

4. Environmental Impact Assessment

4.10 Land Use and Planning

This section discusses the existing land use within the vicinity of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project's consistency with associated land use policies and regulations, and the potential impacts to existing land use from the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project would be conducted compliant with CPUC General Order 131-D, Section XIV.B, which states that "Local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. However in locating such projects, the public utilities shall consult with local agencies regarding land use matters." Consequently, public utilities are directed to consider local regulations and consult with local agencies, but the county and city regulations are not applicable as the county and cities do not have jurisdiction over the Proposed Project.

The area of major potential land use impact is centered on the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion location. The fiber optic telecommunications component of the Proposed Project would occur in an existing ROW primarily on BLM-managed lands, and thus would not change the land use in these areas. Therefore, discussion of the telecommunications component (including the replacement of six subtransmission poles near Trona) of the Proposed Project has been omitted.

4.10.1 Environmental Setting

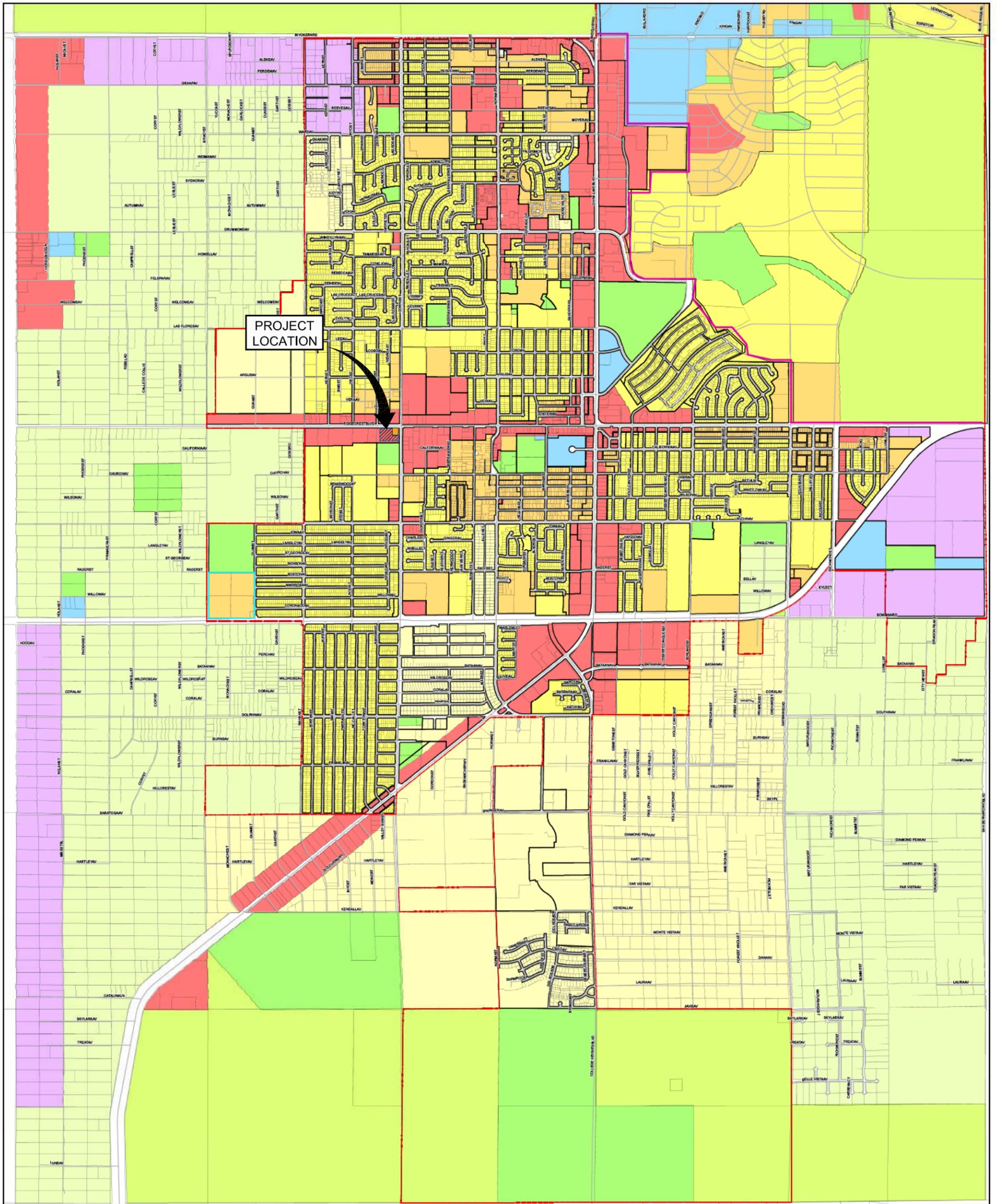
The proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line are located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Ridgecrest Boulevard and Downs Street in the City of Ridgecrest, Kern County, California. The Proposed Project also includes the replacement of six 115 kV subtransmission line poles along the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 115 kV subtransmission line near the community of Trona in San Bernardino County. Additionally, the stringing of fiber optic telecommunication cable along both the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No.2 115 kV subtransmission lines would be located in the City of Ridgecrest, the unincorporated communities of Inyokern, Argus, and Trona in the Counties of Kern and San Bernardino.

