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4.1 AESTHETICS

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c.	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.1.1 Introduction

This section of the PEA describes the existing conditions relating to visual and aesthetic resources within the Proposed Project area and potential impacts to these resources that could result from the construction, operation, or maintenance of the Proposed Project.

Visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that are seen and that contribute to the public’s experience and appreciation of the environment. Visual or aesthetic resource impacts are generally defined in terms of a project’s physical characteristics and potential visibility and the extent to which its presence would alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment. Potential impacts of the Proposed Project to aesthetic resources would be less than significant.

4.1.2 Methodology

The visual analysis is based on review of technical data including Proposed Project maps and drawings provided by SDG&E, aerial and ground level photographs of the Proposed Project area, local planning documents, and computer-generated visual simulations. Field observations were conducted in October 2013 to document existing visual conditions in the Proposed Project area and to identify potentially affected sensitive viewing locations. Sensitive viewing locations were identified based upon CEQA criteria and include the following:

- Locations along designated scenic roadways;
- Recognized Scenic Vista points;
- Nearby residences in San Diego and Poway; and
- Publicly accessible locations where visible project changes could be particularly noticeable.

This visual study employs assessment methods based, in part, on the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA), and other accepted visual analysis techniques as summarized by Sardon, et al. (1986). This study also addresses the *CEQA Guidelines* for visual impact analysis. This analysis systematically documents the visual setting and evaluates visual changes associated with the Proposed Project. In order to convey a sense of existing visual conditions, a set of 24 photographs depict representative public views of the Proposed Project area. As depicted in these photographs, public views of the Proposed Project area currently include electric transmission, distribution, and substation facilities. These existing conditions constitute the baseline from which visual impacts are evaluated.

Consistent with FHWA methods, this impact analysis describes changes to existing visual resources and assesses probable viewer responses to such changes. This assessment evaluates representative views from which the Proposed Project would be visible to the public. In order to document the visual change that would occur, visual simulations show the Proposed Project from key representative public viewpoints, or Key Observation Points (KOPs). The visual impact assessment is based on evaluation of the changes to the existing visual resources that would result from construction and operation of the Proposed Project. These changes were assessed, in part, by evaluating the after views provided by the computer-generated visual simulations and comparing them to the existing visual environment.

4.1.2.1 Visual Simulation Methods

Visual simulations were produced using established computer-modeling and rendering techniques. The simulations illustrate the visual change associated with the Proposed Project as seen from publicly accessible KOPs within the Proposed Project area. Taken together, the set of simulations illustrate the representative visual change associated with the Proposed Project. The KOP locations were selected to represent sensitive viewing locations, as described in Section 4.1.2, and to represent the views of the largest number of affected viewers.

The visual simulations produced by Environmental Vision are the results of an objective computer modeling process; the technical methods employed for producing the computer-generated simulation images are outlined below (see Figures 4.1, Regional Landscape Context and 4.1-2 through 4.1-13 Photographs and Simulations).

High resolution digital photographs were taken using a single lens reflex (SLR) camera with a 50 millimeter (mm) lens or equivalent which represents a horizontal view angle of 40 degrees. An exception is Figure 4.1-8, that uses a 35 mm lens equivalent, representing a slightly wider horizontal view angle of 55 degrees to show the Proposed Project at Oviedo Street. Systematic documentation of photography viewpoint locations included Global Positioning System (GPS) recording and photograph log sheet and basemap annotation. Three-dimensional (3-D) computer modeling for proposed transmission structures, developed using engineering design data supplied by SDG&E, was combined with geographic information system (GIS) and engineering data and digital aerial photographs of the existing site to produce digital modeling for visual analysis and simulation of the Proposed Project. For the simulation viewpoints, photograph locations were incorporated based on GPS field data, using 5 feet as the assumed eye level.

Computer "wireframe" perspective plots were overlaid on the photograph to verify scale and viewpoint locations. Digital visual simulation images were then produced based on computer renderings of the 3-D modeling combined with selected digital photographs of the sites.

Digital photographs and computer modeling and rendering techniques were also employed by Burns and McDonnell engineers to produce two visual simulations that portray the appearance of proposed cable pole structures (refer to Figures 4.1-9 and 4.1-10).

The final "hardcopy" visual simulation images contained in this visual analysis were printed from the digital image files and produced in color on 11 by 17 inch sheets. The simulation figures present two images per sheet - an existing view with a simulation below that portrays the Proposed Project from the corresponding KOP. A summary of the ten simulation views and a description of the particular Proposed Project changes portrayed in each of the views are included in Section 4.1.4.

4.1.3 Existing Conditions

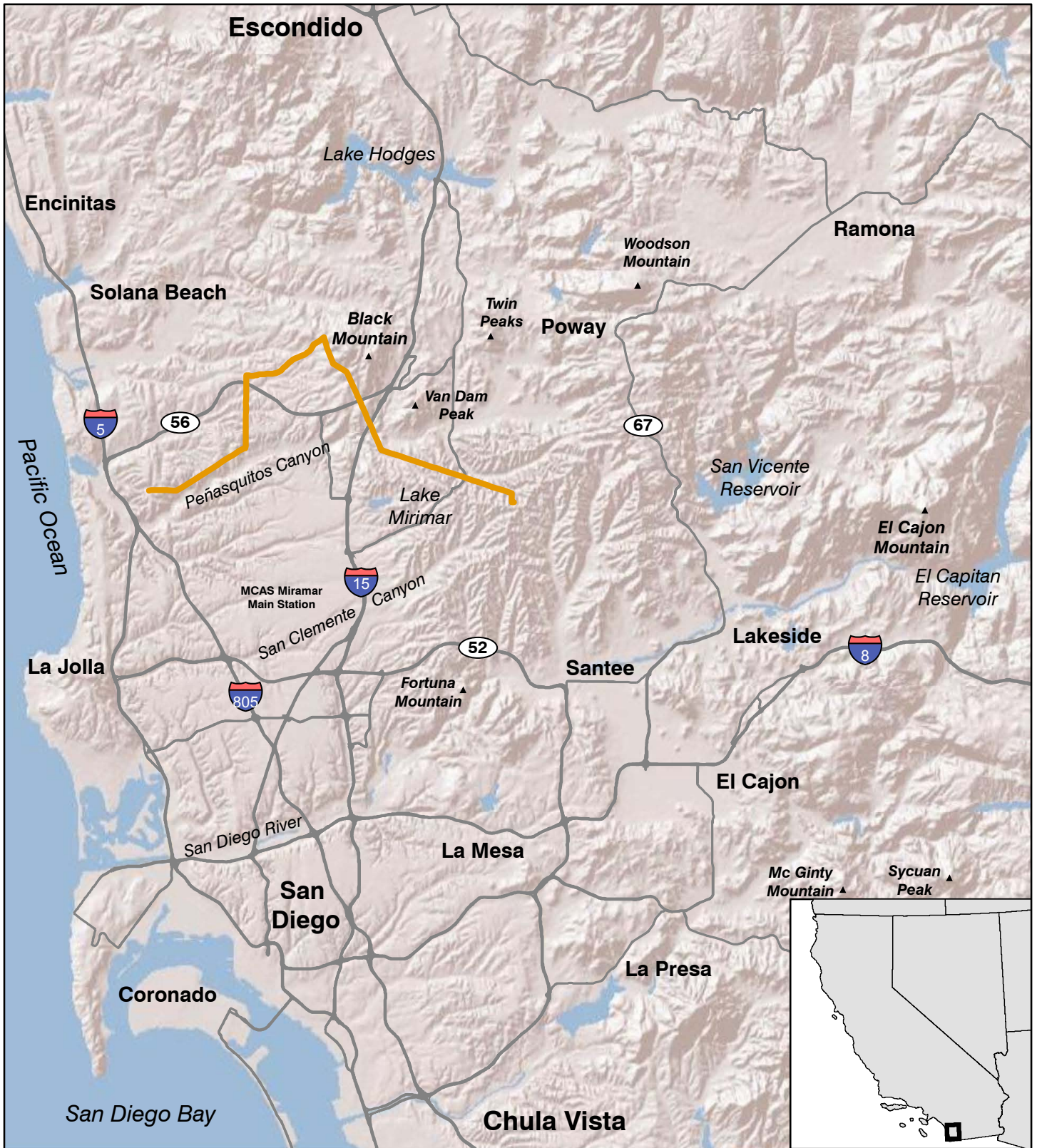
4.1.3.1 Regional and Local Landscape Setting

The Proposed Project is located on the California coastal plain of western San Diego County, approximately 30 miles west of the Laguna Mountains and 20 miles north of San Diego Bay (refer to Figure 4.1-1). Landforms in the Proposed Project area generally consist of rolling hills, canyons, and mesas, or flat-topped outcroppings, and canyon rims. From some locations in the Proposed Project area, hillsides and peaks are visible landscape features in the distance. Dominant landmarks within the Proposed Project vicinity are Black Mountain with a peak of approximately 1,500 feet above sea level and Los Peñasquitos Canyon and its tributaries. This east-west lying coastal ravine reaches approximately 250 feet in depth and almost 1 mile across. Elevations along the Proposed Project route range from approximately 250 to 900 feet above sea level, primarily traversing rolling hills, ridgelines, and canyons.

