Quail Valley
Water Quality
Improvement
Project

FINAL

Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

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unincorporated area, defined as a Census Designated Place (CDP) by the United States Census Bureau. The City of Menifee incorporated in October 2008 and Quail Valley became a part of the newly formed city.

The community of Quail Valley is small and tight knit. The community is tucked in the hills, directly upstream of the cities of Canyon Lake and Lake Elsinore. There is a sense of remoteness in the area which creates a strong sense of community. Most of the residents in Quail Valley know each other well and have many defined places where they meet to socialize regularly.

"The community of Quail Valley is small & tight knit."

Because of the close knit bonds that residents in Quail Valley enjoy, they are frequently in contact with each other. The residents of Quail Valley have
both formal and informal channels of communication. Formal channels of communications include a community newspaper called *The Menifee Post*, which is distributed free of charge at the local convenience store.

It is not unusual to see a resident of Quail Valley perusing *The Menifee Post* while standing in line at a community event. The city of Menifee has a website where residents can get official information, www.cityofmenifee.com. Another website, *Menifee 24/7* (www.menifee247.com) is utilized to a lesser extent in the community. Because there can be limited information particular to Quail Valley in the formal communication outlets, many times the residents must rely on informal channels of communication; word of mouth, posting flyers at the local post office, and posting flyers at the local Circle K store are a few of those channels. Because of its small size, information, especially erroneous information, can quickly spread throughout the community by word of mouth.

Problem:
Erroneous information is easily propagated within the community.

Solution:
On the ground community outreach program.

Although many of the residents of Quail Valley face great economic challenges, they have an extremely strong sense of community. This outlook by the
community can be a very good means of rallying support around an issue, but it can also create mistrust and suspicion depending on how the community perceives a program or issue that is launched by public officials.

The geography of the area results in high ground water levels which is the result of dense bedrock close to the surface. Many of the septic tanks have inadequate percolation. This problem intensifies during rain events.

It is the experience of the authors of this report that any attempts to go forward with any public works project must be accompanied by a well-planned and culturally sensitive public information campaign to ensure that the residents are willing to support the construction of a sanitary sewer system. There is long history of mistrust of public agencies in Quail Valley that must be overcome. This can only be achieved through active community engagement. In order to get the community to support a sanitary sewer project, an outreach program must address community concerns and guarantee that they will be heard. Additionally, because there is a large group of Spanish speakers in Quail Valley, especially in the historic core of Quail Valley known as “the Grid”, any public information campaign should be conducted in both English and Spanish. This is to ensure that the entire community of Quail Valley understands and supports the efforts of local officials who are trying to help the residents.

Problem:
There is a large population of Spanish speaking residents in Quail Valley that have not been reached.

Solution:
Bilingual capabilities are necessary for outreach in Quail Valley.
Regardless of how the construction of a sanitary sewer system is financed, it is imperative that strong community support for the project be present. This is especially true if it is determined that a Proposition 218 campaign is necessary to help finance the project. A Prop 218 campaign will require significant community support, but because of current levels of mistrust, this effort must be exceptional. The Task Force has gained significant credibility within the community and this credibility is important in developing community support.

“Any attempts to go forward with a public works project must be accompanied by a well-planned public information campaign.”

History

Historically, Quail Valley was a getaway destination for Los Angeles residents seeking a rural weekend experience. According to the Menifee Historical Society, the area was initially a hunting resort and getaway for middle class residents of Los Angeles who did not want to have to go out to Palm Springs. Because of the large number of California Quail in the area, a hunting lodge was built. During the 1930’s, the historic core of Quail Valley was subdivided into small lots which ringed a hunting lodge. Most of the housing stock consisted of Craftsmen cottages which were built on the lots as weekend housing. Thus, many of the problems associated with Quail Valley’s septic tanks stem from the fact that the community was not designed to support a large number of residents who lived in the community year round. The initial colony in Quail Valley was called the Lake Elsinore Lodge and Country Club because of nearby Lake Elsinore.
During the 1940’s the area was renamed the Quail Valley Country Club. Over the years the area became less of a weekend destination and became a community of permanent residents residing year round. During the 1950’s approximately 40 families lived in Quail Valley. Local history buffs recall a man named Charlie Cooper as the person who sold the original lots in Quail Valley during the 1940’s.

The historic housing stock built during the 1930’s was torn down over the years and replaced by trailers and pre-fabricated homes.

Quail Valley’s later growth was due to lots being bought up in large groups and trailers being put on them to sell to buyers and renters who wanted inexpensive remote housing. In an interview with the Riverside County Land Use Department, it was reported that speculators bought up “fifty lots at a time”. It is easy to surmise that speculators saw a market in buying up tracts of lots and putting up trailers to rent out. Because of the affordability of the area, the region soon became densely populated.

Many of the residences in Quail Valley still consist of mobile homes which are situated on small lots; some as small as 4300 square feet. The residents of Quail Valley continue to rely on septic tanks for their waste water

“... many of the lots failed percolation tests but the septic tanks were put in nevertheless.”
disposal. Residents contend that many of the lots failed percolation tests but the septic tanks were installed nevertheless. This has led to serious water quality issues in Quail Valley.

Problem:
Leaking septic tanks contaminating groundwater & surface water, possible public health hazards.

Solution:
Installation of a sanitary sewer system.

