

4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section describes the agriculture and forestry resources in the area of the Proposed Project. The potential impacts of the Proposed Project and the Alternative Project are also discussed.

For purposes of this section, the Project Study Area is defined as locations where work described in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, would be performed, plus a buffer of 500 feet from the centerline on each side of all Proposed Project components, for a total buffer width of 1,000 feet. The buffer was selected for the purpose of documenting resources adjacent to the Proposed Project to address any future minor modifications to the Proposed Project. Farmland protected under the Farmland Protection and Policy Act (FPPA) includes Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined and mapped by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the California Department of Conservation (CDC). Agricultural resources addressed in this assessment also include lands conserved through contracts established in accordance with the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act).

4.2.1 Environmental Setting

The Project Study Area includes the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Colton, Grand Terrace, Loma Linda, Palm Springs, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, San Bernardino, and Yucaipa, and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The Proposed Project component in the City of Rancho Cucamonga is limited to improvements within the Mechanical Electrical Equipment Room (MEER) at Etiwanda Substation. The extent of this work within an existing facility would not have the potential to affect agricultural or forestry resources in the City of Rancho Cucamonga; therefore, the City of Rancho Cucamonga is not included for further discussion. Furthermore, there is no designated Important Farmland¹ or agricultural zoning in the Project Study Area in the cities of Calimesa, Colton, Palm Springs, San Bernardino, and Yucaipa; therefore, these jurisdictions are also not further discussed.

This section describes the extent of designated Important Farmland in the Project Study Area, including the role of agriculture in the local economy, a summary of important farmland in the counties, and a description of agricultural zoning set forth by local jurisdictions. The environmental setting section also describes the extent of forest land in the Project Study Area. Information was obtained directly from CDC maps and agency metadata and the interpretation of aerial photographs, and from secondary sources such as agency planning documents. Consistent with the CEQA definition of “agricultural land” as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21060, Important Farmland includes areas designated Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland.

¹ “Important Farmland” consists of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

4.2.1.1 Existing Agriculture and Farmland

Agricultural Production in the State of California

According to the most recent California Agriculture Highlights prepared by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), the State's 81,700 farms and ranches received a record \$37.5 billion in revenue and produced more than 400 commodities in 2010. The State produces nearly half of U.S.-grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables. With its \$37.5 billion in revenue, California remained the top state in cash farm receipts, representing 11.9 percent of the U.S. total national gross receipts from farming (CDC 2012). In 2010, a total of 25.4 million acres of California lands were devoted to farming and the average farm size was 311 acres. As a comparison, the average size of a farm in the United States is 418 acres.

Agricultural Production in Riverside County

The County of Riverside General Plan states that “[o]ne of Riverside County’s most important land uses in terms of historic character and economic strength is its widespread and diverse agriculture lands. Agriculture production is one of the largest industries in terms of dollar value in the County and competes successfully in the global economy” (County of Riverside 2008a). Approximately 5 percent of the unincorporated areas in Riverside County are designated for agriculture (County of Riverside 2008b). In 2007, the most recent year for which data are available, Riverside County contained 3,463 farms on approximately 354,753 acres. The average size of a farm in Riverside County was 102 acres, and the average value of production per farm in Riverside County in 2007 was \$292,244 (USDA 2007). This is approximately 33 percent of the State average farm size of 311 acres, and approximately 70 percent of the average value of production per farm in the State of California, which is \$418,164 (CDFA 2012).

Agricultural Production in San Bernardino County

The San Bernardino County General Plan recognizes commercial agriculture as a desirable land use type and a major segment of the County’s economic base, identifies policies to preserve the agricultural base of the County economy, and encourages the open space values of these uses. Approximately 2 percent of the unincorporated areas in San Bernardino County are designated for agriculture (County of San Bernardino 2009). In 2002, the most recent year for which data are available, San Bernardino County contained 1,405 farms on approximately 514,234 acres, and the average farm size in San Bernardino County was 366 acres (USDA 2007). This is slightly larger than the State average farm size of 313 acres (CDFA 2012). The average value of production per farm in San Bernardino County in 2007 was \$529,296 (USDA 2007). This is approximately 127 percent of the average value of production per farm in the State of California, which is \$418,164 (CDFA 2012). The gross value of all agricultural commodities (i.e., agricultural crops, livestock, and poultry) produced in San Bernardino County in 2010 was \$427,579,000. The County of San Bernardino’s top five commodities for 2010 were milk, eggs, milk cows, cattle and calves, and woody ornamentals (San Bernardino County Farm Bureau 2011). Agriculture has historically been an important part of San

Bernardino's economy. The County consistently ranks in the top 15 agricultural-producing counties in the State.

4.2.1.2 Summary of Important Farmland in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Agricultural Land Designated by the Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (CDC 2008–2010)

As detailed in Table 4.2-1, Summary of Agricultural Land in the Project Study Area, approximately 415 acres of the Project Study Area's 4,089 acres (approximately 10%) can be characterized as agricultural land as designated by the CDC's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) and defined by CEQA. The goal of the FMMP is to provide consistent and impartial data to decision-makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources. The FMMP produces *Important Farmland Maps*, which are a hybrid of resource quality (soils) and land use information. Farmland is defined in CEQA as land that qualifies as Prime, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland. The Important Farmland Categories are described below (CDC n.d.):

- **Prime Farmland.** Land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics able to sustain long-term agricultural production. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Land that meets the criteria for Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture.
- **Unique Farmland.** Land with even lesser quality soils and produces the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but also includes non-irrigated orchards and vineyards.

There are also categories for Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, Other Land, and Water. These categories are mapped by the CDC but are not considered Important Farmland for agricultural impact assessment.

Approximately 320.3 acres of the Project Study Area can be characterized as Prime Farmland, 48.3 acres as Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 46.5 acres as Unique Farmland. The total area of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area is approximately 415.1 acres, and the total within the boundaries of the Proposed

Table 4.2-1: Summary of Agricultural Land in the Project Study Area

Jurisdiction	Farmland Type	Total Farmland Acres Within Project Boundaries	Percentage of Total Farmland Acres for Jurisdiction ¹	Total Farmland Acres Within Project Study Area for Jurisdiction ²	Percentage of Total Farmland Acres in Project Study Area for Jurisdictions
City of Beaumont	Unique Farmland (U)	0.6	1.1%	3.8	8.9%
Total		0.6	1.1%	3.8	8.9%
City of Loma Linda	Prime Farmland (P)	9.8	2.9%	59.8	17.9%
Total		9.8	2.9%	59.8	17.9%
City of Redlands	Prime Farmland (P)	30.2	3.0%	185.8	18.2%
	Unique Farmland (U)	2.7	1.4%	40.9	16.6%
Total		32.9	4.4%	226.7	34.8%
Riverside County	Prime Farmland (P)	0	0%	6.8	0.00%
	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	6.7	0.0%	46.7	0.1%
	Unique Farmland (U)	0	0%	1.1	0.00%
Total		6.7	0.0%	54.6	0.1%
San Bernardino County	Prime Farmland (P)	18.5	0.1%	67.9	0.5%
	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	1.2	0.0%	1.6	0.0%
	Unique Farmland (U)	0	0%	0.7	0.0%
Total		19.7	0.1%	70.2	0.5%
TOTAL STUDY AREA³ (4,089.1 acres)	Prime Farmland (P)	58.4	1.4%	320.3	7.8%
	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	7.9	0.2%	48.3	1.2%
	Unique Farmland (U)	3.6	0.1%	46.5	1.2%
Total		69.9	1.7%	415.1	10.2%

¹ Percentage of area within project boundaries within each jurisdiction.

² Project boundaries plus 500-foot buffer on each side.

³ Percentage of the project boundaries (not specific to the jurisdictions).

Project² is approximately 69.9 acres. Approximately 1.7 percent of the area within the boundaries of the Proposed Project is Important Farmland. Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance are primarily located in the northwest portion of the Project Study Area in the vicinity of Segment 1 (adjacent to the existing WOD corridor and relocated subtransmission and distribution lines), Segment 2 (on either side of Reche Canyon Road), and Segment 3 (within the existing WOD corridor between San Bernardino Substation and El Casco Substation). Unique Farmland is located in Segments 3 and 4 in the cities of Beaumont and Redlands. Refer to Figure 4.2-1, Important Farmland.

Williamson Act Contract Lands

There are no lands subject to Williamson Act contracts in the Project Study Area.

Local Agricultural Designations

The Project Study Area includes Important Farmland in unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino counties and in the cities of Beaumont, Loma Linda, and Redlands.

City of Beaumont. There are no lands designated as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Project Study Area in the City of Beaumont. There are approximately 3.8 acres of Unique Farmland within the Project Study Area in the City of Beaumont, of which approximately 0.6 acre is within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. The 3.8 acres of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area in the City of Beaumont represents 8.9 percent of the total area of Important Farmland in the City. The total of approximately 0.6 acre of Important Farmland within the boundaries of the Proposed Project is approximately 1.1 percent of the total designated Important Farmland in the City of Beaumont.

City of Loma Linda. There are approximately 59.8 acres of Prime Farmland within the Project Study Area in the City of Loma Linda, of which approximately 9.8 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There are no lands designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance or Unique Farmland within the Project Study Area in the City of Loma Linda. The total of approximately 59.8 acres of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area in the City of Loma Linda represents 17.9 percent of the total area of Important Farmland in the City. The total of approximately 9.8 acres of Important Farmland within the boundaries of the Proposed Project is approximately 2.9 percent of the total designated Important Farmland in the City of Loma Linda.

City of Redlands. There are approximately 185.8 acres of Prime Farmland within the Project Study Area in the City of Redlands, of which approximately 30.2 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There is no Farmland of Statewide Importance

² The boundaries of the Proposed Project are depicted in Figure 4.2-1, Important Farmland, and include the existing WOD corridor, the substations, access roads, relocated distribution line routes, relocated subtransmission line routes, telecommunication line routes, and staging yards.

within the Project Study Area in the City of Redlands. There are approximately 40.9 acres of Unique Farmland within the Project Study Area in the City of Redlands, of which approximately 2.7 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. The total of 226.7 acres of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area in the City of Redlands represents 34.8 percent of the total area of Important Farmland in the City. The total of 32.9 acres of Important Farmland within the boundaries of the Proposed Project is approximately 4.4 percent of the total designated Important Farmland in the City of Redlands.

