

**SCE LOOP TRANSMISSION LINE EIR HEARING 7/23/09**

- **MY NAME IS MIKE OLMOS AND I AM ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF VISALIA. I HAVE OVERSEEN COMMUNITY PLANNING IN VISALIA FOR 8 YEARS.**
- **THE CITY OF VISALIA IS THE LARGEST, MOST URBANIZED CITY IN THE TULARE COUNTY AND KINGS COUNTY REGION, WITH APPROXIMATELY 123,000 RESIDENTS, EXPECTED TO GROW TO 165,000 BY 2020.**
- **ALL OF THE ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT LANDS IN THE CITY OF VISALIA THAT ARE DEVELOPED, AND LANDS THAT ARE PLANNED FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.**
- **WHILE AT THIS TIME THE VISALIA CITY COUNCIL IS NOT SUPPORTING OR OPPOSING ANY ALTERNATIVE, OUR CITY IS VERY CONCERNED THAT POTENTIAL IMPACTS CAUSED BY THE PROJECT AND AFFECTING OUR COMMUNITY ARE PROPERLY AND EFFECTIVELY MITIGATED.**
- **DURING THE SCOPING PERIOD, THE CITY SUBMITTED A LETTER DESCRIBING NUMEROUS POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND WE EXPECTED THE EIR TO FULLY ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS AND IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES. WE WERE DISAPPOINTED WHEN WE SAW THAT THE EIR DID NOT DO SO.**
- **THE CITY WILL FILE WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE EIR DURING THE FILING PERIOD. HOWEVER, I WILL TOUCH BRIEFLY ON SOME OF OUR CONCERNS AT THIS TIME.**
- **REGARDLESS OF THE ALTERNATIVE SELECTED, VISUAL IMPACTS FROM THE PROJECT WILL BE VERY SIGNIFICANT. THE HEIGHT OF STRUCTURES WILL APPROXIMATELY DOUBLE, FROM 63 FEET TO OVER 120 FEET. THE NUMBER OF LINES WILL DOUBLE AS WELL.**
- **CURRENTLY, THE TRANSMISSION LINE HEIGHT IS IN SCALE WITH HEIGHTS OF MATURE TREES. THIS HELPS BLEND THE LINES AND STRUCTURES WITH THE NEARBY URBAN ENVIRONMENT. THE PROPOSED FACILITIES, BOTH POLES AND LINES, WILL BE WELL ABOVE THE TREE LINE AND WILL PROVIDE A MUCH GREATER VISUAL IMPACT TO OUR COMMUNITY. THIS MEANS THAT THE VIEW FROM EXISTING**

**HOMES AND PROPERTIES NEAR AND ADJACENT TO THE LINES WILL BE MUCH MORE IMPOSING. IT ALSO MEANS THAT THE LINES WILL BE VIEWED FROM A GREATER DISTANCE, THEREBY CAUSING VISUAL IMPACTS TO A MUCH LARGER AREA AND TO HOMES AND PROPERTIES THAT HAD NOT BEEN VISUALLY IMPACTED IN THE PAST.**

- **THE EXISTING POWER LINE SYSTEM IS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE COMMUNITY, WITHIN THE VIEWSHED OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAIN RANGE. THE VIEW OF THE SIERRAS IS CHERISHED BY PEOPLE RESIDING AND VISITING OUR COMMUNITY. THE INCREASED HEIGHT OF STRUCTURES AND INCREASED HEIGHT AND INTENSITY OF POWER LINES WILL SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADE THE VIEW OF THE SIERRAS FROM MUCH OF OUR COMMUNITY.**
- **THE PLANNED RAISING OF STRUCTURES AND INTENSIFICATION OF POWER LINES WILL ALSO CREATE A SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE TO COMMUNITY PLANNING AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY. THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN PROJECTS URBAN GROWTH DURING THE NEXT DECADE TO ROAD 152, LOCATED ½ MILE TO THE EAST OF THE POWER LINE EASEMENT. THIS FUTURE GROWTH AREA IS ENVISIONED TO CONTAIN A FULL RANGE OF LAND USES AT URBAN DENSITIES. SUBSTANTIAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT WEST OF THE POWER LINE IS ALSO EXPECTED AS THIS PORTION OF OUR COMMUNITY BUILDS OUT. DEPENDING ON THE ALTERNATIVE SELECTED, THE EXISTING POWER LINE EASEMENT, PROPOSED FOR INTENSIFICATION, WILL EVENTUALLY BE SURROUNDED BY DENSE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM RECTOR STATION TO ROAD 152 OR TO THE ST. JOHN'S RIVER, AS DISTANCE OF ABOUT 1.5 TO 4 MILES, DEPENDING ON THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE.**
- **THIS PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY WILL ALSO CONTAIN A FULL COMPLEMENT OF PUBLIC USES INCLUDING PARKS, DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE AND WALKING AND BIKING TRAILS. THE CITY HAS PURCHASED A 100 ACRE SITE BETWEEN THE POWER LINE EASEMENT AND ROAD 152, NORTH OF STATE HIGHWAY 198, THAT WILL BE THE LOCATION OF A FUTURE REGIONAL SPORTS PARK. THESE USES WILL BE DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY THE POWER LINE FACILITIES, AND THE IMPACTS WILL BE GREATLY INCREASED WITH THE PROPOSED INTENSIFICATION OF THE EDISON FACILITIES.**
- **AS THE CITY PLANS FOR THESE USES IT IS CRITICAL THAT POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY**

**DEVELOPMENT BE MITIGATED. THE POWER LINE EASEMENT STRUCTURES, AS PROPOSED TO BE INTENSIFIED, IS A SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE, DUE TO THE INCREASING MAGNITUDE OF THESE FACILITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT MEASURES BE TAKEN TO EFFECTIVELY INCORPORATE THESE FACILITIES INTO THE URBAN FABRIC SO THAT THEY DO NOT BECOME A BEHEMOTH "NO MAN'S LAND" IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT.**

- **THERE ARE WAYS TO MITIGATE THESE IMPACTS. EFFECTIVE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, TREESCAPES, URBAN GARDENS, PLAY FIELDS, AND OTHER MITIGATIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO LESSEN THE IMPACT OF THE INTENSIFIED POWER FACILITIES. THESE TECHNIQUES HAVE BEEN USED EFFECTIVELY IN OTHER CITIES.**
- **THE CITY WILL DISCUSS THESE AND OTHER IMPACTS FROM THE PROJECT IN A COMMENT LETTER THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT.**
- **THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING MY COMMENTS.**