Rainfall in the region is limited, and native vegetation is typically sparse and low growing chaparral and coastal sage scrub. In open areas exposed rock and soil are commonly visible. Where streams in this area flow year round, dense vegetation occurs along riparian corridors; however, it is mostly limited to valley bottoms, as well as to areas of human influence and habitation.

The Proposed Project begins at Sycamore Canyon Substation, located on the northern edge of the MCAS Miramar and trends in a northwest to southwest arc, terminating at Peñasquitos Substation, in the community of Torrey Hills. The Proposed Project route travels through many northern communities of the City of San Diego, as well as a small section of the City of Poway. The Proposed Project route lies near or crosses portions of three major regional open spaces: Black Mountain Open Space Park, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Del Mar Mesa Preserve. Additionally, the route passes near a number of local parks (see Figure 4.9-1 Proposed Route Land Use Map, for location of parks and open space).

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Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Regional Landscape Context

Figure 4.1-1

— Proposed SX to PQ Alignment

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Brad Carter
Created By: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION

Date: 3/28/2014




A Semptra Energy Utility
Sources: SDG&E, 2013; Esri

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-1

The eastern half of the route is generally more densely populated than the western portion. As the Proposed Project travels northwest from Sycamore Canyon Substation, it crosses through the communities of Rancho Encantada, Scripps Miramar Ranch, Miramar Ranch North, and Rancho Peñasquitos, as well as the City of Poway, transitioning often between residential/commercial areas and undeveloped land. In this area, the route crosses or is in proximity to a number of major roadways, including I-15 and State Route 56 (SR-56), as well as regional roadways such as Pomerado Road, Scripps-Poway Parkway, Poway Road, Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Mountain Road. In Black Mountain Ranch Community Park, in the community of Black Mountain Ranch, the route changes direction and heads generally southwest along Carmel Valley Road, then through mostly undeveloped areas within the community boundaries of Pacific Highlands Ranch, Torrey Highlands, Del Mar Mesa, and Carmel Valley where it passes near residential areas along the northern rim of Los Peñasquitos Canyon. The Proposed Project terminates in the community of Torrey Hills, at the Peñasquitos Substation.

Nighttime lighting in the Proposed Project area includes street lighting, as well as localized lighting sources associated with residential and commercial development.

4.1.3.2 Proposed Project Viewshed

The Proposed Project viewshed is defined as the general area from which the project is visible or can be seen. For purposes of describing a project's visual setting and assessing potential visual impacts, the viewshed can be broken down into distance zones of foreground, middleground, and background. The foreground is defined as the zone within a quarter to a half-mile from the viewer. Landscape detail is most noticeable and objects generally appear most prominent when seen in the foreground. The middleground can be defined as a zone that extends from the foreground up to three to five miles from the viewer, and the background extends from about three to five miles to infinity.

Analysis of the Proposed Project primarily considers the potential effects of Proposed Project elements on foreground viewshed conditions, although consideration is also given to middleground and background views. As described below, the Proposed Project would be visible from some nearby locations along public roads. In addition, it would be seen from a limited number of residential and public recreation areas. At many locations, intervening natural landforms would partially or fully screen public views of the Proposed Project. Given these conditions as well as the length of the overall Proposed Project alignment, the Proposed Project would not be visible in its entirety from any single viewing location.

Within the Proposed Project area, transmission structures, including substations, steel and wood poles, and overhead conductors associated with existing transmission and power lines including the Proposed Project, are established features seen within the landscape setting.

4.1.3.3 Project Segments and Representative Views

The Proposed Project is divided into four segments based upon the type and location of proposed facilities (refer to Section 3.3, Proposed Project Description). This section includes a description of existing visual conditions and landscape character found along each of the four Proposed Project segments. Table 4.1-1, Summary of Project Segments, summarizes length, location, and

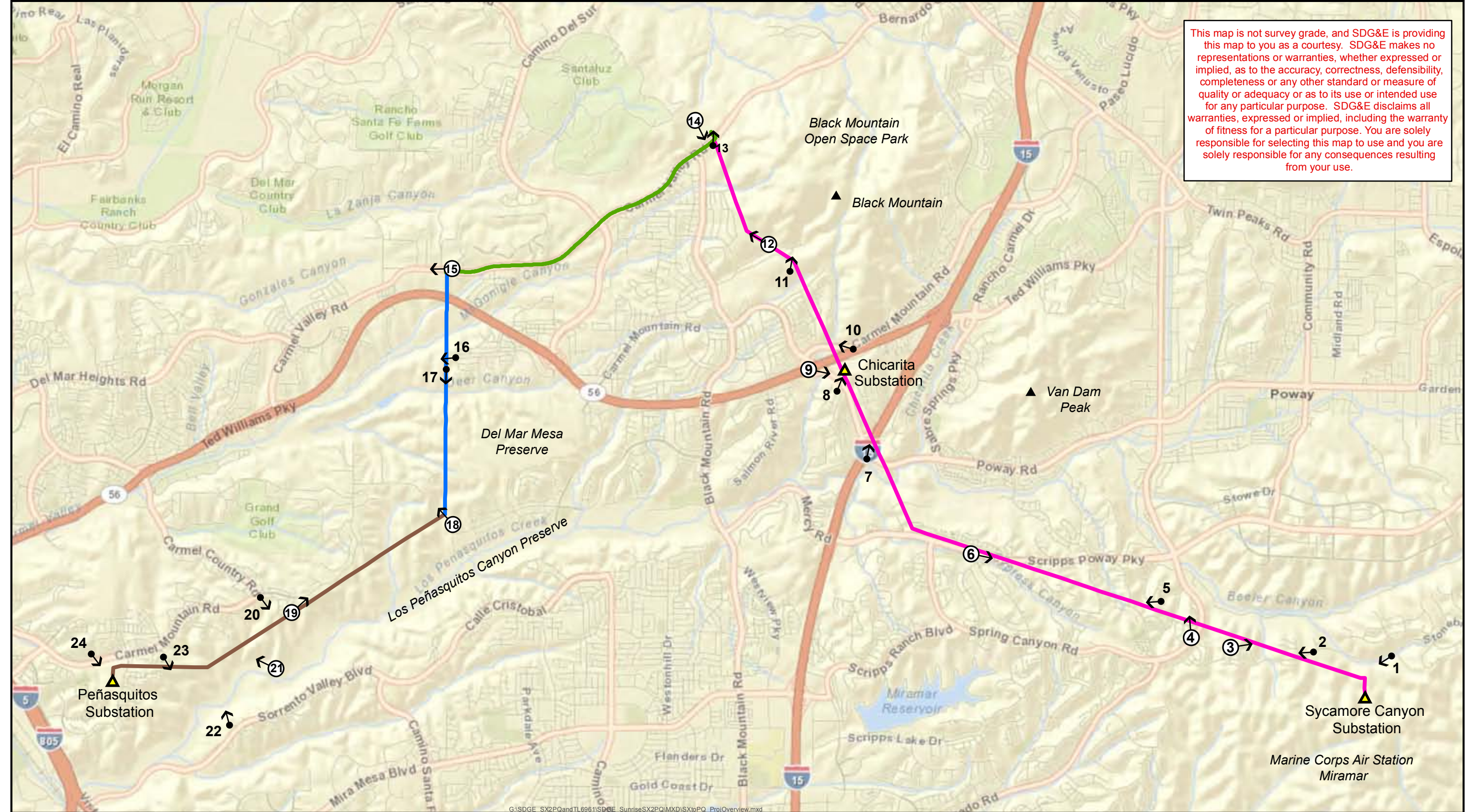
representative views along the segments. Figure 4.1-2, Photograph Viewpoint Locations, delineates the Proposed Project route, and photograph viewpoint locations. Figures 4.1-3a through 4.1-3l, Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting, present a set of 24 photographs that show representative visual conditions and existing public views within the Proposed Project area.

