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**4.13 RECREATION**

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless APMs Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**4.13.1 Introduction**

This section of the PEA describes the existing conditions and potential project-related impacts to recreational areas as a result of short- or long-term conditions associated with the implementation of the Proposed Project. In addition, this section analyzes consistency with any applicable recreational plans or policies. A recreation area is defined herein as any site or facility that is used for recreational activities, including national, state, county, city, or private parks, bicycle paths, or trails; open space preserves; cultural centers or museums; campgrounds; or private recreational sites such as golf courses, amusement parks, or amphitheaters. The Proposed Project is not anticipated to increase the use of parks and recreational facilities such that substantial deterioration would occur, nor would it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Impacts to recreational facilities would be less than significant. Direct impacts to parks and recreational facilities from construction of the Proposed Project are included within Section 4.12, Public Services.

**4.13.2 Methodology**

The recreation analysis involved a review of various documents, including aerial photographs of the Proposed Project area, the *City of Poway General Plan*, *City of San Diego General Plan*, and other relevant government planning documents and online information sources to identify potential recreational resources within the Proposed Project area. The review also included the use of GIS data.

### 4.13.3 Existing Conditions

#### 4.13.3.1 Regulatory Setting

##### Local

###### *City of Poway General Plan*

The following *City of Poway General Plan* policy is potentially relevant regarding recreation.

**Policy A – Parks.** A diversified, comprehensive park system should be provided for the residents of Poway, utilizing adopted standards, contemporary concepts and planning strategies.

###### *City of San Diego General Plan*

The following *City of San Diego General Plan* goals and policies are potentially relevant regarding recreation. Community plans are written to refine the general plan’s citywide policies and are part of the general plan.

###### Recreation Element

**Park and Recreation Guidelines Goal.** A sustainable park and recreation system that meets the needs of residents and visitors.

**Policy RE-A.3.** Take advantage of recreational opportunities presented by the natural environment, in particular beach/ocean access and open space.

**Accessibility Goal.** Provision of an inter-connected park and open space system that is integrated into and accessible to the community.

**Policy RE-D.6.** (1) Provide safe and convenient linkages to, and within, park and recreation facilities and open space; and (2) Improve public access through development of, and improvements to, multi-use trails within urban canyons and other open space areas.

**Policy RE-E.6.** Use underutilized or unnecessary City ROW and utility easements to help meet recreational needs, where appropriate.

**Open Space Lands and Resource-Based Parks Goal.** Preservation of the natural terrain and drainage systems of San Diego’s open space lands and resource-based parks.

**Policy RE-F.1.** Protect and enhance park lands from adjacent incompatible uses and encroachments.

**Policy RE-F.4.** Balance passive recreation needs of trail use with environmental preservation.

**Policy RE-F.5.** Utilize open space lands for outdoor recreation purposes, when doing so is compatible with cultural, historic preservation, and MSCP conservation goals and surrounding land uses, including, but not limited to:

- Corridors that link recreation facilities and open space areas such as utility easements, river and stream corridors, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

**Policy RE-F.7.** (1) Create or enhance open space multi-use trails to accommodate, where appropriate, pedestrians/hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians; and (2) Locate canyon and other open space trails to take advantage of existing pathways and maintenance easements where possible and appropriate.

#### Open Space Element

**Open Space and Landform Preservation Goal.** Preservation and long-term management of the natural landforms and open spaces that help make San Diego unique.

**Policy CE-B.1.** Protect and conserve the landforms, canyon lands, and open spaces that define the City's urban form; provide public views/vistas; serve as core biological areas and wildlife linkages; are wetland habitats; provide buffers within and between communities; or provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

#### *Rancho Encantada Precise Plan*

The *Rancho Encantada Precise Plan* contains the following potentially applicable policy:

- All utilities should be designed to avoid or minimize intrusion into the MHPA.

