

4.12 Population and Housing

4.12.1 Setting

Components of the Proposed Project and alternatives would be constructed within Riverside County in the cities of Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, and Indian Wells, and unincorporated areas of Riverside County, including the community of Thousand Palms, a census-designated place (CDP). The majority of the Proposed Project would be constructed in the City of Palm Springs and the community of Thousand Palms.

Population

Riverside County encompasses a large portion of Southern California, and over the past two decades the County has experienced extremely rapid growth. According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the County's population increased by approximately 76 percent in the 1980's, from 663,172 in 1980 to 1,170,412 in 1990. The 2000 population estimate was 1,545,387 persons, a population increase of approximately 32 percent (SCAG, 2009).

The Proposed Project and alternative alignments and sites are located in western Coachella Valley, a subregion of Riverside County. The incorporated cities within western Coachella Valley followed similar trends for population growth as the County within the same time period. Table 4.12-1 shows the United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau) 2000 population estimates for the cities of Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, and Indian Wells, the community of Thousand Palms, and Riverside County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). As demonstrated in Table 4.12-2, which shows historic and estimated future population growth from 2003 to 2025, the population in western Coachella Valley is expected to substantially increase over the next 20 years (SCAG, 2008).

Housing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2000, Riverside County had approximately 699,474 total housing units, with approximately 11 percent of these dwelling units being vacant (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Table 4.12-3 shows housing data for the cities of Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, and Indian Wells, the community of Thousand Palms, and Riverside County. As demonstrated in Table 4.12-4, the number of households in the cities and communities of western Coachella Valley and Riverside County is expected to substantially increase through 2025 (SCAG, 2008).

Each of the cities and communities (unincorporated areas) within western Coachella Valley has a large seasonal population that owns second homes or vacation homes. The seasonal population increases during the fall/winter/spring months and decreases during the summer period. A majority of the seasonal or second home residences are located in planned residential communities (City of Cathedral City, 2002).

**TABLE 4.12-1
YEAR 2000 POPULATIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

	Palm Springs	Thousand Palms (CDP)	Palm Desert	Rancho Mirage	Cathedral City	Indian Wells	Riverside County
Total Population	42,807	5,120	41,155	13,249	42,647	3,816	1,545,387

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

**TABLE 4.12-2
HISTORIC AND ESTIMATED FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH, 2003–2025**

Area	2003	2005	% Change 2003-2005	2010	% Change 2005-2010	2015	% Change 2010-2015	2020	% Change 2015-2020	2025	% Change 2020-2025
Palm Springs	44,312	46,474	4.9	49,239	6.0	51,756	5.1	56,288	8.8	60,499	7.5
Palm Desert	44,549	49,843	11.9	54,435	9.2	59,588	9.5	64,860	8.9	67,206	3.6
Rancho Mirage	15,302	16,685	9.0	18,983	13.8	22,585	19.0	26,764	18.5	32,096	19.9
Cathedral City	48,139	51,303	6.6	55,745	8.7	60,293	8.2	65,222	8.2	69,431	6.5
Indian Wells	4,433	4,865	9.8	5,309	9.1	5,708	7.5	6,025	5.6	6,311	4.8
Riverside County	1,747,877	1,931,332	10.5	2,242,745	16.1	2,509,330	11.9	2,809,003	11.9	3,089,999	10.0

SOURCE: SCAG, 2008.

**TABLE 4.12-3
YEAR 2000 HOUSING DATA**

	Palm Springs	Thousand Palms (CDP)	Palm Desert	Rancho Mirage	Cathedral City	Indian Wells	Riverside County
Total Housing Units	30,823	2,557	28,021	11,816	17,893	3,843	699,474
Occupied Housing Units	20,516	1,912	19,184	6,813	14,027	1,982	623,711
Vacant Housing Units	10,307	645	8,837	5,003	3,866	1,861	75,763
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	12,480	1,573	12,827	5,654	9,151	1,756	434,872
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	8,030	339	6,357	1,159	4,876	222	188,839

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

**TABLE 4.12-4
PROJECTED HOUSEHOLDS: 2003 TO 2025**

Year	Palm Springs	Palm Desert	Rancho Mirage	Cathedral City	Indian Wells	Riverside County
2003	20,805	20,342	7,556	15,495	2,255	560,731
2005	21,606	22,724	8,148	16,339	2,449	612,341
2010	23,052	25,114	9,801	18,175	2,589	720,531
2015	24,242	27,749	11,641	19,807	2,731	811,486
2020	26,919	29,805	13,355	21,908	2,979	913,207
2025	29,417	31,217	16,371	23,425	3,193	1,008,909

SOURCE: SCAG, 2008.