The General Plan designates the location of the proposed Downs Substation expansion and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line for Commercial (C) use. The surrounding land uses include Commercial (C) to the north, west, and east; Parks and Schools (PS) to the south; and Low Residential Density (LD) to the southwest.

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The location is designated as General Commercial (CG) in the City's municipal code. The surrounding zoning includes Service Commercial (CS) to the north and east; Recreational, School, Public Use (RSP) to the south; multi-family residential (R-2) to the southwest; and CG to the west.

[Figures 4.10-1](#) and [4.10-2](#) are reproductions of the City of Ridgecrest maps and show the designated land use and zoning of the area around the proposed Downs Substation expansion location.



General Plan

- RD=Rural Residential Density
- ED=Estate Residential Density
- LD=Low Residential Density
- MD=Medium Residential Density
- C=Commercial and Office
- I=Industrial
- CI=Civic and Institutional
- PS=Parks and Schools
- OS=Natural Open Space

Legend

- City of Ridgecrest Planning Boundary
- Existing Downs Substation
- Proposed Expansion Area

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
DOWNS SUBSTATION PROJECT
KERN AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA
PROPONENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**CITY OF RIDGECREST
GENERAL LAND USE DESIGNATION
(JANUARY 2008)**

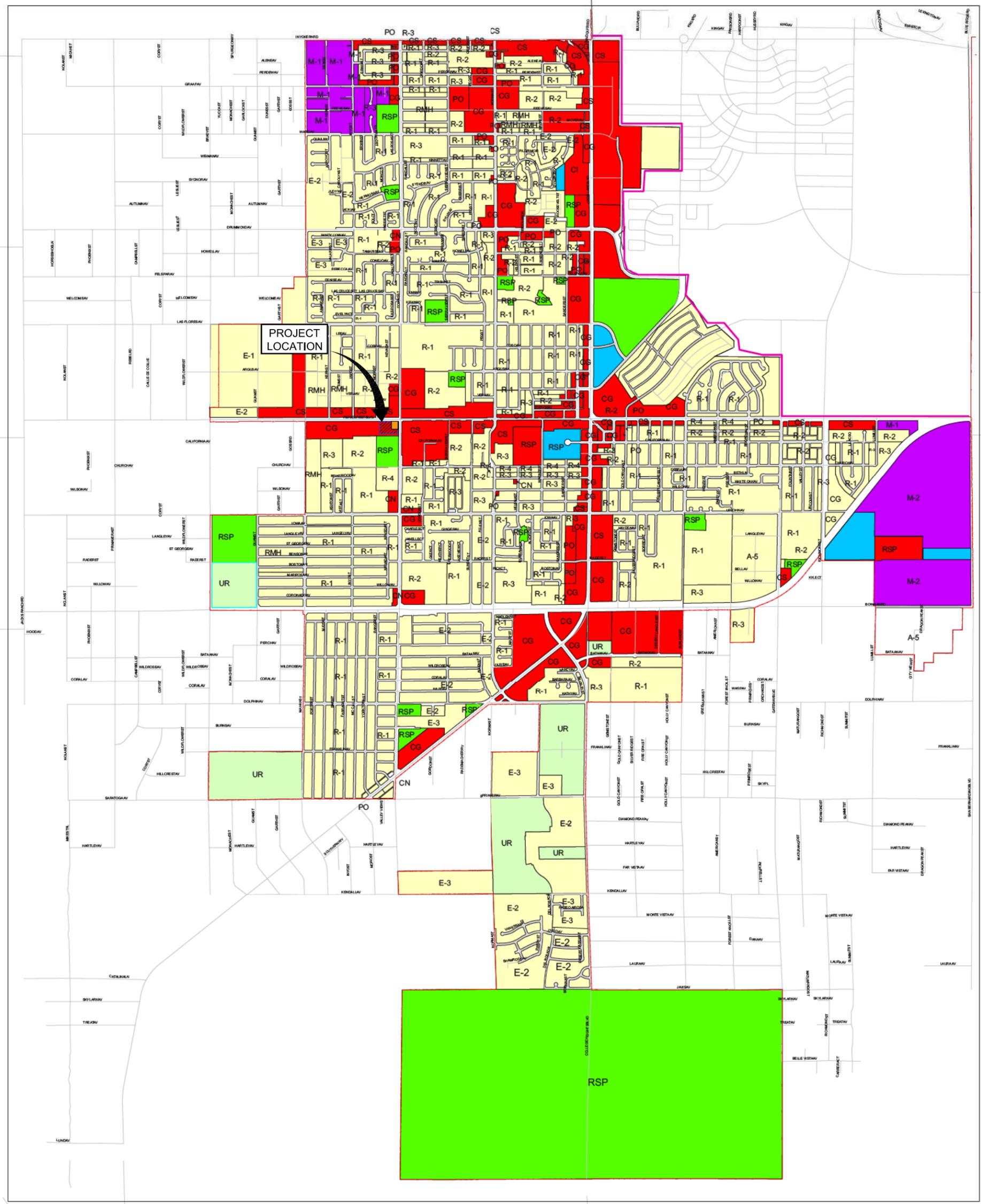


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FIGURE
4.10-1

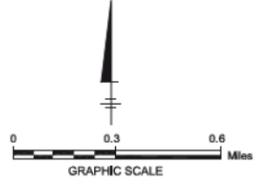


Zoning

- R-1=Single Fam Res.
- R-2=Multi-Fam Res. LD 3000
- R-3=Multi-Fam Res. MD 2000
- R-4=Multi-Fam Res MD 1000
- RMH=Mobile-Home Res
- E-1=Rural Urban Est 40,000
- E-2=Urban Est 10,000
- E-3=Urban Est 7,500
- RSP=Rec,Sch,Pub Use
- UR=Urban Reserve
- PO=Prof. Office
- CN=Neighborhood Com
- CS=Service Com
- CG=General Com
- CI=Civic and Institutional
- M-1=Light Industrial
- M-2=Heavy Industrial
- A-5=Agricultural

Legend

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Civic and Institutional
- Parks and Schools
- Natural Open Space