#### *Scripps Miramar Ranch Community Plan*

The *Scripps Miramar Ranch Community Plan* contains the following potentially applicable policy:

- The 200-foot SDG&E easement which traverses the northeastern portion of the Scripps Ranch should serve as an open space connector and passive park. Although there are strict limits on the types of construction and vegetation allowed in the easement, this plan advocates the following treatments:
  - Where the easement traverses natural areas slated for preservation, those areas should remain unchanged.
  - Where grading or roads occur in the easement, the graded area should be re-vegetated with low-lying groundcover which will not impede access to transmission lines. At the edge of the easement, transitional plantings such as native chaparral species, shrubs and eucalyptus species shall be provided in order to buffer the open space connector from adjacent development while still providing view into the open space.
  - The proposed improved open space shown in the northeastern portion of the Community Plan Area under the easement should be treated in such a manner as to meet SDG&E requirements, and yet still provide a grassy-type area for passive recreation uses.

*Miramar Ranch North Community Plan*

The *Miramar Ranch North Community Plan* contains the following potentially applicable policy:

- The planning area is crossed by a 200-foot wide power easement which currently contains 230 kV and 138 kV transmission and power lines. The easement is planned to accommodate twice its current capacity and will be developed as system loads dictate. Land uses within the easement, such as parking, open space, and trails, may be permitted subject to satisfying liability agreements.

*Sabre Springs Community Plan*

The *Sabre Springs Community Plan* contains the following potentially applicable policy:

- Provision of access corridors to the creeks for fauna including the power easement corridor and the neighborhood park in Sabre Springs North and an extensive area in open space along Peñasquitos Creek in Sabre Springs South.

*City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program*

The MSCP is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation planning program that covers approximately 900 square miles in southwestern San Diego County pursuant to the ESA and CESA and the California NCCP Act. It has been developed cooperatively by participating jurisdictions/special districts in partnership with federal/state wildlife agencies, property owners, and representatives of the development industry and environmental groups. The MSCP is designed to preserve native habitat for multiple species, which is accomplished by identifying areas for directed development and areas to be conserved in perpetuity. The MHPA is the City’s planned habitat preserve within the MSCP Subarea. Public access is allowed in many areas of the MHPA consistent with species protection and habitat management. Trails (biking, hiking, and/or equestrian uses), passive recreation, bird watching, scientific research, and nature walks are examples of allowable uses in the MHPA that provide opportunities for the public to access. Refer to Section 4.9, Land Use and Planning for more information regarding the MSCP and the MHPA.

*Draft Black Mountain Open Space Park Natural Resources Management Plan*

The Draft Natural Resources Management Plan provides for protection, enhancement, and management of the natural resources within Black Mountain Open Space Park. Among other issues, management of the Park must address the presence of utility structures and facilities requiring maintenance and expansion. The plan outlines numerous activities potentially applicable to utilities, including those operated by SDG&E. Below are some of the key guidelines for SDG&E facilities:

All utility projects and maintenance within the park shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- SDG&E shall conduct all operations within the Park according to “Operational Protocols” outlined in the *SDG&E Subregional NCCP*. This *NCCP* serves as a permit with USFWS and CDFW and meets the requirements for the federal and state ESAs.

- All SDG&E work crews should undergo training programs to make crews alert to the sensitivity of the habitats in which they are working. Crews should be routinely trained and advised on how to minimize environmental impacts during maintenance activities.
- All construction and maintenance activities should use BMPs for erosion control at construction/work sites and should provide for park user safety, such as temporary signs and/or barricades.
- Maintenance activities should be coordinated with a Park Ranger. If activities will result in impacts to resources, the Park Ranger will notify the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Natural Resource Manager. Notification of appropriate City of San Diego personnel should also occur as soon as possible when emergency action is required.
- Erosion on access roads will be minimized using appropriate measures, such as water bars.
- For all grading work, dust will be controlled with regular watering.
- Mowing, rather than grading, should be the method of vegetation removal if needed to eliminate/reduce fire hazard, to provide safe access, or to improve view of utility facility.

#### *Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Master Plan*

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is not part of the City of San Diego's active recreation system of neighborhood and community parks; rather it is classified in the *City of San Diego General Plan* as a resource-based park. The purpose of the Preserve is to save the last relatively untouched coastal canyon in the City of San Diego. The Preserve's resources are considered to be of regional importance. The following recommendations summarize the development, management, and implementation proposals for the Preserve:

**General Concept 1.** The primary objective of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve should be the preservation and enhancement of its natural and cultural resources. Recreational and educational use by the public should be the secondary objective.

