

5.2 AESTHETICS**5.2.1 Significance Criteria**

The potential to create visual impacts is determined primarily by CEQA criteria and by local criteria as cited in Section 4.2. Based on the criteria in the Environmental Checklist Form in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a proposed project would have a significant visual impact if it would result in one or more of the following conditions:

- 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
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

5.2.2 Construction Impacts

Short-term construction impacts on visual resources would result from the temporary presence of equipment, materials, and workforce along the T/L routes and at the substations and the Primary Marshalling Yard near the Antelope Substation. Vehicles, heavy equipment, facility components, and workers would be visible during construction of new towers and removal of old towers along the Antelope-Pole Switch 74, 66 kV line within the Saugus-Del Sur R-O-W.

The substations, and in some locations the T/L routes, are sufficiently distant from public travel corridors and rural residences that construction of these project components would not be visible. In areas where the T/L corridor is close to suburban development, construction would be more available to public view. During construction, debris and materials would be kept as orderly as possible to minimize negative visual impact. Given the short-term nature of the construction and with implementation of Applicant Proposed Measure (APM) VIS-1, significant visual impacts during the construction phase would not occur.

5.2.3 Operation Impacts

Operation impacts focus on the longer-term visual impacts resulting from project operation and the presence of aboveground built facilities in the existing landscape. Changes in the

visual environment would result from the addition of T/Ls within the existing corridors, and modification and expansion of substations.

5.2.3.1 Proposed 500 kV T/L Route

To facilitate the review of operation impacts along the proposed route, it has been divided into nine sections. This allows a more detailed evaluation of the potential impacts based upon the land characteristics, the number and duration of viewers, and the characteristics of the T/L itself. While many of the sections are relatively invisible, photo simulations were developed for six sections to show the before and after condition that would represent the reasonable worst case for the route section under discussion. In several cases two Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) were selected and simulations prepared to adequately represent the possibility of visual impacts. Where simulations have been prepared, the before condition is identified as Photo A and the project after construction condition is identified as Photo B (and Photo C, as applicable).

Table 5.2-1 provides a detailed discussion of the potential for adverse changes to visual resources on a section by section basis for the proposed 500 kV T/L route. Photo references to baseline conditions and simulations are also listed.

5.2.3.2 Antelope-Pardee Alternative 1

Changes in the visual environment resulting from the addition of the T/L along the Alternative 1 route would be similar to potential impacts resulting from the proposed route at both the Antelope Substation area and the Santa Clarita Valley.

Alternative 1, however, is more visible as it traverses the San Francisquito Canyon Road and City Highline Fr Road area, since it is both relatively adjacent to the roads and related residential areas such as Green Valley. While the new line would be seen in the visual context of the existing LADWP R-O-W through the Angeles National Forest, it has the potential to incrementally increase the visual impact to the existing view.

5.2.3.3 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would involve the use of single circuit towers in the area between Haskell Canyon and the Pardee Substation, which is primarily a residential area.

**TABLE 5.2-1
POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE CHANGES TO VISUAL RESOURCES**

| Impact Number Project Segment: Milepost (MP) Project Element Viewing Area | Photo Reference | Visual Significance Assessment |
|--|---|--|
| Impact VIS1-1 Segment 1: MP 0.0 Antelope Substation Avenue J/Avenue K | Figure 5.2-1 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>Antelope Substation addition is proposed on the SE side of the existing substation, opposite Avenue J. The addition enlarges the size of Antelope Substation. The major element of the addition is the replication and extension of existing 220 kV racks, and the fencing of the future 500 kV expansion area (1,145 feet x 1,185 feet).</p> <p>Substation changes would be viewed in the context of the existing substation.</p> <p>Views of the expansion from the residences located along Avenue J are essentially imperceptible due to the intervening equipment (see photo simulation Figure 5.2-1). Travelers along Avenues J and K would be distant enough that additions to the substation would be indistinguishable. Potential views from travelers descending Portal Ridge on Johnson Road would be indistinguishable given the distance of approximately 2 miles. Figure 5.2-2 shows the substation as seen from the south to demonstrate the most prominent view of this facility. There are no roads or residences in this area.</p> <p>Because the substation would be viewed in the context of existing equipment or from relatively distant locations, the potential visual impact as a result of the substation expansion would be less than significant.</p> |
| Impact VIS1-2 Segment 1: MP 0.0 to MP 3.8 Transmission line Johnson Road/Avenue K/110 th Street | Figure 4.2-2 Photo 3 (no simulation) | <p>Replacement of 66 kV towers with 500 kV towers south from Antelope Substation to Portal Ridge. Tower replacement would occur at a less than 1:1 ratio.</p> <p>The area south of the Antelope Substation is rural, with a few scattered residences. Some of the residences may be as close as several hundred feet, while others are more than ½ mile from the T/L route.</p> <p>The route crosses Avenue K. Potential views of the 500 kV replacement towers would be seen in the distance from Avenue J and Johnson Road.</p> <p>Although the new T/L is larger, at most viewing distances the T/L would not be significantly more perceptible. Because new towers would replace the existing towers, a substantial change from the existing visual environment would not result. Therefore, the potential impacts would be less than significant.</p> |