According to the firefighters stationed at the Quail Valley Fire station, it was not unusual to see scores of trucks coming into Quail Valley hauling mobile homes. “This happened all of the time” one firefighter commented during an interview.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 Census, Quail Valley had a total of 1,639 residents. The population density was 1307.6 people per square mile. More recent estimates gage the population at 4,400 residents in approximately 1,400 homes. Figure 1 displays the 2000 Census ethnicity breakdown of the area. According to the Census information, 69.62% of the population are white and 47.10% are Latino. The remainder of the residents consists of 1.04% African American, 2.14% Native American, 0.92% Asian, and 0.49% Pacific Islander.
Pockets of Poverty

Although the census tract that contains Quail Valley is not considered disadvantaged by California State Median Household Income Standards, there is no doubt that Quail Valley is severely disadvantaged. The fact that the Census Tract which includes Quail Valley also includes areas which are much more affluent, skews the data and does not show an accurate economic picture of Quail Valley. Figure 2 shows a map of the median household income of the Quail Valley area.

During an interview with several residents of “the Grid”, the authors mentioned that according to the State Median Household Income Standards they were not considered “disadvantaged”. The residents laughed in disbelief. “Look at this place” said Maria who lives in “the Grid”, “If this is not disadvantaged, what is?” For the residents of “the Grid” their designation as being more affluent than they actually are is an insult. “Why don’t you bring them here to see us?” said her neighbor. “Nobody is working, it’s horrible.” This resident is married to a union iron worker who is not working because of the economic downturn. “I have cut back on everything; my cable, the phone.”
Unlike many of her neighbors who didn’t live in Quail Valley during the last heavy rain events, this resident did. She vividly described the flooding. “My house flooded. It was awful. There was a horrible smell, it was disgusting.” The resident pointed to an open area adjacent to her house where she said the storm water rushed down and flooded her street and houses. She pointed to woodwork in her house that was damaged by the flooding. “My carpets were ruined, the floors were ruined, it was really bad.”

“*It is very plain to anyone who spends any length of time in the Quail Valley community that the area is exceptionally challenged, economically.*”

Another neighbor who was visiting with Maria and her friends was a young African American woman with two toddlers. During the time when the authors were interviewing the group, she said she was going home. The authors offered to give her a ride home. During the ride, she said that she spent most of her days walking her children to and from school. The location where she was when the authors met her was, at minimum, 5 miles from the elementary school. It was another five miles to her home. Because of the strong ties in the community, her friends drive her children to school each day. But she still has to walk at least five miles to pick them up and five miles to take them back home. The topography in Quail Valley is hilly making it a challenge to sewer as well as to walk. Because of the conditions that many people in Quail Valley endure, the residents were shocked to learn that they were not considered “disadvantaged”.

The area known as “the Grid” where these interviews took place is predominately Latino, with many young children. The vast majority of the children attend Quail Valley Elementary School, a Title I school. The school is the gathering place for the Latino community in Quail Valley given their historic separation from the rest of the Quail Valley community because of language barriers. The fact that there is a Title I school in Quail Valley points to an unseen “pocket of poverty” within a larger more affluent community. Most of the septic tank failures occur in “the Grid”; the historic location of Quail Valley.

After spending the past 6 months in Quail Valley talking to the residents at length mostly in Spanish, driving through the area, observing the life of the community, and talking to the personnel at Quail Valley Elementary school, it is apparent to the authors of this report that the residents of “the Grid” are severely disadvantaged. For example, when planning community meetings in Quail Valley, the authors chose Quail Valley Elementary School as the location because of its accessibility to “the Grid” where the usual mode of transportation is walking. During the mornings when school is in session, it is very common to see caravans of strollers pushed by mothers who are walking older children to
Quail Valley Elementary School. Oftentimes there are several children packed into a stroller that is meant for one child. When asked why they transport their children in this manner, the response is “we don’t have the money to buy a double stroller”. The majority of the students at Quail Valley Elementary School receive free lunch. Oftentimes this is one of their only complete meals. Due to the high poverty rate in Quail Valley, a local church, the Quail Valley Bible Church, hosts a food bank each Thursday afternoon. The authors attended these food banks in order to disseminate information to the Latino residents about a Spanish language community meeting held in August 2009. It is not unusual to see large numbers of mothers with preschool children walking in “the Grid” on Thursday mornings on route to the food bank to pick up groceries for their families. The visual which comes to mind in “the Grid” is that of a Third World country with children playing Hide and Go Seek amongst broken down trailers, skinny dogs at their heels, and babies crying in their harried mother’s arms.

Quail Valley Elementary serves as the lifeblood of the residents of “the Grid”. The brand new school the children attend during the day stands in stark contrast to the homes they return to in the afternoon. Quail Valley has limited social services which are badly needed in the area. The few social services which are provided to the residents are allocated through Quail Valley Elementary School. The school provides the venue for social services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as well as a free lunch program which helps families provide nutritious meals to their children.
Due to their disadvantaged status, it is not uncommon for the fathers to take the sole family car to work leaving the mothers to walk to the local Circle K market which is the only store that sells convenience food within walking distance of “the Grid”. The closest grocery store is miles away. There is limited bus transportation in Quail Valley. The fact that there is some bus transportation in Quail Valley is due to the tenacity of the community and a Menifee School Board member who lobbied for bus service.