**General Concept 2.** Development should be consistent with these objectives, with care taken that public use should not endanger the qualities that make the Preserve unique.

**Long-Range Management 1.** The goals of long-range Preserve management should be to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment and to provide for public enjoyment, safety, and education.

**Long-Range Management 4.** Rules and regulations should be strictly enforced, with particular emphasis on environmental preservation and vehicle and fire control.

#### **4.13.3.2 Public Parks and Recreation Areas**

The Proposed Project ROW either crosses or is located in the close vicinity of several public parks and recreation areas. Public parks include neighborhood and community parks. Typically a minimum of 10 acres, the facilities at neighborhood parks include picnic areas, a tot lot, multi-purpose courts, and open turf areas. The facilities at community parks are essentially the same as

at neighborhood parks, with the addition of a lighted multipurpose sports field and recreation center building. Community parks are typically a minimum of 20 acres. Refer to Section 4.12, Public Services for more detail about each nearby park and recreation area.

A number of parks are in close proximity to the Proposed Project (within 0.25 mile). Spring Canyon Neighborhood Park, located along Scripps Poway Parkway in the Miramar Ranch North Community, is approximately 300 feet south of and across the street from the Proposed Project Segment A ROW (Sycamore Canyon Substation to Carmel Valley Road). This park includes baseball fields and other park facilities. The 22,000-square-foot Rancho Peñasquitos Skate Park, owned and operated by the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department, consists of a mix of wood and concrete structures, ramps, and other skateboarding terrain. This skate park is located approximately 260 feet to the east of the Proposed Project Segment A ROW in the Rancho Peñasquitos community of San Diego. Hilltop Community Park is a City of San Diego park in the Rancho Peñasquitos community that is located approximately 50 feet to the west and southwest of the Proposed Project Segment A ROW.

The east end of Proposed Project Segment B (Carmel Valley Road) would be located within Black Mountain Ranch Community Park, a sports and recreation facility that consists of multipurpose athletic fields, where a new cable pole is proposed to be installed (Structure No. P41). The underground transmission line (Segment B) would connect from the median in Carmel Valley Road to a pole on the south side of Carmel Valley Road utilizing the access driveway to the park, and an access vault would be installed near the park entrance. Additionally, approximately 0.25 acre within the park would be used temporarily as a stringing site.

There is an existing Class I bike path within SR-56 ROW, along the south side of the freeway between I-5 and I-15. The Proposed Project Segment A and C ROWs (Carmel Valley Road to Peñasquitos Junction) cross over the bike path.

The 2-acre Torrey Hills Dog Park, located in the Torrey Hills community, is owned and operated by the Torrey Hills Center (Vons shopping center). The Segment D ROW (Peñasquitos Junction to Peñasquitos Substation) of the Proposed Project runs directly through this dog park, with existing overhead electrical transmission lines spanning directly overhead.

The Proposed Project passes within 0.25 mile of several other public parks and recreation areas. Cypress Canyon Neighborhood Park, Scripps Ranch Community Park and Recreation Center, and Butterfly Gardens Mini Park are in the vicinity of the Proposed Project Segment A ROW; Torrey Del Mar Neighborhood Park is near Segment B; and Torrey Hills Neighborhood Park is near the Peñasquitos Substation. Additional information on these parks listed herein can be found in Section 4.12.3.1 and all parks within 1.0 mile of the Proposed Project are shown in Table 4.3-6, Locations that May Include Sensitive Receptors.

#### **4.13.3.3 Open Space and Preserves**

A portion of the Proposed Project Segment A ROW of the Proposed Project runs through the Black Mountain Open Space Park along its western edge. Black Mountain Open Space Park is owned and managed by the City of San Diego and consists of a series of chaparral and sage-covered hills, ridges, and canyons. There are plans for a possible expansion of the 2,352-acre



park. Current passive recreational uses within the park include hiking, bird watching, gliding and paragliding, biking, and equestrian use on trails designated for each activity. The park's centerpiece is the 1,554-foot summit of Black Mountain, which provides 360-degree views of the area. The SDG&E access road along the ROW through the open space park is used as a trail, and the ROW crosses over several smaller trails, as well as the Black Mountain service road.