TABLE 5.2-1 (CONTINUED)
POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE CHANGES TO VISUAL RESOURCES

| Impact Number Project Segment: Milepost (MP) Project Element Viewing Area | Photo Reference | Visual Significance Assessment |
|--|---|---|
| Impact VIS1-3 Segment 1: MP 3.8 to MP 5.7 Transmission line Elizabeth Lake Road – Leona Valley | Figure 5.2-3 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>New 500 kV towers would be visible across the Leona Valley. The nine existing 66 kV towers seen in the view south from Elizabeth Lake Road would be replaced with 5 new towers. Grading of existing spur roads would be visible from some locations.</p> <p>The critical view area would be the 0.25 mile adjacent to each side of Elizabeth Lake Road at mileposts 4.4 to 5.0 where the transmission corridor crosses the road. The number of travelers on the road is very low. Scattered ranches are located through the valley.</p> <p>The line would be most noticeable for 0.25 to 0.5 mile in each direction where it crosses the road. The new towers are taller in stature than the existing towers. The impact created by the larger towers is offset by the fact that there would be a reduction in the total number of towers within view from this observation point and that the towers are set back further from the road in the valley area (see simulation Figure 5.2-3).</p> |
| Impact VIS1-4 Segment 1: MP 5.7 to MP 8.4 Transmission line Angeles National Forest: Off-road trails | Figure 4.2-3 Photo 5 (no simulation) | <p>This change is considered to be potentially adverse, but would be less than significant.</p> <p>Replacement of existing 66 kV towers with 500 kV towers at a less than 1:1 ratio would occur for 13 miles beginning at milepost 5.7. Ten spur roads to existing towers would be re-graded for removal and replacement of towers. Road grading would not be visible from most vantage points.</p> <p>The existing corridor and replacement towers would only be visible to forest users utilizing off-road vehicles. This stretch of Segment 1 is through very rough terrain mostly inaccessible to public views. Those forest visitors within range of the corridor are likely to be focused on recreational activities such that views of the replacement towers would neither be in their primary view nor a noticeable visual change.</p> <p>Given the minimal potential for public views and the tower replacement of a less than 1:1 ratio, potential impacts are considered insignificant.</p> |

TABLE 5.2-1 (CONTINUED)
POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE CHANGES TO VISUAL RESOURCES

| Impact Number Project Segment: Milepost (MP) Project Element Viewing Area | Photo Reference | Visual Significance Assessment |
|--|---|---|
| Impact VIS1-5 Segment 1: MP 8.4 to MP 8.9 Transmission line Angeles National Forest: Spunky Canyon Road | Figure 5.2-4 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>From Spunky Canyon Road the 500 kV tower would be visible where the existing 66 kV tower is currently located. Construction of the new tower at this location could require the creation of a new access spur road to the tower site. At this time the location of the potential spur road has not been identified.</p> <p>The tower location is distant enough from Spunky Canyon Road that the increased size of the 500 kV does not significantly alter the existing visual character or block any scenic vistas. The addition of the spur road to the view could result in a change to the visual environment, but would be less than significant.</p> <p>North of Spunky Canyon Road the T/L corridor crosses the Pacific Crest Trail. The existing tower closest to the trail would be replaced. The number of persons using the Pacific Crest Trail is relatively low compared with the number of travelers on Spunky Canyon Road; however, the duration of views for trail users is extended. APM VIS-2 would reduce potential impacts to the trail.</p> |
| Impact VIS1-6 Segment 1: MP 8.9 to MP 19.3 Transmission line Angeles National Forest: Del Sur Ridge Road/Bouquet Canyon Road | Figure 5.2-5 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>After crossing Bouquet Reservoir, the T/L corridor follows Del Sur Ridge. The 500 kV towers would replace the 66 kV towers at or close to the current tower sites. Bouquet Canyon Road runs somewhat parallel to the Ridge from Bouquet Reservoir to the southern forest boundary.</p> <p>At certain points along the Bouquet Canyon Road which has relatively few travelers; the T/L and towers can be glimpsed, however, most views are distant and not within the primary cone of vision of the traveler. From Del Sur Ridge Road (four wheel track) views of the T/L corridor are more immediate with the line crossing Del Sur Ridge Road twice (see Figure 5.2-5 for a typical situation along Bouquet Canyon Road).</p> <p>Given the distance of the view to the ridgeline the increased tower size is not significantly noticeable from Bouquet Canyon Road. While the visual environment around Del Sur Ridge Road would be affected as a result of the increased replacement tower size, the impact is considered adverse, but less than significant because of the few users of the Del Sur Ridge Road.</p> <p>The impact would be less than significant.</p> |