Riverside County. There are approximately 6.8 acres of Prime Farmland within the Project Study Area in Riverside County, none of which is within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There are approximately 46.7 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Project Study Area in Riverside County, of which 6.7 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There are approximately 1.1 acres of Unique Farmland in the Project Study Area, none of which are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. The 54.6 acres of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area in Riverside County represent 0.1 percent of the total area of Important Farmland in the County. The 6.7 acres of Important Farmland within the boundaries of the Proposed Project in Riverside County represent a negligible fraction of 1 percent of the total designated Important Farmland in the County.

San Bernardino County. There are approximately 67.9 acres of Prime Farmland within the Project Study Area in San Bernardino County, of which 18.5 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There are approximately 1.6 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Project Study Area in San Bernardino County, of which 1.2 acres are within the boundaries of the Proposed Project. There is approximately 0.7 acre designated as Unique Farmland within the Project Study Area, none of which is in the Project Study Area. The 70.2 acres of Important Farmland in the Project Study Area in San Bernardino County represent 0.5 percent of the total area of Important Farmland in the County. The total of 19.7 acres of Important Farmland within the boundaries of the Proposed Project represents 0.1 percent of the total designated Important Farmland in San Bernardino County.

Zoning Designations

The portions of Project Study Area that are zoned for agricultural use are within unincorporated parts of Riverside County and the cities of Grand Terrace, Loma Linda, and Redlands. The Proposed Project would be located within a variety of agricultural zoning designations, as discussed further, by jurisdiction below:

City of Banning. The City of Banning identifies two combination residential and agriculture use districts: the Ranch/ Agriculture (R/A) District and the Ranch/ Agriculture Residential — Hillside District (RAR-H). Both districts allow detached single family homes at a density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres, as well as agricultural and ranching activities. The RAR-H District is assigned to lands in the foothills and requires that portions of the site exceeding 25% slope, as well as the ridgelines, be preserved as open space. The Proposed Project would cross land zoned Ranch/

Agriculture – Hillside in the City of Banning. The zoning is located at the eastern edge of Segment 4, north of Gilman Street and between Sunset Avenue on the west and San Geronio Avenue on the east.

City of Grand Terrace. The City of Grand Terrace includes an Agricultural Overlay District as part of its City zoning. The purpose of the Agricultural Overlay District is to permit limited agricultural uses in areas of the City that have historically contained such uses and where current lot size is sufficient to provide a compatible relationship between the limited agricultural uses and the underlying district's residential uses. In the case of a conflict between the regulations of the overlay district and the underlying district, the regulations of the overlay district shall prevail. The agricultural overlay zoning is located at the west end of the Project Study Area in Segment 2, between Mount Vernon Avenue on the west and Barton Road on the east.

City of Loma Linda. The City of Loma Linda includes an Agricultural Estates Zone (A-1) as part of its Zoning Code. The purpose of the A-1 zone is to provide for dispersed residential and agricultural uses. It is further established to ensure the maintenance of prime agricultural lands. The Project Study Area crosses an area zoned for agricultural uses in the City of Loma Linda in Segment 1 of the existing WOD corridor and south of Barton Road.

City of Redlands. The City of Redlands has two Agricultural Zoning Districts: Agricultural District (A-1) and Agricultural District (A-1-20). The purpose of the A-1 agricultural zoning district is to provide for the proper utilization of those lands best suited for agricultural purposes and to prevent the encroachment of incompatible uses. The Proposed Project crosses land that is zoned A-1 southwest of San Timoteo Canyon Road in the southwest corner of the City.

Riverside County. The existing WOD corridor crosses a small parcel of land that is zoned for Light Agriculture with Poultry in unincorporated western Riverside County, west of the City of Calimesa and northwest of the City of Beaumont. The Light Agriculture with Poultry designation allows for single-family dwellings, the raising of poultry or crops, and the limited raising of livestock, except for hogs. The Proposed Project alignment does not cross any agriculturally zoned land in Riverside County, east of the City of Banning.

4.2.1.3 Forest Land

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)).

4.2.2 Regulatory Setting

4.2.2.1 Federal Regulatory Setting

Farmland Protection and Policy Act

The FPPA (USDA 1981) is intended to minimize the impact that Federal programs have related to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural uses. Projects are subject to FPPA requirements if they may irreversibly convert farmland, either directly or indirectly, to a nonagricultural use and are completed by a Federal agency or with assistance from a Federal agency.

4.2.2.2 State Regulatory Setting

California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The CDC established the FMMP to help assess the location, quantity, and quality of agricultural lands and the conversion of these lands to nonagricultural uses (CDC 2004). The FMMP uses Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil classifications, land inventories, and monitoring criteria to prepare digitized maps of farmland in California. These maps and associated statistical data are updated every two years and are used in general plans, regional studies of agricultural land conversion, and in assessing project impacts on farmland. The FMMP categories of lands are described above in Section 4.2.1.2, Summary of Important Farmland in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, was enacted to encourage preservation of agricultural and open space lands by discouraging their premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses (State of California 1965). The Williamson Act creates an arrangement whereby private landowners enter into 10-year contracts with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses. In return, restricted parcels are taxed at a lower rate than they would be if they were assessed at their highest and best use. Contracts are automatically renewed unless the landowner files for nonrenewal or petitions for cancellation.

Section 51238 of the Williamson Act indicates that, unless local organizations declare otherwise, the erection, construction, alteration, or maintenance of gas, electric, water, or communication facilities are compatible with Williamson Act contracts.

4.2.2.3 Local Regulatory Setting

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has jurisdiction over the siting and design of the Proposed Project because the CPUC regulates and authorizes the construction of investor-owned public utility (IOU) facilities. Although such projects are

exempt from local land use and zoning regulations and permitting, General Order (GO) 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.”

As part of its environmental review process, SCE considered local and State land use plans and policies, and local land use priorities and concerns. Therefore, Table 4.2-2, Local Land Use Documents Applicable to Agricultural & Forestry Resources for the Proposed Project, summarizes key policies in local land use plans applicable to agricultural resources. There are no General Plan goals or policies related to Agricultural Resources for the cities of Banning and Grand Terrace.

Table 4.2-2: Local Land Use Documents Applicable to Agricultural and Forestry Resources for the Proposed Project

Document	Plans, Policies, Programs
City of Beaumont General Plan, Resource Management Element	Goal 1: The City of Beaumont will support the maintenance of soil and agricultural resources.
City of Loma Linda General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element	Guiding Policy: Preservation of agricultural land areas is a priority. Implementing Policies for Agricultural Resources 9.5.2.b: The City recognizes the desire to maintain citrus and avocado groves and other agricultural uses as a means to provide open space, to provide and maintain a balanced economy, and to maintain green space and vegetation that will consume carbon dioxide and improve air quality. The open space requirement of Chapter 2A may be met by preserving citrus and/or avocado groves or other agricultural uses determined appropriate by the City Council, and assuring ongoing maintenance through a conservation easement or other legal mechanism, provided that the minimum percentage open space requirements of Chapter 2A are met.
City of Redlands General Plan, City Design and Preservation	Guiding Policy 3.10a: Preserve awareness of Redlands’ heritage as the navel orange capital by employing a variety of techniques to preserve agriculture. Implementing Policy 3.29a: Encourage preservation of citrus groves and other agricultural areas that are designated as having cultural or scenic significance. Encourage retention of existing privately owned citrus groves of all sizes, especially in historic neighborhoods.
City of Redlands General Plan, Growth Management Element	Implementing Policy 2.0e: Encourage and promote orderly development and growth of urban areas while maintaining and encouraging the best possible use of agricultural land, protecting it against premature encroachment of nonagricultural development. Consider the costs of extending urban facilities and services in the review of urban development.
County of Riverside General Plan, Land Use Element	Policy LU 16.2: Protect agricultural uses, including those with industrial characteristics (dairies, poultry, hog farms, etc.) by discouraging inappropriate land division in the immediate proximity and allowing only uses and intensities that are compatible with agricultural uses. (AI 3)
County of Riverside General Plan, Multipurpose Open Space Element	Policy OS 7.3: Encourage conservation of productive agricultural lands and preservation of prime agricultural lands. (AI 3, 78) Policy OS 8.1: Cooperate with Federal and State agencies to achieve the sustainable conservation of forest land as a means of providing open space and protecting natural resources and habitat lands included within the MSHCPs. (AI

Table 4.2-2: Local Land Use Documents Applicable to Agricultural and Forestry Resources for the Proposed Project

Document	Plans, Policies, Programs
	3) Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan Policy RCBAP 3.1: Preserve the viability of agriculture in the region through adherence to policies found in the Agriculture Area Plan Designation section of the General Plan Land Use Element, and policies located in the Agricultural Resources section of the Multipurpose Open Space Element.
County of San Bernardino General Plan, Conservation Element	Policy CO 6.1: Protect prime agricultural lands from the adverse effects of urban encroachment, particularly increased erosion and sedimentation, trespass, and nonagricultural land development. Policy CO 6.3: Preservation of prime and statewide important soils types, as well as areas exhibiting viable agricultural operations will be considered as an integral portion of the Open Space element when reviewing development proposals.

Morongo Reservation

The Proposed Project will traverse approximately 8 miles of the tribal trust lands of the Morongo Indian Reservation east of Banning, California. Except for approximately two miles of new corridor between Malki Road and the western boundary of the Reservation, the Proposed Project will utilize the transmission corridor that has been used by existing SCE 220 kV transmission lines starting in 1945, and as subsequently expanded. Matters concerning the use of the Reservation’s trust lands are subject to approval by the Morongo Band’s General Membership, which consists of all enrolled adult voting members. With limited exceptions, the Morongo Band does not release its internal ordinances and other laws to the public.

The Morongo Band’s General Membership has voted to approve the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ grants to SCE of the rights of way and easements necessary for SCE to continue operating its existing 220 kV facilities on the Morongo Reservation and to replace and upgrade those facilities with the WOD Project. The Morongo Band’s approval of these grants of rights of way and easements includes relocating approximately two miles of the corridor west of Malki Road into a new corridor depicted on Figure 2-3, Proposed and Alternative Transmission Line Routes as either the Proposed Project (Alternative 1) or the Alternative Project (1X). The existing corridor, plus either Alternative 1 or 1X, thus would be consistent with all applicable tribal laws, and are the only corridors approved by the Morongo Band for the continued operation and eventual replacement of SCE’s 220 kV facilities on and across the trust lands of the Morongo Indian Reservation.