Due to the blighted conditions in Quail Valley, the area was designated as a Redevelopment Area in the County of Riverside. This redevelopment area is known as the I-215 Corridor and was formed on July 16, 2002. On May 2, 2006, the County of Riverside amended the I-215 project area into two sub-areas; Sun City and Quail Valley. A workshop was held for the Quail Valley Task Force with the Riverside County Redevelopment Agency who pointed out funding challenges they are facing because of the downturn in the economy. In spite of these challenges, the agency is committed to working with the Quail Valley Task Force to address water quality issues.

Problem:
Difficulty providing infrastructure & social services.

Solution:
Installing a sewer will lift a development moratorium which will allow for economic development.

Problem:
Lack of economic development due to the moratorium.

Solution:
Use redevelopment funds to improve water quality & lift moratorium.
Water Quality Issues

According to the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Board, there are approximately 1,100 septic tanks in Quail Valley and 3,900 available buildable lots. Some areas of Quail Valley, such as “the Grid” are extremely populated adding a further strain on the septic systems.

“During heavy rains in 2004-2005, there was widespread septic tank failure in Quail Valley.”

The geography of the area results in high ground water levels which is the result of dense bedrock close to the surface. Many of the septic tanks have inadequate percolation. This problem intensifies during rain events.

During the heavy rains in 2004-2005, there were widespread septic tank failures in Quail Valley. The heavy rains caused significant numbers of septic tanks to overflow. There were media reports of children playing in raw sewage in the streets of Quail Valley. In response to complaints from the public regarding the septic tank failures, the Riverside County Environmental Health Department (County Health) conducted a survey of the residents of Quail Valley. The survey was conducted in March of 2005 during a period of significant rainfall. Of the 848 homes surveyed, 361 were vacant or there was no response at the door. Environmental Health staff
who conducted the survey reported seeing 27% of the residences having grey water discharges to the ground and into the streets. Of the 487 homes actually contacted, 28% said they had experienced problems with the septic systems. Ten percent of the residences were observed having sewage discharge. Eighty four percent of the residents surveyed said they were willing to hook up to a sewer. The survey did not address the sewer hookup cost or maintenance fee.

Leaking septic tanks in Quail Valley overflow and some of the flow reaches Canyon Lake. It is one of the contributing factors which has led the State Water Resources Board--Santa Ana region, to impose the building moratorium. Other factors contributing to water quality issues in Canyon Lake include flows from Salt Creek, domestic animal waste, livestock waste from dairy operations, as well as flows from the San Jacinto River.

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process provides a flexible assessment & planning framework for identifying load reduction or other actions needed to attain water quality standards, which include:

- Water quality objectives to protect aquatic life
- Drinking water
- Other beneficial uses

Currently, the Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake Nutrient TMDL Task Force is studying the various sources of pollutants in Canyon
Lake and at the time of this report, a conclusive allocation of pollutant loads has not been determined. However, this Task Force is nearing the completion of its pathogen monitoring program that will determine if a pathogen TMDL is necessary for the region.

While there was no quantifiable evidence that the sewage spilling from the leaking septic tanks are solely responsible for the impairments in water quality in Canyon Lake, it is generally believed that the failing septic tanks contribute heavily to the problem.

“Of the 487 homes actually contacted, 28% said they had experience problems with the septic systems.”

Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake Nutrient TMDL:

- In 1994, 1998, & 2002 Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake were identified by the Regional Board on its Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired waters.
- Canyon Lake was listed because of nutrients; Lake Elsinore for excessive levels of nutrients, organic enrichment, & low dissolved oxygen.
- The Regional Board initiated the TMDL development process for both Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake in 2000.
- In September of 2005, the Lake Elsinore & Canyon Lake Nutrient TMDLs were formally adopted by the U.S. EPA.
- The project develops a strategy to implement efficient & cost effective BMPs to address the TMDLs & thereby restore beneficial uses of the two impaired waterbodies.
The moratorium has led to much controversy in the community because it has curtailed economic development in Quail Valley. The placement of the moratorium has made a portion of the City of Menifee undevelopable because of a lack of a sanitary sewer system. Development can only move forward if sewer services are provided.

“In response to these widespread septic failures, the Regional Board initiated the necessary steps to place a moratorium on all septic systems in Quail Valley.”

After the moratorium was imposed and the rain events no longer were an issue, the residents of Quail Valley felt that they were again relegated to the back burner until recently. It is because of this prolonged feeling of neglect that it is so necessary to assure this community that the public officials are committed to the entire Quail Valley community and not just the portion which abuts Canyon Lake. There is a deep sense of suspicion that once a sewer is put in along Vista Way, the community will once again be abandoned. This concern, that only the area around Vista Way, which is the street closest to Canyon Lake, will be the only one to get a sanitary sewer system was repeatedly expressed by the residents during the field work conducted during the past several months.

**Problem:**
Residents fear that public officials are not committed to all of Quail Valley.

**Solution:**
Demonstrate that sewering Quail Valley is a phased project.

During the rain events of 2004-2005 the waters of Canyon Lake...
were inaccessible to the residents of the City of Canyon Lake for a sustained period of time because of high pathogen levels. Canyon Lake is used for both recreational and for surface storage of potable water by Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD).

