

4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

INTRODUCTION

This section includes descriptions of the existing environmental setting in the project area and analyses of the potential environmental impacts that would occur from implementation of the proposed project and alternatives. Discussions and explanations of the findings are provided for the following topics:

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| 4.1 Aesthetics | 4.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| 4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources | 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality |
| 4.3 Air Quality | 4.10 Land Use |
| 4.4 Biological Resources | 4.11 Noise |
| 4.5 Cultural and Paleontological Resources | 4.12 Public Services |
| 4.6 Geology and Soils | 4.13 Recreation |
| 4.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions | 4.14 Transportation and Traffic |
| | 4.15 Utilities and Services Systems |

Potential environmental effects on mineral resources and population and housing are not analyzed in this Draft EIR. The CEQA IS found that the proposed project would not result in any potential impacts to mineral resources because there are no known or potential resources within the project area (CDC 2013). The project would not cause any effects related to population and housing because the limited number of workers required for construction and operation would be drawn from the existing workforce in the area and would not result in a population increase. The level of service to be provided by the proposed project would serve City-approved projects and planned development in the City of Chula Vista General Plan (City of Chula Vista 2005) and would not induce population growth.

FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE SECTIONS

The analysis of each environmental resource area consists of six subsections: environmental setting, regulatory setting, applicant proposed measures, significance criteria, environmental impacts and mitigation measures, and project alternatives. Cumulative impacts are addressed in Section 5: Cumulative Impacts. An overview of the information included in these sections is provided below.

Environmental Setting

The analysis of each environmental resource area begins with a description of the existing physical setting (baseline conditions as determined pursuant to Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines) that may be affected by the proposed project and alternatives. Pursuant to CEQA

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Guidelines (§ 15125[a]), the environmental setting used to determine the impacts associated with the proposed project and alternatives is based on the environmental conditions that existed in the study area in September 2014 when the NOP was published.

The content and level of detail of the environmental setting is proportional to the environmental resource areas discussed and the extent of the potential impacts that could occur from project activities.

Regulatory Setting

The regulatory setting section provides a description of the relevant regulations and guidelines that pertain to each of the 15 resource topics listed above. This section may contain information from various sources, such as federal or state regulations and local agency guidelines, plans, and policies.

Applicant Proposed Measures

SDG&E has proposed measures to avoid or reduce project impacts. The APMs would be considered as part of the project and tracked through the MMRP, similar to mitigation measures.

Significance Criteria

Significance criteria are identified for each environmental resource area and used as a benchmark for determining if a project would result in a significant environmental impact when evaluated against the baseline conditions (i.e., existing conditions). The significance criteria were developed using Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as a foundation.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The results of the environmental impact analysis conducted for the proposed project and alternatives are presented in Sections 4.1 through 4.15. Each environmental impact analysis includes the following elements:

- Impact discussion
- Significance determination before and after application of APMs
- Mitigation measures for significant impacts
- Significance determination after mitigation

Evaluation of Impacts

Each section includes discussions of the potential effects of the proposed project and alternatives on the environment. The significance of each project impact is first considered prior to application of APMs, and a significance determination is stated. Then, the significance of each project impact is considered with application of APMs. Mitigation is required if the impact is significant after implementation of APMs. The CPUC has determined whether there is “no impact,” “less-than-significant impact,” “less-than-significant impact with mitigation,” or

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“significant unavoidable impact” for each threshold of significance and before and after implementation of APMs.

The impact analyses are organized by the two phases of the project (i.e., [1] construction and [2] operation and maintenance) and further organized by project component (i.e., proposed substation, TL 6965 power line, Miguel Substation, and staging yards) if appropriate for the resource topic, significance criteria, or impact analysis.

Feasible mitigation measures are identified to eliminate or reduce significant impacts. The impact remaining after mitigation is then evaluated. Impacts meeting or exceeding the impact significance threshold after mitigation are considered significant and unavoidable impacts.

Implementation of more than one mitigation measure may be needed to reduce an impact below the level of significance. The mitigation measures recommended in this document are identified within each section (Sections 4.1 through 4.15) and are presented in Section 9: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan of this document.

Project Alternatives

Section 3: Alternatives provides a list, description, and map of alternatives to the proposed project. Sections 4.1 through 4.15 present the impact analysis for the alternatives carried forward for analysis in this Draft EIR, including the No Project Alternative. The analysis of impacts from alternatives focuses on how the impacts of each alternative differ from that of the proposed project. Section 6: Comparison of Alternatives provides a comparative analysis of the impacts of the proposed project and the alternatives.

Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis

Cumulative impacts of the proposed project are discussed in Section 5: Cumulative Impacts. The focus of the cumulative impact analysis is to identify those project impacts that might not be significant when considered alone, but may contribute to a significant impact when viewed in conjunction with past, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

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