4.2.3 Significance Criteria

4.2.3.1 CEQA Significance Criteria

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

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)).
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

4.2.3.2 NEPA Analysis

Unlike CEQA, NEPA does not have specific significance criteria. However, NEPA regulations contain guidance regarding significance analysis. Specifically, consideration of “significance” involves an analysis of both context and intensity (Title 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27).

4.2.4 Impact Analysis

4.2.4.1 CEQA Impact Assessment

Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, to nonagricultural use?

Construction Impacts

Existing substations, proposed telecommunications facilities and potential staging yards are not located in areas of designated Important Farmland. Therefore, for these components of the Proposed Project, no conversion of Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important Farmland would result and they are not discussed further.

220 kV Transmission Lines. The Proposed Project would include the removal and upgrade of approximately 181 circuit miles of existing 220 kV line facilities (approximately 48 corridor miles) primarily within the existing WOD corridor.

Access and spur roads would be used to access the planned removal and construction areas. SCE's existing access roads are located within SCE ROW/easements. New and/or expanded property rights may be required to construct new access/spur roads.

Relocation of existing distribution facilities would be required to accommodate relocation of 220 kV transmission infrastructure. Distribution work resulting from the 220 kV transmission lines element of the Proposed Project would include overhead and underground construction. Distribution work resulting from 220 kV transmission lines work would be conducted in franchise³ or newly acquired utility ROW.

The 220 kV transmission lines, access roads, and distribution lines would result in approximately 16.5 acres of temporary disturbance of Important Farmland as depicted in Table 4.2-3, Estimated Disturbed Important Farmland. The 220 kV transmission lines estimate includes the 12 kV distribution line and access road components of the Proposed Project.

Table 4.2-3: Estimated Disturbed Important Farmland

Proposed Project Components	Acres Temporarily Disturbed within Project Boundaries	Acres Permanently Disturbed within Project Boundaries
220 kV Transmission Lines (including 12 kV Distribution Lines)		
Prime Farmland	11.0	2.0
Farmland of Statewide Importance	4.7	0.7
Unique Farmland	0.8	0.8
<i>Total Important Farmland Disturbed for Transmission Lines</i>	<i>16.5</i>	<i>3.5</i>
66 kV Subtransmission Lines		
Prime Farmland	15.1	0
Farmland of Statewide Importance	0	0
Unique Farmland	0	0
<i>Total Important Farmland Disturbed for Subtransmission Lines</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>0</i>
TOTAL FOR PROJECT	31.6	3.5

Substations, telecommunications facilities, and staging yards are not located in areas of designated Important Farmland

The areas of overlap between the proposed transmission lines and designated Important Farmland are in areas where the existing WOD corridor is already established. These areas are not currently being used for agriculture. No change to the current use of this area as a utility transmission corridor would occur. The area subject to temporary disturbance during construction would be available for agriculture use at the conclusion of construction activities. The area subject to temporary disturbance would not result in the permanent conversion of land to nonagricultural use.

³ The term "franchise" refers to utility infrastructure ROW agreements that SCE holds with local jurisdictions.

Construction locations, as discussed in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, would be accessed using existing and newly constructed access/spur roads. Of the 160 miles of new and existing access/spur roads within the Proposed Project, 130 miles of existing access/spur roads would require rehabilitation and 30 miles of new access/spur roads would require more extensive construction activities. Approximately 15 miles of new roads for temporary construction access would likely occur within already accounted-for disturbance areas for the 220 kV transmission lines.

Relocation of existing distribution facilities would be required to accommodate relocation of 220 kV transmission infrastructure. Distribution work resulting from the 220 kV transmission lines element of the Proposed Project would include overhead and underground construction. Distribution work resulting from 220 kV transmission lines work would be conducted in franchise or newly acquired utility ROW. Relocated distribution line routes would be constructed within new ROW or existing franchise, primarily along existing street and public rights-of-way (see Figure 4.2-1, Important Farmland, Sheet 2). These improvements would result in impacts to 0.07 acre of Prime Farmland along the boundary or edge of the designated Important Farmland. The impact would be temporary for the duration of construction activity in this portion of the Proposed Project. The temporary impacts at locations along the boundary of these areas designated Important Farmland would not interfere with or preclude the use of these areas for agricultural purposes during the construction period. The temporary use of Important Farmland for distribution line improvements would not result in the permanent conversion of land to nonagricultural use and impacts would be less than significant.

66 kV Subtransmission Lines. The Proposed Project would require relocation of portions of the existing San Bernardino-Redlands-Timoteo (approximately 2 miles) and the San Bernardino-Redlands-Tennessee 66 kV (approximately 3.5 miles) subtransmission lines located within Segment 1.

The construction of Proposed Project improvements associated with the 66 kV subtransmission lines would result in the temporary disturbance of approximately 15.1 acres of Prime Farmland. The relocated subtransmission line routes would be constructed within new ROW or existing franchise, primarily along existing street and public ROW (see Figure 4.2-1, Important Farmland, Sheet 2). The Proposed Project improvements along the edges of these areas designated as Important Farmland would not preclude or interfere with the use of these areas for agricultural purposes during the construction period. The impact would be temporary for the duration of construction activity in this portion of the Proposed Project. The temporary use of Important Farmland for subtransmission improvements would not result in the permanent conversion of land to nonagricultural use and would be less than significant.

Overall, the Proposed Project would result in the temporary disturbance of 31.6 acres of designated Important Farmland. The area subject to temporary disturbance during construction would be available for agriculture use at the conclusion of construction activities. The area subject to temporary disturbance would not result in the permanent conversion of land to nonagricultural use, and the Proposed Project impact would be less than significant.

Operation Impacts

Existing substations and proposed telecommunications facilities are not located on areas of designated Important Farmlands. Therefore, for these components of the Proposed Project, no conversion of Prime, Unique, or Statewide Important Farmland would result and they are not discussed further.

Additionally, there is no permanent conversion of Important Farmland as a result of the 66 kV subtransmission lines (see Table 4.2-3: Estimated Disturbed Important Farmland).

The 220 kV transmission lines component (including 12 kV distribution lines and access roads) would convert approximately 3.5 acres of designated Important Farmland (See Table 4.2-3: Estimated Disturbed Important Farmland). More specifically, approximately 2.0 acres of Prime Farmland, 0.7 acre of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 0.8 acre of Unique Farmland would be converted. The conversion of Important Farmland for the 220 kV component is a result of the permanent land disturbance associated with the installation of transmission structures, the rehabilitation of existing access and spur roads, and the construction of new access roads.

Approximately 2.2 acres of converted Important Farmland are within the existing WOD corridor and are not currently used for agriculture, but are designated Important Farmland. The existing WOD corridor is currently used for utility transmission purposes and would continue to be used as such with implementation of the Proposed Project. Also located within the existing WOD corridor, approximately 1.6 acres of converted Important Farmland would be disturbed to create and rehabilitate access roads for Proposed Project construction. Although access roads are proposed in areas currently used for agriculture, utility access roads are generally compatible with agricultural uses. No change to the current use of this area as a utility transmission corridor would occur.

For determining significance of the conversion of Important Farmland for the Proposed Project, the following thresholds were used:

A conversion would be considered significant if greater than 10 acres of Prime Farmland would be converted to non-agricultural use and if greater than 40 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance or Unique Farmland would be converted to non-agricultural use.⁴

As previously stated and according to Table 4.2-3: Estimated Disturbed Important Farmland, the Proposed Project would convert approximately 2.0 acres of Prime Farmland, 0.7 acre of Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 0.8 acre of Unique Farmland. The conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland for the Proposed Project would be less than the thresholds established above, therefore resulting in a less than significant impact.

⁴ “These thresholds are used because they are the minimum acreage requirements for individual parcels able to enter into Williamson Act contracts as stated in Section 51222 of the California Government Code, and represent parcels or areas of agricultural land that are large enough to sustain agricultural uses” (CPUC, n.d.).

Normal operation of the lines would be controlled remotely through SCE control systems, and manually in the field as required. SCE inspects the transmission, subtransmission, telecommunications, and distribution overhead facilities in a manner consistent with CPUC GO 165, a minimum of once per year via ground and/or aerial observation. Maintenance would occur as needed and could include activities such as repairing conductors, washing or replacing insulators, repairing or replacing other hardware components, replacing poles and towers, tree trimming, brush and weed control, and access road maintenance. Most regular operation and maintenance (O&M) activities of overhead facilities are performed from existing access roads with no surface disturbance. Repairs to facilities, such as repairing or replacing poles and structures, could occur in undisturbed areas. Operations and maintenance could result in disturbance to agricultural lands, but as with construction disturbance to agricultural lands, would represent a de minimis loss relative to the total Farmland identified in Riverside and San Bernardino counties that the impact would be less than significant.

Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

The following discussion addresses all Proposed Project components, including substation modifications, 220 kV transmission lines, 66 kV subtransmission lines, 12 kV distribution lines, telecommunication facilities, and the establishment of staging yards.

Construction Impacts

The Proposed Project would be constructed across land zoned for agricultural use, but would not be located on any land under a Williamson Act contract.

The Proposed Project would cross approximately 267 acres of land zoned for agricultural use (see Appendix J, Land Use: Zoning Figures). The Proposed Project would be located on land zoned for agriculture in the cities of Banning, Loma Linda, and Redlands and in Riverside County, as further explained in Section 4.2.1.3 Agricultural Zoning Designations. In addition, the City of Grand Terrace applies an Agriculture Overlay Zone to portions of its jurisdiction, including portions of the Project Study Area. Public utility transmission lines and poles are an allowable use for all of these zones. For example, public utility facilities are a permitted use in the Light Agriculture with Poultry Zone in Riverside County (County of Riverside Planning Department, 2009). The Proposed Project would not conflict with the use of lands zoned for agriculture. Any construction impacts to agricultural operations would be temporary and would not cause a conflict with the underlying zoning designation. This impact would be less than significant.

Operation Impacts

Portions of the Proposed Project would be operated and maintained on land zoned for agricultural use. Operation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning regulations pertaining to agricultural use and would not conflict with any Williamson Act contracts; thus, it would have no impacts under this criterion.

Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

The following discussion addresses all Proposed Project components, including substation modifications, 220 kV transmission lines, 66 kV subtransmission lines, 12 kV distribution lines, telecommunication facilities, and the establishment of staging yards.

Construction Impacts

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land, land zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production, as defined above. No impact would result.

