

# **SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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## **1.1 Project Need and Objectives**

The Leucadia Wastewater District (District) has been providing wastewater collection, treatment and disposal services for over 40 years. The District covers a total service area of 16 square miles and provides services to 60,000 residents in a boundary that includes the original service area in Leucadia as well as the La Costa area in Carlsbad and northern Encinitas. The District owns and operates over 850,000 linear feet of wastewater conveyance pipeline, 12 active pump stations and one water reclamation facility.

The District prepared a Needs Assessment Report and Conceptual Site Layout (February 2004), that identifies the need to move forward with its Site Improvement Project to fulfill the District's long-term facility needs. The Needs Assessment Report concluded that: (1) the District has outgrown the existing administration and field services facilities; (2) the existing facilities are obsolete; (3) the existing site circulation is not optimal; and (4) the current facilities will not accommodate long range needs to operate the facility. The purpose of the Site Improvement Project is to resolve the existing support facilities deficiencies, and satisfy the District's corresponding strategic goals to: improve the District's working environment, increase public visibility with a positive community impact, sight the Headquarters Building in a prominent location, develop an attractive building with quality construction, and improve functional circulation consistent with long range staffing needs.

## **1.2 Project Description Summary**

The proposed project would entail removing or relocating some of the existing buildings onsite such as removal of an abandoned operations building and a prefabricated metal storage building. The majority of the 4-acre site would be repaved. Additional site improvements include the construction of new a Headquarters Building , workshop, vehicle garage and covered parking for large vehicles; new gate, fencing and entry; and additional designated parking areas for employees and customers.

The replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities that would be located on the same site and would have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structures replaced, are exempt from local planning requirements as outlined in California Code of Regulations 15302(c). However, the District does comply with local planning requirements and works closely with the City of Carlsbad for the orderly construction and operation of their facilities. The City of Carlsbad requires a change of zone from commercial to utility for

approval, and an approved PDP adopted by ordinance and approved only after a fully noticed public hearing. Since the project site is zoned for commercial uses and the current and proposed use consist of utility uses; the District is preparing this Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration to address a zone change and necessary permits, and to determine if any other impacts would result from the proposed project.

### **1.3 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Authority to Prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) status (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21000 *et seq.*, as amended) and implementing guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., Title 14 § 15000 *et seq.*, 1998), the District is the lead agency pursuant to CEQA, and is responsible for authorizing the construction of the Site Improvement Project.

The District has determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is the appropriate environmental document to be prepared in compliance with CEQA. This finding is based on the Initial Study/Environmental Impact Discussion (Sections 4 and 5 of this document) prepared for the project. As provided for by CEQA (§21064.5), an MND may be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when an Initial study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment but revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur; and there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the public agency that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment.

This draft MND has been prepared by the District as the lead agency and in conformance with §15070, subsection (a), of the State CEQA Guidelines. The purpose of the MND and the Initial Study/Environmental Impact Discussion is to determine the potential significant impacts associated with the proposed Site Improvement Project and incorporate mitigation measures into the project design as necessary to reduce or eliminate the significant or potentially significant effects of the project.

### **1.4 Public Review Process**

Noticing the Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was provided in accordance Article 6 Sections 15072 of the CEQA guidelines. In reviewing the MND and Initial Study/Environmental Impact Discussion, affected public agencies and the interested public

should focus on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project are proposed to be avoided or mitigated.

Comments may be made on the MND in writing before the end of the comment period. A 30-day review and comment period from May 3, 2005 to June 2, 2005 has been established, in accordance with § 15105(b) of the CEQA Guidelines. Following the close of the public comment period, the District will consider this MND and comments thereto in determining whether to approve the proposed project.

Written comments on the MND should be sent to the following address by 5:00 PM, June 2, 2005.

Leucadia Wastewater District  
c/o Dudek & Associates, Inc.  
605 Third Street  
Encinitas, CA 92024  
Attention: Elizabeth Candela

Comments may be made on the MND in person at a public information meeting on the project at Leucadia Wastewater District Board Meeting being held on May 11, 2005 at 5:00 pm.