The 900-acre Del Mar Mesa Preserve is located on the east end of Del Mar Mesa. Parts of the Preserve are under state and federal jurisdiction. The Preserve is contiguous to Los Peñasquitos Canyon and serves as a critical animal migration corridor. The City Parks Department is currently processing a Habitat & Trail Management Plan for the area. The southern portion of the Proposed Project Segment C ROW, covering a distance of roughly 1 mile, crosses through the Del Mar Mesa Preserve. Many of the hiking/mountain biking trails within the Del Mar Mesa Preserve are currently closed to protect the natural features that are contained there. Approximately 1.5 miles of the northeastern portion of the Proposed Project Segment D ROW crosses through the center of the Del Mar Mesa Preserve.

The Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve encompasses approximately 3,000 acres of both Peñasquitos and Lopez canyons. The preserve is jointly owned and administered by the City and County of San Diego. The purpose of this preserve is to protect its varied natural resources, including important plant/habitat communities, many protected plant and wildlife species, and important pre-historic and historic sites. The preserve includes a trail system for hikers, bikers, and equestrian activity. A portion of the Proposed Project Segment D ROW forms the northern border of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Within this area, the Segment D ROW is located on the hillsides to the north of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon.

Much of the Proposed Project ROW runs within and adjacent to open space/vacant land. Along the Proposed Project Segment A ROW, many of the open space/vacant parcels along this corridor are canyon areas and have been designated by the City of San Diego as part of the MHPA. Immediately south of the Poway Road/I-15 interchange, Segment A crosses over Cypress Canyon, which consists of vacant/open space land (with hike and bike trails) and is designated as MHPA land. Along the western half of the Proposed Project Segment B ROW from Camino Del Sur to its end point, there are large tracts of vacant/open space land included in the MHPA (on both sides of the road), including McGonigle Canyon. The northern portion of the Proposed Project Segment C ROW traverses an area that is primarily characterized by vacant/open space land and land that is designated as MHPA. South of SR-56, this open space includes many dirt trails used by mountain bikers and hikers. One relatively significant trail is the McGonigle Canyon Trail, which crosses the Segment B ROW (trail runs in a northeast to southwest direction across the ROW) through part of the MHPA land. The portion of the Proposed Project Segment D ROW that forms the northern border of the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve is located within the MHPA. Within the vicinity of the Segment D ROW there are numerous hiking/mountain biking trails that lead into the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, the Del Mar Mesa Preserve, and other nearby areas within the MHPA lands.

#### **4.13.3.4 Golf Clubs**

The Grand Golf Club is a part of the Grand Del Mar hotel resort and is located approximately 0.25 mile northwest of Segment D. Additionally, there are three golf clubs within one mile of

Segment B including the Santa Luz Club (approximately 0.4 mile to the northwest), The Farms Gold Club (approximately one mile to the north), and the Del Mar Country Club (approximately 0.9 mile to the northwest).

#### **4.13.4 Potential Impacts**

##### **4.13.4.1 Significance Criteria**

Standards of impact significance were derived from Appendix G of the *California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines*. These guidelines note when a proposed project could have a potentially significant impact to recreation, as follows:

- a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

##### **4.13.4.2 Question 13a – Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

#### **Construction – Less than Significant Impact**

While some access to several recreational facilities and preserves would be temporarily restricted during construction, the construction of the Proposed Project would not directly increase the demand for the local public park system as construction activities would be short-term and would not substantially increase the local populations (refer to Section 4.12, Public Services, and Section 4.11, Population and Housing). As described more fully below, restricted access to some existing parks may indirectly cause increased demand for non-restricted public parks in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. However, due to the quantity of parks in the Proposed Project area, the relatively short duration of the Proposed Project’s construction within local parks, and the construction schedule whereby it is likely that not all of the parks would be restricted simultaneously, these impacts would be negligible.

While direct impacts would occur to several parks and recreational facilities in the Proposed Project area during construction, with the implementation of Applicant Proposed Measures described in Section 4.12, Public Services, construction activities would not result in the increased use of these facilities such that substantial deterioration would occur. Direct impacts to the parks and recreational facilities that would be restricted during construction of the Proposed Project are summarized below and are discussed in more detail in Section 4.12, Public Services.