Operation Impacts

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land, land zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production, as defined above. No impact would result.

Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Construction Impacts

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land as defined in PRC Section 4526, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No impact would result.

Operation Impacts

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land as defined in PRC Section 4526, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No impact would result.

Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The following discussion addresses all Proposed Project components, including substation modifications, 220 kV transmission lines, 66 kV subtransmission lines, 12 kV distribution lines, telecommunication facilities, and the establishment of staging yards.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the Proposed Project is limited to those improvements necessary to upgrade the existing WOD corridor. The Proposed Project would upgrade the existing WOD corridor system by replacing the existing 220 kV transmission lines and associated structures with new, higher-capacity transmission lines and structures; installing new and/

or upgraded substation facilities; and making telecommunication improvements. The construction activity would be limited to locations where work described in Chapter 3.0, Project Description, would be performed. As described above, the construction impacts would generally occur within existing right-of-way, in acquired right-of-way, or franchise adjacent to public streets and right-of-way, or in areas where access roads specific to utility infrastructure construction and maintenance would be created. These construction impacts would be specific to the provision of utility infrastructure. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant.

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land, land zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for Timberland Production. The Proposed Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would result.

Operation Impacts

Normal operation of the lines would be controlled remotely through SCE control systems, and manually in the field as required. SCE inspects the transmission, subtransmission, telecommunications and distribution overhead facilities in a manner consistent with CPUC GO 165, a minimum of once per year via ground and/or aerial observation. Maintenance would occur as needed and could include activities such as repairing conductors, washing or replacing insulators, repairing or replacing other hardware components, replacing poles and towers, tree trimming, brush and weed control, and access road maintenance. Most regular O&M activities of overhead facilities are performed from existing access roads with no surface disturbance. Repairs to facilities, such as repairing or replacing poles and structures, could occur in undisturbed areas. Operation of the Proposed Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use. Impacts would be less than significant.

The Project Study Area does not contain forest land, land zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for Timberland Production. The Proposed Project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forestland to non-forest use. No impact would result.

4.2.4.2 NEPA Impact Assessment

Based on the analysis performed, it is anticipated that the Proposed Project would not result in significant effects under NEPA.

4.2.5 Applicant Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to agricultural and forestry resources; therefore, no Applicant Proposed Measures are proposed.

4.2.6 Alternative Project

The 220 kV Line Route Alternative 2 (Alternative Project) would include relocation of an approximately 3-mile section of Segment 5 of the existing WOD corridor pursuant to an agreement between SCE and Morongo. The Alternative Project is approximately 0.13 mile longer than the Proposed Project. Both the Proposed Project and Alternative Project include the same common elements outside of Segment 5 (including the same modifications to existing substations, the same 66 kV subtransmission line relocations in Segment 1, and the same modifications to the telecommunications system). This section focuses on the differences between the Proposed Project and Alternative Project portions of Segment 5.

The Alternative Project does not transect any additional Important Farmland, nor is there any additional Important Farmland within 500 feet of this alternative; therefore, the impacts to designated Important Farmland of the Alternative Project would be substantially similar to those of the Proposed Project. There would be no additional impacts to agricultural resources compared to the Proposed Project.

4.2.7 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, existing conditions would remain in place. The WOD corridor and associated facilities would continue to operate in the existing agricultural resources environment. The No Project Alternative would not result in construction or operation of the Proposed Project. No new impacts to agricultural resources would result.

4.2.8 References Cited

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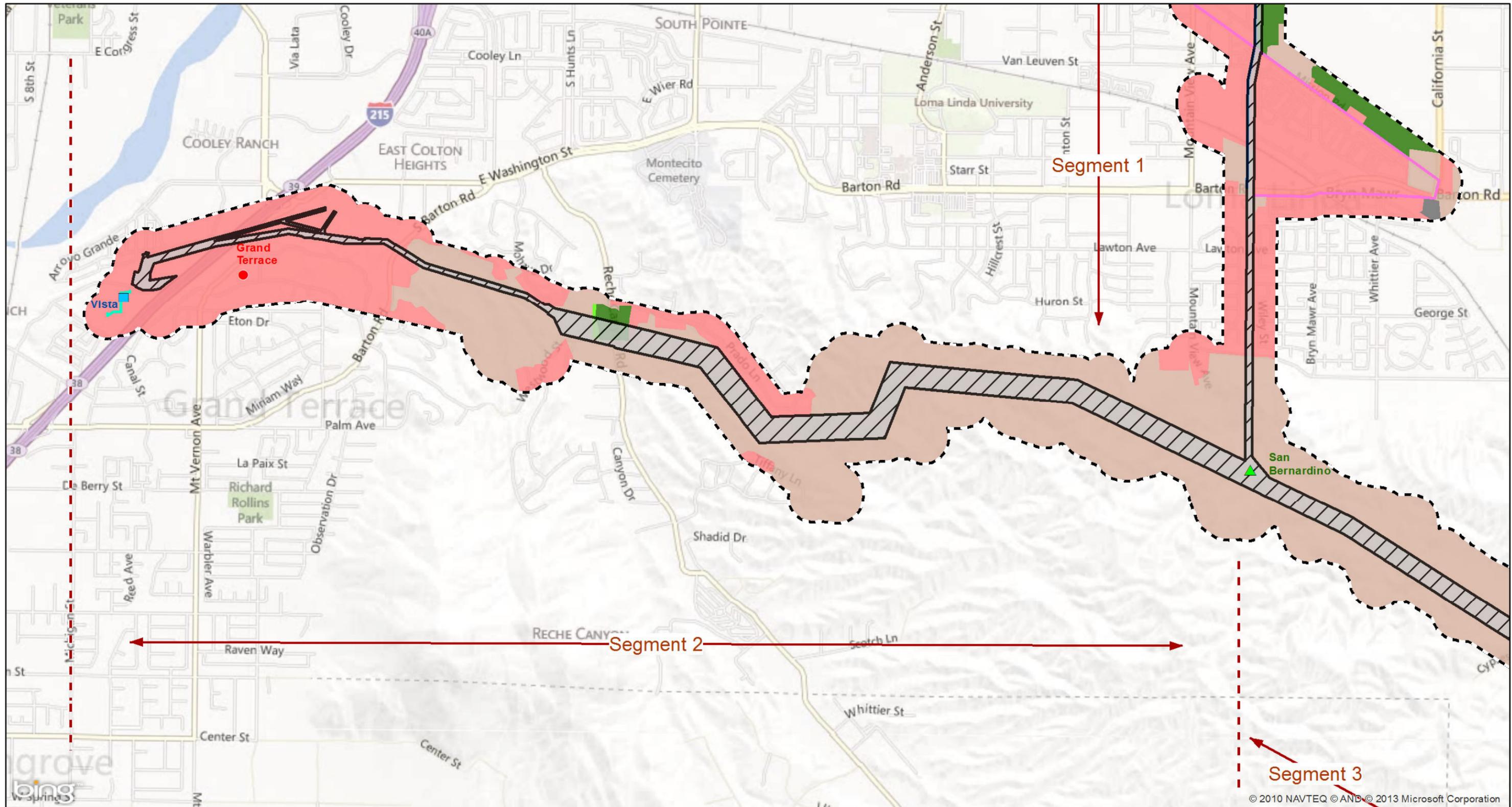
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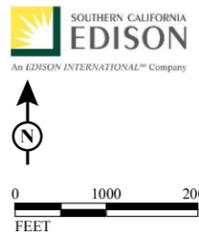
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- Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed
- Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way
- Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way
- Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both

- Staging Yards
- Substations
- Junction
- Telecommunication Line Routes
- Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes
- Relocated Distribution Line Routes

- Segment Breaks
- Morongo Indian Reservation
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Farmlands Study Area

- FMMP Farmland (2010)
- Prime Farmland (P)
 - Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)
 - Unique Farmland (U)

- Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)
- Grazing Land (G)
- Urban and Built Up Land (D)
- Other Land (X)

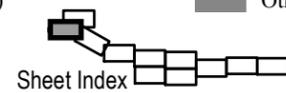
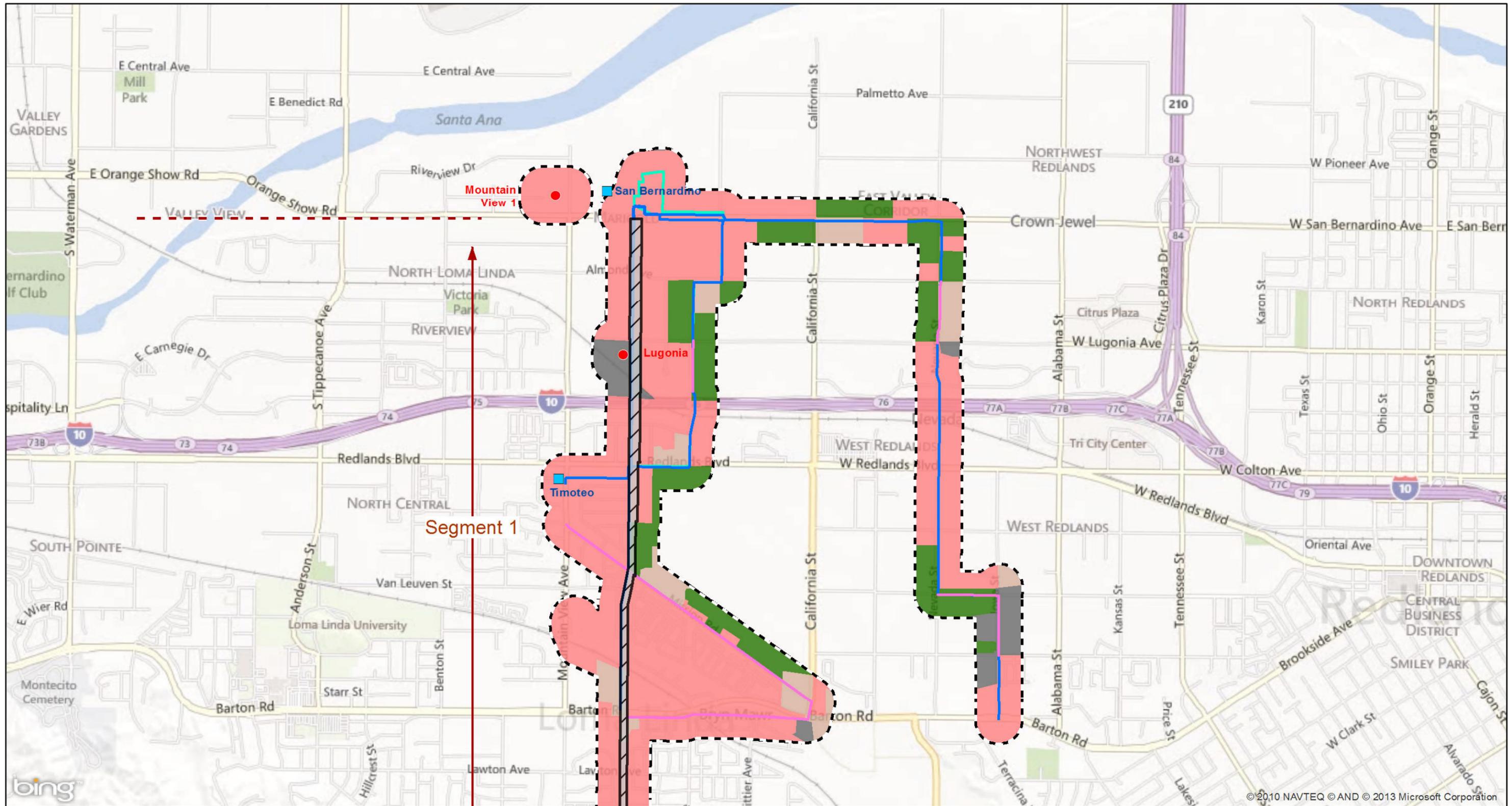


