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4.11 Mineral Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	❒	❒	❒	☑
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	❒	❒	❒	☑

4.11.1 Introduction

This section identifies existing mineral resources in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The proposed Salt Creek Substation site and the majority of the proposed power lines are located within the City of Chula Vista in southwestern San Diego County. For this analysis, the Proposed Project components (Salt Creek Substation, TL 6965, TL 6910 loop-in, Existing Substation modifications, and staging yards) are evaluated together, since economically viable mineral resources were not identified in the immediate Proposed Project area. As such, there would be no impact with regard to mineral resources.

4.11.2 Methodology

A review of existing mineral resources data was conducted, which included the California Department of Conservation (CDC 2007), the City of Chula Vista General Plan (2005), and the County of San Diego General Plan (2011).

4.11.3 Existing Conditions

4.11.3.1 Regulatory Setting

State

The State of California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 (PRC 2710 et seq.) addresses the protection and subsequent beneficial use of mineral resources while providing for the reclamation of mined lands to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect public health and safety (CDC 2007). Under the SMARA, the City of Chula Vista is

required to provide justification of a conflicting land use to show why the approved use is more important to the region than the loss of the designated mineral resource.

4.11.3.2 Mineral Resources Setting

California identifies areas as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) relative to known or expected mineral resources. Portions of Otay River Valley, within the southern boundary of the Chula Vista General Plan Area, are identified as MRZ-2 areas. MRZ-2 is defined as an area where significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists (City of Chula Vista 2005). The MRZ-2 areas are approximately 1.3 miles south of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site.

The Otay River Valley area encompasses approximately 3,200 acres and is a major source of construction aggregate for the County of San Diego. It contains a number of mineral resources, with the most economically valuable being sand, gravel, and crushed rock resources, known as construction aggregate. The only active mining operation within the City of Chula Vista, the Otay Mesa Pit at Rock Mountain, is located within the Otay River Valley area, approximately 2.7 miles southwest of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. The Otay Mesa Pit produces crushed rock resources.

Two other MRZ-2 areas are located just outside of the Chula Vista General Plan Area and are known to contain construction-quality sand reserves: a portion of the Sweetwater River Valley east of the Sweetwater Reservoir, approximately 2.9 miles northeast of the Existing Substation, and a portion near the Jamul/Dulzura Creek east of Lower Otay Lake, approximately 4.4 miles northeast of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site.

No known economically viable mineral resources were identified on the Proposed Project site or in the immediate vicinity.

4.11.4 Impacts

4.11.4.1 Significance Criteria

Standards of significance were derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. These standards are summarized below.

Impacts to mineral resources would be considered significant if the Proposed Project would do either of the following:

- result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that may be of value to the region and the residents of the state or
- result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site that is delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

4.11.4.2 Impact Analysis

Question 4.11a – Loss of Regional- or State-Valued Mineral Resources

Construction – No Impact

The Proposed Project site within the City of Chula Vista has no identified valuable mineral resources. The nearest MRZ-2 area is approximately 1.3 miles south of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. The only active mining operation within the City of Chula Vista, Otay Mesa Pit at Rock Mountain, is located approximately 2.7 miles southwest of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site and would continue to function regardless of Proposed Project activities. Proposed Project construction activities would not result in the loss of a known mineral resource. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

As discussed above, the Proposed Project is located in an area with no identified valuable mineral resources. Operation of the Proposed Project, including the proposed Salt Creek Substation, would not result in the loss of valuable regional or state mineral resources. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Question 4.11b – Loss of Locally Important Mineral Resources

Construction – No Impact

There are no known locally important mineral sources or MRZs on the proposed Salt Creek Substation site or within the other sites affected by the Proposed Project. The MRZ-2 area is approximately 1.3 miles south of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site. No active mining operations or known areas designated or delineated for mineral resource recovery are within the Proposed Project site. The only active mining operation within the City of Chula Vista, Otay Mesa Pit at Rock Mountain, is located approximately 2.7 miles southwest of the proposed Salt Creek Substation site, and would continue to function regardless of the Proposed Project. Proposed Project construction activities would not result in the loss of a known mineral resource with noted value to the region or to the residents of the state. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would be located at a site with no known locally important mineral sources or MRZs. Operation of the Proposed Project, including the proposed Salt Creek Substation, would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.11.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operations Restrictions

There are no specific policies, standards, regulations, or design features that are necessary to minimize impacts from the Proposed Project. No impacts to mineral resources are anticipated with Proposed Project implementation.

4.11.6 Applicant-Proposed Measures

The Proposed Project would have no impact on mineral resources; therefore, no APMs are required or proposed.

4.11.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts

Based on the above analyses, no significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Project, and no APMs are required or proposed.

4.11.8 References

California Department of Conservation (CDC). 2007. Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975. Available at http://www.conservation.ca.gov/omr/smara/Pages/index.aspx. Revised January 2007.

City of Chula Vista. 2005. General Plan. *Environmental Element*. Adopted December 13, 2005. Available at http://www.chulavistaca.gov/City_Services/Development_Services/Planning_Building/General_Plan/documents.asp.

County of San Diego. 2011. General Plan. *Safety Element*. Adopted August 3, 2011. Available at http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/gpupdate/docs/BOS_Aug2011/C.1-6_Safety.pdf.

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