As described in the following text and depicted in the environmental setting photographs, utility structures such as overhead lines, existing steel lattice transmission towers, existing tubular steel transmission and power line structures, two-pole wood H-frame structures or substation facilities are seen throughout most of the Proposed Project area, including the majority of the approximately 13.9 miles of overhead corridor. The only segment of the Proposed Project alignment that does not contain existing utility structures is Segment B (Carmel Valley Road), which is proposed to have the new 230 kV transmission line installed in an underground position. Segments A, C, and D of the Proposed Project alignment all contain three existing circuits (power and transmission lines) on two sets of support structures. Within each of these segments, existing support structures include 230 kV structures that are similar in size to the Proposed Project structures.

Table 4.1-1: Summary of Project Segments

Project Segment (Approximate length)	Segment Location	Primary Affected Viewers¹	Representative Photograph Numbers²	Representative Simulation Figure
Segment A (8.31 miles)	Sycamore Canyon Substation to Carmel Valley Road	Residents, motorists, recreationalists	1 through 14	4.1-4 through 4.1-8
Segment B (2.84 miles)	Carmel Valley Road	Motorists and recreationalists	13 through 15	4.1-9 and 4.1-10
Segment C (2.19 miles)	Carmel Valley Road to Peñasquitos Junction ³	Recreationalists and residents	15 through 18	4.1-11
Segment D (3.34 miles)	Peñasquitos Junction to Peñasquitos Substation	Recreationalists and residents	18 through 24	4.1-12 and 4.1-13
Notes: ¹ Section 4.1.3.4 includes a discussion of potentially affected viewers. ² Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for viewpoint locations. ³ Peñasquitos Junction refers to the location where several existing power lines (TL 13804, TL 6906, and TL 675) turn from a north/south alignment and travel west into the Peñasquitos Substation.				

This map is not survey grade, and SDG&E is providing this map to you as a courtesy. SDG&E makes no representations or warranties, whether expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, correctness, defensibility, completeness or any other standard or measure of quality or adequacy or as to its use or intended use for any particular purpose. SDG&E disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, including the warranty of fitness for a particular purpose. You are solely responsible for selecting this map to use and you are solely responsible for any consequences resulting from your use.



Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project

Photograph Viewpoint Locations

Figure 4.1-2

- 1 ● → Photograph Viewpoint Location and Direction
- ⑩ → Simulation Viewpoint Location and Direction
- ▲ Substation

- Segment A - New 230kV Overhead
- Segment B - New 230kV Underground
- Segment C - New 230kV Overhead
- Segment D - New 230kV Overhead

Created For:
Brad Carter

Created By: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION



Date: 10/17/2013

Sources: SDG&E, 2013; Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, IPC, NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2013

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-2

Segment A: Sycamore Canyon Substation to Carmel Valley Road (Photographs 1 through 14)

Segment A extends approximately 8.31 miles and is situated in an area of low rolling hills and valleys with sparse native vegetation interspersed with developed areas that include ornamental landscaping, parks, and roadside trees. In this segment, the Proposed Project route follows existing overhead electric lines on two sets of support structures through areas of varied land use including open space, low to medium-density residential, and commercial/office development. Segment A crosses several regional roadways and two highways.

The segment begins at the Sycamore Canyon Substation, located on the northern edge of the MCAS Miramar, south of Beeler Canyon. Photograph 1 is a view toward the Sycamore Canyon Substation from Stonebridge Parkway looking southwest toward the substation. The substation is also visible from a limited number of residences located immediately north of Stonebridge Parkway. From the Sycamore Canyon Substation, the route proceeds northwest and the existing set of 138 kV overhead lines is supported primarily by wood H-frame structures adjacent to a mixture of taller 230 kV steel poles and lattice towers. Photograph 2, taken from Stonebridge Parkway near Sycamore Canyon Park, in the community of Rancho Encantada, shows the route's proximity to undeveloped land and residential areas. Transmission and power line structures along the Proposed Project route are visible in the distance on the hillside. Photograph 3 illustrates a close-range view of the Proposed Project route from residences on Fortino Point, in Rancho Encantada. Both existing 138 kV wood H-frames and 230 kV steel lattice structures are seen on the skyline. Photograph 4 is a view from northbound Pomerado Road where the Proposed Project route crosses the roadway 0.25 mile away; existing overhead transmission and power line structures along the Proposed Project route are visible on the left side of the photograph, beyond roadside vegetation.

After crossing Pomerado Road, the Proposed Project route continues along a series of ridges that border residential areas in the City of Poway (Photograph 5) and the communities of Scripps Miramar Ranch and Miramar Ranch North. It also passes near several parks, including Cypress Canyon Park, Butterfly Gardens Mini Park, and Spring Canyon Park; however, topography and vegetation screen the Proposed Project route from most locations. As the Proposed Project route continues northwest it crosses and then parallels Scripps-Poway Parkway, an east-west arterial road. In Photograph 6, an eastbound view from this roadway, existing transmission, power line structures and conductors along the Proposed Project route are visible to the left of the road and the closest poles are prominent along the skyline.

As the Proposed Project Route approaches Scripps Summit Drive, it shifts direction to the north-northwest, crossing the eastern end of Los Peñasquitos Canyon, Poway Road, and I-15, a major north-south freeway. Photograph 7 shows the Proposed Project route crossing I-15, with existing wood H-frame, tubular steel transmission structures and conductors on the hillside to the left of the road, partially seen against the skyline and partially against the hillside beyond an overpass.

Directly north of I-15, the Proposed Project route crosses through the community of Rancho Peñasquitos, in a mixed commercial/residential area. Photograph 8, a view from this residential area, shows existing transmission and power line structures along the Proposed Project route as well as a portion of the existing Chicarita Substation. The Proposed Project route crosses a limited number of local streets, as well as Carmel Mountain Road (Photograph 10) and SR-56,

also known as the Ted Williams Parkway. Photograph 9 is a view from SR-56 showing one existing wood H-frame structure and two tubular steel transmission poles along the Proposed Project route visible against the sky on a knoll to the left of Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard. From Carmel Mountain Road, the Proposed Project route continues northwest, traveling through residential areas and the western portion of Black Mountain Open Space Park. It also passes near Hilltop Community Park (Photograph 11), several schools, including Mt. Carmel High School, as well as residential areas. Photograph 12 shows the Proposed Project route crossing the roadway with residences located on the adjacent hillside. Segment A terminates north of Carmel Valley Road in Black Mountain Ranch Community Park (Photographs 13 and 14).

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1. Stonebridge Parkway near Deprise Cove looking southwest (Segment A)



2. Stonebridge Parkway near Sycamore Canyon Park looking west (Segment A)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3a



3. Fortino Point near Wild Meadow Place looking northeast (Segment A) *



4. Pomerado Road near Stonebridge Parkway looking north (Segment A) *

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3b



5. Treadwell Drive near Creek Bluff Drive looking west (Segment A)



6. Scripps-Poway Parkway at Scripps Creek Drive looking east (Segment A)*

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3c



7. Interstate Highway 15 northbound at Poway Road looking north (Segment A)



8. Calle De Las Rosas at Via De Cantera looking north (Segment A)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3d



9. State Route 56 eastbound near Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard looking east (Segment A) *



10. Carmel Mountain Road near Freeport Road looking west (Segment A)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3e



11. Hilltop Community Park near Oviedo Way looking north (Segment A)



12. Oviedo Street near Rasmussen Way looking northwest (Segment A) *

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3f



13. Carmel Valley Road near Black Mountain Park Way looking north (Segment A-B Junction)



14. Black Mountain Ranch Park looking south (Segment A-B Junction) **

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

**Simulation View. Photograph taken by Burns McDonnell.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3g

Segment B: Carmel Valley Road (Photographs 13 through 15)

Segment B, the underground portion of the Proposed Project, runs 2.84 miles along Carmel Valley Road, a curving arterial street in a low density residential area of Black Mountain Ranch and Torrey Highlands.

At Black Mountain Ranch Park, a community park with sports fields, located northeast of Black Mountain Road (Photographs 13 and 14), the Proposed Project route turns southwest to follow Carmel Valley Road, a tree lined arterial and collector street. In this area, the Proposed Project route crosses Camino Del Sur and a limited number of local roadways. Additionally, the route passes near the Torrey Del Mar Neighborhood Park and the Kids Bay Learning Center, a private pre-school off Carmel Valley Road. This Proposed Project segment ends near Via Abertura where the route again changes direction and heads directly south. Photograph 15, taken from Carmel Valley Road, shows an existing steel lattice transmission tower on the left side of the road, beyond roadside vegetation and conductors crossing overhead.