FIGURE 4.2-1
Sheet 1 of 11

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Important Farmland*

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Transmission Line Right of Way

Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed

Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way

Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way

Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both

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Telecommunication Line Routes

Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes

Relocated Distribution Line Routes

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U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Farmlands Study Area

FMMP Farmland (2010)

Prime Farmland (P)

Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)

Unique Farmland (U)

Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)

Grazing Land (G)

Urban and Built Up Land (D)

Other Land (X)



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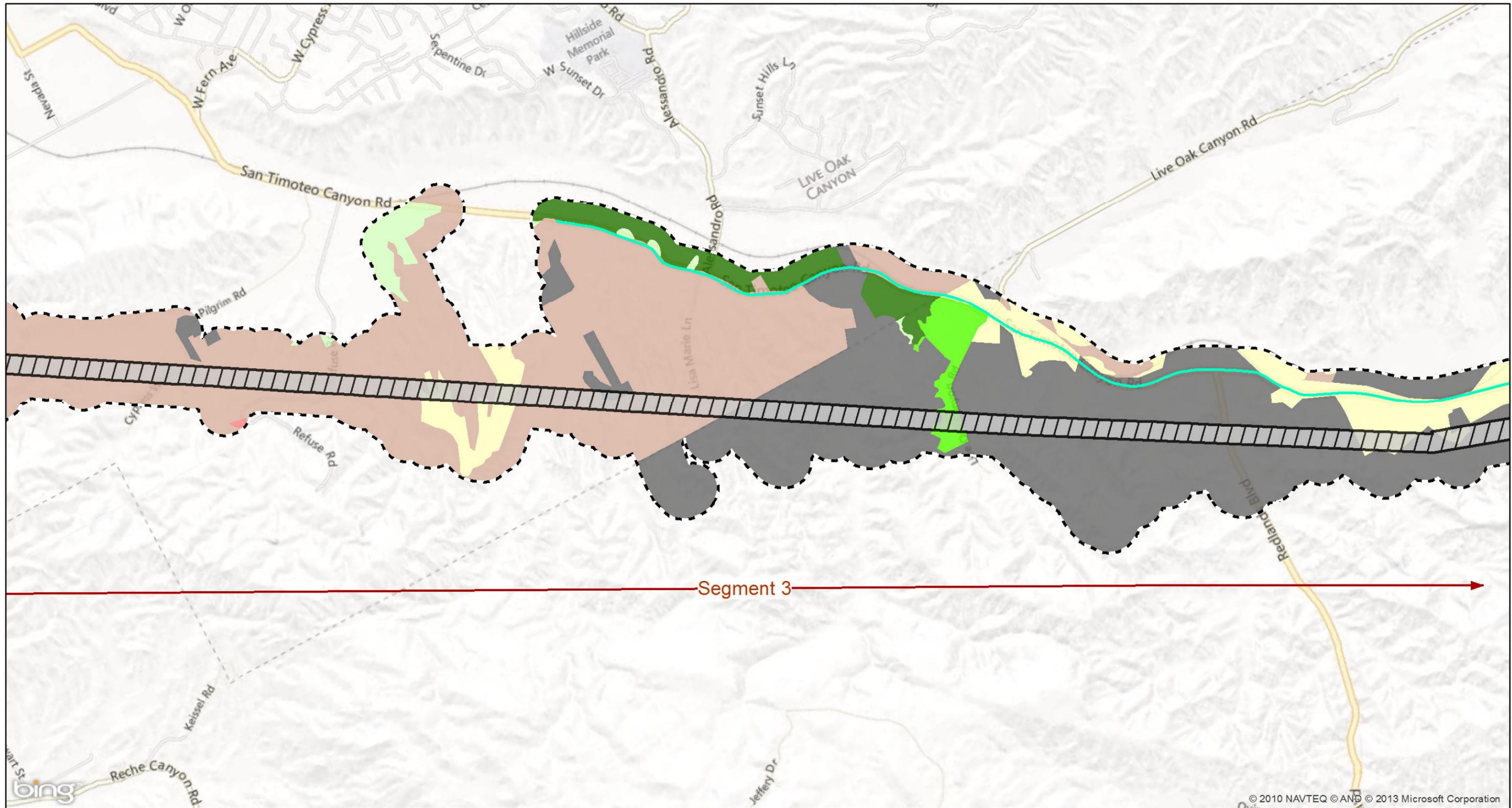
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FIGURE 4.2-1

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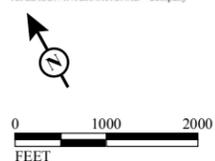
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- Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way
- Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both

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- Other Land (X)



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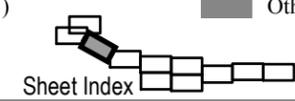
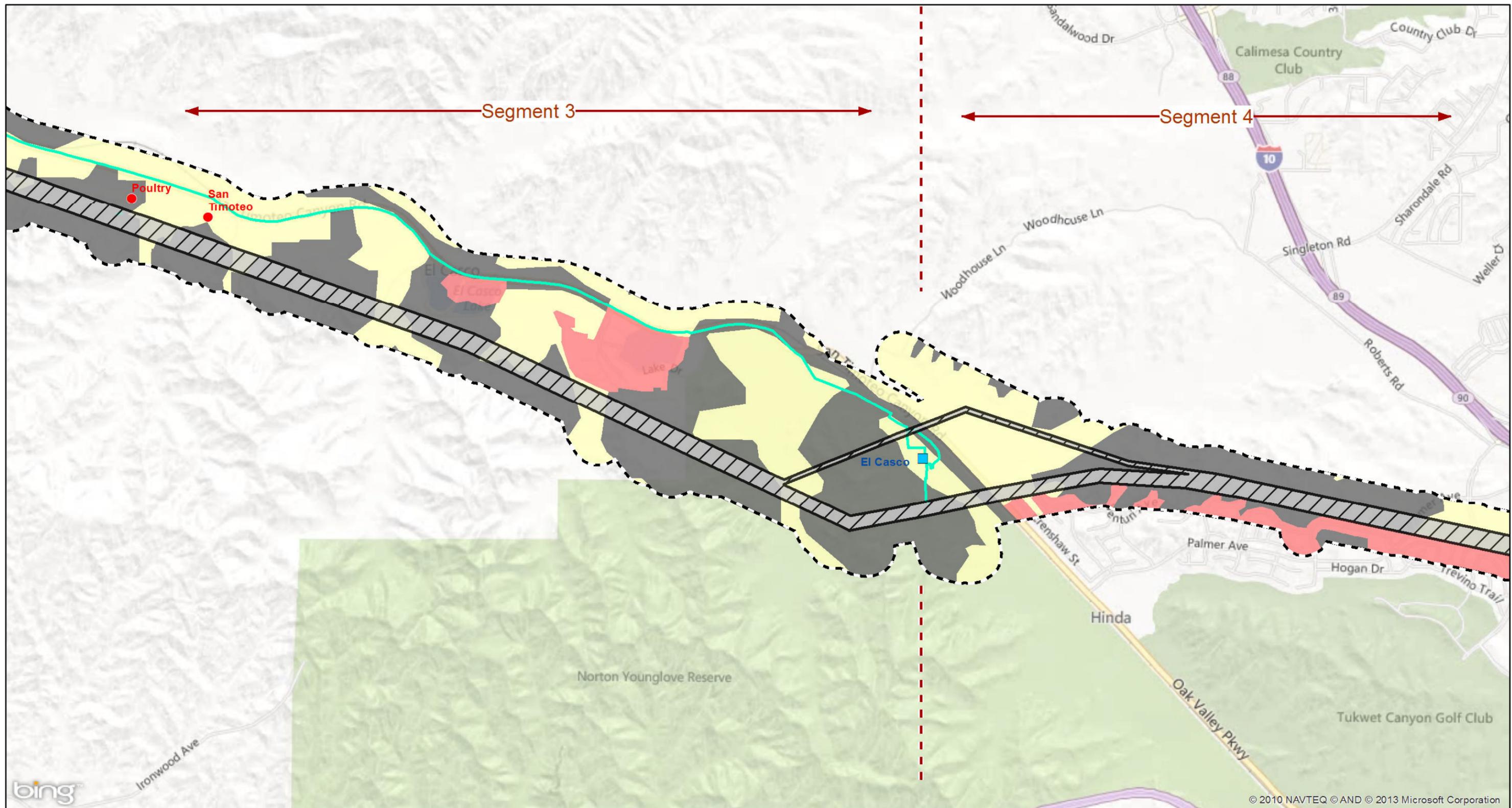


FIGURE 4.2-1
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Southern California Edison
West of Devers Upgrade Project
Important Farmland

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Transmission Line Right of Way	Staging Yards	Segment Breaks	FMMP Farmland (2010)	Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)
Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed	Substations	Morongo Indian Reservation	Prime Farmland (P)	Grazing Land (G)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way	Junction	U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	Urban and Built Up Land (D)
Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way	Telecommunication Line Routes	Farmlands Study Area	Unique Farmland (U)	Other Land (X)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both	Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes			
	Relocated Distribution Line Routes			