“The placement of the moratorium has made a large portion of the City of Menifee undevelopable because of a lack of a sanitary sewer system.”

Given the septic tank failure in Quail Valley, this problem has become a high priority for the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Board. The Regional Board has been concerned about water quality issues stemming from leaking septic tanks for numerous years. On March 11, 1994, the Regional Board adopted an updated Water Quality Control Plan. The Plan was approved by the State Water Resources Control Board on July 21, 1994. The plan was then approved by the Office of Administrative Law on January 24, 1995.

Although many of Quail Valley’s septic systems have failed over the years, the heavy rain events of the winter of 2004-2005 caused such notoriety among the public, as well as in the media, public officials took action. In response to these widespread septic failures, the Regional Board initiated the necessary steps to place the moratorium on all septic systems in Quail Valley.

In preparation for the moratorium on septic systems,
two public hearings were held by the Regional Board in May 2006 and October 2006.

“Public officials are committed to the entire Quail Valley community and not just the portion which abuts Canyon Lake.”

As part of the process of solving the septic tank issue in Quail Valley, Eastern Municipal Water District retained a consultant to perform a study, *The Quail Valley Sewer Improvements Alternatives Study*, which was charged with studying options for installing a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley. *The Quail Valley Sewer Improvements Alternatives Study* delineated Quail Valley into nine subareas. The study concluded that there are a variety of solutions as well as challenges in building a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley.

The residents of Canyon Lake, through the Canyon Lake Property Owners Association, pay an annual assessment to use the lake for recreational purposes. During the rain events of 2004-2005, Canyon Lake residents were not allowed to use the lake because of the contamination. According to city officials, the lake was shut down for a two month period with short intervals that allowed use of the lake. City officials point out that the Canyon Lake Property Owners Association pay $1M per year for the use of the lake. Because of the shut downs due to the contamination from the rain events, many residents were denied the ability to use this.
“Canyon Lake was originally known as Railroad Canyon Lake & was built as a dam for both water storage & flood control.”

Community Outreach & Planning

In March 2009, the City of Menifee formed the Quail Valley Task Force to address the problems associated with the failing septic tanks in Quail Valley. The Quail Valley Task Force was formed with members from Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD), the City of Menifee, the City of Canyon Lake, and the County of Riverside. The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) was asked to conduct a bilingual community involvement program in order to strengthen communication with the residents of Quail Valley. Additionally, SAWPA was charged with summarizing potential funding sources for building a sanitary sewer system.

Beginning in May 2009, SAWPA began meeting with the residents individually as well as in a series of community meetings which were held at Quail Valley Elementary School. In order to gather input from the residents on their concerns regarding the septic tank issue, SAWPA spent considerable time in Quail Valley getting to know the residents and their concerns. The community meetings were helpful in showing the community that something was being done to address the moratorium. Because of the
demographic makeup of Quail Valley, one meeting was conducted in Spanish as it was apparent to the authors that the Spanish speaking community in Quail Valley was not aware of previous community meetings such as those held by the Regional Board prior to the moratorium.

“One meeting was conducted in Spanish, as it was apparent to the authors that the Spanish speaking community in Quail Valley was not aware of previous community meetings.”

The one-on-one interaction with the residents has proved to be helpful in establishing trust in the community. The interactions have also resulted in the community seeing the authors as neutral facilitators. This sense of trust is vitally important because of the past conflicts at community meetings that were held prior to the moratorium being put in place.

In addition to the community meetings coordinated by SAWPA, the authors regularly attended Neighborhood Watch meetings and community events. These events are important gathering places for the residents of Quail Valley. The regular presence of the authors at these meetings created a sense in the community that their issues are taken seriously by the Quail Valley Task Force. The authors also held one on one interviews with residents of Quail Valley.
In addition to the interaction with residents in the community, SAWPA has also held meetings with local public officials. Quail Valley is in the 3rd Supervisorial District which is represented by Supervisor Jeff Stone. When Quail Valley was a county unincorporated area, a Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) was formed which met monthly at the Quail Valley Volunteer Firefighters Hall. Supervisor Stone’s staff member Opal Hellwag was the liaison to this committee. Ms. Hellwag was very helpful in providing SAWPA with background information as well as contact information for community leaders in Quail Valley. Meetings were also held with local officials from the Cities of Menifee and Canyon Lake as well as the two water districts; Eastern Municipal Water District and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District.

The community leaders in Quail Valley were interviewed to get their opinion on failing septic tanks and on the possible installation of a sanitary sewer system within Quail Valley. After meeting with several community leaders, it was apparent that there was a great deal of miscommunication and misunderstanding in the community regarding the septic tanks, the moratorium, and the potential sewer system. It is now clear to the authors that the

| Problem: |
| Mistrust of public officials by the community. |
| Solution: |
| Continue one on one interaction with residents. |
moratorium has caused the most concern in the community.

A June 15, 2009 interview conducted with a five year resident of the area around Vista Way reveals the frustration present in the community. This resident is upset because of the feeling that the moratorium was imposed on the community without measures in place to bring a sanitary sewer system to Quail Valley that would subsequently allow the moratorium to be lifted. During the interview process he expressed that in spite of his frustration, he is willing to do what he can to bring a sanitary sewer system to Quail Valley to enable the moratorium to be lifted. After conducting several more one on one meetings with residents of the community, it is obvious that there are deep-seated feelings of abandonment and anger. However, it is possible for those feelings to be channeled into constructive conversations.