- City of Ridgecrest Planning Boundary
- Existing Downs Substation
- Proposed Expansion Area



**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
DOWNS SUBSTATION PROJECT
KERN AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA
PROPONENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**CITY OF RIDGECREST
ZONING MAP (JANUARY 2008)**

FIGURE 4.10-2

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4.10.2 Regulatory Setting

4.10.2.1 *Federal*

The Bureau of Land Management issues right-of-way (ROW) grants for specific uses of BLM lands. The ROW grants (CA16918, LA0131328 and CALA096498) issued for the current Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No. 2 115 kV subtransmission lines are specific to the current uses in the ROW. SCE has consulted with BLM and has submitted two separate Applications for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands (referred to herein as an SF299 application) for BLM authorization to consolidate the existing the ROW grants into a single grant and to amend the grants to allow the installation of fiber optic telecommunication cable on existing SCE facilities over BLM lands. It should be noted that SCE's current ROW grants also authorize the same uses on portions of Department of the Navy-owned CLNAWS lands. SCE would be required to obtain Department of the Navy approval to install fiber optic telecommunication cable on those portions of the Inyokern-McGen-Searles No. 1 and No. 2 115 kV subtransmission lines that are on CLNAWS. SCE has contacted the Department of the Navy to request authorization for this purpose.

Both BLM and the Department of the Navy would be required to comply with NEPA before issuing the requested amendments to the ROW grants and approvals for CLNAWS, respectively. SCE has been in communication with both federal agencies. Depending on the NEPA determinations of BLM and the Department of the Navy, additional environmental analysis could be required. As part of BLM's environmental review, BLM would be expected to evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with the West Mojave Plan (WEMO). Additional information on the requirements of WEMO is contained in Section 4.4.2.1.