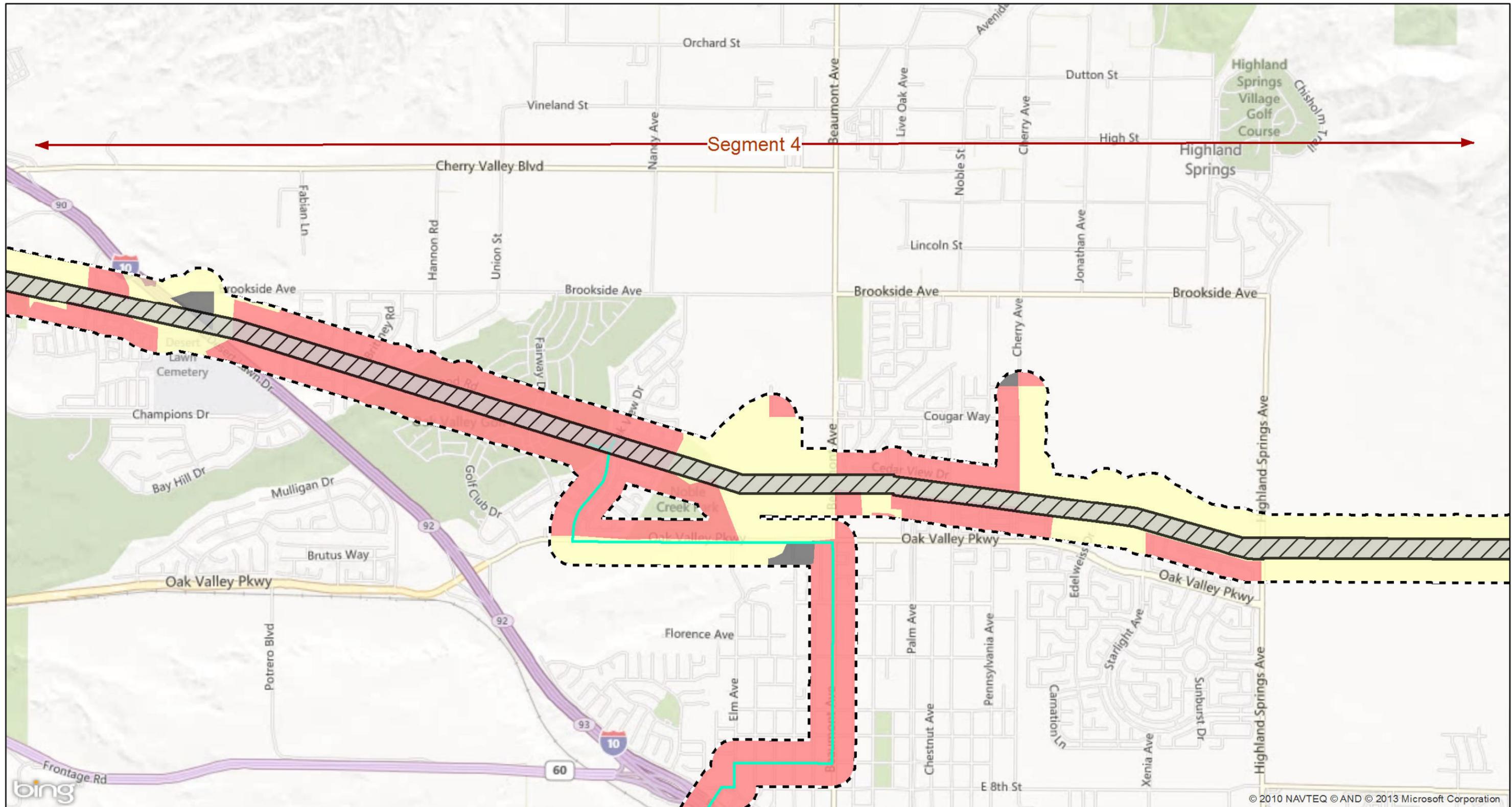
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FIGURE 4.2-1
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Important Farmland

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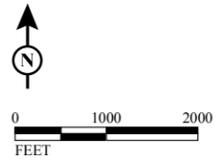


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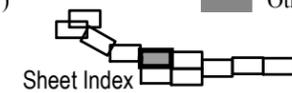
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| Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed | Substations | Morongo Indian Reservation | Prime Farmland (P) | Grazing Land (G) |
| Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way | Junction | U.S. Bureau of Land Management | Farmland of Statewide Importance (S) | Urban and Built Up Land (D) |
| Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way | Telecommunication Line Routes | Farmlands Study Area | Unique Farmland (U) | Other Land (X) |
| Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both | Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes | | | |
| | Relocated Distribution Line Routes | | | |



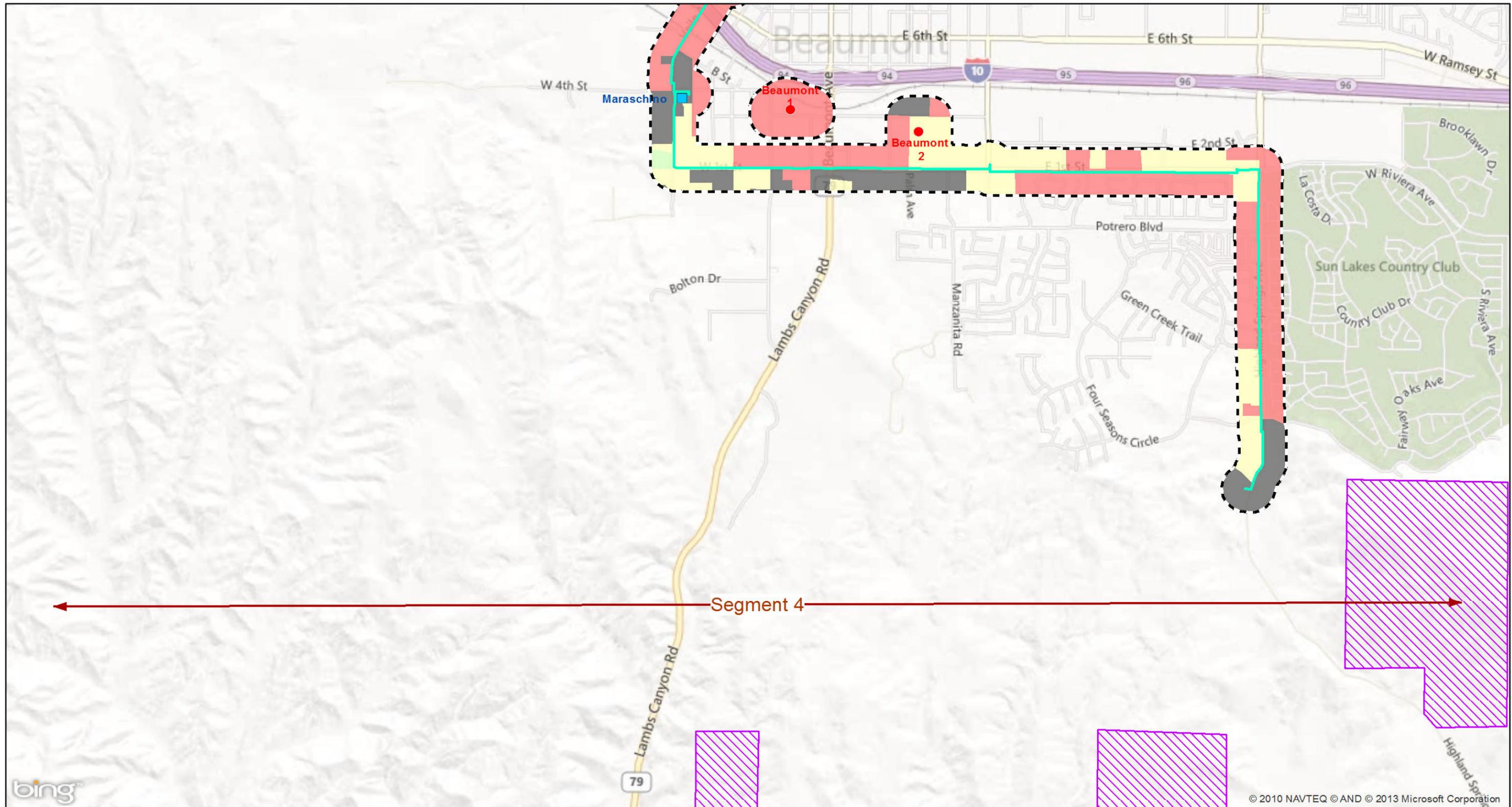
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FIGURE 4.2-1
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West of Devers Upgrade Project
Important Farmland

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Transmission Line Right of Way	Staging Yards	Segment Breaks	FMMP Farmland (2010)	Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)
Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed	Substations	Morongo Indian Reservation	Prime Farmland (P)	Grazing Land (G)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way	Junction	U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	Urban and Built Up Land (D)
Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way	Telecommunication Line Routes	Farmlands Study Area	Unique Farmland (U)	Other Land (X)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both	Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes			
	Relocated Distribution Line Routes			

