent Coast Pump Station, both of which are not accessible to the public due to chain-link fencing.

This programmatic component would include modifications to comply with the latest fish passage and screening criteria. The City is currently evaluating needed improvements at the Tait site, which could include, but would not be limited to, new or modified intake design, upstream and/or downstream hydraulic modifications, improvements to the check dam, and any required fish passage upgrades. The River Pumps at the Coast Pump Station facility would also require improvements, which could include, but would not be limited to new pumps and motors, primary and backup power upgrades, new or modified concrete wet well, and solids handling system. The diversion improvements would likely require construction activities and disturbances in the riverbed, which would be temporary. While permanent improvements would result in some alterations to the existing facilities at the site, the site is currently developed with a surface water diversion and pump station and the proposed upgrades would not substantially alter the existing visual character of the site or surroundings, as they would be installed on the existing site, would not change the height of the existing facilities, and would not result in additional night lighting. Given the above, improvements to the Tait Diversion and Coast Pump Station would not substantially affect scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character, or light and glare. Therefore, this programmatic component would have a less-than-significant impact related to aesthetics.

4.1.2 Population and Housing

With regard to potential impacts related to population and housing, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Santa Cruz CEQA Guidelines consider whether a project would displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere, or whether a project would induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure). Chapter 5, Growth Inducement, evaluates whether the Proposed Project would induce substantial unplanned population growth.

The project and programmatic components would not displace people or housing, as further described below.

4.1.2.1 Water Rights Modifications

The water rights modifications would not have the potential to result in population and housing impacts, as these modifications would not directly result in construction and operation of new facilities and therefore this project component would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing. Therefore, the water rights modifications would have no direct impact on population and housing.

The following analysis evaluates the potential indirect impacts related to population and housing as a result of the proposed water rights modifications, that once approved could result in the implementation of the project and programmatic infrastructure components of the Proposed Project.

4.1.2.2 Infrastructure Components

The known project and programmatic infrastructure component sites do not contain existing housing and therefore would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing and would not require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. As no definitive sites have been identified to date for new ASR facilities, the setting of such facility sites is unknown. However, it is unlikely that new ASR sites would be located on sites with existing

housing that would require demolition to accommodate the new ASR facilities. As such, new ASR facilities also would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing and would not require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, the project and programmatic infrastructure components would have no impact on population and housing.

4.1.3 Public Services

With regard to potential public services impacts, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the City of Santa Cruz CEQA Guidelines consider whether a project would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities, including fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public facilities, in order to meet acceptable performance objectives. The Proposed Project includes water rights modifications and project and programmatic infrastructure components, as shown in Table 4.1-1. No new housing units are proposed that could increase population and demand for public services. As indicated in Chapter 3, Project Description, it is anticipated that up to three new staff would be needed to operate under Proposed Project conditions: one for the Agreed Flows implementation and two for the new ASR facilities maintenance. These staff could be hired from within the County, or from outside the region, which would require relocation. Even if it is conservatively assumed that the three new staff would relocate from outside the area, this population increase is nominal and would not be expected to increase the demand for public services in the County such that new or physically altered governmental facilities would be required in order to meet acceptable performance objectives. Additionally, the project and programmatic infrastructure components would not include any new land uses that would generate substantial new demand for public services. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on public services.

Section 4.11, Recreation, evaluates whether the Proposed Project would result in recreational impacts in response to a scoping letter received from the State Water Resources Control Board (see Appendix A).

4.1.4 References

- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2020. "List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways." Accessed on April 2, 2019 at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>.
- City of Santa Cruz. 2019. City of Santa Cruz Zoning Districts Map. Accessed March 29, 2019 at <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showdocument?id=8090>.
- County of Santa Cruz. 2020. *1994 General Plan and Local Coastal Program for the County of Santa Cruz, California*. Adopted May 24, 1994. Updated February 18, 2020. Accessed June 9, 2020 at <https://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/SustainabilityPlanning/GeneralPlan.aspx>.
- URS. 2013. Proposed McGregor Drive Booster Pump Station Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Prepared for the Soquel Creek Water District. January 2013.