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15. Carmel Valley Road near Collins Ranch Place looking west (Segment B-C Junction) **



16. Santa Fe Canyon near Via Canyon Drive looking west (Segment C)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

**Simulation View. Photograph taken by Burns McDonnell.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
 Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting

Figure 4.1-3h

Segment C: Carmel Valley Road to Peñasquitos Junction (Photographs 15 through 18)

Segment C follows existing overhead electric lines supported by two sets of structures that are situated almost entirely within the undeveloped rolling brush covered hills north of Los Peñasquitos Canyon. This approximately 2.19-mile-long segment crosses open sections of McGonigle and Deer Canyons, Del Mar Mesa Preserve, and passes near residential areas in the communities of Torrey Highlands and Del Mar Mesa. It also crosses SR-56; however, it does not cross any other public roads.

At the junction of Sections B and C, on Carmel Valley Road, the Proposed Project route goes from an underground position back to an overhead position and heads south, again following existing overhead power and transmission lines. In Photograph 16, structures from each of these lines appear against the sky as they pass near houses along Torrey Santa Fe Road and Santa Fe Canyon. Photograph 17 is a trail view taken approximately 500 feet from Santa Fe Canyon; the trail leading south into Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is visible near the center of the view, roughly following the Proposed Project route as it proceeds toward Deer Canyon along the hills. Near Park Village Road and Celome Way (Photograph 18), the Proposed Project route turns southwest, continuing as Segment D. Known as Peñasquitos Junction, this location is where several existing power lines (TL 13804, TL 6906, and TL 675) turn from a north/south alignment and travel west into the Peñasquitos Substation.

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17. Trail to Peñasquitos Canyon near Santa Fe Canyon looking south (Segment C)



18. Park Village Road near Celome Way looking northwest (Segment C-D Junction) *

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3i

Segment D: Peñasquitos Junction to Peñasquitos Substation (Photographs 18 through 24)

Segment D is approximately 3.34 miles long and follows existing overhead electric lines that are supported by two sets of structures along the north rim of Los Peñasquitos Canyon and passes within 150 feet of some residences located in the communities of Carmel Valley and Torrey Highlands. Vegetation in this area is sparse, except where residential landscaping occurs. Compared with other areas along the Proposed Project route, within this segment views toward the Proposed Project are more open and existing structures can be seen against the sky from as far away as the south side of the canyon, which is over 0.5 mile away.

The Proposed Project route heads southwest along the north edge of Los Peñasquitos Canyon on undeveloped land passing near residential developments that are currently under construction and generally not accessible to the public. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Trail is located approximately 0.25 mile to the south.

Several residential areas are located near the northern edge of Los Peñasquitos Canyon within the community of Carmel Valley, and a limited number of residences lie within three hundred feet of the Proposed Project route. In these locations, several trails lead down into Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Photograph 19 is a view of the Proposed Project route from a trail near Briarlake Woods Drive; Los Peñasquitos Canyon lies to the right, out of the view. From this location, houses and residential landscaping are visible on the left. In Photograph 20, taken from a nearby park located approximately 1,000 feet from the Proposed Project, residences can be seen on the left, while on the right, both an existing wood H-frame and steel lattice tower are visible against the sky. The distant south rim of Los Peñasquitos Canyon is visible beyond.

Within this part of Segment D, multi-use trails of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve lie approximately 700 feet south of the Proposed Project route. Photograph 21, a view from Los Peñasquitos Canyon Trail on the north side of Peñasquitos Creek, demonstrates that beyond the valley floor, the walls of the canyon rise steeply, and existing overhead transmission and power line structures as well as several houses are visible against the sky at the rim of the canyon. In many other locations along this trail, topography and riparian vegetation screen views of structures along the Proposed Project route.

Views of the Proposed Project route are available from the south side of Los Peñasquitos Canyon in the community of Mira Mesa. Photograph 22 is a view from this area showing that, although houses built along the opposite rim are quite visible, existing overhead transmission and power line structures are not especially discernible at this distance. In the community of Torrey Hills, near the terminus of the Proposed Project, a limited number of residences have close-range views of the overhead existing transmission and power line structures on the Proposed Project route (Photograph 23). The Proposed Project alignment crosses a small commercial area, and then terminates at Peñasquitos Substation, located near Carmel Mountain Road and East Ocean Air Drive, in the community of Torrey Hills. Photograph 24 shows the substation and several existing overhead transmission and power lines from a public park located across Carmel Mountain Road.



19. Trail to Peñasquitos Canyon near Briarlake Woods Drive looking northeast (Segment D) *



20. Park near Carmel Mountain Road at Carmel County Road looking southeast (Segment D)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3j



21. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Trail North looking west (Segment D) *



22. Juniper Park Lane near Sorrento Valley Boulevard looking north (Segment D)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

*Simulation View

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-3k



23. Manorgate Drive at Laurelcrest Drive looking southeast (Segment D)



24. Park near Carmel Mountain Road at Senda Luna Llena looking southeast (Segment D)

Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint locations

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Photographs of Existing Facilities and Environmental Setting
Figure 4.1-31

4.1.3.4 Potentially Affected Viewers

Accepted visual assessment methods, including those adopted by FHWA and other federal agencies, establish estimated sensitivity levels as a measure of likely public concern for changes to scenic quality. Viewer sensitivity, one of the criteria for evaluating visual impact significance, can be estimated into high, moderate, and low categories. Factors considered in assigning a sensitivity level include viewer activity, view duration, viewing distance, adjacent land use, and special management or planning designation. According to the DOT *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects*, research on the subject suggests that certain activities tend to heighten viewer awareness of visual and scenic resources, while others tend to be distracting. The primary potentially affected viewer groups within the Proposed Project area are described briefly below. It should be noted that these viewers already experience the presence of existing transmission and power line facilities including substations, wood H-frames, tubular steel poles, steel lattice towers, and overhead conductors. It should also be noted that viewer sensitivity can differ in level from one viewer to another, since each viewer notices and values different attributes of the visual environment differently.

Motorists

Motorists, the largest viewer group that could be affected by the Proposed Project, include people traveling on I-15, SR-56, and local/regional streets including Pomerado Road, Scripps-Poway Parkway, Poway Road, Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Mountain Road. Local travelers, who are familiar with the visual setting, are the primary motorists in the Proposed Project area, although other motorists may include those using the highways on a less regular basis. Affected motorists' views are generally brief in duration, typically lasting less than a few minutes. Viewer sensitivity is considered low to moderate.

Recreationalists

Recreationalists, another potentially affected viewer group, include hikers, equestrians, and cyclists using trails, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Black Mountain Open Space Park and Del Mar Mesa Preserve, as well as visitors to local parks such as Spring Canyon Park, Hilltop Community Park, Black Mountain Ranch Community Park, Cypress Canyon Neighborhood Park and Sage Canyon Park. View duration for this group could range from several minutes to several hours, and viewer sensitivity is considered moderate to high.

Residents

Residents within the Proposed Project area comprise the third viewer group. As described in Section 4.1.3.3, along parts of the Proposed Project route, residential properties border or lie in close proximity to the route. Residential views tend to be long in duration; sensitivity to visual change for this viewer group is considered moderate to high.

4.1.3.5 Regulatory Background

The Proposed Project route is primarily located within the City of San Diego, with a limited portion located in the City of Poway. Federal lands through which the Proposed Project passes

include the San Diego Wildlife Refuge and MCAS Miramar. In addition, portions of the Proposed Project pass through the California Coastal Zone.

The Proposed Project involves modifications within a developed utility corridor where there are currently two sets of overhead electric structures and there would continue to be two sets of structures. Additionally, where the Proposed Project does not follow an existing transmission or power line ROW, it is located underground in franchise position in Carmel Valley Road. Due to the presence of these existing transmission and power line facilities and, because the proposed visual change would only be incremental, the Proposed Project would conform to the pertinent visual policies outlined below.

Federal

U.S. Marine Corps

A limited portion of the Proposed Project including the Sycamore Canyon Substation and approximately 0.25 mile of route are located in the MCAS Miramar. As well as identifying sensitive natural resources (MCAS Miramar, 2000), the U.S. Marine Corps prepared a cultural resources management plan addressing sensitive historic and cultural resources for the Air Station (MCAS Miramar, 2011). These plans do not contain specific policies regarding aesthetics which apply to the Proposed Project.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The San Diego National Wildlife Refuge is comprised of approximately 11,100 acres in discontinuous parcels around the San Diego area, primarily in the center of the county. Approximately 650 feet of the Proposed Project route near Preserve Way in Del Mar Mesa passes through a 19 acre portion of this refuge. A Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) has been developed for the South San Diego Bay and Sweetwater Marsh units located approximately 20 miles south of the Proposed Project area. The USFWS is currently finalizing the administrative draft CCP/Environmental Assessment for the Vernal Pools Stewardship project area near Del Mar Mesa through which the Proposed Project passes (USFWS, 2013). At this time, neither document contains specific policies regarding aesthetics that pertain to the Proposed Project.