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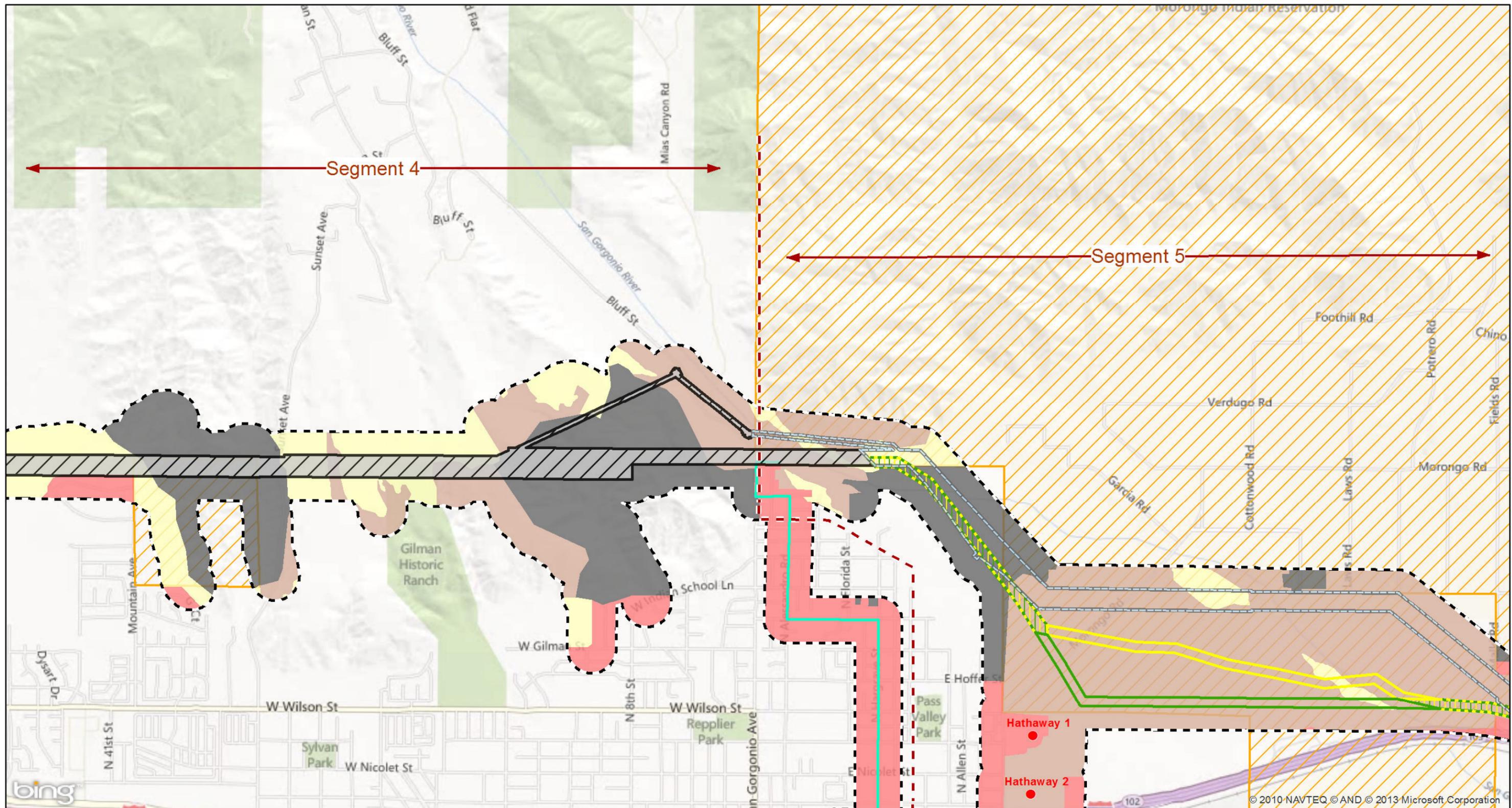
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FIGURE 4.2-1
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Transmission Line Right of Way	Staging Yards	Segment Breaks	FMMP Farmland (2010)	Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)
Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed	Substations	Morongo Indian Reservation	Prime Farmland (P)	Grazing Land (G)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way	Junction	U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	Urban and Built Up Land (D)
Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way	Telecommunication Line Routes	Farmlands Study Area	Unique Farmland (U)	Other Land (X)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both	Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes			
	Relocated Distribution Line Routes			

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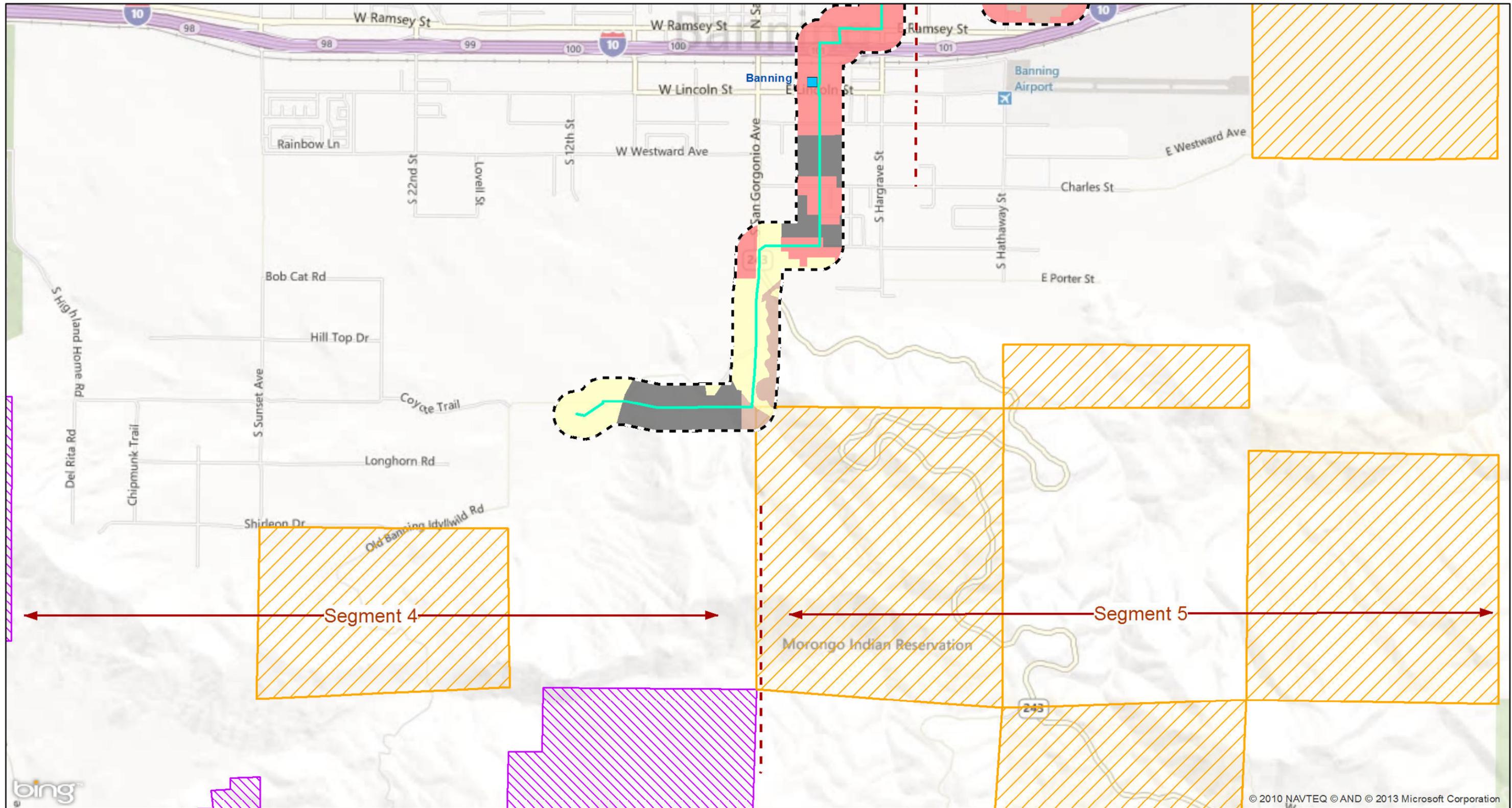
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FIGURE 4.2-1
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West of Devers Upgrade Project
Important Farmland

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U.S. Bureau of Land Management

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FMMP Farmland (2010)

Prime Farmland (P)

Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)

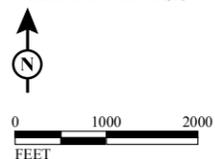
Unique Farmland (U)

Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)

Grazing Land (G)

Urban and Built Up Land (D)

Other Land (X)



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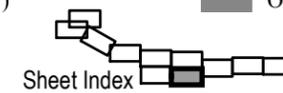
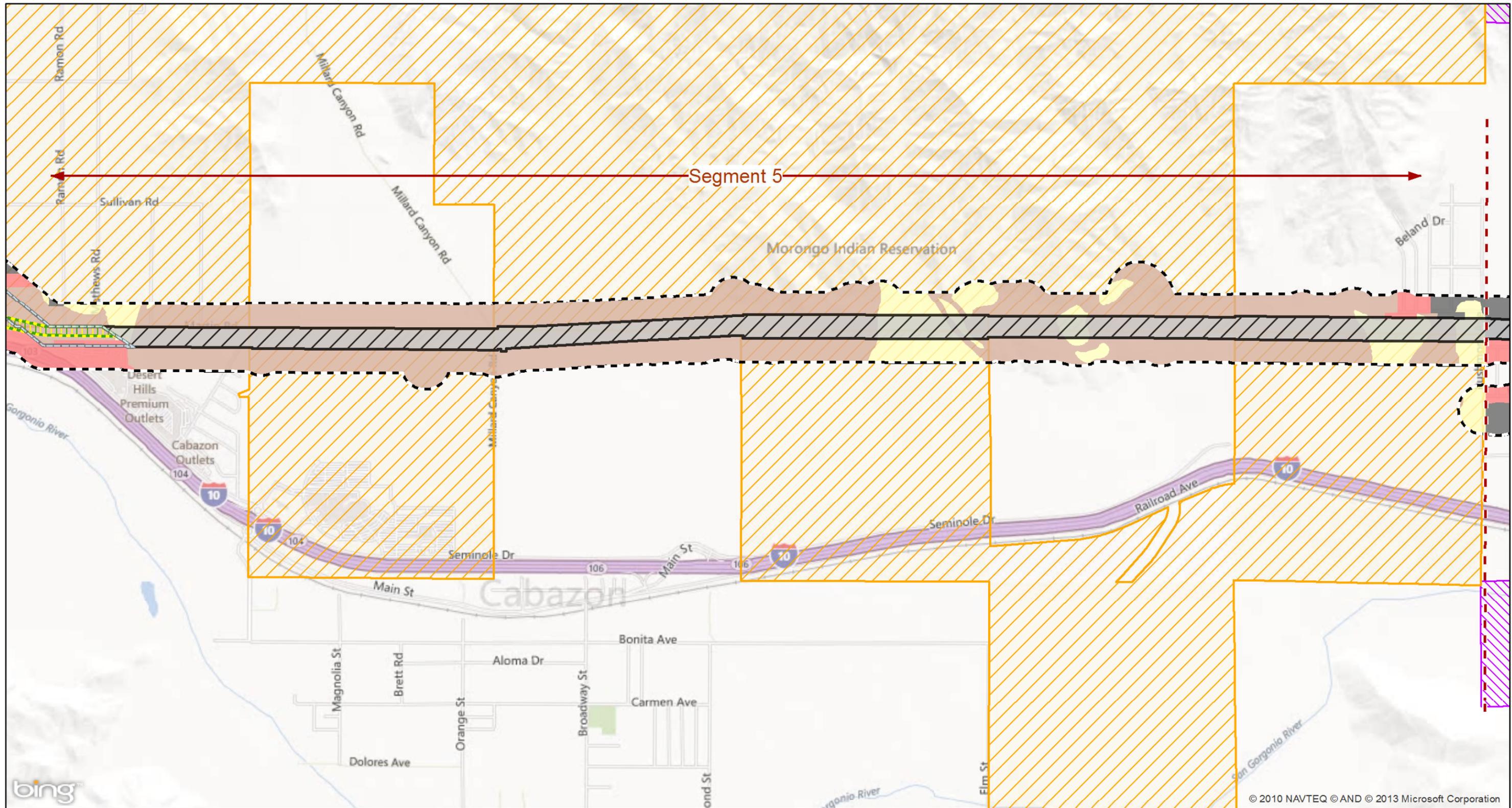