Another resident said she is upset with the agencies who were involved with enacting the moratorium because there was little communication other than the community forums which were held in 2005. “Know (sic) I have always felt like I was standing on the outside looking in and no one was hearing me…this is a very hot topic and a sore subject but I think we need to focus on the future and look ahead to a brighter tomorrow.”

“It was apparent that there was a great deal of miscommunication & misunderstanding in the community regarding the septic tank.”

One long time resident said that the community had been promised a sewer system “thirty years ago”. Other residents said that they were upset because they had been told that by enacting the moratorium, Quail
Valley would get a sewer right away. The resident said that once the moratorium was enacted and the rain events went away, they felt that everyone had abandoned them.

Challenges with the Facility Installation and Implementation Plan

Currently there are no facilities for the collection and conveyance of wastewater discharge in Quail Valley. Because Eastern Municipal Water District is responsible for wastewater collection and conveyance, the logical treatment facility to send Quail Valley’s wastewater would be the Perris Valley Regional Water Reclamation facility which is operated by Eastern Municipal Water District. In the spirit of regional cooperation, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District has agreed to take a portion of the wastewater to their wastewater treatment facility in order to lessen the burden on Eastern Municipal Water District. This will lessen the cost of constructing a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley.

“. . I have always felt like I was standing on the outside looking in and no one was hearing me. .”

The 2005 Quail Valley Sewer Improvements Alternatives Study agreed to delineate Quail Valley into nine subareas. These nine subareas are shown in Figure 3.
This study, commissioned by Eastern Municipal Water District, cited the undulating topography, among other things, as significant challenges to building a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley. One of the major challenges cited in the study was subarea 4, “the Grid”. Because of the extremely small lots sizes and very narrow streets, it will be exceedingly difficult to install a sanitary sewer system without significant costs.

The southern portion of Quail Valley is known as Subarea 9 which is derived from the EMWD sewer study map. Subarea 9 is situated at the northern edge of Canyon Lake. This area is believed to be a contributor to some of the impairments in water quality in Canyon Lake. Due to the close proximately of Subarea 9 to Canyon Lake officials have placed a priority on this area in terms of seeking funding for a sanitary sewer system. Preliminary engineering has not been finalized as of the writing of this report; however, it is believed that installing a sanitary sewer system along Vista Way in subarea 9 is the most feasible.

Cooperation between Eastern MWD & Elsinore Valley WD makes sewering part of Quail Valley economically feasible.

The Quail Valley Task Force has decided to concentrate on
Subarea 9 as the first phase of the sewer system in Quail Valley. There are several reasons why the Quail Valley Task Force decided on this subarea in addition to topography, including the fact that the community there is higher in value than those in subarea 4. This lends itself to a more favorable view of a possible assessment district by the residents. Additionally, there are many empty lots in the area, many of which are owned by absent landowners. It is the belief of the Quail Valley Task Force that these absentee property owners will want to develop their properties. Discussions by SAWPA with some of the absentee property owners support this belief. Presently, no one can build new housing in Quail Valley unless they are hooked up to a sewer system. Current homeowners cannot remodel or add on to their existing properties unless the moratorium is lifted. The moratorium cannot be lifted unless a sewer system is built.

“The Quail Valley Task Force has decided to concentrate on Subarea 9 as the 1st phase of the sewer program.”

Lifting the moratorium on septic systems will require action by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Board must find that the conditions in Quail Valley that led to the moratorium no longer exist.

A complaint map was generated by Environmental Health to pinpoint the locations of the complaints regarding septic failures. The map shows that Vista Way has been the subject of
numerous complaints. The complaints include reports of sewage run off as well as grey water runoff.

Problem:
Moratorium is stifling economic development.

Solution:
Build a sanitary sewer system so the moratorium can be lifted.

There is significant potential growth in Quail Valley if the moratorium is lifted. The area is very picturesque with rolling hills and extraordinary vistas from the tops of the hills. As it stands right now, the city cannot take advantage of the development potential in Quail Valley until a sanitary sewer system is installed in the area.

At this time, there is a feeling in the community that the Quail Valley Task Force will only concentrate resources in Subarea 9 rather than all of Quail Valley. Because the entire community’s support is needed to move forward with this project, it is vital that the community be reassured that the Quail Valley Task Force is committed to servicing the entire area of Quail Valley and not just subarea 9 because of its proximately to Canyon Lake.

A well wrought implementation plan showing the community the Quail Valley Task Force’s commitment to a sanitary sewer system in all of Quail Valley will go a long way in reaching this goal. If the community is not assured that all of Quail Valley
will be sewered it may be very challenging to get the community to support a “yes” vote on any funding mechanism which requires voter approval.