Regulatory Context

CEQA Guidelines §15126.2 requires a discussion of the ways in which a proposed project could directly or indirectly foster economic development or population growth, and how that growth would, in turn, affect the surrounding environment. The following regulatory context is provided to set forth the planning framework that is anticipated under the General Plans for Riverside County and the cities of Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, and Indian Wells. The study area is also covered by the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan, one of the 19 Area Plans in Riverside County. In terms of growth inducement, these agencies would be affected by the Proposed Project since the Proposed Project would improve reliability and transmission capacity in Riverside County.

Riverside County

As noted above, Riverside County experienced extremely rapid growth in the 1980s and steady growth through the 1990s. According to the Riverside County General Plan, the County’s population could substantially increase over the next 20 years. The Land Use Element of the General Plan provides guidance to manage the growth with land use constraints and utilities infrastructure. The General Plan imposes constraints to focus growth into “centers or into existing developed areas, thus minimizing development pressures on rural, agricultural, and open space areas.” The Land Use Element contains the following policy applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (Riverside County, 2003):

Policy LU 5.2: Monitor the capacities of infrastructure and services in coordination with service providers, utilities, and outside agencies and jurisdictions to ensure that growth does not exceed acceptable levels of service.

The Housing Element of the Riverside County General Plan provides background information regarding housing and general policy guidance, but does not contain any housing policies applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (Riverside County, 2003).

Western Coachella Valley Area Plan

One of the primary goals of the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan is to contain and concentrate growth in several strategic unincorporated areas while preserving the rural and open space characteristics of the outlying areas (Riverside County, 2003).

City of Palm Springs

The City of Palm Springs General Plan provides background information regarding housing and general policy guidance, but does not contain any housing or growth control/management policies applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Palm Springs, 2007).

City of Palm Desert

The City of Palm Desert General Plan provides background information regarding housing and general policy guidance, but does not contain any housing or growth control/management policies applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Palm Desert, 2004).

City of Rancho Mirage

The City of Rancho Mirage General Plan provides background information regarding housing and general policy guidance, but does not contain any housing or growth control/management policies applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Rancho Mirage, 2005).

City of Cathedral City

The City of Cathedral City General Plan does not have growth control/growth management ordinances or policies, but utilizes the General Plan goals and policies to manage growth within the City. The Housing Element contains the following policy applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Cathedral City, 2002):

Policy 7.1: Carefully consider increased capacity of streets, utilities and parks that may be needed because of increased population.

City of Indian Wells

The City of Indian Wells General Plan provides background information regarding housing and general policy guidance, but does not contain any housing or growth control/management policies applicable to the Proposed Project and alternatives (City of Indian Wells, 1996).

4.12.2 Significance Criteria

Impacts to population and housing would be considered potentially significant if the project would:

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure);

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; and
- c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

4.12.3 Applicant Proposed Measures

No applicant proposed measures are proposed for population and housing.

4.12.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a) Population growth inducement, either directly or indirectly.

Construction of the Proposed Project is needed to meet electric system demand and to ensure transmission system reliability in SCE's Electrical Needs Area; therefore, the Proposed Project is designed to increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than to induce growth.

Growth is anticipated in the project area, as described in Section 4.12.1, above. This growth is planned and regulated by applicable local planning policies and zoning ordinances and the Proposed Project's provision of electrical service is consistent with development anticipated by plans and zoning in the jurisdictions that the Proposed Project would serve. Additionally, the availability of electrical capacity by itself does not normally ensure or encourage growth within a particular area. Other factors such as economic conditions, land availability, population trends, availability of water supply or sewer services, and local planning policies have a more direct effect on growth.