State

California Department of Transportation: Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways or have been designated as such. The status of a state scenic highway changes from "eligible" to "officially designated" when the local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receives from Caltrans the designation. A city or county may propose adding routes with outstanding scenic elements to the list of eligible highways. However, state legislation is required for designation.

The nearest Designated State Scenic Highway, SR-75 is over 15 miles south of the Proposed Project and the Proposed Project is not visible from this road. The nearest Eligible State Scenic Highway is I-5, approximately 0.75 mile west of the Project’s termination point; however, due to the viewing distance and because intervening topography and existing structures largely screen the Proposed Project route from this roadway, the Proposed Project would not affect views.

California Coastal Act

The 1976 Coastal Act establishes the California Coastal Commission’s (CCC’s) jurisdiction over the state’s coastal zone, generally defined as the land and water area “extending inland 1,000 yards from the mean high tide line of the sea.” The Coastal Act provides for protection of coastal visual resources.

A portion of the western end of the Proposed Project passes through the Coastal Zone. Coastal Zone policies are incorporated within the City of San Diego Community Plans, and the Coastal Commission certifies each Community Plan which has areas in the coastal zone. Community Plan areas within the Coastal Zone through which the Proposed Project passes include Torrey Hills, Carmel Valley, Del Mar Mesa, and Pacific Highlands Ranch. The Proposed Project is located within Coastal Zone areas in Pacific Highland Ranch, Del Mar Mesa, and Carmel Valley Community Plan areas. None of the three Community Plans include specific policies regarding aesthetics that pertain to the Proposed Project.

Local

CPUC General Order 131-D

CPUC General Order 131-D states that local governments have no discretionary authority over construction of utility power line or substation projects. However, as part of the environmental review process, SDG&E has considered relevant land use plans and policies that pertain to visual quality for the jurisdictions crossed by the Proposed Project route. As noted below at the end of each policy discussion, the construction and operation of this Proposed Project does not conflict with any environmental plans, policies, or regulations pertinent to aesthetics.

San Diego County General Plan

Chapter 5, the Conservation and Open Space Elements of the *San Diego County General Plan* (San Diego, 2011) contains provisions regarding scenic roads in the county scenic highways. The county does not designate scenic roads within the City of San Diego (San Diego County, 2011, Figure C-5). Scripps Poway Parkway, 2.7 miles east of the Proposed Project in the unincorporated county, is the nearest county scenic highway; however, the Proposed Project is not visible from this segment of the road.

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Master Plan

The Proposed Project crosses and lies near Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, an approximately 4,000 acre area that encompasses Los Peñasquitos and Lopez Canyons. The preserve is jointly managed by the City and County of San Diego. The *Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Master Plan* (San Diego, 1988) acknowledges the SDG&E utility easement (the Proposed Project route) located within the preserve and recognizes that some of the access roads for the Proposed Project route double as hiking trails (p. 51). The management plan contains general provisions about

protecting the scenic resources particularly limiting development visible from the area. However, the plan does not contain specific provisions regarding aesthetics that pertain to the Proposed Project.

City of San Diego General Plan

The Mobility, Urban Design, Public Facilities, Services and Safety, and Recreation Elements of *San Diego General Plan* (San Diego, 2011) contain provisions regarding aesthetics in the Proposed Project areas.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element delineates Community Plan areas within the City. It also discusses the relationship between the Coastal Zone and Community Plans. However, it does not contain policies regarding aesthetics that apply to the Proposed Project.

Mobility Element

The Mobility Element recommends designating scenic routes within the City; however, no scenic routes are identified. Additionally, it recommends placing utility lines underground, to the extent practicable (p. ME-25). Where the Proposed Project does not follow an existing transmission ROW, it is located underground within franchise in Carmel Valley Road.

Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element recommends minimizing the visual impact of utilities and undergrounding overhead utilities. Where the Proposed Project does not follow an existing transmission ROW, it is located underground within franchise in Carmel Valley Road.

UD-A.16. Minimize the visual and functional impact of utility systems and equipment on streets, sidewalks, and the public realm.

a. Convert overhead utility wires and poles, and overhead structures such as those associated with supplying electric, communication, community antenna television, or similar service to underground. (p. UD-15)

Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element

The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element recommends undergrounding utility lines. Accordingly, where the Proposed Project does not follow an existing transmission ROW, it is located underground within franchise in Carmel Valley Road. The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element also recommends incorporating public art into utility facilities.

In 2002, San Diego adopted a policy for the undergrounding of overhead utility lines to protect public health, safety, and general welfare. (p. PF-48)

PF-M.4 Cooperatively plan for and design new or expanded public utilities and associated facilities (e.g., telecommunications infrastructure, planned energy generation facilities, gas compressor stations, gas transmission lines, electrical substations and other large scale gas and electrical facilities) to maximize environmental and community benefits.

- a. Incorporate public art with public utility facilities, especially in urban areas. (p. PF-50)

Recreation Element

The Recreation Element has general provisions regarding aesthetics in the Proposed Project area including preserving open space view corridors to the water and significant topographic features; however, the Proposed Project would not affect view corridors to the water nor would it substantially affect significant topographic features.

City of San Diego Community Plans

The *City of San Diego General Plan* indicates that the city is divided into 50 Community Plan areas each with its own adopted community plan. In some cases, these are precise or specific plans. The Proposed Project passes through ten Community Plan areas including:

- Rancho Encantada,
- Scripps Miramar Ranch,
- Miramar Ranch North,
- Rancho Peñasquitos,
- Black Mountain Ranch,
- Torrey Highlands,
- Pacific Highlands Ranch,
- Del Mar Mesa,
- Carmel Valley, and
- Torrey Hills.

Policies regarding aesthetics contained in these plans focus on designing aesthetically pleasing streets and residential areas and preserving open space and views. Several of the plans also recommend undergrounding utilities; however, these generally refer to distribution lines and lines below 69 kV. Some of the plans acknowledge the existing Proposed Project route and recommend siting recreational trails within the SDG&E easement.

North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan

The *North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan* (2006) pertains to a 12,000 acre area on the northern edge of San Diego which was largely undeveloped in 1992, when the plan was first adopted. The plan encompasses the following subareas: Black Mountain Ranch, Torrey Highlands, Del Mar Mesa, Pacific Highlands Ranch, and Fairbanks Country Club.

The plan mentions preserving scenic value of natural features and broadly identifies areas of high scenic values. However it does not have specific aesthetic policies that apply to the Proposed Project.

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)

The *Multiple Species Conservation Program* (San Diego, 1998) is a comprehensive habitat conservation planning program that is directed to preserve native vegetation communities and address multiple species habitat needs in a 900-square-mile area in southwestern San Diego County including large portions of the City of San Diego. The plan does not contain specific policies regarding aesthetics.

City of Poway Comprehensive Plan

Approximately 0.4 mile of the Proposed Project route passes through the City of Poway. The Natural Resources Element of the *Poway Comprehensive Plan* (City of Poway, 1991) contains general policies regarding aesthetics in the Proposed Project area, in particular preserving natural and scenic resources, scenic vistas, and views toward mountains ridgelines.

City of Poway Transportation Master Element

The *Transportation Master Element* (City of Poway, 2010) designates several roadways in the City of Poway as scenic. The nearest of these, Midland Road, is 2.4 miles from the Proposed Project route; however, the Proposed Project would not be visible from this roadway.

4.1.4 Potential Impacts and Significance Criteria

4.1.4.1 Significance Criteria

The significance criteria for assessing the impacts to aesthetics come from the CEQA Environmental Checklist. According to the CEQA checklist, a project will cause a potentially significant impact if it will:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Factors considered in applying these criteria to determine significance include the extent of Proposed Project visibility from residential areas, public open space and designated scenic routes; the extent of change in the landscape's composition and character; the degree to which the various Proposed Project elements would contrast with or be integrated into the existing landscape; and the number and estimated sensitivity of viewers.

4.1.4.2 Question 1a – Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**Construction and Operation & Maintenance – Less Than Significant Impact**

The Proposed Project area includes existing overhead transmission and power lines and substation facilities that are visible within the public viewshed. These existing facilities constitute the baseline from which impacts are measured. For purposes of this evaluation, a scenic vista is defined as a distant public view along or through an opening or corridor that is recognized and valued for its scenic quality.