Problem:
No guarantee of an affirmative vote by the community

Solution:
Bilingual community outreach campaign supporting a program for all of Quail Valley.
Potential Funding Mechanisms

One of the biggest challenges in bringing a sanitary sewer system to Quail Valley is the disadvantaged status of the community. For many of the residents of Quail Valley, the potential sewer connection fees will pose a huge economic burden. Because the property owners are responsible for paying their own connection fees, many residents are inclined to resist any attempt to bring a sewer system to the area. This issue has repeatedly been voiced at the community meetings and in the one on one conversation with residents. Task Force partners are attempting to find resources such as grants which may help mitigate some of the cost of the connection fees. In addition to the connection fees, there is also the cost of building a sanitary sewer system. As of the writing of this report, it is estimated that the cost will be approximately $70M to sewer all of Quail Valley, although this number will not truly be known until the preliminary engineering is completed. Because of the current state of California’s finances, it is highly improbable that the state will be able to offer significant financial assistance for the installation of a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley. The Quail Valley Task Force explored various funding sources which may yield resources to bring a sanitary sewer system to Quail Valley. These Potential Funding sources can be seen in Table 1.

Problem:
Improbable state assistance because of state’s uncertain finances.

Solution:
Work regionally to find stakeholders who are will to share the cost.
Some of the funding sources identified by the Quail Valley Task Force include:

**Water Resources Development Act.**
Call for projects. Congresspersons Issa/Bono Mack can include Quail Valley in the list of funding for Water Resources Development Act. November 23 deadline.

**Waiver for Loss of Rural Designation for Quail Valley.**
$2.5M available for Quail Valley if waiver is achieved.

**Homeland/Romoland Watershed Master Drainage Plan.**
To be placed on Bono Mack’s legislative agenda for 2010 can provide full funding for sewer project.

**Community Development Block Grants.**
These grants can be used for building public infrastructure but cannot be used for connection fees. The drawback to this program is a $2M cap on the grant amount.

**Redevelopment.**
Quail Valley is located in the I-215 redevelopment zone and is eligible for redevelopment monies. These funds can be used for connection fees so they can help mitigate the impact on the community.

A workshop was held on September 17, 2009 with the Riverside County Department of Redevelopment to provide the Quail Valley Task Force a means to familiarize themselves with issues particular to the I-215 redevelopment zone. Although the meeting was very helpful, the downturn in the economy has limited funding that is available from the redevelopment zone.
**Increasing Rates.**

Increasing rates may not be a politically viable solution at this time. Although this funding source can be used to fund infrastructure projects and for maintenance costs, they require voter approval. Given the controversy with the recent rate hikes which were generated by Metropolitan Water District and passed on to water users, this may not garner voter approval.

**Stimulus Monies.**

One of the requirements for projects is that they be “shovel ready”. It is anticipated that once preliminary engineering and environmental reviews are completed, the Quail Valley project will be closer to being “shovel ready.” The ARRA monies cannot be used for connection fees.

**Clean Water State Revolving Fund.**

Infrastructure projects have been funded through this mechanism and much stimulus funding for California is part of this program. However, most of the funds have been allocated.

**Assessment District.**

Under Prop 218, a majority of property owners must approve an Assessment District in order to realize this funding option. Due to the economic challenges facing Quail Valley, the residents have many questions. Because of this, it will be crucial to launch a highly effective public awareness program to educate the community on the benefits of an Assessment District. The benefits would include increasing property values by installing a sanitary sewer system. Currently, no one in Quail Valley is allowed to build on their property or remodel their homes because of the moratorium. If a sewer system is installed in Quail Valley, the
moratorium can be lifted and residents can build on their properties. This is an important aspect in Quail Valley as there is still plenty of open space.

**Problem:**
Skepticism by residents that the moratorium will be lifted.

**Solution:**
Create a plan to show what steps can be taken to lift the moratorium.
### Table 1: Potential Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pays For</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redevelopment Funds</td>
<td>Connection Fees</td>
<td>Limited $$$.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Community Block Grants</td>
<td>Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>$2 Million Cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>Depends on Source</td>
<td>Requires Revenue Stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates</td>
<td>Maintenance or Public Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment District</td>
<td>Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>Voter Approval, Limited $$. Dependent on Property Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Grants/Stimulus (SRF &amp; Others)</td>
<td>Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>Shovel Ready Requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA Rural Development</td>
<td>Few Limitations</td>
<td>Eligibility Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County General Fund</td>
<td>Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>Economy???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Infrastructure Bank (I Bank)</td>
<td>Public Infrastructure</td>
<td>Eligibility Requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the past several months, extensive contact has been made with the residents of Quail Valley in both English and Spanish. The Spanish speaking residents in Quail Valley reside primarily in the “Grid” area and have had very little participation with previous public meetings regarding the septic tank issue in Quail Valley. This group has also had very limited contact with the public officials in Riverside County. If handled correctly, the fact that these residents have had very little involvement in the septic tank issue can bode well for the project since they are a “tabula rasa” or clean slate. These residents understand what it takes to construct a sanitary sewer system since many of them work in the construction industry. On the other hand, because of their historic presence and involvement in Quail Valley, the English speaking community is very knowledgeable about the septic tank failures and the history of the efforts to bring a solution to the problem. This group of residents has been historically hostile to past efforts of communication by public agencies because they feel that they were mislead and abandoned after the moratorium was put into place. The English speaking community in Quail Valley has very mixed feelings with regards to bringing a solution to the septic tank failures by way of installing a sanitary sewer system and funding it with an Assessment District. Thus, it is quite clear that there are two sets of residents in Quail Valley; one English speaking and the other Spanish speaking, each with differing perspectives.
“Thus, it is quite clear that there are two sets of residents in Quail Valley; one English speaking and the other Spanish speaking.”