During construction it may be necessary to temporarily close off sections of trails to keep the public at safe distances from the construction area. SDG&E anticipates that the trails that would be temporarily closed would be those built by SDG&E as access roads that have over time come to be used or designated for use by the public as trails. Some of these trails in the open space canyon areas designated as part of the MHPA may be restricted along the length of the Proposed

Project ROW. Also, the Black Mountain Open Space Park and Hilltop Community Park along the Proposed Project Segment A ROW would have restricted access during construction. Portions of Black Mountain Ranch Community Park at the east end of the Proposed Project Segment B within the immediate construction area would be temporarily closed for safety reasons while construction occurred within the park. Additionally, the access driveway to the park would be closed to vehicular traffic during trenching; however, the park would remain open for use.

In the Proposed Project Segment C ROW, SDG&E may use guard structures and flaggers to temporarily hold traffic for brief periods of time while the overhead line is installed over the SR-56 bike trail. Trail access in the Del Mar Mesa Preserve in the vicinity of the Proposed Project Segment C and D ROW, as well as Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve in Segment D, would be restricted. Along the Segment D ROW, access to the Torrey Hills Dog Park, which is directly under the transmission line, would be closed temporarily during construction.

Though the temporary disruptions in the use of trails and parks may be an inconvenience to users of these trails, many other nearby public recreational options would remain available during the access restriction, as well as other portions of the Black Mountain Open Space Park, Del Mar Mesa Preserve, and Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. SDG&E would implement the project design features and standard construction restrictions listed below in Section 4.13.5. In addition, APMs for direct impacts to parks, trails and recreation facilities are listed in Section 4.12, Public Services.

The Proposed Project would not increase the use of other existing recreational facilities in the vicinity such that physical deterioration would occur due to the quantity of existing local parks and the short construction duration; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **Operation & Maintenance – No Impact**

As described in Section 4.11, Population and Housing, the Proposed Project would not create a need for additional housing or long-term population immigration that could result in permanent increased utilization of existing recreational facilities in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. No new employees would be hired to operate or maintain the Proposed Project facilities. The facilities would be operated and maintained by existing SDG&E personnel in the same manner that the existing facilities are currently operated and maintained. Thus, no impact would occur. In addition, SDG&E maintenance activities within existing recreation areas and parks would be anticipated to be equal or less than existing once the Proposed Project is complete and under operating conditions. The Proposed Project involves the installation of new steel structures (a net reduction of 10 structures) that would predominantly replace existing wood structures. Newer, steel structures require less maintenance than older, wood structures, thus resulting in equal or lesser operation and maintenance activities when compared to existing conditions. No impacts are anticipated.

**4.13.4.3 Question 13b – Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

**Construction and Operation & Maintenance – No Impact**

The Proposed Project would replace and relocate existing electric transmission and power line facilities and add one new transmission line within existing transmission and power line corridors and franchise position within a City street. While access to some parks and preserves would be restricted during some of the construction activities, and construction activities would occur within the Black Mountain Ranch Community Park at the east end of Proposed Project Segment B, the Proposed Project does not involve construction or expansion of any recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment; therefore, no impacts would occur.

**4.13.5 Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions**

Impacts relating to increased use of existing parks or other recreational facilities and the construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be less than significant. The proposed implementation of the project design features and ordinary construction restrictions related to recreation listed below (as outlined in Section 3.8) would help to further avoid and minimize environmental impacts.

- **Coordination and measures within parks and preserves.** Appropriate safety measures will be implemented where trails and parks are located in close proximity to construction areas to provide a safety buffer between recreational users and construction areas. Construction schedule and activities will be coordinated with the authorized officer for each affected recreation area.
- **Temporary trail detours.** Where feasible, temporary detours will be provided for trail users. Signs will be provided to direct trail users to the temporary trail detours.

**4.13.6 Applicant Proposed Measures**

The Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts relating to increased use of nearby existing parks or other recreational facilities and the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, no APMs are being proposed for these impacts. APMs for direct impacts to parks and recreational facilities from construction of the Proposed Project are included in Section 4.12, Public Services.

**4.13.7 Detailed Discussion of Significant Impacts**

Based on the preceding analysis, no significant impacts relating to increased use of nearby existing parks or other recreational facilities and the construction or expansion of recreational facilities are anticipated from the Proposed Project.

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