TABLE 5.2-1 (CONTINUED)
POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE CHANGES TO VISUAL RESOURCES

| Impact Number Project Segment: Milepost (MP) Project Element Viewing Area | Photo Reference | Visual Significance Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| Impact VIS1-7 Segment 1: MP 19.3 to MP 22.0 Transmission line City of Santa Clarita: Haskell Canyon Residential Area | Figure 5.2-6 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>The new 500 kV towers along this portion of the T/L would be seen in the context of the existing Pardee-Vincent 500 kV corridor which transects portions of the Haskell Canyon residential neighborhood. The new line would be located to the north of the existing lines.</p> <p>The new line would use double circuit (versus single circuit) towers adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The double circuit towers would be spaced the same as the existing towers in the corridor.</p> |
| | Figure 5.2-7 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>While the new line would be seen in the context of the existing transmission corridor, the additional T/L would add to the existing visual impact in the area. The change is considered adverse but would be less than significant.</p> <p>The impact is classified as adverse but less than significant.</p> |
| Impact VIS1-8 Segment 1: MP 22.0 to MP 25.5 Transmission line City of Santa Clarita: Copper Hill Residential Area/Open Space | Figure 5.2-8 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>New double circuit towers would be located in the middle of the existing transmission corridor. These towers are taller than the existing towers. They would be spaced the same as the existing towers in the corridor.</p> <p>As with the view from the Haskell Canyon neighborhood, the new T/L and 500 kV towers would be seen in the context of the existing Pardee-Vincent 500 kV corridor. Residential development is adjacent to portions of the corridor in this area, but the setbacks are greater. More residential development along the corridor is anticipated, consequently there would be a high number of viewers concentrated in this area.</p> |
| | Figure 5.2-9 Photo A = Baseline B = Simulation | <p>While the new line would be seen in the context of the existing transmission corridor, the additional T/L would add to the visual impact in the area. The change is considered adverse but would be less than significant.</p> <p>The impact is classified as adverse but less than significant.</p> |
| Impact VIS1-9 Segment 1: MP 25.6 Pardee Substation City of Santa Clarita | Figure 4.2-7 Photo 13 (no simulation) | <p>From Copper Hill Road to the Pardee Substation the new double circuit towers would continue in the middle of this transmission corridor. This portion of the line, while adjacent to a proposed residential neighborhood, traverses a more commercial/ industrial area of Santa Clarita with fewer public roads. As such with the greater setbacks and the fewer viewers, the potential for negative visual impacts is reduced.</p> <p>The impact is classified as adverse but less than significant.</p> |

1 **5.2.4 Mitigation Measures**

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3 The following APMs would be implemented to minimize visual impacts during the
4 construction and operational phases of the project.

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6 **5.2.4.1 Construction APM**

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8 **APM VIS-1.** Debris removal. During project construction, the work site would be kept clean
9 of debris and construction waste. Material and construction storage areas would be selected
10 to minimize views from public roads, trails and nearby residences.

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12 **5.2.4.2 Operation APM**

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14 **APM VIS-2.** Spacing of towers next to the Pacific Crest Trail. Where the proposed 500 kV
15 T/L route crosses the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail north of Spunky Canyon Road, the
16 transmission towers would be placed with a minimum setback of 300 feet from the trail.