Although there is a realization that a solution to the widespread issue of failing septic tanks needs to be found, there are deep seated concerns about the cost to individual residents especially among the English speaking residents who feel they simply cannot afford connection fees and other costs they must bear as part of the process. There is also lingering resentment among these residents. These resentments stem from a sense that the residents were promised a sewer system when the moratorium was put in place and, to date, a sewer system is not in place. Because of the moratorium, the residents cannot build on to their homes, they cannot remodel their homes, and oftentimes cannot sell their homes.

Problem:
Two populations in Quail Valley with different perspectives.

Solution:
Continue & expand current community outreach program in English & Spanish.

On the other hand, Spanish speaking residents of Quail Valley have very little knowledge about what has occurred in the past. There is also limited knowledge about the moratorium and its consequences. Many of these residents moved into Quail Valley after the moratorium was enacted and are unaware of its effects on their properties. Because the Spanish speaking community has very little knowledge of the moratorium, there is very little emotion in this
community. Once the process is explained to the residents, they become very eager to engage in the process of bringing a sanitary sewer system to Quail Valley. It is apparent that there is significant interest in this community to engage in the process of bringing a sanitary sewer system into Quail Valley. Because of the language barrier, any continued community involvement process must be in English and Spanish. This process will bring significant support from the Latino community who live in Quail Valley.

After spending nearly 6 months in Quail Valley, often on a daily basis, the authors of this report believe that there is some support for a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley. The majority of the support is in the Latino community. Thus an expansion of the Spanish language community outreach would be a judicious undertaking by the Quail Valley Task Force.

“Because of the language barrier, any continued community involvement process must be in both English & Spanish.

If the Quail Valley Task Force decides to proceed with the sewer project, it is recommended that the community outreach process be augmented and continued so that the community is kept informed on the progress of the project. It was the lack of communication, coupled with the “disappearance” by various entities which caused the
suspicion and hostility in Quail Valley. The authors have quelled many of the suspicions on the part of the community but much remains to be done in order to garner the full support of the community.

Public Outreach Elements for the Future

If it is necessary to undertake any type of financing mechanism requiring voter approval in order to install a sewer system, the community needs to be educated on the process and benefits which such a project will bring to Quail Valley.

Because of the community relations challenges outlined in the report, it is extremely important that the community fully understands the benefits of a sewer system and its positive effects on property values. Movement toward lifting or providing sewer services to the entire community of the moratorium is key to getting the residents of Quail Valley to vote in favor of any type of financing mechanism.

The Quail Valley Task Force has considered conducting a pre-assessment district survey to an indication of the level of support in the community for a sanitary sewer system and the costs involved. A bilingual community education program in tandem with a pre-assessment district would ensure that the residents fully understand the positive impact that a sewer system would bring to the community.

“Movement toward lifting or providing sewer services to the entire community of the moratorium is key to getting the residents of Quail Valley to vote in favor of any type of financing mechanism.”
Absentee Owners

In Quail Valley a significant amount of the land is owned by absentee landowners. Figure 4 shows the percent of owner occupied housing within the Quail Valley area. It is necessary to know who those absentee landowners are. Some financing mechanisms the Quail Valley Task Force might consider may require community support. Depending on the number of aggregate lots owned by individual property owners, absentee landowners can have a significant influence on a vote by landowners. Because of this, it is necessary to identify the different property owners in Quail Valley. A study of all of the parcels in Quail Valley should be conducted in order to determine which are owner occupied, which are rentals, and which properties are in possible foreclosure. Because of the high rates of foreclosures in the area, this data needs to be collected prior to conducting any type of balloting for an assessment or pre assessment district. This process is sorely needed to better gauge who are all of the stakeholders in Quail Valley. Due to the limitations of the initial Scope of Work for this project, the authors were not able to communicate with absent landowners during the previous six months. In the future, it would be a judicious use of resources to undertake this process in order to development a better line of communication with all of the stakeholders in Quail Valley. This data is very necessary for an effective community education process in support of any type of public participation campaign. This data will show the district how to effectively gauge the community’s understanding of the proposed project and evaluate their support or opposition. Any future community outreach program must also include absentee landowners in Quail Valley in order to garner their support for a sewer system.
Media Relations

During the previous six months, several positive press accounts were published in the local newspaper. The positive media was directly attributable to the authors’ writing a monthly column in the *Menifee Post*, generating positive media coverage of the Quail Valley Task Force’s work. Prior to the community outreach program being launched in May, there had been numerous negative stories on Quail Valley in the local press. The authors of this report have developed solid relationships with the press. Because of the coverage of the work of the Task Force, the media accounts have been positive during the past six months. This must continue.

“During the previous 6 months, several positive press accounts were published in the local newspaper.”

Business Community.

Due to the limitations of the initial Scope of Work for this project, local businesses were not fully engaged in the discussion on the potential sewer system. It would be beneficial to engage the business owners who have commercial properties on Goetz Road because of their key location in subarea 9. Many of these commercial interests have larger land holdings in the area and can influence any funding mechanism which requires voter approval.