There are no officially designated scenic vistas in the Proposed Project area. A scenic pull-out situated along Calle Cristobal on the south rim of Los Peñasquitos Canyon is located approximately one mile from the Proposed Project. Due to the viewing distance, the existing overhead transmission and power line facilities located within the Proposed Project corridor are barely evident from this pull-out; therefore the Proposed Project would not substantially affect the existing views seen from this location. In addition, within Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, the open canyon landscape and distant ridgelines are visible from some locations along recreation trails. As described in detail below under CEQA question “C” and demonstrated in the Figure 4.1-10 and 4.1-11 visual simulations, the Proposed Project would not substantially alter the existing landscape or visual character experienced from the trail system. Impacts are anticipated to be less than significant.

4.1.4.3 Question 1b – Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**Construction and Operation & Maintenance – No Impact**

There are no Designated State Scenic Highways within the Proposed Project viewshed. SR-75, the nearest Designated State Scenic Highway, is over 15 miles from the Proposed Project and the Proposed Project is not visible from this road. The nearest Eligible State Scenic Highway, Interstate 5 (I-5), lies approximately 0.75 mile west of the Proposed Project’s termination point; however, because intervening topography and existing structures largely screen views of the Proposed Project route from this roadway, the Proposed Project would not affect views. Additionally, the Proposed Project does not lie within the viewshed of any county or city scenic routes.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway, and no impacts would result.

4.1.4.4 Question 1c – Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**Construction – Less than Significant Impact**

Construction-related visual impacts associated with the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Construction-

related visual impacts would result from the presence of equipment, materials, and work crews along the Proposed Project alignment. Although these effects are relatively short-term, they could be most noticeable to residents who live in close proximity to the Proposed Project and motorists traveling along adjacent roadways. Construction activity may also be noticeable from nearby parks and open space areas. While construction of the entire Proposed Project is expected to take place over approximately twelve months, construction at specific locations along the route would take considerably less time. To varying degrees, construction activities could be noticeable to local residents, motorists, and recreational users. However, because of their short-term and temporary nature, impacts would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

In addition, the Stonebridge and Torrey Santa Fe Staging Yards could be visible from some publicly accessible locations. These areas will have opaque mesh, or something comparable, installed along the fence that would partially screen views of construction equipment and material from public vantage points such as roads and residences.

When Proposed Project construction has been completed, all temporarily disturbed terrain will be restored, to the extent practical, to approximate preconstruction conditions while maintaining adequately safe work areas for operation and maintenance activities, as needed. Re-vegetation will be used, where appropriate (re-vegetation in certain areas is not possible due to vegetation management requirements related to fire safety) to re-establish a natural appearing landscape and reduce potential visual contrast between disturbed areas and the surrounding landscape. In addition, all construction materials and debris will be removed from the Proposed Project area and recycled or properly disposed of off-site.

With implementation of these standard operating procedures and because of the temporary nature of construction activities, construction-related visual impacts would be less than significant.

Operation & Maintenance – Less than Significant Impact

The Proposed Project area includes existing electric substation, distribution, power and transmission facilities that are seen within the public viewshed. The baseline from which impacts are measured includes these existing facilities. Existing access roads and pads are also seen within this viewshed. The Proposed Project involves improvements along an approximately 16.7-mile route between the existing SDG&E Sycamore Canyon and Peñasquitos Substations and includes a new 230 kV transmission line and the consolidation of two existing 69 kV power lines onto new double-circuit, steel structures that would replace existing wood H-frame structures.

Overall, the Proposed Project would replace a total of approximately 68 existing structures with approximately 62 new dull galvanized tubular steel poles; it also includes the addition and relocation of several sets of conductor within the ROW. Although new conductor may be larger than that of the existing overhead line, the change would be relatively minor and not particularly noticeable to the public. In addition, two new cable poles would be installed, one at each end of the underground Segment B. Minor modifications would be made to the existing Sycamore Canyon and Peñasquitos Substations. Because the substation modifications involve only minor changes within existing fencelines, and because alterations would be seen within the context of these existing substation facilities, the change would be an incremental visual effect that would

not be noticeable to the public. The Proposed Project’s effect on existing vegetation would be minimal, consisting primarily of some minor vegetation trimming. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not obstruct views toward distant ridgelines and mountains.

The overall Proposed Project is divided into four segments based upon the type and location of proposed facilities. A set of ten before and after visual simulations depict the Proposed Project’s appearance as seen from KOPs within the four segments along the transmission line route. As described below, the KOPs are a subset of the photographs discussed in Section 4.1.3.3, and were chosen to portray visible project changes as seen from sensitive locations and/or by the greatest number of viewers. These KOPs were chosen to represent key representative public viewpoints, as further explained in Section 4.1.2, above.

The location of each KOP is depicted on Figure 4.1-2. Table 4.1-2, Summary of Simulation Views (KOPs), presents an overview of the visual simulations in terms of the location of each view, the visual changes depicted, and approximate viewing distance to the nearest visible Proposed Project element. As described in the following subsections and as shown on Figures 4.1-4 through 4.1-13, the Proposed Project represents an incremental visual change within a visual setting where existing transmission structures of similar scale and appearance are visible. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not substantially alter the existing landscape setting. As described in detail in the following text and demonstrated in the set of ten before and after visual simulations of the utility line route, the overall change resulting from the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the landscape setting. As a result, impacts would be less than significant.

Table 4.1-2: Summary of Simulation Views (KOPs)

Viewpoint (VP) Location and Number (Figure Number¹)	Visible Proposed Project Change	Approx. Distance to nearest Proposed Project element (feet)
Segment A		
Fortino Point in the community of Rancho Encantada – VP 3 (Figure 4.1-4)	New tubular steel pole replaces a wood H-frame structure.	600 feet
Pomerado Road in the community of Scripps Miramar Ranch – VP 4 (Figure 4.1-5)	New tubular steel pole replaces a wood H-frame structure.	1,200 feet
Scripps-Poway Parkway in the community of Miramar Ranch North – VP 6 (Figure 4.1-6)	New tubular steel poles replace three wood H-frame structures.	750 feet
State Route 56 in the community of Rancho Peñasquitos – VP 9 (Figure 4.1-7)	Two new tubular steel poles installed and removal of one wood H-frame. Two new 138 kV tubular steel poles would also replace two existing poles adjacent to the substation.	1,200 feet

Table 4.1-2 (cont.): Summary of Visual Simulation Views

Viewpoint (VP) Location and Number (Figure Number¹)	Visible Proposed Project Change	Approx. Distance to nearest Proposed Project element (feet)
Oviedo Street in the community of Rancho Peñasquitos – VP 12 (Figure 4.1-8)	New steel tubular pole replaces two wood H-frame structures.	1,500 feet
Segment B		
Black Mountain Ranch Community Park looking toward east cable pole– VP 14 (Figure 4.1-9)	New cable pole structures located at each end of underground segment.	600 feet
Carmel Valley Road looking toward west cable pole – VP 15 (Figure 4.1-10)		600 feet
Segment C		
Park Village Road in the community of Rancho Peñasquitos – VP 18 (Figure 4.1-11)	New tubular steel pole replaces a steel lattice tower.	500 feet
Segment D		
Trail to Peñasquitos Canyon in the community of Carmel Valley – VP 19 (Figure 4.1-12)	Two new tubular steel poles replace wood H-frame structures. Reconfigured conductors on existing towers.	500 feet
Los Peñasquitos Canyon Trail in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve – VP 21 (Figure 4.1-13)	Four new tubular steel poles replace wood H-frame structures. Reconfigured conductors on existing towers.	2,000 feet
Notes: ¹ Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for simulation viewpoint locations		

The following discussion includes description and evaluation of the Proposed Project's potential visual effects on key public views by Project segment, as represented by the visual simulations. Potential changes in visual character to each segment are also discussed.

Segment A

Segment A, the longest segment of the Proposed Project, includes the installation of approximately 8.31 miles of new 230 kV conductor on 38 new, double-circuit and two new, single circuit 230 kV tubular steel poles situated between Sycamore Canyon Substation and Carmel Valley Road. Modifications include removal of 42 existing wood H-frame structures, two tubular steel poles, one double circuit cable pole and two single circuit wood mono poles, as well as relocation of an existing 138 kV line to the second position on the new poles. One small section of 138 kV underground would be installed to connect the existing 138 kV power line to the Sycamore Canyon Substation. As documented in Section 4.1.3.3, the proposed changes

would be visible from several locations, including nearby residential areas and arterial roadways, as well as from a limited number of public recreation areas.

