

## 4. Environmental Impact Assessment

### 4.13 Population and Housing

This section describes the population and housing in the Project Area and discusses the affected environment and regulatory setting for population and housing. Potential impacts are also discussed.

As presented in Chapters 1 and 2, the Proposed Project is designed to ensure the availability of safe and reliable electric service to meet customer electrical demand within the Electrical Needs Area. The Electrical Needs Area encompasses portions of the City of Ridgecrest and surrounding areas of unincorporated Kern County and San Bernardino County (see [Figure 1.3-1](#)). Because much of the Electrical Needs Area outside of the City of Ridgecrest is sparsely populated, the following discussion focuses on the City of Ridgecrest.

#### 4.13.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Ridgecrest has a current reported population of 28,726 according to the State of California Department of Finance. Population growth in Ridgecrest has been rapid in the past: Growth rates exceeded 10 percent per year in the 1970s, and seven percent per year growth was realized in the 1980s.

The population of Ridgecrest is strongly linked to changes in employment at CLNAWS. Population declined in the 1990s due to operational changes at CLNAWS; however, the population has been slowly increasing in the past decade at an average rate of 1.5 percent per year. Further, Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommendations implemented by the Department of the Navy in 2008 are projected to result in a maximum of 2,100 new personnel being relocated to CLNAWS. Based upon a 2008 Environmental Assessment, the population of the City of Ridgecrest and surrounding areas could grow by up to 8,400 new residents as a result of additional personnel and missions being assigned to CLNAWS—this represents a 33 percent increase over the 2000 population.

The City of Ridgecrest is projected to grow at rates between one and three percent per year through 2030. Extrapolating from this forecast, the population in the City of Ridgecrest in 2020 could range from 30,478 (under the one percent annual growth scenario) to 40,106 (under the three percent annual growth scenario).

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### 4.13.2 Regulatory Setting

There are no applicable regulations for population and housing that apply to the Proposed Project. This is due to the fact that the Proposed Project would not induce any population growth or impact housing.

### 4.13.3 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for assessing the impacts to population and housing come from the CEQA Environmental Checklist. According to the CEQA Checklist, a project causes a potentially significant impact if it would:

- Induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly (by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (through the extension of new roads or other infrastructure);
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; or
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

### 4.13.4 Impact Analysis

Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would result in no impacts to population or housing. The Proposed Project is intended to increase the reliability of the existing supply for portions of the City of Ridgecrest and the surrounding areas of unincorporated Kern County, and meet the projected demand spurred by growth at CLNAWS.

The Proposed Project would not be expected to facilitate an increase in population. The need for the proposed upgrades to electrical transmission and fiber optic telecommunications systems is a result of, not a precursor to, development in the area. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not cause new opportunities for new industry or commerce or impact population growth in the area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly induce any population growth. The Proposed Project would be constructed and operated solely on lands that are not habited by people, and therefore would not displace any housing or people.

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

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Would the Proposed Project induce substantial population growth in the area, either directly (by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (through the extension of new roads or other infrastructure)?

**No Impact.** The number of workers that would be employed to construct and operate the Proposed Project would not directly or indirectly induce any population growth in the area. Construction activities are anticipated to occur for approximately nine months, and during peak times, SCE expects to have approximately 15 to 25 craft laborers per day working during construction. The Proposed Project would be unmanned during operations with the exception of routine maintenance. It is likely that maintenance activities would be conducted by current SCE personnel, and thus the Proposed Project would not require the hiring of any additional operations personnel. The small number of positions required during the construction and operations phases would not directly or indirectly induce any population growth in the area.

The Proposed Project would not be expected to facilitate an increase in population. The need for the proposed upgrades to electrical transmission and fiber optic telecommunications systems is a result of, not a precursor to, development in the area. Accordingly, operation of the Proposed Project would not induce any population growth in the area. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

Would the Proposed Project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

**No Impact.** The Proposed Project would not displace any existing housing. Expansion of the existing Downs Substation would be accomplished utilizing an adjacent, undeveloped lot. The new 115 kV subtransmission line, replacement subtransmission poles, and fiber optic telecommunication cable would be installed in existing rights-of-way or on SCE-owned property. Therefore, there would be no displacement of existing housing or people, and thus it would not be necessary to construct replacement housing elsewhere.

The construction phase of the Proposed Project would not impact the local housing market. There would likely be a need for temporary accommodations during the construction phase for non-local workers while they work on particular aspects of the construction project. These individuals would not trigger any additional demand for housing since they would be expected to utilize one of the

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several local hotels or motels for their short stays.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

*Would the Proposed Project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

**No Impact.** The Proposed Project would not displace any people. The expansion of the existing Downs Substation would be accomplished utilizing an adjacent, undeveloped lot. The new 115 kV subtransmission line, replacement subtransmission poles, and fiber optic telecommunication cable would be installed in existing rights-of-way or on SCE-owned property that are not habited by people. Therefore, no impacts would occur under this criterion as a result of the Proposed Project.

### 4.13.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to population or housing, no Applicant Proposed Measures are offered.

## REFERENCES

City of Ridgecrest. 2008. City of Ridgecrest General Plan Public Draft. October. [Online Resource] Available at:

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<sup>25</sup> Short-term lodging is widely available in Ridgecrest. National chains and locally-owned businesses offer more than 500 hotel and motel rooms.

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State of California, Department of Finance. Report 84 E-4, Population Estimates for California Counties and Cities: April 1, 1970 through January 1, 1980. [Online Resource] Available at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/estimates/e-4/1971-80/counties-cities/>.

State of California, Department of Finance. 2007. Population Projections for California and Its Counties 2000-2050, Sacramento, California. July. [Online resource] Available at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/projections/p-1/documents/P-1%20Report%20Tables.xls>.

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