Community Meetings

Three community meetings were held to gather input from the community. Because of the sizable Spanish language population in Quail Valley, one of the meetings was held in Spanish. It was apparent that the entire Quail Valley community appreciated the opportunity to provide input on the proposed
sewer project. There were concerns about the lack of communication in the past, but these concerns were partly mitigated by the community meetings. The community appreciated having the meetings at Quail Valley Elementary School because of its ease of accessibility by everyone in the community. If the Quail Valley Task Force decides to go forward with the installation of a sanitary sewer system, it is recommended that more community meetings be held as the process continues. This will ensure that there is no miscommunication or negative perception by the residents in Quail Valley. The meetings need to be held in both English and Spanish at separate times.

Stakeholder Group

This phase of the Community Outreach consisted of a limited number of community meetings as well as having the authors attend regularly scheduled community events. It is recommended that the next phase include the creation of a Quail Valley Stakeholder group which would consist of residents and absentee landowners who would meet regularly. The purpose of this stakeholder group would be to create “grassroots” support for a sewer project. The Quail Valley Task Force consists of elected officials and agency staff. The community does not participate in the work of the Quail Valley Task Force. By creating a Quail Valley Stakeholder group through the City of Menifee, it will allow the residents to engage in the process and provide input to the Task Force. If someone feels that they are part of the process, it is easier to have them promote the project to their neighbors, thus creating a groundswell of support.
“It was apparent that the entire Quail Valley community appreciated the opportunity to provide input on the proposed sewer project.”

Conclusion

Quail Valley is a community in need. It is not unlike many other communities across the country that have undergone changes since its inception. In many ways, the story of Quail Valley is the story of Southern California.

From its inception as a resort community for Los Angeles residents who could afford a second home in a remote area complete with a hunting lodge and swimming pool; to a blighted community of residents who are very challenged economically, Quail Valley has spanned the spectrum of the economy. Due to the fact that many of these homes were built as weekend getaways and not permanent housing, severe problems with residents living in the area year round have cropped up. When it rains in Quail Valley, septic tanks overflow, homes flood, and residents often become prisoners of their own homes because sewage spills on the street. Additionally, there are significant potential health hazards when the rain events cause the septic tanks to overflow.

The residents of Quail Valley do not want to live this way but...
because of their economic challenges, they are leery of the cost of a sewer system. There has been miscommunication in the past and anger in the community. What the authors have done in the past 6 months is spend time in Quail Valley; walking the streets, attending community events, talking to people, and simply becoming a part of the community.

In order to contemplate installing a sanitary sewer system in Quail Valley the community needs to trust the public officials. There has to be a two-way communication line between the public officials and the residents they serve. The process must be open and transparent so that the community is reassured that at some point in time all of Quail Valley will have a sewer system and not just a select portion which may help a more affluent community nearby. If this message is relayed clearly, the authors believe that there is community support for a sewer system and that the community will find the resources to pay for the connection fees and other costs associated with the installation of a sanitary sewer system. Communication is the key to the septic tank problem which has mired Quail Valley for far too long.
Areas of Major Concern in Quail Valley

Concern 1
Moratorium has stifled opportunities for economic development.

Concern 2
No Plan for addressing the moratorium.

Concern 3
“Undersized” Developer-Installed utilities creates a sense that Quail Valley is expected to remain stagnant, economically.

Concern 4
Community does not feel linked with decision-making process.

Concern 5
There has been very little sewer infrastructure installed anywhere in Quail Valley. Canyon Heights is sewered and a new development has recently been approved to be sewered.

Concern 6
Raw sewage runs in the street during rain events.

Concern 7
Installation of a sewer system in Subarea 9 won’t convince other residents that they will also be sewered.

Concern 8
Lifting the moratorium may impact funding.
Implementation Strategies for Quail Valley

Strategy 1
A plan to either lift the moratorium or sewer the area needs to be developed. The plan should include identification of agency responsible for petitioning the Regional Board to lift the moratorium. The community is more concerned with the moratorium than with sewer planning. Frame the sewer issue as part of a moratorium response.

Strategy 2
The project to provide sewer service to the residents of Quail Valley will most likely be a phased project with phases implemented based on technical complexity and funding availability. Funding for the project is unlikely to come from a single source and a robust funding package will need to be developed for each phase. Continued efforts to secure both State and Federal funding will be crucial to the success of the project. In addition, concentrated efforts to secure funding for reduction of connection fees will be important as this is a lower-income area.

Strategy 3
Area sewer plans need to address additional sewer needs within Quail Valley and strategies to fund the “oversizing” of the sewer needs to be developed. These strategies need to be shared with the community. The creation of a Quail Valley Stakeholder Group would be a useful means of accomplishing this goal.
Strategy 4
Communication with the residents of Quail Valley needs to occur on two tracks. Both the Anglo and Spanish-speaking residents have distinct viewpoints and means of acquiring information on local issues. How these communities are engaged requires different methods. However, this in no way implies that these two groups be provided different or seemingly-contrary information.

Strategy 5
There should be a concentrated effort to move forward with providing sewer to Area 9 within the context of a larger Quail Valley project. The community needs regular updates on the project’s progress.

Strategy 6
An interim plan to assist residents during rain events has high value to both the community and downstream residents. A septic pumping program during the rainy season could be developed and implemented. This program requires an accompanying public outreach program as residents must be assured that their participation will not result in penalties.

Strategy 7
An MOU agreement among the Quail Valley Task Force members to continue to work toward resolution of issues within all of Quail Valley would help assure residents that the Quail Valley Project will not end with the sewering of Area 9. This will increase support for the project in the community.