Figure 4.1-4, a view looking northeast from Fortino Point, approximately 900 feet north of Stonebridge Parkway, represents nearby residential views in this area of Rancho Encantada. Street trees frame the view of the road from this location, and a two-story residence and street lights are visible in the foreground. Overhead power lines and two transmission structures located beyond the house on the hillside can be seen against the sky. The Figure 4.1-4 visual simulation shows the removal of the existing wood H-frame structure and replacement with a new tubular steel pole. The new replacement pole is taller than the existing wood structure; however the form of the new single pole structure is simpler than that of the wood H-frame causing it to appear more streamlined against the sky. Additionally the color of the steel pole is lighter and slightly less noticeable than the darker wood when seen against the sky. Comparison of the Figure 4.1-4 before and after images indicates that the visual change associated with the Proposed Project would not have a substantial effect on the existing character or composition of the landscape seen within this residential area.

Figure 4.1-5, a photograph from Pomerado Road, is representative of motorists' views traveling northbound near Stonebridge Parkway. On the right, the steeply sloping landform allows for views toward distant hills and peaks, visible beyond the buildings located on a mesa closer to this viewpoint. Roadside vegetation on the left side largely screens views of the Proposed Project route from most locations along Pomerado Road. However, from this vantage point, overhead conductors and two structures are visible near the left of a taller lattice transmission tower and a wood H-frame structure located along the Proposed Project route. Both structures are seen against a combination of sky and hillside backdrop. The Figure 4.1-5 visual simulation shows a new tubular steel pole that is taller than the existing wood H-frame structure it replaces. While the increased height could result in the new pole being slightly more noticeable, its color is more similar to the color of the steel lattice tower and the sky, which reduces the visual contrast between the two structures and the sky. The simulation also shows new colored marker balls on conductors crossing over the roadway; however given their size and the viewing distance, the new elements are barely noticeable. The visual simulation demonstrates that the resulting change to the existing visual character and landscape composition is relatively minor, and that the effect would not substantially alter the roadway view.

The Figure 4.1-6 photograph, taken from Scripps-Poway Parkway, represents eastbound motorists' views and is also similar to views from nearby Spring Canyon Park. Noticeable vertical utilities along the roadside include traffic signals, street lights, and transmission and power line structures that support parallel overhead lines. On the right, dense vegetation screens views toward the south. On the left side of the parkway, a tubular steel pole and a wood H-frame structure appear prominently against the sky in the foreground, although landscaping screens the structures' lower portions. Farther away, mature vegetation effectively screens the lower parts of additional power structures as the line of poles recedes out of the view. The Figure 4.1-6 visual simulation of the Proposed Project shows new tubular steel poles replacing the existing wood H-frame structures. While the replacement structures are taller than the wood H-frame structures, the new poles are more similar in appearance to the existing poles situated in the utility right-of-way along the roadside. This consistency in form, color, and general appearance among the poles results in the replacement structures being less noticeable. Given this and the presence of

numerous other vertical built elements in the existing visual environment, the Proposed Project is a relatively minor, incremental visual change. Comparison of the Figure 4.1-6 existing view and simulation demonstrates that, given the presence of existing transmission and other vertical structures, the Proposed Project would not substantially alter the existing landscape character as seen from this area.

Figure 4.1-7 presents a view from SR-56, looking southeast, near the location where the Proposed Project crosses Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard. In general, roadside vegetation partially screens more distant views from this freeway corridor; however, from this location multiple structures are visible against the sky on the ridgeline, beyond Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard, including a wood H-frame structure that is part of the Proposed Project. In addition, small portions of Chicarita Substation and several tap poles are barely discernible on the left; however, these facilities are largely screened by vegetation. The Figure 4.1-7 visual simulation of the Proposed Project shows one wood H-frame structure replaced with two new 230 kV tubular steel poles, visible against the sky on the right. In addition two new tubular steel poles replace two existing poles adjacent to the substation; however, these new structures are barely noticeable due to screening provided by dense vegetation. Near the far right, a new marker ball installed on overhead conductor would also be visible, but barely noticeable. Comparison of the before and after images shows that, despite the increased number of structures, the Proposed Project would result in an incremental visual change that would not substantially alter the existing landscape seen at this location, and it therefore would not degrade the visual character of views from this freeway.

Figure 4.1-8, a view from Oviedo Street near the intersection of Rasmussen Way, represents views from a limited number of nearby residences as well as an unobstructed but brief duration view from this local road. In the foreground on the right, houses that are set back from the Proposed Project route lie near the top of a hillside with dense vegetation separating them from the downhill slope and utility corridor. At the left edge of this view, the rear yard of another residence is visible, and multiple sets of overhead conductors can be seen against the sky. On the right, the upper portion of a steel lattice transmission tower is also visible beyond the hillside shrubs, and two wood H-frame structures appear on the ridgeline, near the center of the view. The Figure 4.1-8 visual simulation shows the introduction of one new tubular steel pole on the ridgeline. This new pole replaces two existing wood H-frame structures that are currently visible on the ridgeline. The new structure would be visible against the sky; however, given the removal of the existing wood H-frame structures, and in light of the brief duration of the view, the change would be incremental and therefore would not substantially affect this view. In addition, the new structure could be seen from the rear of a limited number of residential properties; however, due to the presence of existing transmission structures and overhead lines and because it is expected that the existing vegetation situated at the top of the slope would provide partial screening for residential views, the effect would not substantially alter the existing landscape character of residential views at this location.

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Existing View from Fortino Point near Wild Meadow Place looking northeast (Segment A - VP 3)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location. Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from Fortino Point
Figure 4.1-4

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Existing View Pomerado Road near Stonebridge Parkway looking north (Segment A - VP 4)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from Pomerado Road
Figure 4.1-5

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-5



Existing View from Scripps-Poway Parkway at Scripps Creek Drive looking east (Segment A - VP 6)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from Scripps-Poway Parkway
Figure 4.1-6

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-6



Existing View from State Route 56 eastbound near Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard looking east (Segment A - VP 9)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from State Route 56
Figure 4.1-7

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-7



Existing View from Oviedo Street near Rasmussen Way looking northwest (Segment A - VP 12)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from Oviedo Street
Figure 4.1-8

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-8

Segment B

Segment B involves the installation of approximately 2.84 miles of underground line, and construction of a new 230 kV tubular steel cable pole at each end of this segment. The new cable poles would be the only visible Proposed Project elements within Segment B and would be visible to a limited number of viewers primarily along Carmel Valley Road. Both cable pole structures would be enclosed by 8-foot non-reflective galvanized steel chain-link fence. Section 4.1.3.3, includes a description of the visual setting within this area, including references to existing views toward the proposed cable pole locations (Photographs 13 through 15, Figures 4.1.3h and 4.1.3i). Visual simulations of the new east and west cable poles are shown in Figures 4.1-9 and 4.1-10 respectively.

Figure 4.1-9 is a before and after view of the project, as seen from the parking area within Black Mountain Ranch Community Park. The park facility, operated by the City of San Diego Recreation Department, includes sports field, paved parking areas with lighting, a rest room building, and landscaping. Two sets of existing transmission and power line structures, including steel lattice towers and wood H-frame structures support parallel transmission and power lines that traverse the park with a separate distribution line supported by wood poles running parallel. The transmission and power line structures are prominent built elements seen within the park landscape. A green colored water storage tank located south of both the Park and Carmel Valley Road is another prominent built element seen from the park. Visual change associated with the new east cable pole structure would be seen primarily from this park and its entry road. The new east cable pole would be an approximately 160-foot tall steel pole that would replace an existing wood H-frame structure located within the park. A new wood distribution pole would be added near the cable pole. Additionally, new steel poles would replace existing wood H-frame structures that are located south of the park. These structures are visible from the park. As shown in the simulation, the new poles are taller than existing structures; however the form of the new poles is simpler and the overall change in the landscape character is incremental. The final cable pole design may include landscaping that would partially screen the lower portion of the cable pole, as seen from some places within the park. Given the presence of existing transmission and power line structures at and near Black Mountain Ranch Community Park, the visual change would be incremental and the effect would not substantially alter the landscape character of the park. Incorporation of landscaping could partially screen the lower portion of the new pole, thus reducing the visual effect. The new structure would also be seen from a limited area along Carmel Valley Road. Given the new pole would replace an existing wood H-frame structure and because the view is brief in duration, the project would not substantially alter these roadway views.

The west cable structure would be an approximately 160-foot tall pole that would replace an existing steel lattice tower. The new pole and 8-foot non-reflective galvanized steel chain-link enclosure would be visible from Carmel Valley Road, and may also be seen from Via Abertura and nearby commercial and residential areas. Figure 4.1-10 shows an existing view and visual simulation of the west pole, as seen from Carmel Valley Road. The new structure would replace an existing steel lattice tower. Because the new cable pole is taller, it could be noticeable from the roadway; however roadway views would be brief in duration and given the presence of an existing steel lattice tower, the overall visual effect would not be substantial.