Devers Substation is currently the only staffed facility that would be part of the Proposed Project and it would remain staffed after the completion of construction. However, the Proposed Project would not result in any additional long-term staffing increases at Devers Substation. All of the other facilities that would be associated with the Proposed Project would be unmanned and would receive occasional routine maintenance or emergency repairs. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not induce long-term population growth, either directly or indirectly, in the project area. There would be no impacts related to long-term population growth in the project area.

Construction activities in the project area are expected to last approximately 12 months, beginning in 2010 and concluding in mid-2011. The combined number of construction workers that would be required to construct the Proposed Project components would be approximately 300 crew members, including SCE and contracted construction personnel. However, it is assumed that the majority of the crews would move from one project component site to the next (e.g., from one substation site to the next site) site, resulting in the need for well under 300 total construction crew members at any one time. It is anticipated that construction workers would commute from within Riverside County or adjacent areas and would not need to relocate to the project area. Therefore, Proposed Project construction activities are not expected to result in any significant increase to the local population or housing market, and would not indirectly induce growth by

creating new opportunities for local industry or commerce. There would be no impacts related to short-term population growth in the project area (No Impact).

b) Displacement of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Construction of the Proposed Project would not displace any existing housing units. The Proposed Project subtransmission and transmission lines would be constructed within existing SCE right-of-way (ROW), with the exception of a 0.8-mile portion of the proposed Farrell-Garnet subtransmission line that would be constructed in new ROW in existing open space, and franchise locations generally paralleling local, County, and State roads as well as traversing vacant, open space. The Proposed Project would also include upgrades to the Devers, Mirage, Tamarisk, Eisenhower, Concho, Indian Wells, Santa Rosa, Thornhill, Garnet, and Farrell substations, as well as to the Edom Hill Communication Site. Construction activities proposed to occur at these sites would be entirely within the existing SCE property boundaries, with the exception of at Farrell Substation where an access driveway would be constructed to the adjacent street. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have no impact with regard to the displacement of existing housing (No Impact).

c) Displacement of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

As noted above, the Proposed Project would not displace any existing housing units. It would therefore not displace residents. Also, as stated above, construction of the Proposed Project would traverse existing SCE ROW, property boundaries, and franchise locations and would not eliminate housing or any other structures that are currently used by people. Therefore, the Proposed Project would have no impact on the displacement of people (No Impact).

4.12.5 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for the cumulative impacts associated with population and housing issues are the cities and unincorporated communities of western Coachella Valley in Riverside County, which assumes full buildout of the Proposed Project, in combination with buildout of the projects listed in Section 3.6, *Cumulative Projects*. Riverside County, including western Coachella Valley, is expected to undergo substantial growth over the next two decades. By 2030, the population of Riverside County is expected to nearly double to 3.3 million persons residing in approximately one million residential dwelling units (SCAG, 2008). However, the Proposed Project is designed to increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than to induce growth. Therefore, the Proposed Project represents no incremental portion of a potential

growth impact, and the Proposed Project would not have cumulatively considerable impacts in regards to population and housing (No Impact).

4.12.6 Alternatives

No Project Alternative

For the purposes of this analysis, the No Project Alternative includes the following two assumptions: 1) the project would not be implemented and the existing conditions in the study area would not be changed; and 2) new subtransmission and transmission lines and/or additional power generation would be constructed in or near the study area to supply power to the Electrical Needs Area. Given the highly speculative nature of the No Project Alternative assumptions, this analysis is qualitative.

Under the No Project Alternative, none of the facilities or infrastructure upgrades associated with the Proposed Project evaluated in this EIR would be constructed by SCE. However, SCE would be required to design a new project in order to satisfy the objectives of the Proposed Project. It is unlikely that any such project would result in either direct or indirect population growth (No Impact).

Under the No Project Alternative, SCE would be forced to upgrade other existing facilities or add new subtransmission and transmission and generation capacity elsewhere to compensate for existing system limitations and anticipated future loads. This would result in construction and operational impacts if the properties were located in areas that necessitated removal of housing and displacement of housing units and persons, in which case the impact may be greater than for the Proposed Project.