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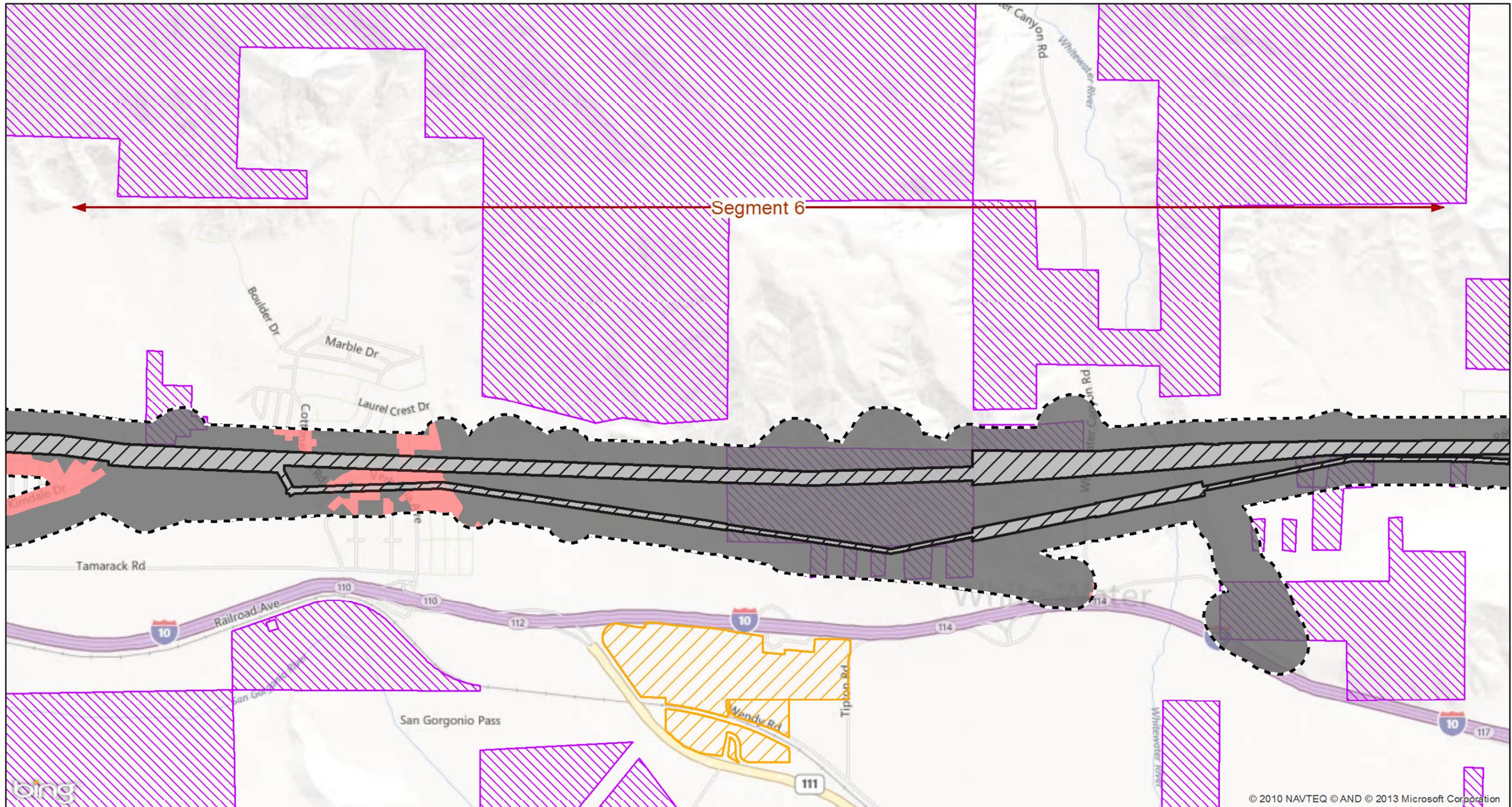
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Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed	Substations	Morongo Indian Reservation	Prime Farmland (P)	Grazing Land (G)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way	Junction	U.S. Bureau of Land Management	Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)	Urban and Built Up Land (D)
Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way	Telecommunication Line Routes	Farmlands Study Area	Unique Farmland (U)	Other Land (X)
Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both	Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes			
	Relocated Distribution Line Routes			

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FIGURE 4.2-1
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 Southern California Edison
 West of Devers Upgrade Project
 Important Farmland

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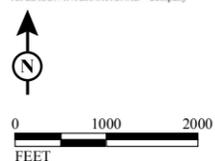
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- Urban and Built Up Land (D)
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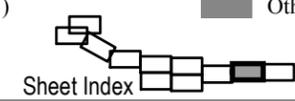
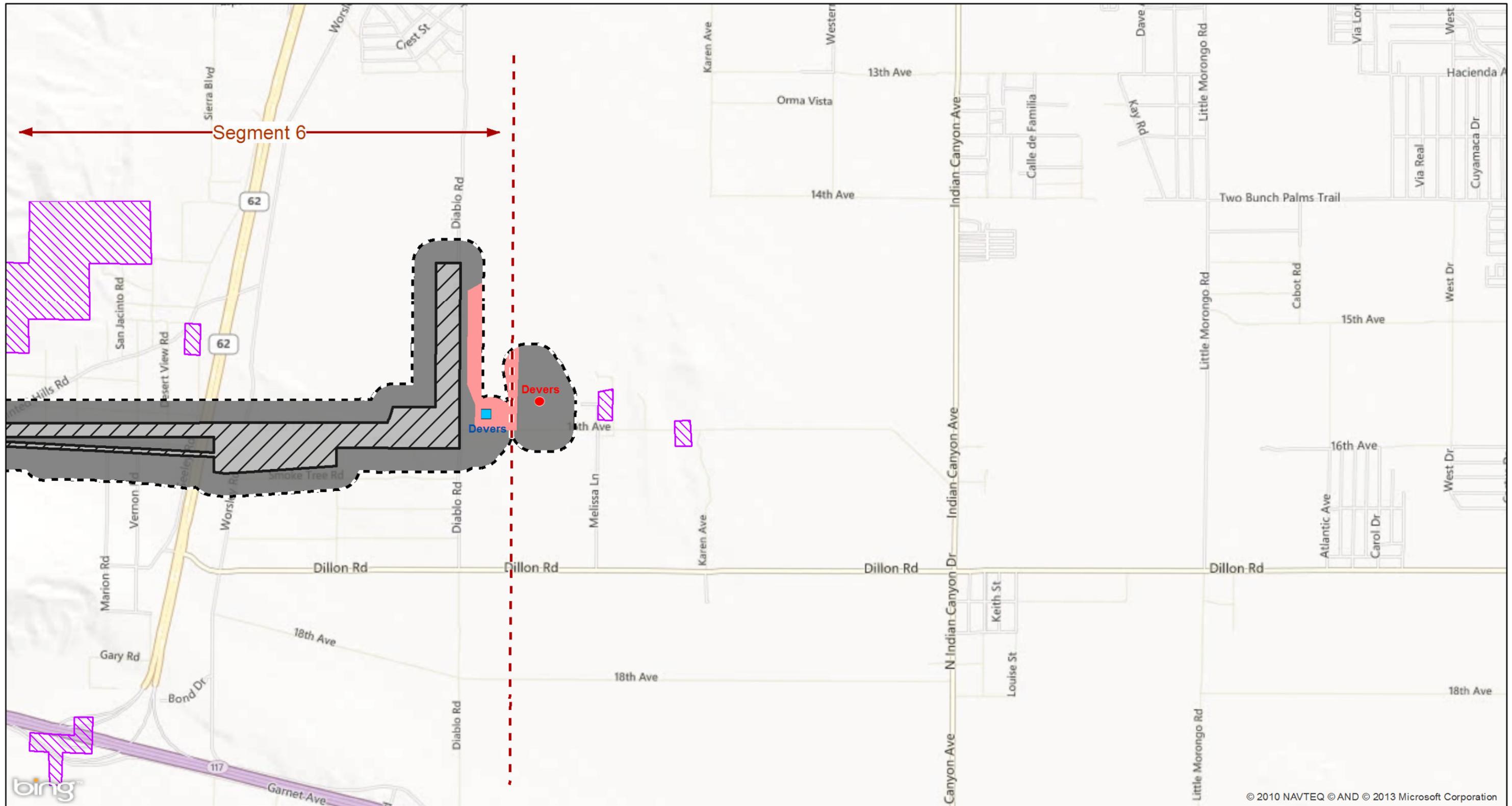


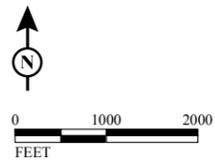
FIGURE 4.2-1
 Sheet 10 of 11

Southern California Edison
West of Devers Upgrade Project
Important Farmland

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LEGEND

- Transmission Line Right of Way
- Transmission Line Right of Way to be Removed
- Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way
- Proposed Alternative Transmission Line Right of Way
- Proposed Transmission Line Right of Way Common to Both

- Staging Yards
- Substations
- Junction
- Telecommunication Line Routes
- Relocated Subtransmission Line Routes
- Relocated Distribution Line Routes

- Segment Breaks
- Morongo Indian Reservation
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Farmlands Study Area

- FMMP Farmland (2010)
- Prime Farmland (P)
 - Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)
 - Unique Farmland (U)

- Farmland of Local Importance (L and LP)
- Grazing Land (G)
- Urban and Built Up Land (D)
- Other Land (X)



FIGURE 4.2-1

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