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Existing View from Black Mountain Ranch Park looking south (Segment B - VP 14)



Visual Simulation of Proposed East Cable Pole*

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

* Rendering by Burns McDonnell

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation of Proposed East Cable Pole
Figure 4.1-9

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-9



Existing View from Carmel Valley Road looking west (Segment B - VP 15)



Visual Simulation of Proposed West Cable Pole*

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

* Rendering by Burns McDonnell

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation of Proposed West Cable Pole

Figure 4.1-10

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Segment C

Segment C involves approximately 2.19 miles of new 230 kV conductor to be installed on existing double-circuit 230 kV steel structures between Carmel Valley Road and the Peñasquitos Junction, east of Park Village Road. The existing 230 kV lines would be reconducted and bundled on the east side of the existing structures. Additionally, one steel lattice tower would be replaced with a new tubular steel pole. Most of these minor modifications would not be noticeable to the casual observer. Furthermore, as documented in Section 4.1.3.3, the proposed changes would only be visible from limited residential areas, and from public recreation areas with limited public access.

Figure 4.1-11 shows a close-range view from a residential street in the community of Rancho Peñasquitos. Open scrub-covered hillsides and several residences along the ridgeline appear in the backdrop of this view; the intersection of Celome Way and Park Village Road with houses, mature landscaping, and street lights is seen in the foreground. Trailhead signage for Los Peñasquitos Canyon Del Mar Mesa trail is visible in the center-right beyond the rise in the road. Two power structures, including a steel lattice tower which is visible partially against the sky and a steel wood H-frame structure seen primarily against the hillside, are prominent features. Topography and landscaping partially screen the lower portions of these structures which are situated within largely open land beyond the residences.

The Figure 4.1-11 visual simulation of the Proposed Project shows a new tubular steel pole that replaces the existing steel lattice tower. Similar to the lattice tower, the upper portion of the new pole is silhouetted against the sky and the lower portion is visible against a landscape backdrop. The color of the existing utility structure resembles the gray steel color of the pole, and the form of the new tubular pole is not dissimilar to the wood H-frame structure to the left or the light pole standard and the palm tree trunk seen in the foreground. The Figure 4.1-9 existing view and corresponding simulation indicate that the visual change associated with the proposed replacement of a steel lattice tower with a new tubular steel pole would not substantially alter the existing character or composition of this residential landscape setting.

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Existing View from Park Village Road near Celome Way looking northwest (Segment C-D Junction - VP 18)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location.
Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
Existing View and Visual Simulation from Park Village Road
Figure 4.1-11

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-11

Segment D

The proposed changes within Segment D involve installing approximately 3.34 miles of new 230 kV conductor on existing double-circuit 230 kV steel structures located within the right-of-way between the Peñasquitos Junction and Peñasquitos Substation. In addition, existing 69 kV power lines would be consolidated onto approximately 17 new 69 kV, double-circuit tubular steel poles that would replace approximately 15 existing 69 kV wood H-frame structures and five wood monopole structures, and two new tubular steel cable poles would replace two existing two wood cable poles located immediately outside of the existing Peñasquitos Substation. The proposed changes would be visible from public recreation areas as well as from nearby residential areas and a limited number of nearby local roadways. As documented in Section 4.1.3.3, views from many locations in this area are distant and landscape detail is hard to discern.

Figure 4.1-12 presents a view looking northeast along the Proposed Project route taken from a recreation trail located south of Briarlake Woods Drive and Heather Run Court. On the right in the background, the southern rim of Peñasquitos Canyon and more distant hills are visible beyond the hilly topography and brushy terrain of the north canyon rim. Rear residential yards located near the canyon rim are visible beyond a small hill in the immediate foreground on the left side of this view. Near the center, two overhead power lines that run parallel are visible; the lines on the left are supported by steel lattice transmission towers and the other is a 69 kV line supported by wood H-frame structures.

The Figure 4.1-12 visual simulation shows two new replacement tubular steel poles and the removal of existing wood H-frame structures. In addition, the left sides of the adjacent steel lattice towers have been changed to include a pair of bundled conductors with 'V' insulators. Although the new poles are taller than the existing wood H-frame structures, the form of the new single poles is simpler than that of the wood H-frame structures, and the color is similar to that of the adjacent steel towers and to that of the sky. In addition, because the replacement poles are located closer to the lattice towers, the overall width and footprint of the developed utility corridor would decrease, which could reduce its visual presence, as seen from some locations. While the new conductors are slightly more noticeable than the single conductor, it is expected that this change would not be noticeable to the casual observer. A comparison of Figure 4.1-12 before and after images demonstrates that the Proposed Project could represent a noticeable visual change as seen from this close-range vantage point; however, as described above, the effect would be incremental and would not substantially alter or degrade the overall existing visual character or landscape composition experienced in the area.

The Figure 4.1-13 photograph, taken from Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, is a typical view experienced from the trail system within the western part of the Preserve. From this area, a relatively flat expanse of valley floor dominates the foreground, and the crushed rock recreation trail that is visible in the immediate foreground can also be seen in the distance as it climbs the steep north side of Los Peñasquitos Canyon. With the exception of dense riparian vegetation seen at the left edge of this photograph, the area's vegetation pattern consists primarily of intermittent low scrub that allows for open views toward the Proposed Project route from many trail locations. Along ridgelines, residences built near the canyon rim as well as a variety of utility structures including steel lattice towers and wood H-frame structures are visible against the sky.

The Figure 4.1-13 visual simulation shows new tubular steel poles that would replace wood H-frame structures. A new set of marker balls to be installed on existing overhead line would be visible, but barely noticeable against the sky. The steel replacement poles would be taller than the original wood H-frame structures; however, they would be similar or lower in height compared with the existing towers and the conductor span catenaries (conductor sag between structures) would now mimic those on the existing 230 kV towers more closely. In contrast to the original wood H-frame structures, the form of the new single pole structures would be simpler and more streamlined, particularly when seen against the sky. In terms of color, the new steel poles are similar to that of the nearby existing steel towers and to that of the sky. A comparison of the Figure 4.1-13 existing view and the corresponding visual simulation demonstrates that the Proposed Project would result in a minor incremental visual change that would not substantially alter the existing landscape character or significantly affect views from nearby trails within Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

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Existing View from Trail to Peñasquitos Canyon near Briarlake Woods Drive looking northeast (Segment D - VP 19)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location. Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
 Existing View and Visual Simulation from Trail near Briarlake Woods Drive
Figure 4.1-12

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BACK OF FIGURE 4.1-12



Existing View from Los Peñasquitos Canyon Trail North looking west (Segment D - VP 21)



Visual Simulation of Proposed Project

Note: Refer to Figure 4.1-2 for photograph viewpoint location. Exact pole heights may vary depending upon field conditions.

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project
 Existing View and Visual Simulation from Los Peñasquitos Canyon
Figure 4.1-13

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4.1.4.5 Question 1d – New Light or Glare

Construction – Less Than Significant Impact

No night time construction is planned. Temporary security lighting may be installed at staging and storage yards. This lighting would be directed on site and away from any sensitive receptors. Therefore, no significant impact would occur.

Operations and Maintenance – No Impact

The Proposed Project area includes electric transmission, power, distribution, and substation facilities that are visible within the public viewshed. These existing facilities constitute the baseline from which impacts are measured. Neither the existing nor the proposed transmission and power line facilities are anticipated to require any permanent lighting, unless required for flight hazard lighting as determined by the FAA. New structures would use dulled galvanized steel which would minimize the potential for glare. Potential glare from overhead conductors would be similar to what currently exists within the Proposed Project area. Therefore, there are no impacts.

4.1.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions

With implementation of the project design features and ordinary construction restrictions outlined within Section 3.8 in addition to the measures outlined below, potential impacts related to aesthetics would remain less than significant.

Temporary Lighting: Temporary lighting at staging and storage areas will be directed on site and away from any sensitive receptors.

New Chain Link Fence: New fencing installed as part of the Proposed Project including fencing around new cable poles will be a dull, non-reflective finish to reduce potential glare.

Visual screening of staging yards. Where staging yards are visible to the public, opaque mesh or slats (or equivalent material) will be installed along the fence that will soften the view of the staging yard from public vantage points such as roads, residences, and public vantage points.

Cable Pole Final Design and Screen: Final design of the eastern and western cable poles will consider design measures, such as landscaping installed outside of new perimeter chain-link fencing or decreased pole diameters, to reduce the visibility of each structure.

Materials: Non-specular conductor and dulled galvanized steel poles will be used in order to reduce potential glare.

4.1.6 Applicant Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project has no potentially significant impacts relating to aesthetics; therefore, no APMs are proposed.

4.1.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

Based upon the preceding analysis, no potentially significant impacts relating to aesthetics are anticipated from the Proposed Project.

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