SCE's coordination and communication with BLM and the Department of the Navy includes: a June 17, 2010 submittal of two SF299 applications to BLM for amended ROW grants; sending an August 24, 2010 letter to the Department of the Navy to initiate the approval process for authorization to install fiber optic telecommunication cable; submission of cultural resources information to BLM; an in-person meeting on September 21, 2010 with BLM; and other periodic verbal communications.

4.10.2.2 *State*

CPUC General Order No. 131-D applies to this Proposed Project.

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4.10.2.3 Local

Although this Proposed Project is exempt from local land use and zoning regulations, CPUC General Order No. 131-D, Section III. C requires “the utility to communicate with, and obtain the input of, local authorities regarding land use matters and obtain any nondiscretionary local permits.” In addition, SCE has considered local and State land use plans as part of the current environmental review process. The documents SCE reviewed are listed below:

Kern County General Plan—The General Plan, adopted in 2004, is a policy document with planned land use maps and related information that are designed to give long-range guidance to those County officials making decisions affecting the growth and resources of the unincorporated Kern County jurisdiction, excluding the metropolitan Bakersfield planning area. This document helps to ensure that day-to-day decisions are in conformance with the long-range program designed to protect and further the public interest related to Kern County’s growth and development. The General Plan also serves as a guide to the private sector of the economy in relating its development initiatives to the public plans, objectives, and policies of the County.

San Bernardino County General Plan—The General Plan, adopted in 2007, contains the goals and policies that will guide future development within the County. It also identifies a full set of implementation measures that will ensure the policies of the plan are carried out. It describes the planning area, provides an overview of existing conditions, summarizes the issues raised during the preparation of the General Plan, and identifies the environmental resources and constraints associated with the General Plan.

City of Ridgecrest General Plan—The City’s General Plan, adopted in 1994 and currently being revised, is a policy document designed to guide the future growth and development of Ridgecrest in a manner consistent with its physical, social, economic and environmental goals. The plan provides a framework of policies and programs with which local decision makers may direct the growth of the community. At the same time, it constitutes a vehicle for citizen involvement both during the plan’s development and throughout its implementation.

City of Ridgecrest Municipal Code—The General Commercial District is intended primarily to serve as the central trading district of the City along major arterials. Per Section 20-16.3, electrical transmission or distribution substations are permitted subject to obtaining a conditional use permit. However, CPUC General Order 131-D, Section XIV. B, states that “Local jurisdictions acting pursuant to local authority are preempted from regulating electric power line projects, distribution lines, substations, or electric facilities constructed by public utilities subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction.” The Proposed Project would be conducted compliant with CPUC General Order 131-D, Section XIV. B, and therefore would not require a conditional use permit.

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4.10.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for assessing the impacts to utilities and service systems come from the CEQA Environmental Checklist. A project causes a potentially significant impact if it would:

- Physically divide an established community;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

4.10.4 Impact Assessment

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would result in no impacts for the following CEQA criteria:

Would the Proposed Project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would not contain major linear features that would serve to physically divide an established community during construction or operations.

Would the Proposed Project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact. The proposed Downs Substation expansion project would encompass approximately 2.5 acres of a 4.6-acre parcel located in the City of Ridgecrest. The dimensions of the enclosed upgraded Downs Substation would be approximately 444 feet by 317 feet. The property is rectangular in shape and the property limits would be approximately 601 feet by 398 feet.

The expanded property boundary would remain within the CG zone and use of the expanded parcel would be consistent with current permitted uses. Additionally, the expanded property boundary remains consistent with the Commercial General Plan land use designation. Therefore, the proposed expansion of Downs Substation and the proposed new 115 kV subtransmission line

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would not conflict with the City of Ridgecrest zoning ordinance or General Plan. Accordingly, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

No Impact. The Proposed Project is located within the boundaries of the West Mojave Plan (WEMO) planning area. WEMO amended the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) existing California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) plan and, upon adoption by other participating jurisdictions, would provide for a habitat conservation plan to be implemented by a number of participating governmental agencies. The Proposed Project's consistency with WEMO is analyzed in the Biological Resources section; the Proposed Project is determined to be consistent with WEMO.

4.10.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to Land Use and Planning, no Applicant Proposed Measures are necessary.

REFERENCES

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