Alternative 2

As with the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 2 would increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than induce growth. Construction and operation techniques associated with this alternative would be similar to that identified for the Proposed Project. Alternative 2 would include an underground segment and would be approximately 0.2 mile longer than the proposed Farrell-Garnet 115 kV line. Therefore, construction of this alternative may require a larger workforce or take longer to construct than the Proposed Project. However, the additional construction efforts would not induce population growth directly or indirectly; therefore, impacts related to population and housing would be the same as under the Proposed Project. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

Activities associated with construction of this alternative subtransmission line would occur within existing SCE ROW or local franchise locations and would not require the displacement of any existing housing units or people; no impacts would occur (No Impact).

Alternative 3

As with the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 3 would increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than induce growth. Alternative 3 would include an underground segment and would be approximately 0.7 mile longer than the proposed Farrell-Garnet 115 kV line. Therefore, construction of this alternative may require a larger workforce or take longer to construct than the Proposed Project. However, the additional construction efforts would not induce substantial population growth directly or indirectly; therefore, impacts related to population and housing would be the same as under the Proposed Project. Alternative 3 would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly; no impacts would occur (No Impact).

Activities associated with construction of this alternative subtransmission line would occur within existing SCE ROW or local franchise locations and would not require the displacement of any existing housing units or people. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

Alternative 5

As with the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 5 would increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than induce or accommodate growth. This alternative would result in the subtransmission line being constructed mostly underground. However, the construction workforce would be similar to the one described for the proposed Mirage-Santa Rosa line and no additional permanent staff would be required. Therefore, Alternative 5 would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

Activities associated with construction of this alternative subtransmission line would occur within existing SCE ROW or local franchise locations and would not require the displacement of any existing housing units or people. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

Alternative 6

As with the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 6 would increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than induce or accommodate growth. Alternative 6 would include an underground segment, but would be approximately 1.6 miles shorter than the proposed Farrell-Garnet 115 kV line. Therefore, the construction workforce required to construct this alternative would likely be similar to that associated with the Proposed Project. Therefore, it can be assumed that Alternative 6 would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly; no impacts would occur (No Impact).

Activities associated with construction of this alternative subtransmission line would occur within existing SCE ROW or local franchise locations and would not require the displacement of any existing housing units or people. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

Alternative 7

As with the Proposed Project, implementation of Alternative 7 would increase reliability and accommodate existing and planned electrical load growth, rather than induce growth. Alternative 7 would be approximately 3.3 miles longer than the proposed Farrell-Garnet 115 kV line. Therefore, construction of this alternative may require a larger workforce or take longer to construct than the Proposed Project. However, the additional construction efforts would not induce substantial population growth directly or indirectly; therefore, impacts related to population and housing would be the same as under the Proposed Project. Alternative 7 would not induce population growth either directly or indirectly; no impacts would occur (No Impact).

Activities associated with construction of this alternative subtransmission line would occur within existing SCE ROW or local franchise locations and would not require the displacement of any existing housing units or people. No impacts would occur (No Impact).

References – Population and Housing

- City of Cathedral City, 2002. *City of Cathedral City General Plan*, adopted July 31, 2002.
- City of Indian Wells, 1996. *City of Indian Wells General Plan*, adopted February 1, 1996.
- City of Palm Desert, 2004. *City of Palm Desert General Plan*, adopted March 2004.
- City of Palm Springs, 2007. *City of Palm Springs 2007 General Plan*, adopted October 2007.
- City of Rancho Mirage, 2005. *City of Rancho Mirage General Plan*, adopted November 2005.
- Riverside County, 2003. *Riverside County General Plan*, adopted October 7, 2003.
<http://www.rctlma.org/generalplan/index.html>. Accessed June 2008.
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), 2008. *Regional Transportation Plan, adopted 2008 Growth Forecast, by City*, website
(http://www.scag.ca.gov/forecast/downloads/excel/RTP07_CityLevel.xls), accessed October 21, 2009.
- SCAG, 2009. *A Century of Growth: Riverside County Population 1900-2000*, website
(<http://www.scag.ca.gov/census/pdf/River.pdf>), accessed October 20, 2009.
- United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau), 2000. American FactFinder 2000 Data Set.
website (<http://factfinder.census.gov>) accessed June 2008.